

The Moose and the Motor

Climate Change, Place, and Environmental Interference

in Rural Northern Sweden

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I declare that this thesis and the work presented is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, or reproduced photographs, this is clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis examines the experience of landscape and place among inhabitants of Arjeplog, in the rural north of Sweden, and the friction between different ideas of nature, environmentalism and climate change. Using photography intertwined with traditional anthropological methods, I show how the local community care fiercely for their lifestyle and local nature while tensions exist in the landscape between attempts at sustainable traditional living and the voices of environmentalism coming from the south. This must be understood within the wider history of the north as a resource landscape: resources have long been pillaged in the name of humanistic capitalism, and the 'wilderness' narrative surrounding the north has made it a prime location for locally disruptive renewable energies in nation-building 'green' modernization projects of the state. Contemporary national conversations of environmentalism are seen as a continuation of this interference: voices of anthropogenic (human caused) climate change are understood as emanating from the same urban population, seen as an out of touch 'other' with little understanding of the rural north. If we are to examine climate change anthropologically, we must also look to those places where the consensus is rejected and doubted, and where certain voices are held in doubt: to look at locally felt places, landscapes and nature to understand how these discourses are enmeshed in problematic structures and north-south, rural-urban divisions, and the processes by which they are rejected. This also requires acknowledging our own place as researchers, and how our views on global environmental matters are themselves shaped by where we come from. Using experimental visual methods including photograms, pinhole cameras, exhibition spaces, and curatorial roles allowed an exploration of aesthetics of nature and landscape: how Arjeplog should be represented and what was important to show through my visual representation of place. The images work throughout the thesis to present place visually in relationship with the text, disrupting the vulnerability, resilience and adaptation narrative of climate change through exploring emplaced environmentalism.

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Prologue



The light from the sauna lit up all the tiny snowflakes clinging to the frosting on the roof, the fire crackle filling the inside and heating the hot coals. We had taken the ice-cold buckets from the anteroom and tried to fill them at the river, but the water was frozen away behind a sheet. The dogs howled in the distance, the air full of sparkles as snow froze hard in the minus 30°C cold.

We sat there on the wooden bench, Marianne and I, protecting the metal beer cans with our hands so the metal wouldn't heat up and burn as we drank. We often talked about my research on those wooden benches of the sauna, discussing history and the day's events as I tried to connect her stories to broader local ideas of environment and why no one was talking about climate change.

I told her of my plans to put on an exhibition in the museum, to show my photographs to my participants and to the Arjeplogare (locals) I hadn't met. She

thought it was a good idea, she would help with the coffee and sell her books there to get people in. 'But they will come anyway,' she said, 'people are curious'.

She was quiet for a minute, and then told me a story of her friend who had moved to Arjeplog.

'She came here and felt that people were kind, very kind, and she had friends. But maybe never close, close friends. She told me how people let her in but only to a point, only to here,' Marianne paused and gestured holding a hand, very close to her face and palm turned towards her, almost touching her nose. It was not a stop sign but a wall, a barrier. 'People let you in, but only to here. Then it stops'. Like a window, like being on the other side of glass. I asked why and said I hadn't felt that yet.

'Maybe because people have grown up together here. They know everything, their families have been here for two, three generations. Everyone knows every detail about their families - who their grandparents were, their jobs, if their grandfather was a murderer so maybe they are too', she paused, smiling.

'But newcomers? They don't know anything about them. And you haven't been here so long, you have not tried to buy a house or get a job. If you did, maybe you would feel this', and she held up her hand again,

the window, the glass separating the outside world from Arjeplogare.



Introduction



National¹ conversations of climate change ignited in Sweden in 2018, summer heatwaves sparking forest fires and a media response that embraced the scientific predictions of more record-breaking weather. National newspapers carried headlines warning of new climate realities, the international press covered the fires raging through the forests, and Swedish politicians brought climate to the fore in their election campaigning in Stockholm. It was the year Greta Thunberg became a global figure in environmental activism, inspiring ‘school strikes for the climate’ around the world following her own weekly demonstrations outside Swedish parliament. My fieldwork in Arjeplog came to an end in the summer of 2018, just after the forest fires and just before Greta’s voice became one of international recognition. These headline grabbing responses, however, emerged primarily from

¹ Snowmobiles from partygoers at the first of May – Valborgsmässafton, and a scene from the extreme snowfall of winter 2017-18 lit by sun after days of snow.

voices in Stockholm in the south. In Arjeplog, in the sub-arctic north of Sweden, the response to these events was quite different.

This mixed media dissertation, combining ethnographic text and image, examines the complexity and conflicts embedded in the national ideas of climate change, green energy and sustainability when locally experienced with emplaced weather and landscape in northern, rural Sweden. Photography was a key method during fieldwork for understanding engagement with landscape, and especially experimental methods (following Schneider and Wright 2006, 2013; Sánchez-Criado & Estalella 2018) that cross the boundaries between art and anthropology in an 'open ended' way (Grimshaw, et al. 2013:150). Throughout the text it reflects the Arjeplogare's aesthetic preferences that emerged through photo sessions and exhibitions, and the 'beauty' of landscape (following Firth 1992) that provokes pride of home and is central to the local scale of environmental protection.

Using photography to therefore give a sense of place in relationship with the text, I explore how residents in the small community of Arjeplog relate themselves to their nature through snowmobile travel with their own scale of sustainability, practices of moose hunting and foraging, seen to be restricted by the state.

I worked mostly with those who were not identifying as Sami, did not speak a Sami language, and were not a member of a sameby (Sami village). As I discuss in depth later in this Introduction, defining Arjeplogare is complex given the history of the north and the problematic State-imposed definition of what it means to be Sami in the past (following Green 2009). While Green (2009) uses the term non-Sami, this is far from a clear dichotomy in Arjeplog as many are aware of 'Sami blood' in their ancestry and would not classify Arjeplog as home to two distinct groups. Historically, however, there have been distinct groups in Arjeplog so I do use the

term non-Sami in terms of historical inhabitants and relations with the State. When Arjeplogare with whom I worked talked of climate, however, they sometimes referred to 'Sami' directly, often referring specifically to those who own reindeer. Therefore I differentiate between those who herd reindeer and those who do not, as this is of relevance when discussing responses to climate change among those with whom I spoke, and is one way scholars refer to the specific cultural needs and experiences of herders compared to the 'majority population' (see Green 2009).

By referring to Arjeplogare, I am also referring mostly to those with whom I worked closely during my fieldwork (following Willerslev 2004), who shared similar sentiments regarding climate change, landscape, interference and the State. I do not claim to speak for all Arjeplogare as there are those who actively engage with climate change and who have subsequently demonstrated in support of Greta Thunberg and environmentalism.

I show how climate change was not a narrative used by my participants, however, in regard to physical change to the landscape: the unusual weather patterns during my year of fieldwork were understood as consistently strange, part of life in Arjeplog with its historically unpredictable weather. The question of climate change was one of uncertainty, and often understood as part of natural fluctuations in the earth's climate. What is more, the warmer summer during the heatwave of 2018 was partly experienced as a positive change, allowing for an engagement 'with the nature' that is impossible during colder years and especially during the widely discussed 'crap' summer of 2017. Instead, it was the national response of climate change that was threatening to the Arjeplogare with whom I worked, in part the locally disastrous impacts of the hydro-electric dams built throughout the north and used by the state in contemporary narratives of 'green' renewable energy.

Climate change was never a simple question in Arjeplog and revealed many aspects existing in tension. It is complex, a 'wicked problem' with no clear set of alternative solutions, as Steve Rayner describes in the 2006 Jack Beale Memorial Lecture on Global Environment (in Fiske et al. 2014). It revealed deeper turbulence with actors seen as meddling in the northern lifestyle: the perceived threat came not from predictions of warmer global temperatures, even in light of the dependence on an industry built literally on ice, but from the voices of these discourses themselves. This included politicians, urban environmentalists, and especially members of the environmental party, Miljöpartiet, often seen as profoundly out of touch with the northern rural lifestyle. Climate change discourses threaten the relationships with nature and place as they introduce uncertain futures and uncomfortable responsibilities among my research participants, both in the proposed individual responses such as cutting down on petrol but also on the state's moves to combat emissions through the new renewable energies.

All of this must be understood in the wider history of the North in relation to the state. Arjeplog is in Norrland, the vast northern part of Sweden that has been long treated as a 'goldmine' by the state in terms of forestry, mining, and hydro-electric power (see Sörlin 1988). There is a body of literature exploring this 'internal colonization' of the state into Sami lands (Fur 2006; Össbo & Lantto 2011), and I argue that this conflict continues today in Arjeplog extending among the non-reindeer herding community in terms of these discussions of landscape use and environmentalism.

The 'state' must be understood here through its status as 'outsider' regarding its position in relation to the citizens of Arjeplog and how it is imagined by them (see Ferguson and Gupta 2002). It is not so easy to separate the state from the workings

of corporate interest (Klein 2014) and this is important in Arjeplog where big business interacts with the state in hydropower and forestry, the combined actors being perceived as outside interested parties in the natural resources of the north. Arjeplog has its own variety of environmentalism (following Guha and Martinez Alier 1997) that has a decidedly local perspective in contrast to the global goals of the state. Through travel by motor, in snowmobiles and boats, Arjeplogare know their landscape and are proud of its beauty that they see is worth protecting. Through hunting, their sense of place in is negotiated in relation to both the forest and the meat they obtain from the moose, in a network of forest-moose-body, further strengthening their pride of place and motivations to protect their local nature. This lifestyle is seen as sustainable, and the right way to be in relation to the natural world in contrast with that seen in Stockholm and the big cities.



While there are scholars who call for examinations of place that extend to the global scale (Devine-Wright 2013; Heise 2008) I argue that it is of great importance to continue to examine the local scales of response to climate change. This is especially important in anthropology with its tendency to examine the concepts of vulnerabilities, adaptation, and resilience in climate change (Fleischmann 2018; see Crate 2009; Finan 2009). As Rudiak-Gould argues (2011) we need to examine the reception of the discourse of climate change, which exists as an idea as much as a physical phenomenon (Hulme 2009). An emplaced approach that takes phenomenological, lived experience into account allows this kind of focus as it facilitates understandings of nature and landscape in the context of new discourses of environmentalism and conflicts (see Little 1999). We should, I argue, turn our gaze towards the places where climate is rejected if we are to fully understand this global phenomenon, and consider these emplaced 'different perspectives' (Marino & Schweitzer 2009: 216), including those which challenge our own understandings, if we are to grasp the complexity of this new global future. As Callison asks, 'what does it mean to have a future with climate change? what will it mean to inhabit that future?' (2014:244).

A note on terms: environment, nature, landscape



Nature has been a concern of anthropology for a long time (Descola & Pálsson 1996) but it often occupies a place in the background, or backdrop to the action (Morris 2000). In recent years it has been used in widespread debates of nature/ culture, stemming from renaissance philosophy in which the two were seen to be distinct entities, with culture being overlaid onto a backdrop of the natural world (Pálsson 1996). While anthropologists are overcoming this dualism in their analyses where such a distinction is not self-evident, it still exists in many societies in the ways people talk of nature and how it exists apart from the cultural realm. This was apparent in Arjeplog, where nature was used as a category and place apart from the town. Nature is therefore both a cultural category *and* a physical, biological realm that is 'prediscursive and presocial' (Escobar 1999:1). In this research I use nature to refer to this cultural category within place, examining how it is used by the

Arjeplogare² in discussions of photography, climate, food, and positioning with the urban south.



During my fieldwork I realised the sensitivity needed when using the term ‘environment’ (*miljö*). As I elaborate further in chapter five, is it not a big leap from *miljö* to *miljöpartist* (member of The Green Party) or *miljöaktivist* (environmental activist). These connotations were critical in terms of my place as a researcher and how Arjeplogare perceived the climate change discourses they saw as coming from the environmentalists and the south. For these reasons I have avoided using the term ‘the environment’ in this dissertation. Environmentalism is used regarding the national and global environmental movements, and the different varieties as discussed by Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997) and Guha (2000a; 2000b). We cannot

² The self-referential name used by inhabitants of Arjeplog, like Londoner or Stockholmare.

be afraid to engage critically with environmentalism, especially in this research: we must be mindful of local difference and aware of problems with global discourses assuming globally fitting solutions. Such discourses, as we will see, can exacerbate local tension. Furthermore, as Ingold has argued, the term suggests some kind of 'natural' untouchedness, a place apart which can be observed (Ingold 2000). Although the Arjeplogare often refer to nature as a place apart, this is more connected to the idea of nature as place and activity rather than being untouched and pristine.



Instead, I use the term 'landscape' in referring to my field of study, or as Anna Tsing defines: 'the configuration of human and non-human across a terrain' thus incorporating and encompassing human and animal, fungal, and microbial interrelations (Tsing 2005) as well as the non-living such as ice, rock and snowmobile, as in the below image of Marianne ice fishing one winter in a meeting of human, ice, nets and fish. This definition allows understanding of things moving and crossing conceptual boundaries, the co-existence of both natural and non-natural things within Arjeplog, and why in chapter three the moose meat is a part of

place, as are the people. It allows for enmeshed understandings of animals, geology, ecosystems, human action, history and place-making. As Ingold argues, landscape is not a surface but a 'topologically ordered network of places' and past activity (2000:53). Landscape therefore offers a creative, interesting site of exploration for anthropologists interested in place and nature, where it is understood as a process rather than a static backdrop (Hirsch 1996).



It also has a second meaning, useful for this practice-based research: visual representation in landscape painting. The word comes from the Dutch *landschap* and 'recognised as such because it reminded the viewer of a painted landscape' (Hirsch 1996:2). Although Tilley (2004), Empson (2011), and Feld (2005) argued for a more phenomenological, sensory examination of landscape beyond the visual, and geographers once 'banished' the term for being too pictorial (Hirsch 1996:13), its origins as an art genre become useful in chapter one where I discuss my photography and art as a methodology in understanding landscape experience.

There, landscape as an artistic representation becomes a way to understand experience and representation of place. It thus exists in this thesis both as a visual genre (see Cosgrove & Daniels 1988; Cosgrove 1988) *and* 'a part of everyday social practice' (Hirsch 1996:22).



Towards a Place-based Anthropology of Climate Change

'Even though climate change may have begun as a scientific concept, it has flourished as it's been adopted, torqued, politicized, paired. In short, it's been filled with meaning through its interactions with belief systems, practices, and other forms of knowledge.'

(Callison 2014:247)

During my fieldwork, encountering conflicting ideas of environment, nature and climate change, it became clear that we need more place-based climate change anthropology. This will also allow room for perspectives that do not fit within the dominant foci of vulnerability, resilience and adaptation so often seen in climate change anthropology. This thesis contributes instead by offering an ethnographic account that is both visual and phenomenologically orientated in its appreciation of the importance of place and place-making in discussions of climate change.

The 1980s saw a 'spatial turn' within social sciences, and in particular from geography, in which a focus on sense of place became central. The key figures of this movement were Lefebvre, Harvey and Massey, with work that challenged 'historicist approaches that view space as a given entity, inert and naturalized, in order to engage in an interpretative human geography' (Arias 2010:31). Following this turn, Feld and Basso pointed to the 'shared frameworks' of anthropologists and geographers, with both examining contested places using this new focus (Feld and Basso 1996).

Doreen Massey's work explores how place-making is a process and is by no means contained or static (1991, 2001). Places, she writes, are the 'products of material practices' (2001:475). They are *made*, rather than simply existing as a backdrop. Both Massey and Casey refer to place as an event and recognise the 'fluidity of place' (in Pink 2015:36), but Massey highlights the randomness of things coming together in place whereas, for Casey, places should be understood as a 'gathering process' in a contained space (in Pink 2015). Pink argues that Massey's approach highlights the openness of place and how it is 'woven together' (ibid: 36), something that felt true in Arjeplog with its entwined histories of Sami, Swedish settlers from the coast, and car testers flying in from overseas, woven with the wandering moose, game, and

tourists. Massey has also written of the power imbalances of place in a globalizing world. She highlights uneven power geometry: how certain actors control movement and power while others suffer as they move between places (1991), something that is again salient when considering the power geometries of the state in both the colonization of the north but also contemporary conflicts between politicians and inhabitants of the region.

This movement also points to the importance of understanding places as unbounded: people can move between and be spread out across many different places, and there can be multiple communities in one place (Massey 1991). Furthermore, as Massey argues, one specific place can be experienced very differently depending on age and mobility (2001). One can, however, find patterns in how place is communicated. While individually experienced differently, Arjeplog-as-place was communicated and positioned as in opposition with the rest of the country by many of my participants, as I discuss more throughout the thesis. While people moved in and out of Arjeplog, there was a background focus on 'being an Arjeplogare', being *of* that place, either through birth or having lived there long enough. Engineers came for the car testing seasons though very few were 'Arjeplogare': most were simply seasonal visitors.

Almost all of my participants were born and raised in Arjeplog, with a small number having moved there many years ago from nearby towns in the same *kommun* (municipality). While some of them had left to go to high school in a neighbouring town, or left for work, they had all returned to live in Arjeplog and talk of it as a bounded place. Gupta and Ferguson (1992) have critiqued the tendency towards describing places as 'contained', calling instead for understanding the movement and erosion of boundaries (in Feld & Basso 1996). This call is pertinent for many

communities, including perhaps the indigenous Sami population of Arjeplog who have historically crossed the now-imposed borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Siberia with their reindeer herds in seasonal migrations. For the Arjeplogare with whom I worked, however, Arjeplog as a municipality was often described in terms that suggested it was somehow contained, in-as-much as it was held as one entity compared with other parts of Sweden and other nearby communities and separated from the other settlements by dense forest, mountains, and vast waterways.



ARCHIVAL IMAGE OF ARJEPLOG TOWN, OR PLASS'N. PHOTO © BÖRJE GRANSTRÖM, COURTESY OF THOMAS GRANSTRÖM

Keith Basso's work examines how sense of place among the Western Apache is told and reaffirmed through storytelling (1996), which guides moral behavior while reinforcing ties to certain places in the landscape. Although a sense of place can come across as obvious, Basso argues, they are complex and often remain an

'enigma' (1996: xiv) because they are taken for granted by anthropologists for whom it is enough to simply physically locate the place of their research. 'The ethnographic challenge', writes Basso, 'is to fathom what it is that a particular landscape, filled to brimming with past and present significance, can be called upon to "say", and what, through the saying, it can be called upon to "do"' (Basso 1996:75). Landscape and place work dialectically, therefore, both being given meaning but also acting back to the people who are emplaced there: it works to give them moral direction through the stories that give the place meaning. The use of visuals throughout this thesis is one attempt to give place a central stage in this particular portrait of Arjeplog and its relationships with nature, landscape, and climate change. Methodologically, the work of landscape phenomenologists was crucial to this research regarding how landscape and place were felt and experienced (Dreyfus 1991; Ingold 2000, 2010; Merleau-Ponty 2008, 2012; Tilley 2004). Rather than a Cartesian separation of mind and body, phenomenology considers the feeling-body and unconscious bodily skill of engaging with place and landscape (Merleau-Ponty 2012). This approach can be seen in Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* (1977) in which we know landscape through habitual practice rather than a conscious knowledge of a set of established rules: knowing one's plot of land in Arjeplog through the habitual clearing of snow, for example, or walking the dogs through the familiar streets or forests. A phenomenological approach, argues Ingold, breaks down the dichotomies between the biophysical and the sociocultural: rather than mind representing culture and body representing nature, he argues, we should view the person as a sensing organism as a whole in an environment – what he calls 'dwelling' (Ingold 2000, 1993). This, I argue in chapter four, can be limiting when participants discuss weather, but was a jumping-off point for examining relationships to nature and landscape in place, not least for its commitment to a focus on the person as

embodied in the world and the importance of paying attention to the senses (Ingold 2000; Tilley 2004).

Sarah Pink has also taken in ideas of place in her discussion of sensory ethnography and how we can embrace the senses and occupy a role as an emplaced researcher (Pink 2015). She calls for an 'emplaced ethnography', drawing on Howes definition of emplacement as 'the sensuous interrelationship of body-mind-environment' (Howes 2005:6-7). As Feld has argued, sensing place is a crucial part of place-making (2005) including sounds and smells rather than the dominance on the visual, something that is important when we turn to examine the food culture in Arjeplog in chapter three. This was useful throughout fieldwork, too, in paying attention to the smells of the motors and the sounds of the snowmobiles: how one local machine was of no importance, but the whine of multiple Norwegian tourists out on their snowmobiles disrupted the known places and complicated the mind-body-environment described by Howes (2005). I discuss the role of the senses in relation to the visual, and the critique of occularcentrism alluded to by Howes (2005), in the following chapter, which details my approach to visual anthropology and how I used visual media both as a method and in relation to the text.



Sense of place has also been picked up by those interested in climate change, both within and outside of anthropology. It has been used in public health scholarship regarding specific, place-based climate threats (Cunsolo Willox, et al. 2012; Hess, et al. 2008) that follow the concepts of vulnerability, adaptation and resilience (Devine-Wright 2013). Geographer Devine-Wright (2013) discusses the different scales at play, arguing that most of this work focuses on the local and he calls for a more global look at sense of place where it extends to concern the planet-as-place (see Heise 2008). Devine-Wright, Price, & Leviston examine the different responses based on, variously, a national perspective of place compared to the global and what this means for engagement with climate change as anthropogenic in Australia (2015).



Within environmental psychology the term place-attachment has developed in parallel to geographer's use of place (Devine-Wright 2013; Devine-Wright & Howes 2010; Scannell & Gifford 2013). In particular, Scannell and Gifford examine responses to climate change discourses in their study, linking place attachments to rejections of climate change due to uncertainty, gender, and lack of perceived threat to the local environment in British Columbia (2013). They argue that a connection between so-called 'place attachments' and climate communication has not yet been done and that further research of this nature is needed (ibid). They also point to how a place attachment can influence engagement with climate discourses if the 'climate actions appear to threaten the status quo of existing place meanings', citing Devine-

Wright and Howes' (2010) study of U.K. residents who did not want wind farms in their local area (in Scannel and Gifford 2013). This, as I show in chapter two, is very relevant in Sweden, as hydroelectric power is perceived in Arjeplog as disastrous for the local ecology yet held up by the Swedish state as the answer to the global problem of high emissions and the need for renewable energies.

Drawing on this body of work on place, my fieldwork contributes to a boom in the humanities' interest in climate change over the past decade following the increasing severity of the IPCC³ reports. Within anthropology the sub-field is 'rapidly expanding' (Crate 2011)⁴. Other disciplines, especially natural science and archaeology, were working on climate change long before anthropology (Crate 2011; Sanders & Hall 2015), yet it can offer human perspectives of climate change experienced in place and a number of scholars point to the unique contribution of this discipline and the 'unique vision of the anthropologist (Rosaldo 1989)' (cited in Strauss 2009; see also Crate 2009; Henshaw 2009; Roncoli, Crane and Orlove 2009).

The emergent field of political ecology allowed a recognition of the faults with previous climate-deterministic accounts and gave a new focus on vulnerability, resilience and adaptation (Peterson and Broad 2009; see Finan 2009). This became the prevailing approach within both the anthropology and art of climate change and the Anthropocene (Fleishman 2018; Sanders and Hall 2015): a new 'catchword' for anthropology and climate change (Antrosio and Han 2015; Latour 2014) and the term for the earth's proposed new epoch in which humans 'first began to have marked effects on Earth's climate and ecosystems' (Hulme 2009:289)⁵. As a term it

³ The International Panel on Climate Change

⁴ For reviews, see Peterson and Broad (2009) Roncoli, Orlove and Crane (2009) and Crate (2011).

⁵ Hamilton, Bonneail and Gemmenne state there are many arguments concerning when it began (2017). Morton writes that the Anthropocene as a term was formally approved in 2018, as starting at 1945 (Morton 2018:43).

covers not only climate change but the wider physical impact of human life on a planetary scale, including pollution, lack of biodiversity, mass extinction, and degradation of habitats (see Lewis & Maslin 2018; Morton 2018; Tsing, et al. 2017). It is, Latour asserts, the literal connection human beings have with the earth, as natural scientists and geographers discover the impacts of our species in the very rock layers themselves (Latour 2014:2). This is an important point to make here as, in Arjeplog, environmental focus is instead turned towards pollution and keeping the local environment free from human destruction. As I will show in chapters four and five, the discourse of climate change is rarely linked to human activity, therefore their definition of the Anthropocene may be somewhat different to that of anthropological scholars with a more direct interpretation of visible human impacts on the climate. The term should be used with caution, furthermore, as it is bound up in internal disagreements among geologists. It has emerged and dominated the social sciences despite the term 'Holocene' originally defined by the rise of the human, and scientists have been aware of the human impact on the planet for 400 years (Lewis & Maslin 2018). The term carries significant ethical complexities regarding current relative responsibilities, possible solutions, and comparable historical emissions (Latour 2018; Lewis & Maslin 2018; Posner & Weisback 2010).

Within visual anthropology, interest in climate change has involved handing the camera to those experiencing change, in the case of a group of Masaai pastoralists who were trained in production and made a ten minute participatory film of their experiences of environmental changes (Masaai Voices on Climate Change (and other changes, too), 2011), or *Thank You For The Rain* filmed partly by Kisilu, a farmer in Kenya recording the storms, floods and droughts at his home (2017). Such films join the body of literature examining climate change's impact on lived realities and changing landscapes around the world (see edited volumes from Crate & Nuttall ,

2009; Hastrup & Rubow 2014) and, more relevant for this research, in the Arctic (Crate 2009; Henshaw 2009; Hastrup 2014; Nuttall 2009).

These responses have provided crucial perspectives on the human aspects of climate change. However, there are limitations to this format that open up the need for a different kind of phenomenological, emplaced ethnography. As Sanders and Hall write of the dominant approach within the discipline:

The story ordinarily goes like this: local, traditional cultures crucially depend on nature for their cultural, material and spiritual needs. They will therefore suffer first, worst and most directly from rapid climate change. These place-based peoples are somewhat resilient and adaptive, due to their local, indigenous or traditional ecological knowledge. Yet cultural adaptation has limits. Urgent anthropological interventions are thus required to mediate and translate between local and global worlds to help these cultures adapt.

(Sanders and Hall 2015)

I disagree with Sanders and Hall in their designation of such scholars as ‘turtles’ needing to modernize with theory (ibid), as these ethnographic accounts have highlighted important situated experience of climate change and the ways it is affecting place-based realities in many parts of the world. However, this approach does highlight the limitations of climate change anthropology that does not problematize the concepts and categories of climate change itself. It reveals an expectation that communities embrace the narrative of climate change, recognizing their vulnerabilities or future risk. While Crate’s assertion that we must understand the implications of changing place and senses of homeland is important (2009:148), what happens when people do not see the earth changing, or do not see it on the same scale as the media, scientists or environmentalists? And what happens when they understand change as situated within local histories of strange weather and attempts to control resources from elsewhere?

More recent work develops this critique in terms of new directions for anthropology, Fleishmann (2018) argues anthropology must also examine the producers of knowledges of climate change and Rudiak-Gould has called for anthropology to examine the *reception* of climate change discourses (2011). In the last couple of years, a number of works have engaged with this, both within anthropology (Marino and Schweitzer 2009) but largely within other disciplines such as science and technology studies (STS), sociology, and journalism (Callison 2014; Crockford 2018; Hoggan & Littlemore 2009; Norgaard 2011; Oreskes & Conway 2012). Norgaard has examined how a community in Norway is worried about climate change impacts but does little to act on it in everyday life, in a sociological examination of 'denial' (2011). Within STS, Jasanoff argues how scientific representations of climate change meet in tension with local lived experience, in an 'erasure of local specificity' (2010:235) leading to conflict. Long term fieldwork that examines place-based encounters with climate change discourses can therefore be productive explorations of such friction. Climate change is a global phenomenon but is locally experienced (Strauss 2009:166) and this is also true of the *discourse* of climate change, as an idea as well as a physical thing (Hulme 2009). As Marino and Schweitzer ask, 'when anthropologists assume their studies are going to be about "climate change", we must ask ourselves, what place is there for [these] different perspectives?' (2009:216).

Political ecology has been a good framework for anthropology of climate change as it involves the 'intersections of political economy and environmental change' (von Hellermann 2013:2; see also Escobar 1999; Little 1999). As Barnes et al have warned, it is important not to attribute all changes to climate (2013) and we should be mindful of political and economic mediation in the climate (Oliver-Smith, 2009). However, in addition to political ecology accounting for these entwined structures,

we also need a visual and place-based anthropology of climate change which makes room for the phenomenologically experienced landscape and how place-specific responses to climate change discourses can be understood. When working for a London arts consultancy I supervised an exhibition focussing on Anthropocene and climate change which was sponsored by a major developer of pesticides and GM crops. The images showed dramatic scenes of global destruction, sometimes individual staged pieces or images from longer term photographic projects around the world. Within the exhibition, the images' purpose appeared to be to shock visitors into action and, largely, to view the human subjects as victims within a human tragedy. This is one way to visualise the Anthropocene, itself funded by a company enmeshed within Anthropocene practices. It engages with an ethic of responsibility while simultaneously being targeted for green washing (see Karliner 1997) thus complicating its own ethical position. My question during that exhibition, sparking the idea for a practice based project, was how can we do visual work which addresses different experiences of climate change and the Anthropocene? What could such visual work contribute when enmeshed in ethnographic fieldwork? And this was complicated further when the place in question was not actively engaging with a vulnerability narrative.

Despite the considerable and challenging ethical realms of climate change (Callison 2014; Crate 2011) there is no 'universal human ethic' regarding environmental management, as Novellino has argued (2003:173). There is no single Swedish environmental ethic, either, despite the suggestion by Isenhour (2011). How place is made, conceptualised, and phenomenologically experienced is of crucial importance when we look at Arjeplog and how climate discourses are rejected. This, combined with a visual approach, allows for an angle in anthropology that can exist alongside the resilience, adaptation and vulnerability studies and offer a way to

examine the relationships between place and conflict stemming from environmentalist discourse.

Representing rural Sweden

Not surprisingly, given anthropology's origins as a discipline, there is comparatively little ethnographic work about rural Sweden (Hannerz 2018; Murphy 2015). Ethnology⁶ is arguably a larger discipline within Sweden, and Swedish anthropologists often travel elsewhere for their fieldwork, and there is a large body of literature concerning the history of the north. There are some anthropologists working in Sweden, however, and Murphy gives a good overview of pre-2015 anthropology of this work, stating that much of what came since the 1980s has focussed on immigration, ethnicity and race (2015). Besides these works, O'Dell's ethnological work on Sweden delves into consumer culture in comparison with the United States (O'Dell 1997) and Mels has examined the spatialization of the national parks of Sweden (Mels 2002). Murphy's own ethnography explores Swedish design as interwoven with the development of the welfare state, in which he gives a thorough and detailed history of the political changes of the 20th century in Sweden and how 'soft power' is instrumented through objects (Murphy 2015: 29). Other works of note include Frykman and Löfgren's examination of middle-class life in Sweden, in which Löfgren examines the emergence of a post-industrial revolution love of nature among the middle class where nature was a view to be admired and the stereotype of the Swedish as nature-loving emerged, supported by the

⁶ Ethnology also uses ethnographic methods but from a different academic background, examining for example 'folk art' or 'folk practices' within Sweden such as historical festivals or traditions. It began as 'folk life research' and was reinvented as Ethnology in the 1970s engaging with the 'ethnography of everyday life under modernity' and overlapping with anthropology (Hannerz 2018:61). Löfgren argues that it was in fact the 'new cult of nature' in the 1890s that led to ethnology as it sparked pilgrimages to pastoral villages such as Dalarna (1987:61).

increasing engagements with country cottages, skiing, hunting, and berry picking (Frykman & Löfgren 1987; Löfgren 1987). Environmental history has been a key literature base for this research, especially regarding those scholars working with environmental history in the north of Sweden. Sverker Sörlin, for example, has written about the historical resource extraction in Norrland (1988) discussed more in chapter two. Fur's examination of colonial Sweden and the colonialization of the north is an important book for this research as she details the way natural resources were treated during the 19th and 20th centuries (Fur 2006). The histories of the north were in part revealed and contextualised through these texts, as well as through the work of historian Neil Kent (2008; 2014; see also Hallendorf & Schück 1929; Sejersted 2011; Toyne 1970; Wilson 1970).



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Northern Swedish rural society has ‘drawn interest’ regarding decline and migration from small communities to the south and Hannerz argues that anthropologists have not embraced the potential of this new northern rural setting

(Hannerz 2018:62). The majority of the anthropological literature of Northern Sweden focuses on the lives of the indigenous Sami populations who have lived and moved across Sápmi – Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia – for at least 10,000 years (Kent 2010). There is also a substantial literature on historical ecology and archaeology of northern Fennoscandia, including Arjeplog's own research network *INSARC -Institutet för arktisk landskapsforskning* - The Institute for Arctic Landscape Research (Bergman 2018; INSARC 2015) made up of local researchers from archaeology, ecology, and legal studies who live in Arjeplog. Furthermore, the last 20 years has seen a rapidly growing body of literature exploring the impacts of climate change on Sami populations and reindeer herders (Furberg, et al. 2011; Heggberget, et al. 2002) as well as the ongoing conflicts with the state over land use (Beach 1986; Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008; Norstedt 2018), the Sami rights to the land (Brännström 2018) and impacts of renewable energy infrastructure in Sápmi (Fur 2006; Össbo and Lantto 2011). This research is written by both Swedes and Sami and, more importantly, there is media representation by Sami herders themselves in their own voices explaining how anthropogenic climate change is a disaster for reindeer herding, an activity now crucial in their cultural practice⁷ (see Nutti 2018; Orange 2019; Söderberg 2017; Sámetinget 2020). Outside the academic and journalistic sphere, too, Sami artists have been working on visual media communicating place, memory, and landscape, for example Tomas Colbengtson and Jorma Puranen.

It was in part because of this body of work that I did not want to research climate change among the Sami in Norrland: not only because their voices were already

⁷ This was not always the case, as many Sami lived off fishing and subsistence. The definition of Sami as primarily reindeer herders, it has been argued, has allowed the state to define them and treat them accordingly (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008).

being heard, but because they were already making art, writing, and speaking publicly about the impacts. I felt that attempting to join this conversation would be inappropriate. I once heard an interview with a Sami woman at The Nordic Museum in Stockholm, in which she reprimanded the scholarly attention directed towards the Sami as another form of objectifying and colonizing a group who had been put in many boxes by the State and by researchers in the past.

Anthropologist Carina Green describes an interaction with a Sami interlocutor in Kiruna, in northern Sweden, in which he questions her interest in Sami experience (Green 2009). She discusses these complexities in depth, acknowledging that while this restriction would limit research considerably among anthropologists, there was an imbalance of power in her words reaching the 'men in power' as her informant put it, rather than his own words or those from his community (Green 2009). She explains that this was a 'general feeling among many Sami people toward research and researchers' (2009:31) as anthropology is linked to the 'majority society, to (post)colonial attitudes' and authority (ibid).

This was not the only reason I decided not to take an approach examining specifically 'Sami' perspectives on climate change, though it did play a role. At the same time as I was reading these accounts and the literature focussing on Sami experience, history and politics, I also realised that so little was being published of the rural, 'non-indigenous' experience of landscape and climate change in Sweden⁸. I became interested in the voices that were not being published in academia or in the media. The non-indigenous experience of nature and climate change was something of a mystery, made even more interesting by the fact that rural

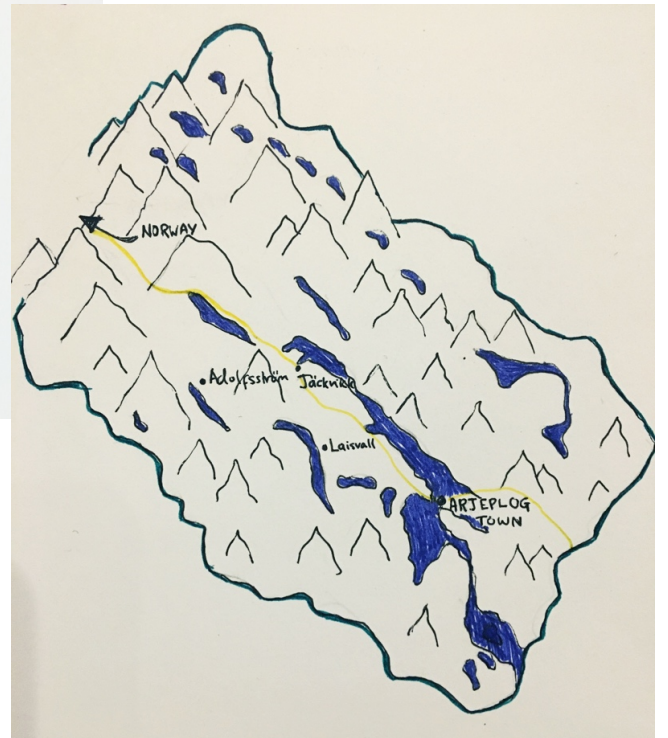
⁸ I discuss the complexities of a Sami-non-Sami dichotomy in the next part of this Introduction, including the challenges and care we must take in defining 'Sami' (following Green 2009; Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008) and the blurred distinctions specific to Arjeplog.

Northerners live side-by-side with Sami reindeer herding communities and experience the same climate and the same physical conditions yet are not vocal in the press. Isenhour has written of Stockholm residents' engagements with climate change and sustainability (2010, 2013), and how they talk of their rural countrywomen (2011), but there was no 'other side' that I could find. What were these rural Swedes saying about their urban counterparts? And how were they talking about climate change?

Isenhour states that the Giddens paradox does not apply to 'Swedes', where Giddens argues that people are motivated to change their behaviour if they feel the effects of climate change locally and personally (Isenhour 2013). Isenhour argues that despite not feeling the effects of a changing climate yet in Sweden, her participants were motivated to change their behaviour anyway (ibid). The limit of her work, therefore, in terms of this research, is that she talks for all Swedes as if there is a national response that they all share. This dissertation contends this conclusion, as I argue that Arjeplogare do not feel personally responsible for the climate crisis and therefore Isenhour's conclusion of 'Swedes' is far too broad. What Isenhour's work does show, however, is the link between Swedish discourses of climate change and sustainability, and how sustainability is used in Stockholm in response to climate change in the media. This is important for this thesis, too, in terms of the different ways in which sustainability is discussed and realised in Arjeplog and framed in opposition to people in Stockholm, discussed in chapter three.



Arjeplog





I came to the town and municipality of Arjeplog in July 2017, to the vast expanses of water and the mountains hiding behind the haze of the summer. The night train took me along the east coast following the Baltic sea, then inland, followed by a three-hour bus through dense pine and spruce forest peppered with birch and small bands of reindeer taking the road at a slow canter. The *kommun* (municipality) of Arjeplog resides in the larger province⁹ of Lappland, which covers the northernmost inland part of the country, and at the same time the county of Norrbotten, which covers the whole northern part of Sweden including the coastal county. These distinctions are of political importance in administration but less so in this thesis. Mostly I just knew that Norrbotten was used when checking the weather service and Lappland was used in all tourist applications due to its connotations of the Sami, reindeer, snow,

⁹ Sweden has 3 'lands' – of which Norrland is one and covers the whole north of Sweden. The country is divided into 25 provinces, and also 21 counties with its own administrative board. Confusingly, there is also a province called Norrbotten.

Christmas, and winter wonderlands. Norrland, the term for the whole northern part of the country, was used when talking about the resources taken from the north to the south of Sweden.

The town itself sits at the intersection of lakes Hornavan, Uddjaure and Kakel, with a total of 8727 lakes across Arjeplog's *kommun*. The Silver Road cuts directly through the region, running from Norway to the coast, originally connecting the silver mines in Norway to the west to the coastal Swedish cities for trade (seen in yellow on the smaller map). The *kommun* is a mammoth 14,000 square kilometres of land stretching up across the arctic circle and populated by 2900 people, making it a *glesbygdskommun* – a sparsely populated municipality. This term is one used often by Arjeplogare when outlining their specific struggles with the state's infrastructure and injustices of distribution: lack of healthcare, postal services, and money failing to go back into the *kommun*, to name a few examples. The municipality's Facebook page boasts frequently of the land mass per person, with visual comparison overlaid on maps of the *kommun* in contrast to more densely populated localities. The *glesbygdskommun* is therefore not always negative but can be a point of pride and a way to define Arjeplog in contrast to the cities.



Arjeplog's position straddling the Arctic circle means it has extreme and dark winters stretching from November to March, and the temperature was as low as minus 45° Celsius in the winter I was there. The lakes freeze, providing the perfect surface for the municipality's fifty-year-old main industry: car testing. New car models are shipped to Arjeplog's sub-arctic climate to be tested in low temperatures but, crucially, to be driven in secret on the vast expanses of the ice while experiencing the renowned service-minded attitude of the town. This extends to the tourism side of the industry, where interested parties can pay to drive expensive cars on replica race circuits etched into the ice of lake Uddjaure.



The testing season, November to March, sees 3000 engineers descend on Arjeplog and live in the town for a few weeks at a time, in short term shifts before they are exchanged with other engineers. They come mostly from England, Germany, France and Korea, staying in private homes that Arjeplogare rent out as they move out to their *stugor* (cabins) or in with their parents. Every winter there is a mass exodus out to these temporary places, deep cleaning required before leaving and then regularly throughout the season. Five companies make the ice tracks with specialised knowledge and enormous trucks, employing hundreds of Arjeplogare in

both track-preparation and administrative positions. The town's infrastructure depends on this influx, in terms of plumbing and water supply but also two supermarkets and a number of souvenir shops thriving during the test season.



I planned Arjeplog as my fieldsite with early ideas of researching the impacts of climate change being felt in relation to the car testing industry. Upon arrival, however, I realised a few key things that changed the direction of my research. Firstly, that my participants were tired of the focus on car testing from the media. Secondly, that very few people discussed climate change as something impacting life in Arjeplog, or the future. What was said in direct response to the car testing was often hearsay, or speculation about how worried the bosses were. I decided to focus instead on how this discourse was being avoided or entwined with historical resource extraction and emplaced nature as I felt this was of far more interest. It is necessary, however, to include car testing in any discussion of Arjeplog and

landscape given the income it provides and the sheer enormity of the operation in, as many called it, 'little Arjeplog'.



Most of the inhabitants of the *kommun* (approximately 2000 out of 2790) are based in the town of Arjeplog (Pite Sami: Árjapluovve, Lule Sami: Árjepluovve), built as a marketplace on Sami lands in the 1600s at the meeting of 3 of the big lakes of the municipality. The temporary meeting place became a permanent settlement for both Sami and non-Sami Arjeplogare by 1720, known locally as 'Plass'n'. It is necessary to present the history of Plass'n and Arjeplog-the-municipality in a little more depth before I introduce my participants, as it is important in both understanding the complexities of a Sami/ non-Sami dichotomy in the present day in Arjeplog, which as many of my participants said is an impossible distinction to make nowadays. Furthermore, it is relevant to the positioning of the Arjeplogare with whom I worked against 'outsiders', and the relationship to landscape and resource extraction that I discuss throughout this thesis.

Arjeplog's History and the Politics of Belonging to Place

Arjeplog as a settled town has historically been home to Sami reindeer herders, Sami who did not herd reindeer, and those who moved there from the south and the coast, though defining these groups and the extent to which they are separate is complicated after hundreds of years of cohabitation. The north of Sweden is part of Sápmi, a country of its own that includes the north of Norway, Sweden, Finland and parts of Russia. The Sami¹⁰ people are indigenous to Sápmi, and crossed through its landscape both with and without reindeer before state boundaries were imposed by the respective nation states of Scandinavia and Russia (Kent 2014). The Swedish parliament 'recognised the Sami as an Indigenous people in 1977' and 'as one of Sweden's five national minorities' (OECD 2019:31).

As Omma et al. write:

The official number of Sami in Sweden is between 20,000 and 25,000. This figure is probably far too low: Hassler and colleagues estimate the number at 40,000 to 50,000, calculated from various registers such as the Sami Parliament electoral register, depending on the way Sami identity is defined (Hassler *et al.* 2004).

(Omma et al. 2011:10.)

The Swedish state became especially interested in Sápmi and the northern Swedish region in the 1600s as it became clear that the land was resource-rich and ripe for the plundering (Fur 2006; Green; 2009; Sörlin 1988). Missionaries, miners and county administrators began to appear in the northern regions, converting the Sami to Christianity and building infrastructure for the benefit of the State on what they

¹⁰ Sometimes written Saami.

took to be 'Crown land' but what was in fact reindeer herding land in Sami immemorial right (Green 2009:11).

As Green (2009) and Sörlin (1988) argue, and as I discuss more in chapter two, the north became a new 'frontier' for the Swedish state (Green 2009:54) in its industrial revolution with this new goldmine of national resources, and it became more administratively involved in this region. Swedish citizens began to move up the East coast into the North, settling in Piteå, Luleå and Umeå in a process of internal colonization. Natural resources were extracted from the land while simultaneously nature became romanticized among the incoming Swedes, described as pristine and tied intimately to national identity (Green 2009:54, see also Löfgren 1987). While Green argues this was mostly for the upper classes in the beginning (2009: 55 following Sörlin 1988), we can see this attitude today amongst the inhabitants of Arjeplog who are intent on protecting a pristine nature in which they live, which will be discussed more in chapters one and five.

Arjeplog had been a meeting place and marketplace for Pite Samer before, in 1634, silver was discovered and mined in the municipality, on the border with Norway, prompting the Queen of Sweden to declare Arjeplog its own *kommun* distinct from neighbouring Arvidsjaur. Local Sami were forced into labour (Green 2009) and the silver was transported through Arjeplog to the settlers on the coast. The town of Arjeplog emerged in the mid-1700s – a few small buildings including a Sami school and a new church, but still no permanent residents. It was still a place to trade and do business, and a place to stopover on the route from the mine to the coast. By 1810 it had 25 buildings and by the 1820s three families were living there (Lindgren 2016). From the mid-1800s, it became a permanent settlement for a small number of both Sami and Swedish families who decided to live there year-round in a process

of domestic, or internal, colonialization, and the community developed into districts, a fixed street network, and private ownership (Lindgren 2016). For 200 years, therefore, it has been a place of both Sami and 'non-Sami' residents and these distinctions have become more complex over time as families grew and mixed. Many of my participants knew they had Sami ancestry somewhere and told me how complicated it was to define who was Sami and who was not.

'It is impossible to know who is Sami in Arjeplog', my participant Johan said. As a child he had asked his mother if he was Sami and was told he was not, only to find he did have Sami ancestors only one or two generations away. This, he said, was true of many Arjeplogare. There were relatively few who herd reindeer now, he told me, but many who have Sami ancestry even if they no longer speak the language – which is one key way the Sami Parliament defines the right to call oneself Sami. My participant Anna-Lena echoed Johan's words, telling me it was extremely complicated to separate the two histories and it depends on how far back one is willing to look into one's ancestry. She also told me how difficult it would be for a researcher from 'outside' Arjeplog to explain such a web. Both she and her partner, Dan, who owns reindeer, also suggested differentiating between those who herd reindeer and those who do not, if and when it is necessary.

The impact of the State's manoeuvres into Sami lands is extensively documented (Fur 2006; Green 2009; Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008; Sörilin 1988; Össbo and Lantto 2011), and despite uncertainty the residents of Arjeplog are entangled in this 'majority population' (Green 2009) in which their rights to the land are recognised by state mechanisms while the Sami and especially reindeer herders have to fight for theirs a history of conflict.

This conflict is also part of the difficulty in defining who is Sami and who is not, as the State's attempts to take land in the north has often utilized certain strategies of definition in order to further their own cause. Green's thesis goes into great detail of the complexities of ascribing definitions onto the Sami, and the problems caused by the State's definitions of the past (2009; see also Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008). She argues that in early interactions between Sami and non-Sami, ethnicity was not a problem, and Sami and non-Sami co-existed as settlers with many Sami practicing herding *alongside* farming. It was, Beach argues, the state who are responsible for the divisions in the area: 'it is easy to see how the misconception that real Saamis are only herders and that herding is the only true occupation of Saamis was not simply a mistake born of ignorance, but rather a necessity for the colonial exploitation of resources and the introduction of the rights of Swedish settlers on the same land. (Beach 1981:306-307)' (in Green 2009:49).

The state has tried to define Sami and it has had dire consequences in splitting them internally with regards to their self-organisation. The Reindeer Herding Act of 1928 allowed the State to wrongly categorize the Sami through occupation - as only reindeer herders - in a way that allowed the State to remove their rights to land and restrict their power (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008) and served 'as narratives of the colonial past' (Green 2009:53). This Act also split the Sami themselves as they were forced to choose if they were either herders or Swedish, there was no room for a non-herding Sami, and this strengthened the division between reindeer herders and settlers (ibid; OECD 2019). The Sami have been subsequently defined variously through ethnicity, language, occupation, and membership within a sameby. Today 10% of Sami are engaged with reindeer herding (Omma et al 2011) and 'the majority of the Sami are not members of a sameby and as such, are legally prevented to practice reindeer husbandry and do not have hunting and fishing rights on the

sameby land. In other words, they are on equal footing with other Swedish citizens by law' (OECD 2019:33).

It can also be difficult to ascertain who is Sami and who is not, as 'definition of who belongs to the Sami ethnic category is arbitrary' (Green 2009:44). The Sami Parliament Act recognise Sami persons as registered on the electoral roll and eligible to vote in Sami Parliament elections, based on considering oneself to be Sami and either speaking the language at home, or the parental home, or the home of grandparents (OECD 2019). As Green explains, 'many persons with "mixed" ancestry might float in and out of their Sami identity, and many have through assimilation and integration come to define themselves as part of the majority population' (ibid). In her research, the extent to which someone was Sami was not important for her informants. One non-Sami participant in her research claimed ' "we all have drops of Sami blood running through our veins"' (2009:21) and many, she argues, used this to contest the Sami's "'ethnic difference"' and therefore special rights (ibid). For those actively identifying as Sami in Kiruna, however, Green argues that political mobilization allows them to engage with indigenous rights, and position themselves as 'ethnically and culturally different' to the dominant structure of the State (2009:23) and as different but equal to the non-Sami locals. Defining themselves as different allowed a 'particular perspective' in the specific conflict over the Laponia World Heritage Site which is the focus of her work. Her entire thesis, alongside many other scholars' works explore the issue of sami identity and conflict with the state. Some scholars working in the north differentiate instead between reindeer-herding communities and non-herding communities in discussions of environmental impacts specific to reindeer herders in this region.

This thesis will not explore such conflicts in Arjeplog but it is necessary to explore this history and point to this extensive literature which addresses these complexities in the north. It is a vital part of the current politics and discussions of land and environment in northern Sweden. It also demonstrates how it is not appropriate for me to try to define who is 'Sami' myself as an outsider, and especially considering I worked mostly with people who did not own reindeer or speak a Sami language. It also provides a context for the complexities of State interference in the north, which will be discussed throughout this thesis as the Arjeplogare with whom I worked positioned politicians and Stockholm residents as 'outsiders'.

For the Sami in Arjeplog, it is possible that the 'non-Sami' Arjeplogare also represent this 'outside' in the form of a systemic 'majority culture' as discussed by Green (2009) and concerning use of land and politics of belonging. Green argues that, in her fieldwork in Kiruna, 'ethnic background' was not a source of conflict in the community and Sami and non-Sami were integrated in the community in terms of recreational activities, schools, work, relationships etc – but that 'this "unity" can often be considered to be rather superficial' (2009:41) given this history. However, as I have mentioned, this conflict was not the intended focus of my thesis and it is not my intention to suggest or reinforce polarization when very little of this 'difference' was mentioned during my fieldwork. In fact, many even pointed out that Arjeplog was not the same as Kiruna and had less conflict than other, more northerly municipalities. Instead, I focussed on the rural, northern experience of climate change among those who were not engaged with reindeer herding, in order to gain a different perspective of both northern Sweden and climate change within an anthropological perspective.

While I did speak to a few reindeer herding Arjeplogare (including my conversation with Malin in chapter four, and Anna-Lena's partner Dan), most of the voices central to this argument and mentioned in this thesis were those who were not 'officially Sami': they were not part of a sameby, did not speak a Sami language, and they did not herd reindeer. As I have discussed above, this is not a simple distinction, but for the sake of clarity throughout this thesis I refer to all of my participants as Arjeplogare and use Sami to describe those who identified as such, with an acknowledgement that the reality is complex. When later in the thesis my participants tell me to 'ask the Sami' with regards to climate change, context suggested they meant specifically reindeer herders as they followed routes through nature as the herds migrated and were thus 'closer to nature' through their occupation.

Participants

In a town as small as Arjeplog I did not limit my pool of participants too narrowly with regards to age and gender. Through chance, fate or gravitation, most of my closest participants ended up being women between the ages of 30 and 70, though I also interviewed husbands and friends and male bosses who I would not wish to exclude from this dissertation. This research could have been very different if my participants were teenagers or young adults in Arjeplog, and this is worth considering both in the ethnography and in future research projects, especially in the post-Greta era of global youth movements. I did speak with some teenagers and young adults who echoed the arguments made throughout this thesis at the time of fieldwork. Returning to Arjeplog in the future could invoke different responses among both the young population and those with whom I worked. My main

participants ended up being good friends – especially Marianne, Mats, Fredrik, Anna-Lena and Dan. They invited me into their homes and their cabins, were patient and interested in the photographic experiments, taught me how to ice fish and butcher a moose, devoted a lot of time to teaching me the local dialect, *Arjeplogsmål*, about hiring out to car testers, and about celebrating the joy and beauty of Arjeplog itself. Åse generously invited me to her workplace on the ice and was kind enough to invite me back with a filmmaker on behalf of the Nordic Museum. Karen, Stina, Alma, Anna, Stefan, Johan and Kenth also donated time and energy into this research through interviews and were always friendly faces around town. For that I am so grateful.

Where I refer to the Arjeplogare it is therefore to a group of my main participants with whom I worked closely (following Willerslev 2004) and people I met in town, at the exhibition, and in their own homes, who problematized the notion of anthropogenic climate change and positioned it in terms of an outside discourse from people who have little understanding of the northern way of life.

I lived in Plass'n throughout my entire year in the *kommun*, luckily right in the middle of town even during the test season. The town had a primary school, high school, a beloved church (that now hosts rock concerts), a few shops, restaurants, hairdressers, and a bustling calendar of activities for locals. During the test season it was full of young engineers strutting out of the only pub, open during those few months, who bought up all of the individually packed salmon from the supermarkets and the cans of beer from the state-regulated alcohol shop.

I lived in Arjeplog for 13 months, from July 2017 to August 2018, and returned for several short trips the following year. I experienced a full year cycle of weather, hunting, fishing, foraging and car testing. Every Tuesday evening I sat beneath the

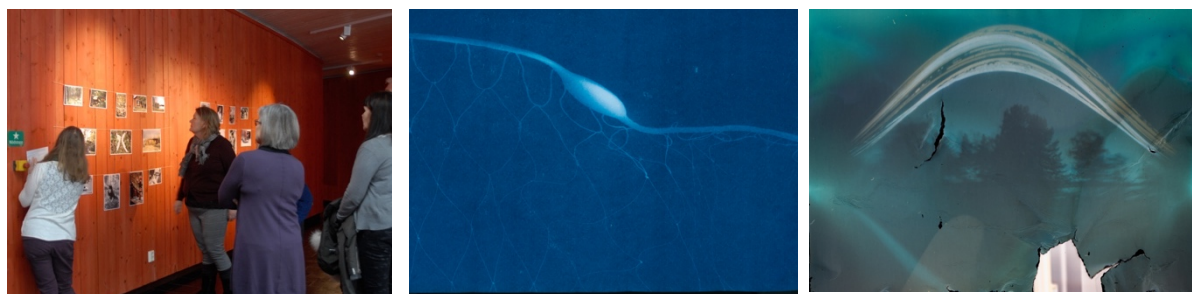
elderly residents' home with Marianne, Mats, Fredrik and a group of men who made knives and other handcraft. Odde taught us well, supervising the machinery and giving tips on the best way to attach the blades and to finish the woodwork. There was always *fika* (a coffee break) at 7pm, Odde boiling the coffee and the men taking it in turns to bring *fikabröd* (cakes or sweet cinnamon bread) or something they had baked at home. I walked with my participants, I went to local events, I bought a year's pass to the swimming pool and I took photographs for Marianne's newspaper.







My fieldwork did not end with my physical withdrawal from the town either. I stayed in touch with some of my participants through Facebook and received updates about life in the town, as well as sharing my thoughts and development of the thesis with those with whom I had worked. This was especially important for me given the apathy and even outright refusal of anonymisation by some of my participants. Many did not want me to hide their names in this thesis, arguing that their thoughts should be heard, and their feelings attributed to them. This raised a methodological difficulty for me, immersed in the anthropological guidelines of anonymity. I decided, in the end, to respect my participants with their informed consent. One part of this involved checking my participants still wanted their names in print upon my return visits, but also sending transcripts to key participants with their contributions to be certain that they were satisfied. This has also allowed an ongoing relationship of consent and communication regarding the content of this research.



Throughout the thesis, photographs serve a myriad of functions. Primarily they offer a sense of place that accompanies the descriptions and arguments made in the text, not simply illustrating but reinforcing Arjeplog-as-place in this account and the particular local environmentalism focusing on caring for the surrounding nature. During the fieldwork, however, they worked as a methodological tool. In chapter one I discuss various photographic methods, including sun prints and

photograms, showing how they threaded throughout my research practice in the field and allowed an understanding of environmental engagement, exploration of subjectivity, and aesthetics of landscape.



In chapter two I use my own photographs as well as those taken by one of my participants, Johan. I explore the affective responses to hydropower, which presents daily struggle for locals in Arjeplog and disrupts their practices of dwelling (Ingold 2000), showing how this capitalist-environmentalist infrastructure is situated within a larger expansion into the north from the 17th century in a history of humanistic expansion into the ‘wilderness’ of Norrland. Hydropower is promoted today as ‘green’ and part of Sweden’s new identity but locally experienced as deeply problematic and environmentally destructive, furthering the image of Norrland as uninhabited wilderness to be used as a landscape resource by the south. This frames the ongoing mistrust of the motivations of the state and the south in contemporary discussions of environmental responsibilities and climate change.



Chapter three takes a more ecological approach to Arjeplogares' experience of nature, using photography to present a tripartite network of forest-moose-body that is created through the moose hunt and the place-based personhood this reinforces in relation to the nature. Here I introduce a second point of tension with the state: how the local food lifestyle is inherently sustainable yet bound by rules and regulations. There is irony felt among my participants given the 'outsider' environmentalist voices of the south arguing for sustainable lifestyles.



Chapter four looks specifically at weather and emplaced understandings of climate change, often understood as a naturally occurring wave of temperature fluctuations. Strange weather during my year in Arjeplog was understood as 'standard': the weather has always been weird and always social. Alongside different visual records of the weather events during my fieldwork, I examine how science was embraced to support this idea of fluctuating climates and how nature is understood as operating on its own time scale outside of human influence.



Chapter five directly examines the discourse of climate change and the threats this brings to the Arjeplogare through visual ethnography and mappings: threatening their reliance on petrol for placemaking, the perception of the out-of-touch urban south seen to be making demands from a sparsely populated rural north, and what this means for ideas of responsibility. I reflect on my own positionality and the role of the anthropologist in places where environmental response is at a different scale than that of the researcher.

These arguments come together in a discussion of the emplaced landscape, nature and environmentalism of Arjeplog and how these are positioned in opposition to the south, the city and the state. I explore the implications this has for both the country and wider conversations of climate change, and the potential for anthropology to examine place-based rejections of climate and sustainability discourses around the world. As global conversations about climate change intensify, we cannot ignore the subtle differences in how these discourses are received or practiced in rural areas. Voices coming from the cities, calling for drastic action, ignore the 'little people' as Anna-Lena called them. North-south divisions in Sweden are further reinforced by discourses of climate change and environmentalism, where frictions are revealed and strengthened between local and national scales, and framed by global conversations.

1. Photographs & Landscapes

'It is seeing it with new eyes. We are home blind.'

UFFE, LOOKING AT MY EXHIBITION.

'Your photographs are very old fashioned. I want more modern things like helicopters and snowmobiles'

JANNE.



The February sky seemed to expand after months of cold dark. The sun rose higher each day, bringing brightness to the unusually thick snow which had fallen all winter, and sparkling it alight with glitter. The windows of the exhibition hall at Silvermuseet (The Silver Museum) were veiled by snow drifts blocking the view of frozen lake Hornavan. Inside, the red walls were covered with my photographs of Arjeplog from all the seasons I had been there, hanging from pins stuck into the old

wood. Marie – a friend of a friend, and the exhibition’s first visitor – was walking around the images, still wearing her snow trousers and woolly hat, tiny droplets of meltwater slipping from her boots in the warmth. The water traced her path on the stone floor. She paused in front of each season, hand on her chin, looking carefully and sometimes leaning forwards for the details or back for the views. She walked over to me as I waited beside the coffee percolator.

‘This is Arjeplog,’ she said, tapping her heart, ‘It makes me feel... *I live here*’.

In this chapter I explore the intersections between landscapes and image-making, and how different photographic practices facilitated new understandings of relationships with nature in Arjeplog. Photographic interventions and moments reappear throughout the thesis and this chapter is an introduction to the physical processes including my participants’ photographs, archival images, collaborative efforts, and my own photographs both as research tools during my fieldwork and as a creative means for dissemination where the images serve as visual ethnography.

Many of these processes involved bringing the environment into different physical places, including the large-scale format of a museum exhibition, smaller table top elicitation sessions within the space of the home, map making sessions, and the micro spaces of photographic surfaces: cyanotype photograms and sun prints made from photo paper left in the landscape for 6 months inside beer cans. They allowed me to explore local subjectivities of landscape in contrast to the limited national and global conversations of environmentalism: as lived experience of place coming into conversation through the images, but also to see how the landscape should be represented both visually in terms of subject matter, and aesthetically with regards

to the clarity, style and detail of the images. This allows for a visual exploration of an emplaced 'Anthropocene', in part directed by the inhabitants themselves.

I draw on artist-scholars who argue for a combined practice, showing the creative potential of using image-making as a research tool (Schneider & Wright 2006, 2013a, 2013b) and who highlight the 'shared ethnographic space' of art and anthropology (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2004:1). These methods were central to my research project, and they serve as more than documentation and more than visual illustration. When the techniques were not embraced by my participants, I discuss how that was also productive in showing me what *was* important in aesthetic representations of place.

I follow an approach described by Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz in their work crossing the arbitrary boundaries of art and anthropology: as experimental, as 'open ended' and a way to 'try things out even though they might seem awkward, or puzzling, or to yield nothing tangible' (Grimshaw, et al. 2013:150). Anthropology has been dismissive of experimentation, argue Schneider and Wright (2013b:11), and this has been limiting in the discipline. Rather than being seen as a 'deviation' however, we can view such approaches as operating within a 'distinctive ethnographic modality' (Sánchez-Criado & Estalella 2018:13). Multimodal anthropology, utilising images, video, sound and performance in an inventive rather descriptive form, is a way to '*generate relations*' (Dattatreyan & Marrero-Guillamón 2019: 220, emphasis in original) and is the anthropology 'yet to come' (ibid). Sánchez-Criado and Estalella¹¹ remind us, furthermore, that experimentation does

¹¹ See Sánchez-Criado and Estalella's edited volume *Experimental Collaborations: Ethnography through Fieldwork Devices* (2018) for further examples of experimental ethnography.

not necessarily need to be a novelty or 'rupture' of the ethnographic form but that there is a history of 'creative exploration' in anthropology that we can continue (2018:14). This chapter, and this project in general, is thus a further reclaiming of experimentation as a creative good following these practitioners.

Visual anthropology in light of ocularcentrism

As I discussed in the Introduction, scholars within anthropology and the social sciences have called for an appreciation of the senses and sensory methods in scholarship that go beyond the visual (Howes 2005; Pink 2015). This 'sensory turn' is a response to the ocularcentric critique of anthropology (Howes 2005), that argued against the reliance on vision and visual media (see Grimshaw 2001). In presenting a thesis that is partly photographic, it is necessary to address this critique and my response to it in terms of the way I use visuals and engage with multisensoriality.

Chris Tilley argues that there is a dominance of the visual in Western culture (2004). He cites Ingold in discussing the importance of the other senses, and especially Ingold's (2000) descriptions of sounds as more participatory than vision. Tilley argues that sounds work together in perceiving landscape and that some cultures are suspicious of the visual and favour aural accounts (2004). However, the participants with whom I worked in Arjeplog are Western, and during my fieldwork they described the delight of 'big views' and the visual aspects of landscape, as I discuss later in the chapter regarding their aesthetics of landscape and the legacy of the pictorial in romantic ideas of nature (following Löfgren 1987). Photographic exhibitions were familiar events in the local museum, and visual artists were praised

for their depictions of Arjeplog-the-place and its beautiful landscapes and wildlife. Engaging with visual media was a normal part of everyday life, and looking at photographs was a familiar pastime. Therefore it felt appropriate to use images in a productive way with participants to understand their experience of place and landscape (following Pink 2009).

Visual anthropology and the critique of ocularcentrism is discussed by Anna Grimshaw in her book 'The Ethnographer's Eye' (2001). Visual media in ethnography was condemned and rejected by both 20th century and contemporary anthropologists in what Lucien Taylor has called 'iconophobia' (in Grimshaw 2001:5) and Grimshaw links this with the wider 'crises of oculacentrism' in anthropology, which itself mirrors a wider crisis and 'anxieties' about vision as a privileged source of knowledge (2001:6). And yet, she writes, vision has been central to ethnographic texts alongside a simultaneous and paradoxical 'disappearance of explicit acknowledgement concerning the role of visual techniques and technologies, indeed vision itself, in the new fieldwork-based monograph' (2001:3). She argues that there are a number of ways to embrace the visual in anthropology, or as she describes it 'ways of seeing' (2001:7), and the problematic 'observation' at the heart of ocularcentrism is but one way¹². Vision functions both as a methodological strategy and 'as a metaphor for knowledge, for particular ways of knowing the world' (ibid). In other words, we can *use* vision as a method instead of taking it for granted in an academic monograph. Her book focusses on these two ways of thinking of vision, as both method and as the 'ways of seeing' in the discipline, and the interplays between the two.

¹² Though, as Grimshaw writes, Stoller reminds us that this critique of 'observation' as objectifying and 'detached' does not in fact apply to Malinowski's early ethnographic writing which was sensual and descriptive – after which the discipline's texts became more and more scientific (2001:6-7)

The notion of actively utilizing the visual as a method was always central to my research, where images functioned not only as an extra or a part of the text, but a method in the field as I will explore in this chapter. In the dissemination of my argument, it also became a way to show certain things throughout the text: harmonies, networks, or conflicts presented in diptychs that speak with the text.

While aware of the literature and experimentation on audiovisual methods, and work embracing sound, smell, and senses other than the visual, the fact of the matter is that I am trained in photography and have previously worked with photography and anthropology. While I experimented with sound and film in the field, I had neither the equipment nor the training for this and in fact felt more comfortable with the camera in my hand.

To make up for this, however, and to acknowledge the important place that the other senses have in anthropological enquiry (Howes 2005; Stoller 1989) and phenomenological experience of landscape perception (Tilley 2004) I have woven the other senses throughout the text itself. I paid attention to senses during fieldwork, listening and smelling and tasting: the whine of the snowmobiles, the smell of the engines, the sound of the saw cutting through the bone of the moose and the acrid smell of bone dust, the smoked moose meat filling my mouth, the way woodsmoke clung to the wool of my clothes days after drinking boiled coffee in the woods, the crunch of snow after twenty days of snowfall, the tractors rumbling through town to clear the roads, the rush of the spring meltwater, the bark of dogs running loose around the town or springing through the forest on the hunt.

I wrote all of these observations into my fieldnotes as they pertained to ways of sensing place (Pink 2015) both for me and as described by my participants. As Tilley goes on to argue, sensory and perceptual experience can only be described 'by

expressive use of language' (2004:28), and 'evocative thick description' (ibid:30). While multisensory exhibitions and film can also attempt to achieve sensory evocation, we can use the creativity of language to bring senses into the anthropological monograph without abandoning the ethnographic text. These sensory, lived experiences were central to my ethnographic writing throughout this thesis, as a way to communicate the different ways of knowing landscape and my own place in Arjeplog through the text itself.

This is also a way in which the images and text come together: photographs and text work to evoke senses during fieldwork, as the texts describe sounds, tastes, textures, feelings, and the images complement these descriptions by providing another sensory layer and a visual stimulus. Practically, this allows the work to exist with a relationship between text and image without the need for a monograph accompanied by exhibition or DVD.

As I discuss later in this chapter, the images also function on the pages as a way to bring the reader into Arjeplog along with the sensory descriptions, and a way to present the 'beauty' and pride of landscape that became so apparent, and important, during my fieldwork. My participants selected images they liked, discarded those they did not, and described their care of local landscape explicitly in relation to the splendour of their surroundings. As they recognised the visual aesthetics of landscape art, painting and photography, it was important to represent their homeplace visually throughout this thesis.

From light on negatives to prints in hand – elicitation and subjectivity



As a photographer, producing a lot of images during fieldwork was an inevitability. Inspired by the contemporary direction of visual anthropology I wanted to bring the photographs into the ethnographic process, rather than the visuals serving as simply illustrative or as a separation to my fieldwork. I wanted to experiment with ideas of subjectivity in images of landscape in terms of the subject matter itself – to ask what I should be photographing.

Art critic and theorist Nicolas Bourriard wrote of the discursive space of the exhibition as an 'arena of exchange' (Bourriard 2002:17). His work *Relational Aesthetics* argues that art creates a social environment in which ideas can be exchanged between the artist and the viewer, whereby the 'beholder is the joint creator of the work' (Bourriard 2002: 17 paraphrasing Duchamp 1954). This arena, Bourriard argues, is judged by aesthetic criteria and 'the symbolic value of the

“world” it suggests to us’ (ibid:18). Although his work focussed in part on performance space and performance as the artwork itself, his book speaks to the idea of visual anthropology as a research method in its own right: a way to use art in the ‘production of ethnographic knowledge’ (Pink 2009: 5) rather than alongside it or published after fieldwork. By allowing photographs to inhabit discursive spaces, they can provide opportunities for discussion, feedback, and subjective enquiry.

I did this on a large, formal scale at the museum (discussed below) but also in smaller iterations in the home, drawing from the more ‘classic’ elicitation tradition. Photo elicitation in fieldwork is a useful and prolific research tool, where images from different sources spark conversation of history and change. I used my own images in a range of styles to bring the ‘art’ aspect of my work into the home spaces of my participants to experiment with the styles they liked (and disliked) and see how nature and specific events should be represented visually. In this way I hoped to bring together subjectivity, aesthetical preference, memory and the ‘ideal’ into conversation across the tables.

I shot mostly using analogue film¹³ during my fieldwork as this is the equipment and style that I use in my own art practice. I used the event of the film roll coming back from the lab to show new photographs to my participants for feedback. The material journey of the image was thus: exposing the chemical negatives to light in place in Arjeplog, sending the film to be processed in London or Stockholm, waiting for the images to come back, printing the images on my office printer, and spreading out

¹³ Using 135mm and 120mm film was both an aesthetic and practical choice for me: the cameras were far lighter, especially the 35mm Nikon F80 and Pentax P50 compared to heavy digital cameras. Also, film camera batteries need changing just once a year whereas the digital batteries struggle to cope in cold temperatures. In Arjeplog, temperatures fell as low as minus 40° in the winter.

the resulting photographic prints in physical form on the table-tops of Arjeplog. Locals were curious about this anachronistic process, themselves mostly shooting on their smartphones and showing me images on screens. To look at prints felt like a familiar novelty, something they had not done for a long time but enjoyed revisiting and feeling nostalgic. For me it felt like opening up the research process. I was able to constantly show how I was viewing Arjeplog and it became a nice way to talk about place and personal histories.

I did a lot of this kind of elicitation photo-work with Marianne, one of my main participants and a friend throughout the entire fieldwork process. Marianne is a journalist, running her own local online newspaper and collecting stories and reports from the whole *kommun*. I would often stay at the house she shared with her partner Mats, their teenage son Fredrik and their four lovely dogs, Pentti, Mikko, Molli and a Chihuahua named Akki. They introduced me to many people in the *kommun*, took me fishing, taught me about Arjeplog life, how to fillet perch and how to butcher a moose. I photographed all of these events, as well as meals, nature, town, mountains – anything I thought was beautiful or interesting, or that I was told to photograph by Marianne. She would often direct me, guiding me to take a photograph of something important, inviting me to things she thought I should photograph for my thesis, or curious when I photographed something that she did not think was so interesting.

She often introduced me to other Arjeplogare as being from England and interested in Arjeplog life. This was amusing to her, and to many of my participants. They thought it very strange that a woman would come from the UK all the way to ‘little Arjeplog’ and want to understand life there. In guiding me to take photographs, Marianne was trying to show what was important in capturing ‘Arjeplog’ as

someone who was not from the region. Raymond Williams argues that it is “insiders who ‘live’ their landscape and ‘outsiders’ who entertain an objectified concept of it’ (1973, in Hirsch 1996:13). Hirsch argues that Williams’ distinctions are ‘difficult to sustain’ as it presents both a romanticised view of nature and a false dichotomy between inside and outside (ibid). In Arjeplog, however, there very much was a notion of ‘outsiders’, of people coming from somewhere else. As I showed in the prologue, this notion of being an ‘outsider’ to the Arjeplog life was an important thread throughout my fieldwork and understanding of environmental discourses seen to be coming from the outside. The challenge for me as a visual anthropologist was to try and ‘entertain’ a more subjective concept of landscape through the feedback of my participants rather than, as Williams described, ‘the very idea of landscape [implying] separation and observation’ (1973:120).

Mats and Marianne invited me out to Gelgolis for New Year, an old *stuga* that had been built for Mats’ grandparents’ wedding. A *stuga* is a small ‘summer’ cabin popular over all of Sweden but usually not in the same county as the regular home, accessed for a ‘return to nature’ away from the cities (Löfgren 1987:67). In Arjeplog this is different. Many have their *stuga* in the municipality but further away, either in the forest or on an island, so they can access it often when fishing or needing a little holiday ‘in the nature’.

We skied to Gelgolis across the snow and I took photographs all weekend, drinking up the beautiful isolation of the place as we relaxed into the habits of being out in the wilderness: no electricity or running water, chopping firewood to warm the room in the minus 30°C cold, taking buckets down to the lake for coffee water. Afterwards I returned to their main house in Revi to talk about the photographs and to find out which image articulated Gelgolis the most. All three chose a photograph

of the *järnspis*, the iron stove warmed by the little fire in the centre. For Marianne, it summarised the cosy feelings of being out there, of doing the 'old ways' of survival without the washing machines, electricity, and vacuum cleaner of the regular house.



'Yes!' cried Marianne, holding up the picture.

Yes! What a nice picture. The iron stove... I posted about it on Instagram once. That the iron stove is like a song that gets stuck in your brain, it is like... it is better than everything else. You can be warm, you can make food, you can roast bread, you can dry feet, you can do whatever you want with a *järnspis*. That for me is relaxation. In Gelgolis with the *järnspis*, or the gas lamp and outside toilet, I am free and inaccessible. Here at home I am dependent on electricity. This house doesn't work without electricity. And I am dependent on it. If someone cuts the electricity wires now, nothing would work. If the power should be gone

for a week, here in the middle of winter then we would have a problem. We can light a fire in the stove, but we cannot use the fan, we cannot spread the warmth in the house. We can't use the toilet. In Gelgolis it would not matter. If the whole of Arjeplog would be without power, we could survive longer there. One is free, one is independent of others.

That one image summed up what it meant to be in the cabin. Not the photograph of the cabin itself, or the forest that they felt alone and independent in, out in the nature, but the stove. It represented everything about the feeling of independence and relaxation. That one photograph communicated both that self-sufficiency and the cosiness that comes with it, relying on old fashioned survival techniques, natural resources, and slowness that allowed a sense of calm and wellbeing away from everyday life.

Using my own images like this sparked conversations around things I did not ask about in the moment, or things that were so 'everyday' for my participants that they would not have photographed themselves. Marianne took photographs of me that weekend or of our New Year's Eve meal, and neither Marianne nor Fredrik used the disposable cameras I had given them. It was the photograph of something so normal, taken by an outsider, that led to them to explain the importance of being off-grid and cosy when out in their familiar nature.

I repeated this process with Marianne, Mats and Fredrik throughout my time in Arjeplog and once more after I finished fieldwork. I returned in September 2018 with a book of almost all of my fieldwork photographs, arranged chronologically in an album of over 500 images in plastic wallets. This was a similar exercise to the mini-photo elicitation sessions at home, such as those described above with

Marianne, opening up my visual practice for feedback and criticism. It also allowed the family to take out the images they wanted, mostly choosing photos of local views and their own places: the cabins, the dogs, holidays we had taken together, and special places.

Looking at my close-up images of ecology, mostly flowers and wild plants from across the *kommun* arranged on one big page, Marianne paused and thought for a while.





‘We never used to see these small beautiful things,’ she said slowly. ‘We wanted big views. Landscapes. We see this kind of thing more and more now, because of Instagram and Facebook, but we never would have seen them before.’ Many photographers in Arjeplog capture big views and wildlife, and many painters use the nature as their motif. But with social media, especially the work of local photographer and journalist Maria Söderberg, close-up images of Arjeplog’s flora are becoming part of the local visual culture. This shows how digital photographic methods are developing in this region and also how visual traditions are not static, they are in constant flux.

It is necessary to discuss specifically the role of aesthetics in these processes of elicitation, both in terms of aesthetics of landscape art in Sweden but also my own strategies in this research. I will focus on subject matter and the trends visible in Arjeplog in what people wanted to see and what counted as preferable and beautiful, rather than the mediums or colour palettes specific to visual imagery here.

There is no definitive 'Arjeplog visual style' as such, and there are artists dealing with different subject areas and methods (including also tattooing and sculpture), but there is a strong presence of big views and big nature as subjects in the Arjeplog art scene. The Arjeplogare with whom I worked had a deep appreciation for local artists who painted, photographed, or sculpted the wildlife specific to their own region: lynx, moose, the forest, grouse. Nature seemed to be at the forefront of local art and visual culture. Photography has continued this tradition, and local photographs deemed 'beautiful' are those which continue this landscape tradition, focussing on wildlife and the big views of the municipality. They often look like paintings, and the subject matter overlap: photorealist paintings of wildlife by local artists mirror the photography that captures these picturesque views from the top of the mountains. In recent years drone photography has become more and more prevalent, used to capture the car testing from above but also wide landscape shots of glacial formations and the lakes. In chapter two I show some of my participant Johan's drone photography of a beloved local land-formation called Åsarna. He also photographs the car testing with his drone, and uploads images of Arjeplog from above onto Facebook to show his neighbours what their town looks like from new perspectives.

This aesthetic involving nature as subject matter also has a history within the broader aesthetics of Sweden and the north, which influences the appreciation of landscape photography, my own photography, and what counts as beautiful (as I discuss more below). Löfgren demonstrates how the emerging middle-class of Sweden became interested in big views and panoramas at the end of the 19th century, in what he calls 'new landscape aesthetics' that included sunsets, mountains, and those elements of rural life considered 'exotic' for city dwellers travelling about the country (1987:55). This follows the trend sweeping through

Europe during and after the industrial revolution in which nature became romanticised and the appreciation of it became entwined with art and landscape painting (Löfgren 1987; Williams 1973; see also Cosgrove & Daniels 1988; Hirsch 1996). Nature was romanticised both in the desire to get out to the country but also in owning visual representation of nature in landscape paintings.

The contemporary visual culture of Sweden, and especially the north, continues this trend. Tourism images in the north often center around highly edited digital images portraying lingon berries in the traditional wooden coffee cups, for example, or reindeers in profile against a snowy backdrop. People are suggested through hands picking berries, or people out walking in the mountains. Closeups are common, especially the coffee pot on the fire or knives resting next to freshly caught fish. This is an aesthetic of selling a lifestyle to tourists both within and outside of the region. It cashes in on the idea of the north as wilderness, as I discuss more in chapter two, and the romantic idea of getting away to the nature and connecting with it.

In Arjeplog, this aesthetic finds its way into the tourist information centre. In general, however, it felt more like a Norrland style than an Arjeplog one specifically.

The aesthetic in Arjeplog seemed less about the dramatic experience of nature and more the proud appreciation of the wildlife that roams its mountains and forests. As discussed above, wild animals were shown in their habitats, undisturbed. A lynx in a tree, gazing into the eyes of the viewer and immortalised in oil paints. A famous local painter, Roland Pantze, often paints reindeer out in the snow, or lynx, wolves or bears. They are in their natural place. The famous doctor and founder of the museum, Einder Wallqvist, painted both portraits but also scenes of the town covered in snow, or the mountains surrounding the town. These paintings were

favoured by the Arjeplogare, and many had such images on the walls of their homes as well as photography showing moose, birds, or local landscapes.

In a discussion of aesthetics and Alfred Gell's work on art and agency, Layton summarizes that for Gell, art should be understood as how it operates in society and how Western art is attributed to the personal inspiration of the artist (Gell 1998 in Layton 2011:211). In Arjeplog, landscape art brought familiar scenes and dramatic views into the home, reminding the occupant of the splendour of the municipality and also reinforcing the connection to landscape: people were proud of local artists who did well in representing the local nature. In this way, the attribution of art was not just to the inspiration of the artists but the inspiration provided by nature itself. This comes up later in the chapter, too, when I am expected to capture the landscape well given how 'beautiful' it is in reality.

As Firth reminds us, the distinction between manmade art and the art found in nature is slim. The forms found in nature are what he calls 'incipient art', 'converted to art by human recognition' (1992:18). Therefore, he argues, the opposition between natural and manmade beauty is false, and the only difference is a superficial one resting on the 'degrees of involvement with the relationship to the material' (ibid). Landscape, in Arjeplog, is considered almost art in itself, a readymade visual masterpiece to be viewed as well as photographed and painted. Photos were frequently uploaded to social media depicting the person in the landscape, with a caption pointing to the splendour of the municipality and the luck of the person in calling it home.

Gell further argues that art can act as a 'stand-in' for the people, 'involving the same reactions that the maker or owner's personal presence would' (1998, in Layton 2011:211). In the same way, the painting or photograph of Arjeplog perhaps acts as

a stand-in for landscape, bringing the 'pristine wilderness' of the the romantics into the home and daily life. Murphy argues that, since the 19th century, beauty and simplicity have been core components in aesthetics of Swedish design, and that there has been a 'promotion of interaction with beautiful things as a means for engendering happiness in everyday life' (2015:46) and even strengthening democracy. Furthermore, he states that 'to create environments that resonate with positive aesthetic details, is to attend to the affective well-being of people who use those objects and inhabit those spaces' (ibid). Filling one's home with beautiful art, for example, can be a way of attending to well-being in such a way.

The word 'beauty' has its own complexities within the history of aesthetics and its uses in anthropology, as discussed by Firth (1992). He discusses the ways beauty has been used in anthropological engagements with art, and decides that a key part of art is its ability to evoke a reaction 'often referred to as an aesthetic sensibility' involving a combination of 'cognitive and emotive elements' that results in pleasure (1992:18). This, he argues is beauty. Furthermore, he argues, experimental movements in art were often geared towards the abandonment of conventional aesthetics in preference for an 'inner vision' of the artist themselves (1992:19).

From the beginning, I wanted my research to engage with local aesthetics and local subjectivities rather than abandon them in the pursuit of my own interpretation. In the Introduction I discuss how an exhibition in London about 'The Anthropocene' sparked my desire to think about images differently in relationship with ethnographic research. Climate change photography can seem like disaster tourism, in which the photographer lands in a place to capture something that will shock the viewers back home. While this is not always a bad thing, if it motivates change from those with power to make a difference, people can sometimes shown as separated

from their experiences of place, and their own local aesthetics, and woven into a tragic narrative of what a collective 'we' are doing to the planet (which I problematize in chapter five following Vanolo 2016). In pursuing visual anthropology, I wanted to allow a dialogue between local aesthetics of place and my own role as a researcher taking photographs. I was of course myself influenced by the local aesthetic of Arjeplog, Sweden, and the north, and these entwined within my own practice. The images throughout the thesis are an attempt to reflect this pride of the beauty of landscape in Arjeplog, and the 'local' scale that they are so engaged with in their own environmental practice.

Grimshaw and Ravetz discuss the 'shared ethnographic space between ethnography and art' (2005:1), and by bringing my prints into the ethnographic space of the home these shared spaces collapse into each other across the tabletops of my participants. The images made from light exposure on a negative become physical, material prints to be handled and exchanged across Arjeplog tables, sharing a place with the pieces of everyday life in the heart of the home. Individual prints were pulled out of the book for Marianne's own collection, or brushed aside as uninteresting, critiqued with the eyes of someone who has lived in Arjeplog for fifty years.

It was a means to explore what John Berger (2008) called 'ways of seeing', both from myself as photographer and the perspective of viewer: to use photographs to understand how they saw and wanted me to see their home landscape as an 'outsider' from England.

I had expected to explore the experience of climate change through encounters with visual aesthetics of landscape and how landscape is represented and known in relationship to visual culture. What happened instead was the understanding of landscape aesthetics and knowing place in relationship to 'outsiders' threatening

this pride of place: people with no knowledge of Arjeplog making decisions about how they know place, which sits at odds with their appreciation for nature and the care they take for the local. I discuss this more throughout the thesis, and especially in chapter five, but it also began to come through in the bigger space of the photographic exhibition.

Photographs in Silvermuseet: the exhibition as discursive space





Following the success of the smaller photograph sessions on kitchen tables, I broadened the method out to a larger, more communal space in the town. Grimshaw and Ravetz wonder what happens when you put anthropology in different spaces, asking ‘is an art gallery conceived as an ethnographic space in its own right?’, and if it would it be recognised as anthropology (2015:10). Anthropology was a strange subject for Arjeplogare. They were baffled by my interest in things that were so obvious to them. I used this idea of different spaces while also presenting a form they recognised: a photographic exhibition. I hoped the room they inhabited as they viewed the photographs could become what Bourriard (2002) outlined as a conversational space, where I could talk about Arjeplog’s landscape, nature, and familiar places with new participants. Putting on a public event in a recognised building allowed people to come to see what I was doing and ask me directly.

It also allowed me to play with the idea of landscape as a visual genre. Although phenomenologists argue against thinking of landscape in purely visual terms, as discussed above, the term 'landscape photography' and landscapes in general is still useful when examining how place should be represented artistically (Cosgrove & Daniels 1988; Hirsch 1996). As discussed in the Introduction I use landscape to mean primarily the field of study, the place of Arjeplog incorporating the human, non-human, urban, and the category of nature. But 'landscape' also has an etymology in the visual, coming from the genre of painting as something to be viewed from a distance (Empson 2011:239; see also Hirsch 1996) or by 'disinterested analytical observation' (Tilley 2004:24). Using it as a tool was an attempt to explore ideas of subjective experience of place through how I represented (for better or worse) landscapes in my own photographs.

The Silver Museum (Silvermuseet) is a beloved museum in the middle of Arjeplog town. It displays the material culture of Arjeplog's inhabitants across three floors: how they hunted, fished, foraged, shopped, lived, and interacted with each other, and a large collection of Sami silver. The staff were kind enough to let me display my photographs in their exhibition hall, which by luck was unreserved for two weeks during the spring film festival. With the help of Marianne and a local photographer, Lennart, we printed sixty of my photographs in A5 and A4 size showing landscape and hunting, fishing, snowmobiles, and weather. Linda from the museum helped me set them up arranged in seasons¹⁴, attached by string and white tack to the red planks of the museum walls down in the exhibition room.

¹⁴ A decision based on the ease of display but also the idea that a landscape painter 'must capture all seasons' (Cosgrove 1988:165).

This space was a between-place. It was not an exhibition in a gallery, but a space already known for local research about Arjeplog-the-region due to the presence of INSARC – the research group based at the museum. People knew the form and they had seen photographs displayed in the same room before. I printed an A4 side of information briefly explaining the purpose of the exhibition and feedback forms providing a place where people could write their thoughts with anonymity, although many wanted their voices heard and known. They would come up to me in the street to say they had seen the photos and had critiques.

The exhibition was the first time I met Uffe. I had heard of him after he gave Marianne a wild boar he had shot, and she had sent me photographs of it on her kitchen table beside the Chihuahua. He was one of the first people to come into the exhibition after we opened, as Marianne had sent an SMS explaining how I had made a cake and he ought to come and look at some photographs taken by an Englishwoman. This is often how she described the exhibition to her friends and colleagues: come and see how someone from England sees Arjeplog. Uffe wandered in quietly and shook my hand, then spent a long time walking around the big room. He was grey haired and a little shy, with a soft smile and crinkly eyes and a checked fleece jacket. He lived outside the town in a place called Roverbacken, named after a man spent a night sleeping on the ground there long ago. In a typical Arjeplog fashion Uffe had worked with many different jobs during his lifetime, including mountain rescue and more recently as the person who deals with the wild animals hit by traffic, usually moose. He drifted towards us and the coffee percolator.



‘It is interesting to see how people from abroad see Arjeplog,’ he said. He pointed to a medium-format photograph showing snow-covered spruces outside Marianne’s house in Revi. ‘Like this. People come from Italy, England, France and they see the forest, like this one. It is seeing it with new eyes. We are home blind. But’, he said, ‘we would never take photographs like this, you see. We look for the strange things, the lumps on the birch trees that people use to make the wooden cups, you know?’ And he reached into his pocket and took out a smartphone, finding the camera roll and flicking through some photos to show me his ‘strange things from the forest’, including the birch lumps and then more of him and his dog in the snow.

While I saw the forest as an aesthetically pleasing repetition of planted trunks of spruce, disappearing into the distance in the snow, Uffe saw anomalies and interesting places *within* the forest. He knew the landscape from the inside, and the small things. In this way, one photograph of some spruce trees opened a door into

understanding place and his experience of the forest. As Basso gave attention to linguistics in his beautiful book *Wisdom sits in places* (1996), photography also offers ways to have conversations about landscape to see what it is people find there and what it can mean about place. In Arjeplog the mountains and lakes are vast and the population is sparse. Yet they know, and want to know, what each mountain or lake is in every photograph, and usually have an accompanying story or anecdote from that place or who they know that lives there. The local nature is not a wild backdrop but a social place, one of kinship, memory, knowledge and dwelling (following Ingold 1993, 2000).

Malin paused at the same photograph of those trees and said something quite different. She is Sami and one of the INSARC researchers at the museum, focusing on the legal history of Sami land disputes and evidence from court documents showing they have legal rights to herd reindeer (Brännström 2018). She was filling out a feedback form but when she saw me she came over with it in her hand, wanting to tell me herself that I had missed berry picking and reindeer herding but that that would come if I followed her to work one day in the future.

‘But it is so good to have the forest, not just the mountains,’ she said. ‘Many here say “*att gå till fjällen*” (to go to the mountains) - but we actually live in the forest. They are really nice pictures of the landscape. It shows well how beautiful it is here.’ This was another response to the exhibition that I heard many times during its two-week opening, like Marie’s response discussed earlier in the chapter. This pride of the local landscape emerged in the smaller elicitation sessions too, when people recognised places and paused to reflect that they live in this beautiful place and want to see it reproduced beautifully in turn.

This also allowed me to see what was not considered beautiful. For Marianne and Fredrik, it was mountains where the trees were clear-cut from the top for timber, or new planted forest in rows and rows compared to the wild forests of Gelgolis. People did not want to see the rubbish scattered outside the recycling centre, emerging after the winter snow melted in the spring. They did not want to see pictures I had from the south, when I had been visiting my partner's family farm. They wanted to see *their* home, beautifully.

This notion of beauty needs further exploration here in terms of the role of aesthetics and what beauty means in relation to the visual culture of Arjeplog and the north. Filmmaker Joris Ivens felt his monochrome images of miners in France were too beautiful and therefore distracting from the message of suffering having intended them to provide a sense of place (Schneider & Wright 2013b). This is a charge often directed towards fine art and documentary interplays in photography.

In this case, however, the message *was* that something should be understood as beautiful. I was never asked to photograph the overtly ugly: things of disrepair or embarrassment were never presented to me as a subject. That which was ugly, for Marianne and Fredrik, was the mountain Galtispouda stripped of the trees. They did not like my photographs that showed this 'bald mountain'. This is a contrast to the clarity described by the Zafimaniry, who surprised Maurice Bloch when his hopes for descriptions of love for the forest was met instead with a strong desire to cut the trees down (Bloch 1996:64-56). This presented the Zafimaniry with views of the village rather than oppressive forest shrouded by mist, and (as Bloch surmises) gives them a sense of making a mark on their land (1996:77). For Marianne and Fredrik, the bald mountain was a sign of human interference destroying the beauty of a familiar and natural view.

On the other hand, that which some may find ugly aesthetically – for example the butchering of the moose, or graphic images of fishing practices or hunting – were beautiful for the Arjeplogare. I discuss this more in chapter three, photographing the moose butchery and being told to come closer and capture the ‘beautiful streaks’ on the meat. These practices were vital to the identity of Arjeplog, and beautiful because it was the best possible food, direct from the nature.

I was never told by my participants to ‘not include’ certain images in my discussions of Arjeplog, but instead I paid attention to the ones they liked and disliked. Marianne understood that even the ‘ugly’ images were part of what makes Arjeplog, and even what makes it special and unusual compared to other places. She herself told me of the rubbish melting out of the snow, of dog poo left on the grass to be covered with the winter snowfall and revealed again in spring. There were certain things that ‘make Arjeplog’ that are not included in the images here, such as the local dialect and the common problem of dogs running loose around town and people posting in the facebook group asking whose dog is outside the supermarket. What I was interested in was one part of what makes Arjeplog-the-place: the part which came bursting through during elicitation and the exhibitions. Pride of place given the extreme landscapes and beautiful scenery was abundantly clear when people both told me why they loved Arjeplog, why they stayed, why they were so angry with outside interference, and which of the photos they liked. Nature was almost always mentioned when I asked what one needs to do in order to ‘be an Arjeplogare’. As Karin tells me in chapter three, one needs to care for the nature, not litter, and probably be part of a hunting team.

Beauty is of course a complicated word, as previously explored, enmeshed in subjectivity and value. As I have discussed throughout this chapter, understanding

the subjectivity of my participants was a key part of my visual practice. And their subjectivity was entangled in what makes something 'beautiful'. I discuss above how there is a national appreciation of the landscape as subject in visual culture, but also a specific 'northern' visual culture and even more specific Arjeplog style that draws on the history of landscape painting in Sweden and appreciates the picturesque and often romantic portrayal of nature. As Marianne explained above, they were used to 'big views' as well as local wildlife, and this has a history of landscape aesthetics in Sweden (Löfgren 1987) and in the north.

Therefore it is of little surprise that my own photographs that aligned with this aesthetic were chosen as beautiful, bringing this 'pleasure' to participants discussed by Firth (1992:18), but that also complemented this pride of landscape.

It felt odd, taping my photographs to the walls and opening up my research process for the town to critique. I felt exposed and vulnerable presenting place to those who lived there. But the exhibitions, both the small in-house sessions and the large one at the museum, were valuable opportunities for feedback and discussion with my participants. It gave them a chance to see what I was doing, what I was interested in. As discussed, it gave me insight into what was important to show, what I had missed, and what I could photograph in the future for further conversation. There was a limit to the amount of landscapes that can shown in an exhibition. It was also important, as the exhibition feedback forms communicated, to have *people* doing things that were also important to Arjeplog, and the practices that make it what it is: some visitors were grateful for the fishing and hunting that showed the connection with landscape and nature. Others missed the sense of community, which was again a source of pride, and one even wished I had included a picture of the offices to show

'normal life'. Using my own images sparked conversations that would have been missed had I only looked at existing images for understanding of local aesthetics.

Positioning myself as an outsider, or being positioned as such by my participants, created a space where people were kind yet firm with how I should see their home.

I was someone to be educated in the ways of Arjeplog, and this was made easier, I believe, by being from the UK. Had I been from Stockholm, I think I would have felt more resistance. As I will discuss in the following chapters, the divisions between the rural north and the urban south, especially the capital city, run deep in discussions of environment and landscape.

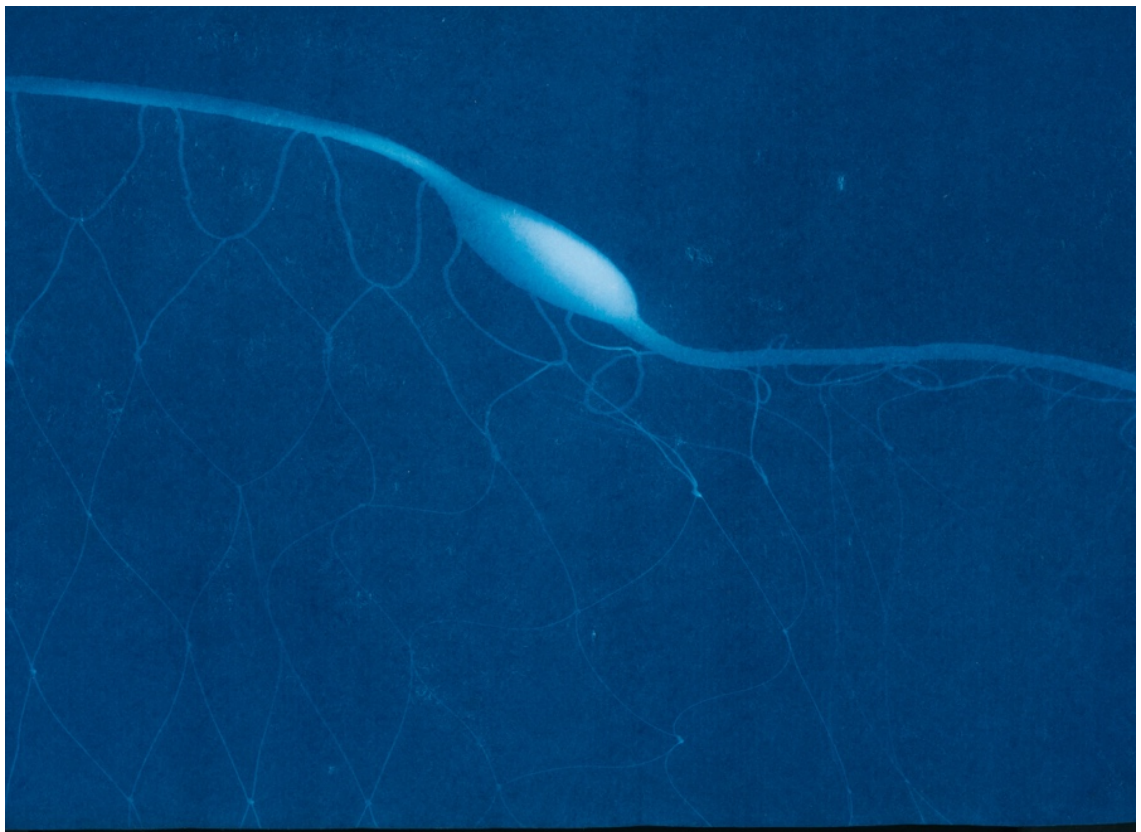
Cyanotypes

'But what is it?' said Marianne.



A compelling and creative direction of visual anthropology embraces more experimental image-making in which ethnographers embrace the shared practice of art and anthropology (Schneider & Wright 2006). Rather than focussing only on the study of existing visual culture in a place, or the art world itself, Schneider and Wright argue for experimentation and 'border crossings' to engage the two together (ibid). They cite MacDougall, who argues that such experimentation in anthropology must do more than serve as a replacement for text: visual anthropology and image making in the field must find new methodologies and objectives to the classic ethnographic written form (ibid:23).

In my fieldwork, image making was a way of creatively engaging with the landscape by bringing ecology and ecological practice into direct contact with photographic surfaces. It was a method in itself for asking questions about aesthetics, local priorities, and local understanding of the natural world. Roanna Heller writes that ‘artists learn through making, ethnographers learn through writing’ and bringing the two together forms a difficult yet productive challenge (Heller 2005:135). Inspired by this idea, I wanted to use older techniques of photography that engaged in a more hands-on way with photography’s materiality and processes. To *make* images with my participants using the ecological landscape and experiment with bringing together practices of landscape with processes of photography.



I was sitting on the cold ground of Mats and Marianne’s garage, beside a snowmobile and some kind of vast snow-moving tractor device that was looming over my experiments and making me nervous. The sliding door was open to a view over their house and plot of land sloping down to the stream below, the big dogs barking in the

cold and the chihuahua squeaking from inside. The winter snow had not yet begun to fall but the sky was an ominous October grey, the worst possible weather for making sun-prints.

I had been experimenting with cyanotypes in my art practice before I realised they were full of creative potential in anthropological practice (Bartlett 2018). Making cyanotype photographs involves coating a surface with a mixture of potassium ferricyanide and ferric ammonium citrate, turning the object into a blue photosensitive surface. When exposed to the sun this surface lightens as it reacts to the ultraviolet light. The iron III particles become iron II particles which react with the ferricyanide. Washing the print in water then removes the iron III particles leaving only the Prussian blue colour behind. As the object or image dries, the blue tone darkens. If an object is placed on the paper, this protects it from the light and keeps that part of the paper white while the rest is exposed. Thus, a photogram can be produced by placing an object or ecological matter onto the paper and leaving its form imprinted in an abstract trace, as with the above fishing net.

I had been inspired by Batchen's work with photograms as traces (Batchen 2016) and initially in this research I imagined such practice could be useful in showing affective responses to landscape in the context of climate change, following the prevailing tone of climate change research as discussed in the Introduction. I planned to use it as an exploration of memory, change, melting ice, perhaps a layered piece including storytelling within the image: a collaborative way to explore local ecology and any potential changes in Arjeplog's seasons. As Dattatreyan and Marrero-Guillamón discuss, multimodal and inventive approaches to ethnography can foster collaborations that disrupt the researcher-interlocutor relationship and make for a more radical knowledge production (2019).

So I was there, on the ground, spreading out the chemically coated cyanotype paper on the garage floor and laying a fishing net over the top. I hoped that people might want to get involved in making them given the simplicity of the ready-made kits. Mats wandered past the garage, saw me, and paused for a while. He rearranged his cap a little, examining the situation, looking from me to the paper, and back.

'Well Flora,' he said at last in his thick Arjeplog dialect, 'you do carry on with some mysterious things'. He laughed a short laugh and turned back to the house, calling for the dogs to follow. I felt a little dejected.

Mats' reaction was a fairly standard one with regards to these sun prints. I grew to realise that my participants did not understand the point of the cyanotypes and instead wanted the detail from the original objects. It was far more interesting to hold an actual fishing net in the exhibition than to see this blue and white iteration of something real and vital to the history of the community. One visual project, discussed in much more detail in chapter five, demonstrated this yet further. It involved giving participants a laminated map of Arjeplog and asking them to annotate it with a plastic overlay, creating lines of experience across the *kommun* and showing travel and emplaced experience in a visual form. I turned these into cyanotypes to show the vast lines of travel out from the town in an abstract way and showed these to some of my participants - a blueprint of their tracks.



As with the nets, the cyanotypes seemed to be of far less interest because people wanted to see the details of their home landscape. As with the analogue images, people wanted to know *where* things happen: *where* is that mountain, *who* is that, *what exactly* is the animal they are butchering. The cyanotypes removed these details and took away the main point of interest – the specific localness of Arjeplog, its nature, the thousands of lakes marked on the map.

While this at first felt like somewhat of a failure, as I had been hoping for a way to create something well-received among my participants, I realised that such an approach would defeat the point of the method and the ‘speculative’ approach embraced by Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz (2013:150). I tried this as a research process to produce ethnographic knowledge (Pink 2009). In this respect, the cyanotypes and their responses succeeded in showing me the expectation of landscape aesthetics, and the pride in certain landscape practices deserving a style which showed off the nature. Arjeplogare were used to high quality artistic images

of landscape from beloved local photographers, such as Johan's in chapter two, and subverting this expectation using simplified forms showed what was required of landscape photography and how one should communicate visually. As Sofie¹⁵ said to me once (herself a local photographer and journalist), 'it is not hard to take beautiful pictures of Arjeplog', it is so beautiful that all pictures turn out well.

It may not be hard, but it is expected. As a visitor and photographer, I was expected to represent Arjeplog to these same aesthetic standards. In a review of anthropology's engagements with aesthetics, Flores asks the pertinent question 'what is aesthetic? For whom? Under what conditions?' (1985:32). This raises an important point about experimentations with art and our intended audience. For Lippard it was a 'dilemma' in which anthropological art is 'not made for those about whom the art is made' (Lippard 2013:25). Trying to engage with this 'dilemma', the first audience of my research was the subjects themselves, the people of Arjeplog (following Jean Rouch 2003:43 in Pink 2007). Even when not present in the photographs, the images were a response to their objects, life histories and experiences of landscape. Flores's questions concern both local aesthetic judgements and 'the aesthetic *art*' (my emphasis), referring to the process by which something becomes 'art' in its visual form (1985:32). In the case of the cyanotypes, the first audience of the Arjeplogare did not judge them to be of their aesthetic. After the fact, however – after the fieldwork – can the images be used in someone else's aesthetic? I am using them in my fieldwork, in conferences, and they are admired by students of art for their abstraction. Thus, they were somewhat rejected in Arjeplog but have been embraced elsewhere and have been useful in my understanding of nature through their very *unacceptance* in the field.

¹⁵ Sofie often used a drone to capture Arjeplog from above, and her photographs are very popular and can be seen on the @visitarjeplog Instagram page.

These different expectations of beauty, therefore, can be embraced as part of a methodology in fieldwork, allowing explorations of our own aesthetic standards as ethnographers and those of our participants (and the productive tensions between them).

The beer can cameras



The third and final method I want to discuss is the beer can camera. In the late autumn I came across a youtube video by Justin Quinnell showing the process of building pin hole cameras from cans (Quinnell 2012). Using a few simple items, he made cameras that could be left outside for six months to record one landscape

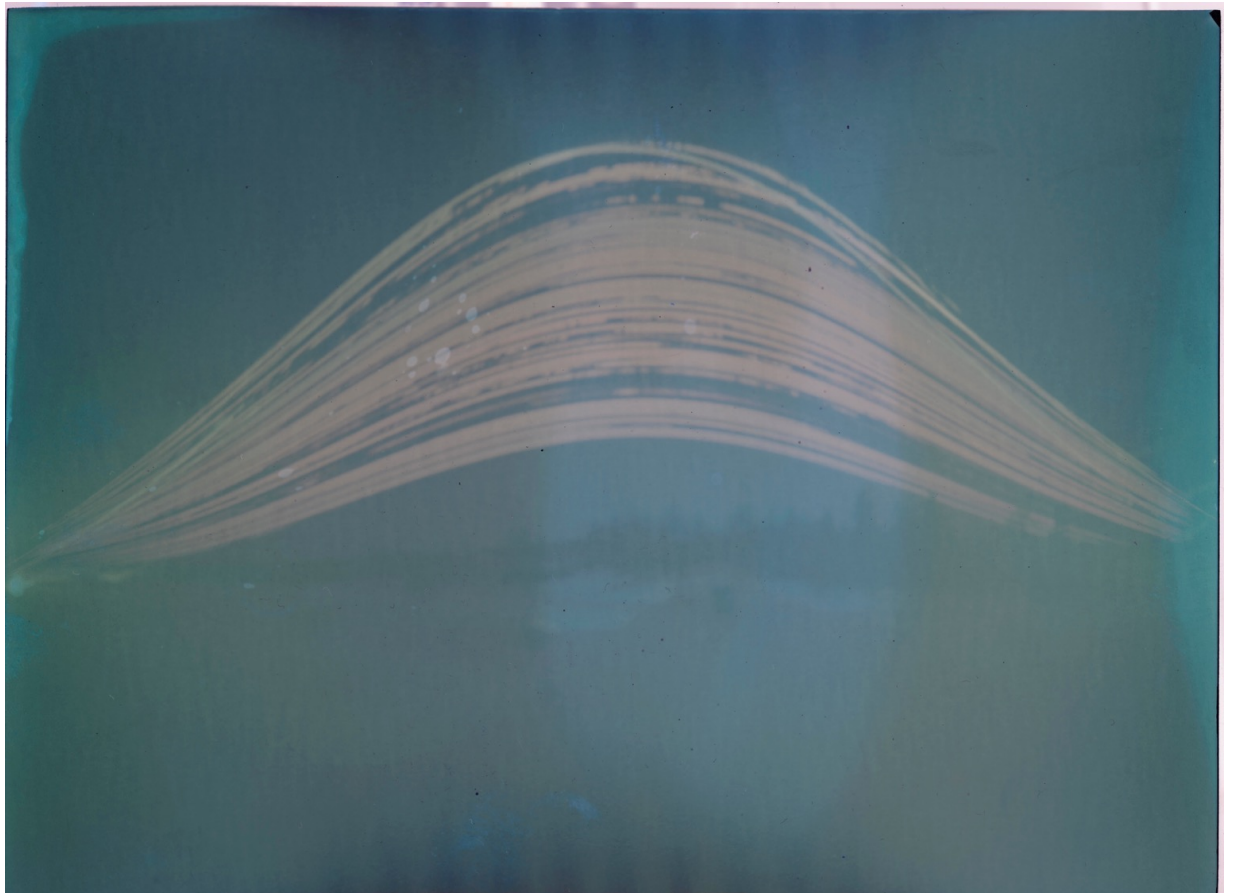
under the rising path of the sun. I found this idea compelling as a fieldwork tool, using local beer cans as the cameras. It would also be a chance to do something together with my participants having failed to engage them in the cyanotype process.

Because this particular method involved drinking a large number of beverages it was much easier to sell, and people were decidedly curious that this approach could be part of PhD research. It meant working hard drinking beer in the sauna, to the delight of Marianne when she introduced my studies to others. It meant saving the cans and cutting off the tops in the same garage where Mats had stood in perplexity, watching me making the cyanotypes. This time he was busy sawing off the metal rings and curiously watching as we inserted photosensitive paper and silver-taped the tops.

These cans would wait out in the weather for six months, the tiny pinhole aperture recording the path of the sun from its lowest winter point to its highest at midsummer. Arjeplog is just below the arctic circle, with a few hours of light in the winter and midnight sun in June. This was a way to capture that change, that rhythm, and give my participants a new way to see their homescape. We set them up outside Mats and Marianne's place, taped to the pine trees, and we took one to the roof at our friend Uffe's where it sat proudly attached to the TV aerial.



We drank the beer together, we made the cameras together, we climbed the roofs together in the snow. We waited together for months, watching the cans sit stoically in the minus 40°C cold as if waiting for berries to ripen¹⁶.

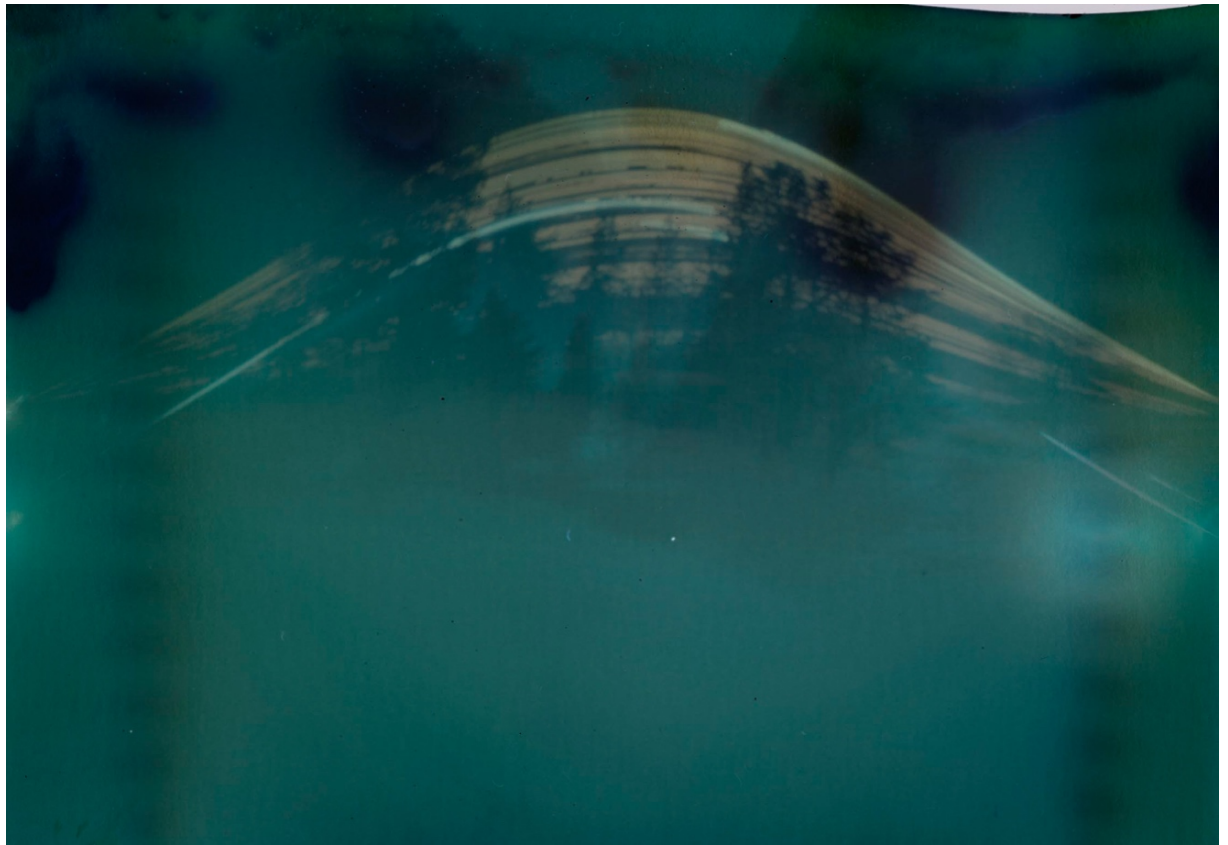


¹⁶ A comment made by Lotten Gustafsson-Reinius when I presented this at Stockholm University 2019.

The results show the sun tracks, January to June. It is a play on the camera as Foucauldian surveillance. As we set up the cameras on the aerial it occurred to me that we were essentially installing a version of CCTV camera, a device that would continuously capture a scene over six months and record it onto a physical object. A 'real' CCTV camera installed during fieldwork would have uncomfortable connotations in light of visual anthropology's history as 'embedded in the power relations of imperialism' (Pink 2009: 6) and be a severe invasion of privacy. Foucault wrote of Bentham's panopticon design as a form of governmental, institutional discipline, characterised by an 'unequal gaze' as observation was always possible by those in power (Foucault 1995). A CCTV camera installed during fieldwork would embody this 'unequal gaze' if it observed my participants' lives all the time, the camera functioning in a more violent way as Susan Sontag describes it can: as exploitative, invasive, and a 'looting' (Sontag 1979: 64).

This beer can CCTV camera, however, does not record human activity. Unless the subject stood in the same spot every day they would never be seen. This camera is a much slower interpretation that captures not people but landscape, space changing in rhythms and light as the snow melts and the stars move. You can make out the snow line, the enduring winter edge mostly in shade by the trees while the rest melted into summer, and even see stars dotting the sky.

Uffe thought the image above, from his aerial, was very cool. I had scanned the purple colour of the exposed photo paper and inverted the colours, making the scene more alike to sky and sunlight but also with a hint of the northern lights colour scheme, though no one mentioned that.

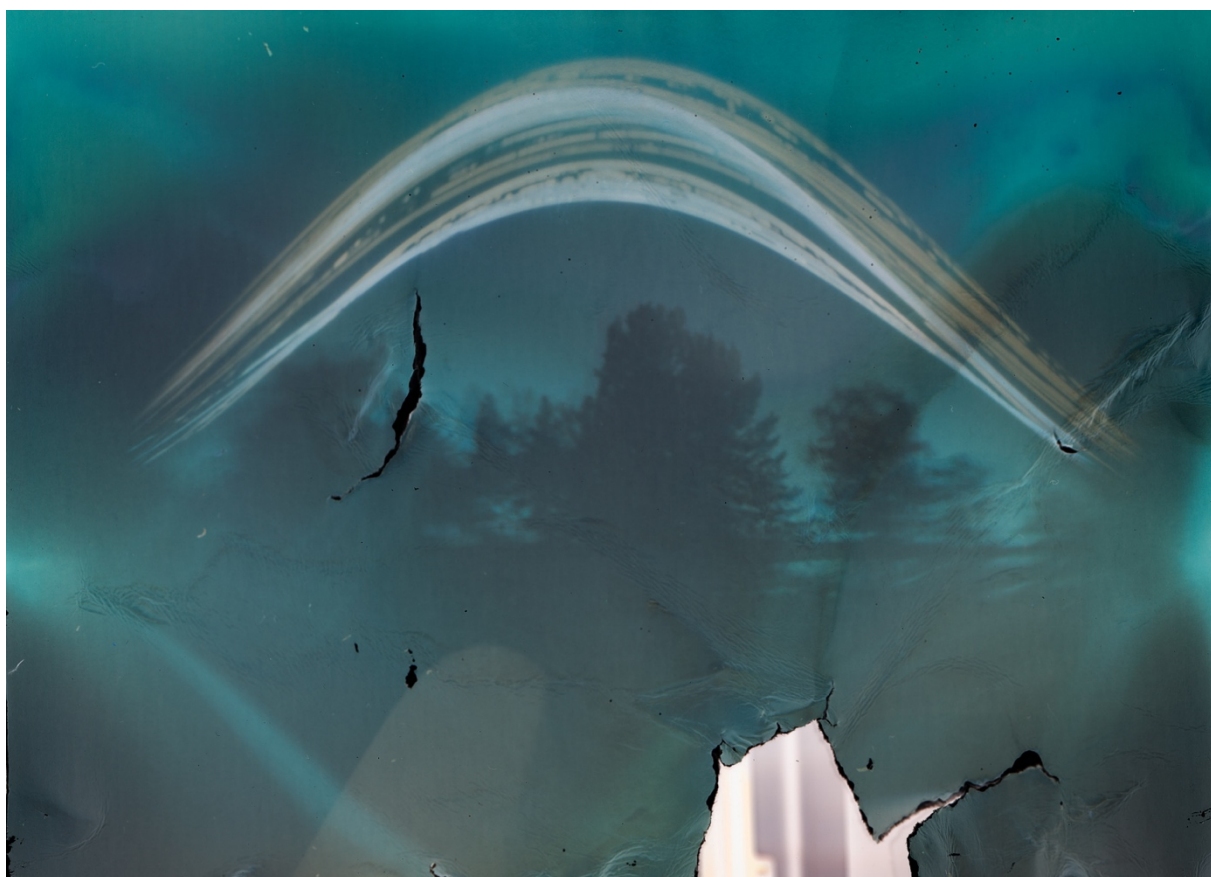


Unlike the cyanotypes, this method succeeded in both engaging my participants with the process itself and with the resulting images. Everyone was curious about the beer cans and how it would work: how to position the cans to get the 'best view', how they should be put up around the houses, facing the forest, or even high up on the signal mast on the mountain Galtispouda with views over the town (a suggestion I regretfully failed to pursue for health and safety reasons).

They wanted it to show home, a new way to see familiar views. It was also a way to talk about rhythms of nature – how the sun returns in spring winter and days become long, people can go back to being outdoors and fishing on the lakes. It connected with the way my participants talked of climate, as I will discuss in depth in chapter four: the huge natural fluctuations and the idea of nature as an endless cycle. Many explained climate change as the earth's crests and troughs, moving their arms through the air in a wave. When placed together these sun prints mirror this

idea of fluctuating deep time on the 24-hour scale and create a way to show this rhythm visually.

Marianne, Mats and their son Fredrik liked the results, especially the ones which included clearly visible trees in the foreground. They would make good prints for the wall, they said, with the detail from the spruce. The forest is hugely important in the history of Arjeplog, and the continuing sense of place today. It is a way to be out in the nature and, for Marianne, to find wellbeing and be happy. Trees are what makes mountains beautiful, she said once, and they have provided income and industry for forest owners of the past. 'It is shame about the blobs though', they said, which in some way ruined the expectation of a perfect image. This, again, showed the importance of detail and clarity in capturing landscape. While I as an artist loved the inconsistencies of a physical print, materially affected by the very environment it portrays, to them it was an error in the process, and a shame. Their 'way of seeing' (Berger 2008) visual representations of landscape involved faultless photographic images, a legacy of the multitude of landscape photographers in the region and the beautiful images populating the local visual culture.



Photographic methods in conversation with participant observation and text

For visual anthropologist Craig Campbell, on his work *Agit-kino Iteration no2*, there is no separation of his writing and his artistic practice. They are, he argues, ‘movements that cannot be disentangled, for their points of departure are bound to the research; they emerge from the same inaugural position’ (Campbell 2013:25). Likewise, I cannot imagine my research without these images, and neither can I imagine the images standing alone without the research behind them. The two spoke to each other in the field, with my place constantly understood as a researcher-photographer from my participants.

These methods were a central part of my research project, but they did not exist in isolation. The way they helped me understand my participants' relationships to nature, landscape and climate change existed in dialogue with other anthropological methods. Photo elicitation happened with recorded interviews, and photography took place during participant observation. I could not have done my research without those other methods. While it is tempting to be pulled towards an all-or-nothing approach to visual anthropology – thinking if it is possible to make a purely photographic 'thesis' or photo essay – I feel that would betray the hours of time my participants gave to me and the arguments they made for climate change, responsibility, hydropower, injustice, and urban misunderstanding. Perhaps it would have been possible to capture those things in a visual form, and I have no doubt that others would have succeeded in this, but it was not something I was able to comprehend at the time. I found that it was difficult to produce creatively in the field and I struggled to give my brain the space to think about showing complex relationships with the state and with the environment that I was in the midst of trying to understand, while learning the language and navigating complicated dynamics between locals and environmental discourses. However, image production was a central tool in beginning to understand these complicated entanglements and how people engaged with nature and the non-human. In this way it served as the process of the research rather than a finished product in the dissemination of the work, and therefore perhaps goes some way into countering the idea of the thesis as a clean 'finished text'. The images were in no way finished as they were always entangled in ongoing and incomplete processes of understanding.

To me, this thesis needed to be written and shown visually. As well as a way to understand during my fieldwork, they also provide a way to *show* afterwards, both in the thesis and in other dissemination of the research. Images hold different spaces and functions throughout this ‘text’ or multimedia object. Some do illustrate, but I hope others can give a sense of place, and of the vastness and beauty of Arjeplog which is central to the relationship to local nature versus global and national discourses. I have used diptychs in places to show two concepts existing either in tension or in harmony, or to show frictions in different ways of seeing. Sometimes the images provide a different perspective than is offered in the text.

I have also used photographs from participants and archival imagery, and these are captioned with credits where necessary. In general, I refrain from captions, instead allowing the text to provide the context for the image-in-place. Any uncredited image is therefore my own.



PHOTOGRAPH © MARIANNE HOFMAN

Along with taking my own photographs, I also gathered images from my participants in Arjeplog and was shown a thousand more in photograph albums, smartphone screens, computer screens, framed wall prints and screensavers. Smartphones were brought out of pockets and camera rolls were opened and searched through for photographs they remembered taking - fingers gliding across glass, the warmth sending signals into the depths of the phone as if the hand was touching the photographs themselves. Pixels arranged in the order of family parties, first school days, pictures of children on their first snowmobile (as in the above image from Marianne), photographs from the latest moose hunt, the hunter documenting the size of the kill, the beauty of the forest that day, or at the *jaktstuga* (hunting cabin) afterwards, sitting around the fire drinking coffee. Throughout the thesis, photographs generously given by participants and friends appear alongside my own images and are credited as such. The region also has an enviable history of local landscape photographers and photojournalists including Johan Fjellström whose images are featured with kind permission in chapter two.

There was a wealth of material in the local archives at Silvermuseet, including old press photographs from the 20th century as well as personal donations. Below are two monochrome press images from the 1960s, reproduced with kind permission from the museum and the photographer. The visual styles of the press photographs, especially Kurt Killberg, also influenced my own work as I too shot entirely with analogue film, so I wanted to put the images here as a kind of visual credit.



© KURT KILLBERG COURTESY OF SILVERMUSEET

These visual methods were an attempt to bring together my own artistic work with the expectations of my participants and bring together Berger's two 'ways of seeing' – both my own and that of the perceivers of the images (Berger 2008). While this approach brought out both tensions and harmonies in the exhibition space, as I have shown, it was also a very difficult process. Art is often (and was for me) about personal explorations of the world (Lippard 2010). Opening up visual works complicates this position and can be frightening in its vulnerability. As Heller has argued, however, this is a 'productive' challenge (2005:141).

And while being challenging, it was also a way to have fun in the field. Anthropology can sound serious and vague to those who are not within its realms and institutions. Opening up the process and giving physical form to questions of landscape provided a lovely way to engage with my participants in the creative process. Ironically, such experiments can be judged within anthropology in terms of their legitimacy and the work 'condemned for its artfulness' (Grimshaw, Owen and Ravetz 2010:149). In this case, however, techniques borrow from or inspired by art made the research *more* legitimate to my participants. They saw what I was doing, and they understood the things in which I was interested.

From field to page

‘The work of every artist,’ Bourriard wrote, ‘is a bundle of relations with the world, giving rise to other relations’ (2002:22). This was the theoretical framework within art theory which I embraced in my anthropological practice, turning my personal bundle of relations with my past practice and my experience of Arjeplog into a collaboratively curatorial space in which my participants could critique and organise the images, and ‘give rise to other relations’ (ibid). This, across all the different forms of imagery I used, was the goal: to connect with my participants and friends in the field through visual media. When they liked the images it provoked conversations of pride and belonging. When they did not it gave rise to comments on aesthetics and subjectivity of landscape.

The environment is a sensitive subject in Arjeplog as I show throughout this thesis. It became clear that there were things I should show: traditional local practices, the beautiful nature, and the self-sufficiency of the rural north. Directing my practice was a chance for my participants to have a say in the way I represented their lifestyle. It was an exploration of their subjectivity of landscape and the ideal portrayal of home. Methodologically, therefore, it was itself a source of knowledge production. It was also a way to visually engage with environmental accounts, disrupting the prevailing Anthropocene responses of threatened or destroyed landscapes. Throughout this thesis it contributes as visual ethnography: giving a sense of place, showing the beauty of Arjeplog as a homeplace, and following the local iteration of environmentalism and care for nature, but also presenting the frictions that cut across different scales within environmental discourse, as I show in the next chapter in an examination of hydropower.

2. Hydropower and the North as Resource Landscape



'ARJEPLOG INNAN REGLERING' – ARJEPLOG BEFORE WATER REGULATION.

PHOTO © BÖRJE GRANSTRÖM COURTESY OF THOMAS GRANSTRÖM

Photography was a central tool in exploring hydropower's physical and emotional presence in the north, using my own images, archival images such as the above, and photographs taken by Johan, a photographer born and raised in Arjeplog. In this chapter I explore the emplaced injustices surrounding natural resources in the

region, introducing the turbulent relationship between the state and the rural north which threads throughout this thesis. I focus on the lived experience of hydropower among my participants Anna-Lena, Marianne and Johan: the legacy of dams built in Norrland throughout the 1900s and the day-to-day impact the water regulation has on landscape and place in Arjeplog. I argue that resistance to hydropower constitutes a local form of environmentalism (following Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997) and resistance to the state (following Scott 1985, 2005) while the nation state simultaneously uses hydropower in their modernising move towards renewable energy¹⁷. Friction is revealed at the intersection of these local and national scales of environmental concern, and this friction will reappear in later chapters in discussions of climate change, responsibility, and sustainable hunting practices. In the second half of the chapter I contextualise this relationship with the state in terms of historical resource extraction. The north has been described as a gold-mine, a colony, and an inexhaustible source of natural resources for the Swedish state. This history is a crucial element in contemporary attitudes towards the state and urban south as out-of-touch outsiders interfering with the nature of the north.

Friction in the water

At 10am one July morning I awoke to a missed call from Anna-Lena, and a series of messages telling me to wake up and get dressed. She was in her late forties when we met, born in Arjeplog and returning to her roots after a successful career in the south. She runs the local flower shop where her partner Dan also sells guns and ammunition, cheerfully (and unofficially) named 'Guns and Roses'. We had all been

¹⁷ See also Abbink 2012; Hirsch 2010; Lord 2016; Roquetti et al 2017 for similar conflicts elsewhere, and Little 1999 for other examples of 'everyday resistances' to hydropower projects in Brazil and India.

out the night before with Marianne, first at the big fishing competition at the harbour – watching the prize trout be weighed and announced by Ingo's booming tenor over the loudspeaker – then the following after-party in the big tent at the water's edge.

They were heading to Anna-Lena's little island *stuga* (cabin) for a couple of hours to water the flowers and wanted me to come. The weather was glorious, the sky a brilliant blue and not a cloud to be seen. Marianne said to be ready in an hour with a thermos of coffee.

They arrived two hours later and we drove to the supermarket to buy supplies, then on to Nåtti – a strand of beach lined with cabins and a small jetty from which we could take the boat out to Anna-Lena's 'little paradise'. I had been there before, in the winter, roaring across lake Kakel on the back of her snowmobile with the dogs leaping across the ice in pursuit. They lived on the island periodically in both winter and summer, travelling to work by boat in the summer months and sometimes living there 'full time' when they hired out their main house to the car testers in the winter. Back then, in November, we had pulled up to land and parked the snowmobile on the shoreline, walking up the rocky incline to the raised microclimate where she grew flowers and vegetables during the summer. It had been hard to imagine that day, as thick snow covered the rocks in white bumps along the water's edge. She had told me not to walk too close to those stones as the ice was less stable.







Those rocks posed a problem in July, too, when we returned by boat. The water around the island was low and gleaming, and Anna-Lena slowed the motor as we pulled behind the land in a wide arc. The rocks were visible under the ripples, closer and closer to the surface as we approached, moving through the landscape rather than across it in a constant moving and sensing of place through the hull (Ingold 2000). Anna-Lena eyed the water with concern.

She cursed the water regulations under her breath, '*jävlar reglering*' - 'fucking regulation'.

Water regulation – *vattenreglering* – is the term used for the changing water levels in the operation of the hydroelectric dams: the rush of spring meltwater contained for later release during the long, dark months of winter to provide energy (Arheimder & Lindström 2014) and disrupting the natural levels of the water flow. Hydropower came to Norrland in the mid to late 1900s as the company Vattenfall

bought up rights to northern rivers. This was not without local dissent, yet even despite frequent losses over river rights disputes Vattenfall continued with major expansion after the Second World War. In the 1930s, the company bought rivers across the whole of Sweden, including the river Skellefte älv that feeds the lakes of Arjeplog. By the 1960s, Vattenfall had built fifteen dams in Norrland. However, ecological impacts of the dams were identified as early as the 1950s and the dams were not as effective as initially believed (Jakobsson 2002). By the 1970s, interest in nuclear power began to take hold as well as local environmental movements pushing back against the expansion of hydropower, influencing politicians to protect the remaining unregulated waterways. A number of rivers thus became protected, and focus shifted to increasing efficiency of the existing rivers rather than building more dams. Construction on the large rivers was stopped in 1993 and existing dams were made more efficient but maintained operational (Arheimer and Lindström 2014; Sörlin 1988).



In Arjeplog, the major lakes are fed from the river Skellefteälv, running across the North from west to east: from its mountain source Ikesjaure to Skellefteå at the Gulf of Bothnia on the east coast. The dams were built along this river in the 1960s and turned the major lakes of Arjeplog into water reservoirs that could be regulated, the height of the water controlled by the operators far away from town in order to control the flow and hold back the spring floods. The energy from the processes of blocking and releasing the water is harnessed, processed, and sent to the south through power lines (much larger than in the below image). This connects Arjeplog physically with the southern counties, strung together as the water's power speeds its way from one end of the country to the other and powers homes across the nation.



While the energy pulses its way south, the north feels the effects of the constantly changing water. The rising and falling tides strip the banks of the islands and

landmasses, pulling the land into the lakes and leaving shorelines rocky and exposed.

It is difficult to get to Anna-Lena's island now, with the rocks. The water used to be two metres higher, and now it alternates between the low rocky level and back up, one and a half metres higher again, with no warning. On that July day she drove slowly, carefully, towards the beach. Two handsome and abandoned jetties stood on the shore, both metres away from the waterline as if waiting for the tide. She had built them herself, with concrete, when the water was higher. A simple flat wooden pallet stood where the water met the stone. This was our jetty now.

I jumped out and pulled the bow of the boat, trying to get it onto the wood of the pallet and off the stones as my shoes filled with the cool lake water. Even with the pallet, the boat scratched over the stones in a rumble of low groans and grating rasps that came into the body with a rough harsh poignancy (following Ingold 2000). Anna-Lena was worried about that sound, she said so as her face furrowed into a frown: she did not want a hole in the boat. This is a constant problem for *stuga* owners in Arjeplog. While the rest of the country has regulations about not building close to the shore, this rule is almost unthinkable in Arjeplog¹⁸. Due to the vast amounts of shoreline and narrow land strips it is not possible to adhere to the rules of building one hundred meters inland. Many cabins are placed near to the beach and many need to be accessed by boat rather than road. This changing of the water level, without warning, presents daily material frictions between the boats' surfaces and the rocky floors and banks of the lowered lakes, disrupting the everyday bodily experiences of being in the landscape (Ingold 2000). That which should be

¹⁸ This law is in the process of being contested by local politicians, given the need for housing and the sheer amount of occupied land that is very close to multiple shorelines.

underwater is now exposed, and jetties that once sat just atop the water level now lie stranded, either far from the shore or meters above the water level.

At Vuonatjviken, a restaurant and camping place along the King's Trail¹⁹, the owners' boats have been suddenly submerged by the rising water, or cast onto the rocks when they lower the level suddenly and the boats are destroyed against the stones. That place is only accessible by boat over lake Reibnes, and when the boats are destroyed the occupants are stranded. And boats are expensive.



We sat in the sun after getting the boat in a steady position on land, eating our salads and watching the dog Nikki barking at the mainland from her spot on the beach. Anna-Lena cried out with delight at the success of her asparagus plants, tucked in their little garden microclimate in the glade of the pines.

The *stuga* was filled with everyday things, Anna-Lena's and Dan's, ready for their arrival whenever they decided to come after work or for a weekend. They could live

¹⁹ A popular hiking trail through the north of Sweden, and through Arjeplog.

here without bringing loads of stuff in the boat, just some food and the dogs. They came here often for fishing trips, dinners, to take care of the garden, or if, like today, the weather called out to them to get outside and enjoy the sunshine. After lunch, Marianne suggested taking the boat out to Plass'n (Arjeplog town), taking the scenic route so we could do some fishing on the way. We took some rods to the boat and rounded up the dogs. We had to wiggle the boat off the stones with our combined body weight, Anna-Lena standing at the stern with a long stick to try and prize the boat away from the ground. We were stuck on a rock, Marianne and I, and had to manoeuvre the boat off without damaging its base or pushing it too far too fast and being stranded behind on the shore.

We heaved with all our weight, our feet in the water and our bodies pushed to the sides of the bow.

'Men JÄVLA reglering!' - 'FUCKING regulation!' cried Anna-Lena in fury as she prodded the sand with the stick.

*



The impacts are visible in the landscape when viewed from the boat. Suddenly the metre of rocks is clearly seen where it should be a clean sweep of water up to the grass. The two images above show the shorelines around Nätti island, the first

leaving the 'mainland' where the boat was kept and the second with Nåtti in the background as we left the *stuga*. In both images, the gold of the beach lights up in a strip where there once was water. The houses atop the bank were built to be at the water's edge, allowing an easy journey off the boat and an easy jump into the water from the sauna. Anna-Lena showed me her sauna on the island, build to be a simple hop away from the water. They would sit looking out over the lake until the temperature was almost too hot to bear. Then they would run out of the heat directly into lake Kakel. These daily practices, ways of knowing place, being in the landscape and in the nature are interrupted by the water regulation. Getting to the *stuga* is now a challenge with expensive risks. Getting from the sauna to the lake involves clambering over rocks instead of a clean jump into the water.

This everyday experience of hydropower reveals the interruption in routine and 'being out in the nature', as my participants would often describe day trips and being out on the boat. The landscape becomes unreliable, no longer dependable or knowable in the same way as if they could just drive up to their cabins or build a sauna knowing it would always be beside the water. Anna-Lena feels the impacts physically, through the grinding stone against the structure of the boat. Our clambering out into the water was also a way of physically engaging with this environmental impact.

Ingold has described the 'poetics of dwelling' (2000:26) to refer to the sensing, experiencing body in the world, drawing on phenomenological thought about the human being in the landscape. He uses Bateson's exploration of the cane, in which Bateson asks where does the feeling body end if one feels one's way with a cane and not with vision (in Ingold 2000:18). Anna-Lena saw the rocks as we approached, but the shuddering groan of them against the boat when we tried to leave the island was

the point at which she knew it was a real problem and her anger intensified. In Arjeplog this concept of *being* in the landscape – a feeling, experiencing person engaging with things and navigating their home place – is fractured by the changing water levels and the resulting impacts. The engagement with the changed place is an anomaly, it is not a natural state of Arjeplog's water. It becomes a new landscape every time the water level changes, or the rocks become more exposed. Writing of landscape phenomenology and the habitual knowledge of things, Tilley argued that it is 'only in a new landscape or unfamiliar place that one has to consciously think about relationships and learn where things are' (2004:11). Arjeplog becomes more unfamiliar and unnavigable with each changing of the reservoir, and this creates a break in the habitual experience of a landscape formerly known.

Landscape phenomenology is therefore a useful frame for understanding the experience of changed places. At its heart it confronts the place of the human within the world, experiencing it bodily through the senses and not just through the mind. When changes do occur in the landscape, however, as Tilley writes, the mind is engaged as well as the experiencing-body. There is both a physical friction *and* an emotional response to the landscape altered by hydropower: these changes are affective – they can make Anna-Lena angry when she visits her own cabin and make people deeply sad when they see changes to their home landscape. This affectivity was made even more apparent when we continued on the boat to Åsarna, a beloved local feature of the landscape affected by water regulation, and I saw the emotional response from Anna-Lena, Marianne, and later from Johan.

Åsarna: local environmentalism versus national 'green' energy

When we left Anna-Lena's island, after much pushing, prodding and swearing, we drove around in the boat trying to catch some fish and heading generally in the direction of Plass'n with no great hurry. As we pulled nearer to the shorelines, we saw groups of locals on sun loungers spread out over the beaches, sunbathing or stepping into the cool water. We looked on, envious of fresh water against warm skin in the 30°C heat.

'I am a little tempted to swim, you know,' said Anna-Lena, steering the boat in the direction of Åsarna.



Åsarna – 'the sand ridges' – is a beloved local landscape of Arjeplog. Stretching out through the network of lakes, in the above photograph, it is a thin strip of land created from the ice age and the slow, steady movements of glaciers. As the huge ice masses expanded and retreated, grinding their way through the rocky surfaces of

the north, they picked up stones and rocks and carried them as they travelled. These rocks fell around the glaciers creating land formations in strips across the Swedish lakes, rocky islands that follow the lines of the former ice mountains. Seeds blew into these rocky forms, nestling into the crevasses and the sand left behind. Trees sprouted, sandy soil creeping around the roots and into rock. Today Åsarna is covered with old towering pines and a thick carpet of bilberry bushes and pine needles. Paths have formed through the repeated steps of journeys and meanderings, as far as the feet can go depending on the water level. Anthills dot the trails, small interruptions filled with busy activity, the ants carrying the pine needles and building up huge heaps of dusty brown. Moose shuffle gently through the bushes when no people can be heard, pulling at the undergrowth and sometimes taking their last breath amongst the green. We found a moose carcass there, once, lying across the path. It looked asleep, like it had just settled for a nap.



This is not just a pristine place, a non-human place. The feet that form the paths also stop here. Picnic tables dot the strip. Small cabins built by local associations are maintained by the good nature of visitors who know from the polite signs to keep it tidy. Firepits and prepared firewood wait patiently for visitors with food and matches, *kokkaffe* and *korv* for grilling (boiled coffee and sausages). Locals sometimes run around the formation, families come for a picnic and a swim, or the local ecologist from the museum emerges out from the trees. There is a famous local archaeology site nestled between the trees and the water – a gravesite of a female

hunter from long ago. It is a place to be 'in the nature', for locals to get outside and into the forest just three kilometers from the town. Although forest surrounds Plass'n it is considered either wild forest or planted for timber, whereas this place is specifically prepared for them to be here. It is not like spontaneously wandering into the mountains, which would require maps and planning and a risk of getting stuck. Like the prepared trails at Vaukaleden to the south, it is an accepted place to be in nature: it is both wild and not wild, the grilling places surrounded by the tall pines and moss.

From the edges of Åsarna, however, it is as if the pine roots are reaching out to clasp the air as the sand falls in steep inclines down to the water. This is even more apparent from the boat, as one sees the effect stretching all the way across the edges of this particular landmass.

'I feel sad for the trees, climbing out of the sand', I said on the boat to Marianne and Anna-Lena, assuming it was just the pines growing too close to the edges as gravity pulled the sand down the slope.

'Water regulation', they replied in one voice. Their faces were serious and they stared at the sandy banks. 'It is terrible', said Marianne. 'It erodes the soil like that.' She mimed a steep slope with her arm, pulling it back in repeated movements to show the water level rising and pulling back, stripping away the sand as it retreated.



They looked at the roots with melancholy as Anna-Lena slowed the motor. This was not the same anger and frustration as with the rocky shore around the *stuga*. There, the rocks were a barrier to the shoreline. At Åsarna the banks were sand, and the erosion was not a hindrance to the approach. The boat swept easily against the soft banks. But the gnarled roots emerging, grasping at the nothing of the June air as the sand trickled down into the beaches, created a quiet in our little boat. This was a deep sadness for a landscape disappearing.

*

For Johan, the effect on Åsarna is a scandal and a tragedy for Arjeplog. I arrived at his little photography office a couple of weeks later, in the summer of 2018, and we sat with the blinds drawn against the blistering July sun. His walls were decorated with old cameras and prints of his work – the view over the ice tracks back in the days before his drone, when he used to hire a helicopter to get the shots.

‘Åsarna is a totally unique area, shaped by the ice’, he told me, biting into one the chocolate biscuits I had brought as he put his feet up on his desk. ‘And that is gradually disappearing. And I grew up seeing them in their full glory.’ He has been documenting the changes, photographing them over forty years. They exist, he said, not in any specific order or folder but dotted sporadically through his computer files from whenever he goes past Åsarna on his boat.

Johan has lived in Arjeplog over his entire lifetime. He had just turned seventy when we met, and a pillar of the community in many ways. He leaves Arjeplog in the cold dark winter months but when he is there he is seemingly everywhere. If there is an event going on he will be there with his camera, photographing for his own archives or for the Facebook group ‘*Inside Arjeplog*’ that he and his wife make for tourists and car testers. He often photographs the nature, too, looking for elusive bird species

and using a telephoto lens to capture them in beautiful clarity, uploading them to Facebook to show his finds to the local community and those who have left but wish to see the beauty of the area. He has seen the nature changing over seventy years in Arjeplog, before and after the hydropower. He has grown up with the impacts becoming more and more apparent, and his job as a photographer means he has visible records of these changes over such a long period.

'Because', he continued, 'when I go fishing and I go out on the lake, I always cry when I see what it looks like.' Hydropower, in general, was 'totally awful' for Johan:

It is a total scam to call it environmentally friendly because it is not. If you look at what it looks like now, drive around in Hornavan and have a look. The fish are gone. The birds have gone. The landscape has totally changed, and it is totally destroyed. Our island, two and a half kilometers from here - when it is high water I think about 70% of the island is underwater. And look, I don't mind making electricity, but I hate it when people call things something they are not.

He looked at me with a serious furrow above his grey eyebrows. 'When they sell this as green electricity, I do not buy it.'

He leaned back into his office chair and was silent for a minute, looking at me intently. I fidgeted in wait and then asked, 'because of the local effect?'

'Because it has terrible devastating effects on the local society. And everyone puts on their blinkers', he mimed headlights flashing from his eyes, 'because you have to be able to call it green. It is the mainstay of the Swedish electricity, and if you have to say it is environmentally disastrous then what are [the state] going to do? They

would have to do something about it. So, they call it something else. They call it green’.

And yet, he said, the problem gets little attention in Arjeplog. He was irritated by the focus on snowmobiles as a local environmental issue: people complain so much about the sound and pollution from snowmobiles, and this overshadows the impact on the water and on Åsarna. No one was *vocally* angry, he said. He had been part of *Ålvräddarna* – ‘The River Savers’ – a big environmental organization in Sweden started as a response to the impacts of the dams in the 1960s (see Jakobsson 2011). ‘But in Arjeplog it was looked upon as if you said you were a *miljöpartist* – a member of the environmental party’, he laughed. ‘It is probably the worst thing you can be. Because people don’t believe, they don’t believe in the message. Because we don’t see. We don’t see it here.’

I discuss this aspect of local mistrust in environmentalism far more in chapter five, and how ‘the message’ is not seen in Arjeplog, but for now want to focus on this specific aspect of hydropower. Johan was disappointed that Arjeplogare were not more visibly angry over the local impacts and chose to focus on the snowmobile problem. The environmental movement he had been part of seemed to be an anomaly in the town. However, a year after that interview something happened which threw this anomaly into question.

I stayed in touch with Johan after fieldwork ended and asked if he could send me some of the photographs he had of Åsarna over the years. He could not find all the images throughout all the many folders of his hard drive, it was too great a task. He did one better, however: he created a Facebook post of recent photographs he had

taken of sand ridges in Arjeplog, a year later, with individual captions and the following main text²⁰:

Unique sand ridges are disappearing. Every time I am out on Hornavan I enjoy the beauty that this circa two-mile²¹ long sand ridges invite. At the same time, I hate to see how they are slowly but surely disappearing. Eventually they will disappear completely into Hornavan's depths. The destruction of the unique sand ridges is because Hornavan is a water reservoir for hydroelectric power. The water level is two metres higher than the natural level. Hydropower may be renewable but it is also destructive. Both the fish and the sand ridges are slowly but surely undermined. I camped a kilometer north of Sakkavare, on a part of the ridges that can no longer be reached without a boat. The old path which followed the whole length of the ridges has almost disappeared. A huge anthill has been built on the path, waiting for Åsarna, like Atlantis, to disappear.

Grievous is the only word. (*Sorgligt är bara förnamnet*).

²⁰ Originally in Swedish, my translation. Reproduced (along with the images) with kind permission from Johan.

²¹ A Swedish mile is 12km.



‘The sand ridges are incredibly beautiful and invite rich animal and bird life. I found tracks from elk, reindeer and foxes from the boat.’ (Captions and images © Johan Fjellström).



'The sand ridges at Sakkavare, which earlier were covered in forest and now are more like sand piles.'



'Here parts of the old path can be seen, which with the next high-water-level are probably totally gone'.



'A last bastion against Hornavan, boulders as an uneven fight against the water. This year, when the reservoir is not full, the destruction is clearly seen'.



ABOVE IMAGES © JOHAN FJELLSTRÖM

Johan's above images focused not just on the impacted sand but on the beauty of Åsarna and the human activity there, the intersections of nature and culture. While he highlights the presence of the natural – moose, reindeer, fox – he also showed his boat, the beautiful spot he found to camp, and the huge pike he caught there. He writes of it not just as a natural wilderness in peril but a known place he cherishes. This is also reflected in the impacts of the changing water level that he highlights, namely the disappearances. The forest is fading away into 'sand piles' but also the old path retreats into the water. He is not only sad for the loss of the natural, but the history of peoples' experiences trodden into the ridges and knowing how far out they were able to go before. Altogether, the pictures with the captions written out here portray his sorrow at the environmental impact of the water regulation on this human and non-human landscape.

Guha and Martinez-Alier have written of the *varieties* of environmentalism that exist around the world (1997; see also Guha 2000a). Not all, they argue, must take the forms of mass protest or campaigns: seeing and being affected by environmental issues also counts as being an environmentalist (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1997). They define an environmentalism of the poor, connecting this with the 'south' in contrast to the environmentalism of the affluent global north. While my participants are not 'poor' in the sense used by Guha and Martinez-Alier, and they *do* live in the global north, the authors' definition of the 'environmentalism of the poor' (1997:36) does seem to fit this scale of environmentalism demonstrated by my participants. Guha and Martinez-Alier define such an environmentalism as originating 'in social conflicts over access to and control over natural resources: conflicts [...] between rural and urban populations over water and energy' (1997: xxi). The focus on energy and water is incredibly relevant for the response to hydropower in Arjeplog. It is a deeply rural-urban division, with the north used for energy seen to be sent down to

the cities in the south as part of a historical resource extraction from this area. The Arjeplogare with whom I spoke were angry not just at the impacts of the hydropower but at the lack of monetary return in the *kommun*: the resource (water) was used and taken to the south with no money being paid back into healthcare or schooling in the north.

Guha and Martinez-Alier also define this environmentalism as being a 'defence of livelihood and communal access to natural resources, threatened by the state or by the expansion of the market' (1997:36). This second definition, used to position the environmentalism of the poor against that of the affluent, works here too in terms of the different claims to natural resources of Arjeplog. As Johan shows with his images, and as I showed in my exploration of the boat trip with Marianne and Anna-Lena, hydropower is affecting the livelihood and communal access to the natural resources in Arjeplog. It is causing problems in terms of access around the waterways of the *kommun* but also fishing practices, as it creates problems for the boats when Arjeplogare try to navigate their shorelines. This reaction to the hydropower may not be a public protest, as it was for Johan in the days of Älvräddarna, but I argue that it is a form of environmentalism in Arjeplog following these definitions by Guha and Martinez-Alier (1997). It may not be, as they mean it to be, an 'environmentalism of the poor', but an environmentalism of the rural community against the state, which is seen to be taking the natural resources and giving little back to the community who lives there.

Similar to Guha and Martinez-Alier's work on different scales of environmentalism, Scott (1985, 2005) has written of the different scales of resistance in his work on class conflicts. He argues that even discussing disagreements in 'hidden transcripts' unheard by reporters, politicians, and researchers counts as being a form of

resistance (Scott 1985, 2005; Amoore 2005). The act of posting on Facebook is itself a resistance against the water regulation, as is the act of replying to that post with stories and distress of the impacts on Åsarna and communicating these issues to me – a researcher – with permission to publish them without anonymity. When Anna-Lena and Marianne discussed the impacts from the boat, this too was both a local form of environmentalism and a form of resistance against the hydropower in Arjeplog. Guha and Martinez-Alier discussed resistance among other communities verbally resisting state interference in natural resources, especially in India (see also Little 1999). Focusing on the Narmada conflict, in which a huge dam was to be built and displace a community, they define such resistance as a ‘vocabulary of protest’ in which locals ‘are trying to defend their interests *and* passing judgement on the prevailing social arrangements’ (1997:13). They use this term to convey the ideological aspect of protest even without a formal ‘manifesto’ (ibid).

What was also interesting about Johan’s Facebook post in particular was the response of other Arjeplogare, especially given his concern that people are not engaged in the disappearance of the ridges. Many people commented on Johan’s post with their own stories of experiencing the drastic effects of water regulation on Åsarna. Some acknowledged the good of hydropower but expressed sadness at the local effects. Many included their own photographs, which showed both the beauty of the place and the stark exposure of the sand stripped back from the pines. Their comments lamented the tragedy of the practice of water regulation and some called for how they could prevent it being eroded even further. Therefore, the scale of this affective response, and environmentalism, was not confined to individual reflection. This Facebook post was itself a forum for environmentalist discussion, in its own Arjeplog form.

This notion of the local form of environmental engagement will reappear throughout this thesis, in terms of further resistance against the state in the context of sustainable food practices. Regarding hydropower specifically, however, there is an interesting juxtaposition regarding the different scales of environmental engagement. Friction is created between the local and national scale through differing ideas of what the site of environmental response should be.

A report written in 1975 explored the potential impact of the hydropower project in Sweden. The author, Åse Sundborg, wrote this of the relative impact of water regulation in Sweden compared to elsewhere:

Hydropower development can produce a range of different environmental effects [...] Some striking examples are given of environmental effects in regions of different climates and geology. Dam bursts, sediment problems, the introduction of fastgrowing aquatic vegetation (especially water hyacinths), water-borne diseases, changing fish production, extensive displacements of large groups of people, changing ecological balance, are some of the effects discussed.

By comparison with such environmental catastrophes, the development of hydropower in Sweden can be regarded as rather non-drastic.

(Sundborg 1975:126, from the original English summary).

'Rather non-drastic' struck me as an interesting phrase in an environmental report, especially in light of Johan's comments and Anna-Lena and Marianne's reaction to water regulation and Åsarna. Sundborg's definition of 'drastic' is, evidently, referring to something more headline-grabbing. A burst dam, a community ridden with disease, or forced to move out. This actually did happen in Arjeplog. A family sold their land and was forced to move so that lakes could rise above what once was

housing (Hofman & Segerstedt 2017). But perhaps as it was a few families in a small community it was 'rather non-drastic'.

In her ethnography of 'global connection' concerning the rainforests of Indonesia, Tsing shows how the scales of local, national, and global all overlap but are also made (2000, 2005). They are not separable, naturally occurring entities, but 'come into being in part through the contingent articulations into which they are pushed or stumble' (2000:119). Tsing uses the process of 'national building' as a key element, and the main purpose of her book, she explains, is to look at how aspirations of global connection come to life in friction. She argues that we must not take dichotomies such as local and global for granted but must pay attention to how these scales are made (Tsing 2000). In this way, Tsing's theories and usage of scales can be applied to this fieldwork. Scales 'must be brought into being: proposed, practiced, and evaded, as well as taken for granted' (Tsing 2000: 120, see also Tsing 2005; Ferguson and Gupta 2002), and here we also see that the differentiation of scales is, in part, created in friction.

What Johan showed so clearly is the differences in scale within the discourses of 'green' – locally, nationally, and globally. The state has its own national project and renewable energy goals and can sell hydropower as the green alternative to burning fossil fuels as part of its nation-building project. As Greta Thunberg herself has said, Sweden is not innocent in climate change but is still one of the biggest carbon emitters in the world (Thunberg 2019). Today the hydroelectric dams are used in Sweden's goal of 100% renewable energy by 2040, making use of the 'rich supply of moving water' (The Swedish Institute n.d.). Hydropower is one of the top renewable energy producers in Sweden for electricity and allows the nation 'high consumption

with low emissions' (ibid)²². In contemporary politics the hydroelectric power allows Sweden as a nation to hold a certain position in the morally charged global discussion of climate change and renewable energy development. This allows Sweden to have a national identity built partially on this renewable technology.

While this idea of green is understood on the global scale, in global discourses of renewable energy, locally it is experienced very differently. Locally, the impacts are felt on an everyday scale in daily encounters across the whole *kommun*. My participants are aware of the global conversation of climate change²³, but they are also fiercely protective of their own *local* nature and traditions of using the landscape. They care deeply about protecting their environment, and it is this local environment that is threatened by hydropower. Anna-Lena, Johan and Marianne see the impacts of this daily as they traverse their landscape.

Their intimate knowledge of the landscape means they perceive the differences described by the above impact report of 1975 as not 'non-drastic'. That report was written with a global scale in mind, in which water could act as a national or even 'global' commodity (Strang 2004). The report's author listed the most dramatic potential scenarios occurring in the world. While the report held this global scale in its context, Arjeplogare live their local landscape. While rocky encounters on the way to the cabins could be seen by environmentalists as of less consequence in the global climate debate, within the local scale it is a disruptive and expensive part of life in Arjeplog for people who are not personally immersed in the conversation of the global scale of climate change. They engage with it bodily, and any change can

²² It is also worth noting, as anthropologist Scudder has warned, climate change poses a real risk to hydroelectric dams (Velsco 2018).

²³ Though, as I will show in chapter five, it is largely understood as a natural phenomenon among my participants and not a result of human action. And, in chapter six, I explore how this global conversation is enmeshed in such power imbalances with the state as are discussed in this chapter.

be affective and an interruption into their experience of landscape. Something nationally 'green' can thus be locally environmentally destructive. This has implications, too, for national development of electric cars and motors. This electricity will have to come from somewhere, and a lot of it from the north. Therefore, friction can be expected if more power is to be driven from the waterways of Norrland with seemingly little local benefits returning to the source.

Thus Tsing's idea of scale and friction is a useful framework in this context, allowing us to examine the different scales at play in the water: the global conversation of renewable energy, the nation building of Sweden as a 'green' state in relation to this discourse, and the local destruction witnessed by those who engage with the landscape daily, and bodily. As she argues, it is 'increasingly clear that all human cultures are shaped and transformed in long histories of regional-to-global networks of power, trade, and meaning' (2005:3). In addition to this 'regional-to-global' network, we can see the 'local-to-national' network of the hydropower and its implications in the water.

Another aspect to consider is the role of technology in local nature, a further example of the local scale being influenced by national development. While the dams are used now for renewable energy, they were not originally built with this in mind. As Jakobsson has shown, the decisions behind the development of hydropower in the early 20th century were not motivated by an interest in renewable energy so much as a nationally produced and technologically innovative supply of power from water (Jakobsson 2002; Robin 2017; Sörlin 1988). Bäcklund (1996) reminds us that the rush towards hydropower in Sweden in the 1960s was sparked by technological innovation and problem solving, and Lundholm argues that hydropower was 'transformative' both economically and socially as simultaneously 'pioneer work

and nature exploitation' (1985:94). The physical power of water was transformed, as hydropower became not just a natural force but a state investment crucial to the nation. The dams were not built to be 'green', they were built to be modern and have nationally produced energy. Anthropologist Rick Cucuirean has written of his involvement with the James Bay hydroelectric project in Canada in 1971, which affected local Cree and Inuit populations and the surrounding environment. Cucuirean wrote an essay in a multimedia project by Witternbon and Biegert (1981) describing his role as a liaison between the hydropower company and the Cree population. He explained how the 'technocrats' building the dam thought science could solve all problems, but how the Cree saw the changes to the water level and to the lake's colour up close in daily encounters (Cucuirean 1981:55). Cucuirean explained the global crisis to the trappers, but also explained to the hydropower company that the trappers saw their traplines and the changes to their territories. Cucuirean asserted that the technocrats in the James Bay Project were building the dam with the belief in science above all else, a belief at odds with the local Cree communities (ibid). In Arjeplog this disjuncture manifests as the harnessing of water power into a project that prioritised the future of the nation: one technologically driven future that sits at odds with the local experience and dwelling of many Arjeplogare. Similar conflicts of experience can also be seen with dam-constructions in the global south, such as in Guatemala where communities are taking action to challenge the hydropower sector over access to resources (Hirsch 2010) and in Brazil where dam construction leads to displacement and threats to local resilience (Rondinelli Roquetti et al. 2017). In Ethiopia the state is working to build the Omo dam 'at any cost' (Abbink 2012:134) in pursuit of economic growth, and techno-economic projects are 'presented as depoliticised' while in fact increasing the level of governance over its citizens (ibid:141).

The Arjeplogare with whom I worked were not distrusting of science, but the interference of natural landscapes by outside actors who did not understand Arjeplog life. Isenhour's work in Stockholm argues that 'the south' was far more interested in technocratic solutions to environmental concerns. The northern communities, she argued, were distrusting of these solutions over rural environmental knowledge (Isenhour 2011). With the hydropower project in northern Sweden, this is an example of such a technocratic solution in motion and the rejection of it by local inhabitants. It was always about technological innovation, science, and using nature as a resource first. Therefore, it is of little surprise that rural Swedes, less trusting of technological solutions from outside, would not meet such projects with delight, especially when they changed the daily manoeuvring around landscape that I have explored here.

It could be tempting here to view these frictions as rooted in ontological difference, as Blaser (2009) and de la Cadena (2010 in Li 2013) have argued is true of many environmental conflicts. Political ontology poses that conflicts occur as 'different worlds or ontologies strive to sustain their own existence as they interact and mingle with each other' (Blaser 2009:11). Differing from the more methodological school of the ontology turn (see Henare, et al. 2006; Heywood 2017; Holbraad, et al. 2014; Holbraad 2009), this framework argues that it is different realities, constantly in the process of becoming, that coexist rather than different epistemologies or ways of knowing the world. Different worlds are created and exist in conflict with one another (see Li 2013) through their enactments. One of my participants even said to me once that environmental activists 'don't live in reality', and one could jump to the ontological turn in explaining both this and the conflicts over hydropower. However, for me there is both a problematic thread running through the ontological turn and a lack of fit with its message in light of this data. Ontology often discusses indigenous

relationships with nature as one 'reality' or world that exists in stark contrast with that of 'modern' nature-culture divides (Blaser 2009). Furthermore, Blaser suggests that one does not recognise the other as oppositional. In Arjeplog, in the case of hydropower but also food and climate change (as we will see), my participants were well aware of the difference in knowledge between themselves and those they perceived as urban, south, or 'other'. The environmentalists and the politicians who build the dams exist within the 'modern', and criticisms of them were often directed towards their lack of understanding of the realities of rural sub-arctic life. But these 'realities' were more colloquially meant than a major ontological shift suggesting two separate worlds. Although Blaser argues that ontology does not equate to bounded existences, this theoretical framework does tend to restrict the idea of leakages between such worlds. Arjeplogare travel to Stockholm and understand the conflicts of perspective from the state. As Heywood summarised of a critique of the ontological turn, 'its emphasis on difference detracts from issues that indigenous peoples face because of their connections with the rest of the world: climate change, neoliberal economic politics, or globalization' (2017). And this, I argue, is also true for the non-indigenous Arjeplogare as well as the indigenous Sami, whose lives are also entangled in these connections and global processes. As Escobar argued against radical alterity, while people can experience nature differently they can also coexist and overlap (1999:5).

In her work on responses to resource extraction in Peru, Li argues that a political ontology approach is necessary in understanding the different visions of the mountain Cerro Quilish as resource bank versus an *Apu* or 'sacred mountain': she argues that the mountain was 'not only a mountain or a resource, nor was it simply *perceived* in different ways' but it was instead 'radically different entities' existing in multiplicity (2013:400). The denigration of 'anything nonhuman (including the

things of nature, such as mountains, minerals or water) as a resource', Li argues (2013:400), impedes our ability to engage with it from a different entity or perspective. Following Blaser (2009), she argues that political ontology allows for understandings of such co-existing understandings of nature. However, following my critique of this controversial paradigm shift, I would argue that one can still view Arjeplog as a place of multiple perspectives rather than multiple worlds, including in the designation of the waterways as lake versus as resource. Blaser's argument (2009) is that by taking a multiculturalist model we as researchers run the risk of viewing one nature with many different cultures which sit apart from it, separate. But could we not, instead, view the multiculturalist model of nature as an entity which is *sometimes* separated by culture but where it is also possible to engage with culture through a non-separation? This would allow for some to avoid a nature-culture divide while simultaneously allowing for other cultures to impose these lines, meanwhile recognising the physical, biological reality of nature (Escobar 1999) and not closing off and bounding these places from fluid movement, discourse and exchange.

For my participants in Arjeplog, rather than two worlds it felt more like two ways of knowing nature: as a resource or as a protected home landscape. For this reason, the notion of scale was more fitting. As Richardson and Weszkalnys argue, in their own presentation of the usefulness of ontology, the studies in their own special issue 'emphasise to good effect [...] the scale-making practices that characterize resource-making (Tsing 2005)' (2014:11). Anthropologists' analyses of resources, the authors argue, need to consider both resources' ontologies *but also* their 'participation in making local, regional, national and global scales' (ibid:16). The Arjeplogare themselves actively produce their own local scale of protecting their nature, discussed more in chapter four, while the state actively engages with the global

discourse of renewables. Furthermore, these scales are reinforced through the ongoing conflicts between the small community (and the north more widely) and the state/south. Thus, there is a little overlap between Blaser's idea of constant becoming (2009) and Tsing's idea that scales are constantly navigated and produced (2005). The notion of scale, however, seems to fit this data much better as it allows for movement, friction and reinforcements between different ways of knowing and different environmental engagements without the finality of deeming them two different worlds.

So far, I have discussed how there is a local form of environmentalism in Arjeplog in response to hydropower, which is itself an environmentally framed response to global climate change. This relationship, the friction between the north and state, must be understood and contextualised in terms of the historical resource extraction. This forms a large part of the relationship with the state in the north today.

The North as the nation's goldmine: historical resource extraction by the south

Affective and environmental responses to the hydropower projects, as described above, do not exist in isolation in Arjeplog. As with many stories of landscape and environmental management it is but one aspect in an enmeshed history of the fight for local natural resources. Hydropower and the responses to its impacts must be understood in Norrland's long history of resource extraction, effecting experience of landscape for both reindeer herding communities and non-reindeer herding communities, and seen as benefitting the political south while taking from the sparsely populated north. The whole process of hydropower was often linked to a

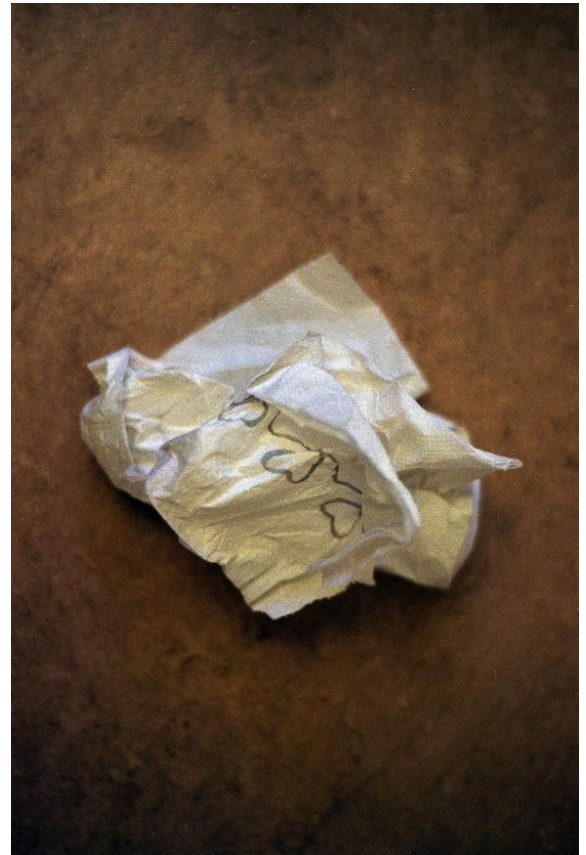
bigger problem faced by locals in Arjeplog – that the south treated the north as a ‘goldmine’, for minerals, timber, and electrical power in the form of renewable energy. Renewable energy is understood as a continuation of this history, alongside dominant discourses of environmentalism understood as a further interference of the urban south into the rural north.

Marianne told me once, driving out to her cabin, that Arjeplogare belonged to their land and their land belonged to them in turn. But the capitalist system embraced and embodied by the Swedish state did not seem to agree with this definition. The natural resources were becoming, more and more, a part of big business and corporate enterprise. Forestry in Arjeplog, having once been in part a venture of the locals, was increasingly dominated by the power of companies such as Sveaskog, planting timber to be felled and exported south for furniture and toilet paper.

This, for Marianne, was part of the tragedy of Arjeplog and the north as resource landscape in which the benefits leave the municipality and nothing returns.

‘None of it comes back here. It all gets taken away and none of it stays. We don’t get any of the money for it. In Arjeplog the wood is stronger because it grows slower. Much stronger than the trees in the south.

‘And it is such a shame that they take our old forests for toilet paper.’



For Marianne, the problems of hydropower were connected to the wider problem of Arjeplog as a place of resources for the state and big companies, and this echoed attitudes I heard throughout the town. Wood, water, and electricity were exported from Arjeplog and yet the municipality did not benefit from more investment or infrastructure. Furthermore, for Marianne, the beautiful forests of home were seen to be wasted in their felling for such mundanities as toilet paper – an example of how resources are experienced very differently (Richardson and Weszkalnys 2014; Strang 2004). This presented a stark contrast to the ways people talked about the car testing industry. That was also a capitalist project by entrepreneurs using the local landscape, and as the engineers were from Europe and Korea the tax rarely made its way back into the community either. While my participants lamented the

international focus on car testing rather than the lifestyles they cherished and the knowledge they prided themselves on, car testing was still a useful thing for the community in terms of jobs and income through hiring out the homes. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, car testing was started by a local man in the 1960s who then passed it on to his son. The second testing company was also started by a father who is now passing it to his daughters. Despite the international focus, and engineers, it is a locally controlled industry born from the known community. Hydropower and big forestry, on the other hand, are outsider industries controlled in unseen offices where dams are emptied at the push of a far-away button. It is also no secret that the politicians in the south do not want wind farms to ruin the views from their summer cabins on the archipelago and thus they export renewables north, out of (their) sight.

For the nation state the wider region of the north has long been part of the economic national project crucial to modernization. Libby Robin has written of Sweden as one of the nation states 'anxious to be a world leader in a world bent on modernity' (2017:65) with a national identity formed partly in its 'heroic relations with extreme places' (ibid:63), in which the far north is crucial to their nation-building project. In Sörlin's book *Framtidslandet*, he also argues that it was modernization that caused the industrialized nation-building, replacing Sweden's previous 'warrior' identity with one of progress and infrastructure (1988:265). Earlier I described how one aspect of Sweden's nation building was through committed investment in renewable energies, but this was just one of the resources 'discovered' in the north and mined by the state from the 1600s.

While Sweden attempted to colonize both in the 'New World' of America and in the Caribbean, it also instigated an internal colonization of Norrland from the 1600s

with the discovery of silver, iron, and the vast timber supplies needed for Sweden's naval expansion. The North was Sweden's 'own India', filled with the 'gold of the north' in all its forms (Fur 2006; Tidholm 2018). This process, journalist Po Tidholm writes, continues today in Lapland with the contemporary hydropower projects and the ongoing mining companies operating across Norrland, building entire towns and disrupting Sami herding grounds (Tidholm 2018; Össbo and Lantto 2011). The relationship between the state and the Sami is 'dire', Tidholm writes (2018: my translation): legally owned Sami land is divided up according to state policy, preventing Sami herders from moving across the land as they need to do in order to move with their herds²⁴. Their experience of the state in Norrland is far more dramatic as it threatens their everyday livelihoods and movements and experience of nature (Furberg, et al. 2011; Össbo and Lantto 2011) and can lead to suicide if Sami individuals are no longer able to maintain their Sami identity during the exploitation of lands for wind farms and hydropower (Stoor, et al. 2015).

Attitudes to nature in Sweden had joined the sweeping change throughout Europe and beyond: wood, trees, water, minerals, animals and even other humans were understood and classified as *resources* by both nation states and settler communities in a gradual splitting apart of nature and culture into two opposing, or at least separate, forces (see Descola and Pálsson 1996; Pálsson 1996), what Escobar would call 'capitalist nature' from his three 'nature regimes' (Escobar 1999:6). Merchant argues that this change took place during the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe, in which the nurturing mother nature model became a site of brutal extraction for capitalist profit and new focus on technology and development (Merchant 1989). In Sweden, Löfgren argues that at the end of the 19th

²⁴ See Brännström 2018 for a discussion of the legal precedent for Sami ownership of their lands.

century 'nature was seen as a kingdom of slumbering riches, waiting to be exploited' (1987:50). He argues that the 'technological and scientific colonialization of nature' that followed shaped the man as master of nature ideology (ibid:51). Meanwhile nature became a romanticised other for the enjoyment of the middle-class sick of industry, having formerly been a part of a more holistic system (Löfgren 1987).

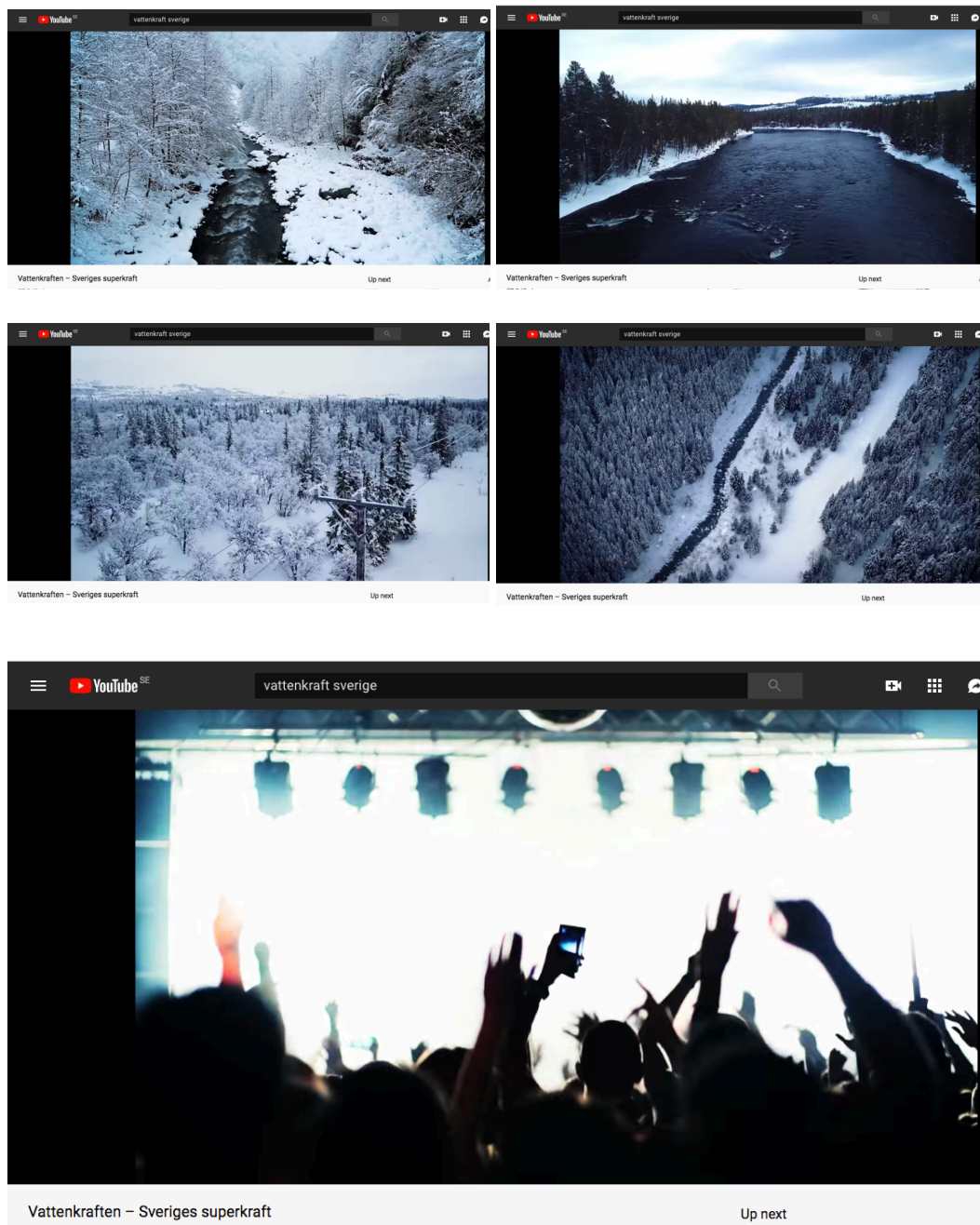
As Richardson and Weszkalnys demonstrate, resources do not simply exist but they 'become' (2014:14, following Zimmermann 1933). The transformation from nature to resource is, they argue, both a process of 'boundary making' which distinguishes nature from culture (2014:6) but also an active transformation of nature *into* culture (2014:12, my emphasis). Extraction of natural resources, they state, is central to human efforts to become 'modern' (ibid:6).

From an 'unimportant outpost' to 'an area of enormous national economic significance' (Sörlin 1988: 262), the industrialization of Norrland's natural resources led to extensive physical changes to its landscape. The northern population doubled with the influx of new jobs, bringing settlers in from the south and inland from coastal communities to the east. Communications systems were built, connecting north to south, and a railroad physically connected the two sides of the nation. The 'irregularities of untamed nature' in the north were thus conquered, incorporated through infrastructure into the 'idea of the civilised south' (Sörlin 1988:264). These processes designed to modernize took their toll on the landscape and on the cultural identity of the Sami who were living there (ibid). The communications infrastructure, tourism, mining and technology were industrial projects that broke up the perceived wilderness and destroyed the forest.

The changes to the north were thus part of a wider modernization project, reaffirming Sweden's global standing through a new identity forged from its natural

resources (Sörlin 1988). While Sörlin acknowledges the geodeterministic link between culture and natural resources, he argues that patriotism and nation building in the early 1900s were very much based on natural resources in restoring the 'lost status' of Sweden as a global power (ibid: 265). Hydropower was therefore embedded in this larger national project, in which the north was seen as a resource bank to be accessed for the good of the nation state. While this effected the cultural practices and livelihoods of the reindeer herding community and Sami more extensively, its legacy is also felt in the community of Arjeplog. My participants felt a deep sense of injustice that the south benefited from the resources of the north. They felt that the money made from the energy of their water was not returning back to Arjeplog for the urgent needs of healthcare, education or infrastructure. The welfare state was not in a fair balance for them. They provided the raw materials, and yet were without a local doctor for long stretches of time.

Wittenborn and Biegert's work about the James Bay Project was an attempt in part to show the difference between the propaganda of hydropower and the experience of it in reality – to counter the ads circulating in the media showing the dream of water power to 'make visible what is hidden for outsiders' (1981:281). The 'propaganda' of the hydropower in northern Sweden utilizes nature as a gift: as a free energy source and a battery given to humanity from the wilderness itself. Contemporary framings of hydropower feature images of Stockholm as rushing cars, lamps, city life, juxtaposed with images of huge snowy expanses of wild water flowing and reservoirs of future electrical power. Examples are shown here in stills from a contemporary video from the Uniper Youtube account, an international energy company (Uniper 2018). The implication of the video is that the uninhabited northern landscape is the energy source for the technological modernity-bustle of the urban south.



The way hydropower is marketed in Sweden today, and internationally as in the above advert, would suggest the energy is coming from an inhabited place, in the way of no-one, in order for Sweden to take its place at the frontier of climate mitigation with its move towards 100% renewable energy.

This chapter is an attempt inspired in part by Wittenborn and Biegert's desire to counter the propaganda, but also by my participants in Arjeplog: their local experience of hydropower, their daily encounters, and their affective responses

exist in stark contrast to the uninhabited wilderness shown in glossy marketing images. Hydropower may be sold as 'green', and is globally greener than coal, but it is by no means an unproblematic energy source when viewed across and through these different scales of locality. The state may engage renewable energy as part of its modernization project but wounds still run deep in sunken villages and hulls of fishing boats. And these wounds stretch back, both throughout the history of the north, and forwards, shaping the way new discourses of environmentalism are received.

In the following chapters I will examine more of these examples including the fossil fuel debate and the hypocrisy felt regarding the politicians allocating responsibility to civilians. But what this chapter has also shown is that, while Arjeplogare may be wary of national environmentalist discourses, they are involved in a local scale 'environmentalist' discourse over their water and access to their lands. This raised the question of scale (following Tsing 2005), which is a theme that runs throughout this research: the intertwined scales of local, national, and global and how these are built, collapsed, and reveal tensions; but also the local scale of environmentalism in contrast to dominant global narratives.

3. Food from Mother Nature

'All of this big business and these regulations are separating people from mother nature, and from the land. Now everyone has to shop at the supermarket.

Before, people could live off the land.

Before all these rules.'

PEDER



The discussions regarding both the local scale of environmentalism and friction between Arjeplog and the state are exemplified in the local food culture, especially in acquiring what is considered the best food from the region. In this chapter I take

a more ecological approach to the relationship Arjeplogare have with their environment in terms of the food they hunt and forage 'from the nature', and how in doing so they access wider networks and ideas of the landscape. Focusing on the moose hunt, I examine the flowing (Ingold 2010) networks of forest-body-food produced and maintained in the hunting practices, and how this is crucial in producing a place-based identity among my participants in opposition with the state and urban, southern Sweden. Starting with what is found in the forest I then examine these networks in depth during the butchering of the moose, followed by the local positioning of 'real food' in contrast with Stockholm and, finally, looking at the interference from the state through regulation and support for corporate development. Ultimately, I argue that the state is seen to be out of touch with rural life and interfering with traditional realisations of identity and northern personhood in relation to nature. This will have implications later, too, when we examine the response to climate change narratives seen to be coming from this same removed, disconnected place.

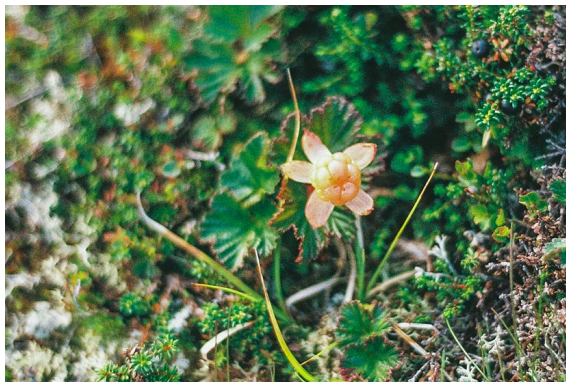
There is a vast body of literature examining hunter-gathering both in terms of economic structures and relation with the non-human (Bird-David 1990; Blaser 2009; Lee 2018; Willerslev 2004; Woodburn 1998) as well as nutrition and diet from hunting and foraging (see Crittenden & Schnorr 2017 for a review; Messer 1984). For the Arjeplogare, it should be noted, hunting and foraging exists alongside their other jobs and their food bought from supermarkets, as it does across Sweden (Löfgren 1987). Kelly argues that anthropology often frames hunter gatherers as relics, and an 'antithesis' to Western lifestyles, simplifying such communities and downplaying the importance of 'modern social and economic contexts and the variability among those who hunt and gather to obtain their food' (Kelly 1995: xii-xiii). There are many forms of hunting and foraging continuing today in Arjeplog,

where fishing has a long and vital history from the early days of the first Sami and Swedish settlers. While the fridges and cupboards are full of foods from the supermarket, Arjeplog freezers are full of local fish (perch, trout, arctic char, salmon), as well as game (grouse, capercaillie, and reindeer from the Sami herders) and berries (mostly lingon, bilberries, and cloudberries). In this way, food from hunting and foraging exists enmeshed in the 'world system'²⁵ (Kelly 1995:23): moose meat and berries side-by-side with world foods and imports within the household. While the moose hunt dominates the autumn, in terms of work and time, berry picking is another extremely important part of 'living by nature' in Arjeplog as well as, to a lesser extent, foraging for mushrooms. When I held my exhibition at the museum, one comment was the lack of berries and how important it was to show this practice as another crucial way to gather food from the environment to last the winter.



²⁵ This was one of the main critiques of early hunter gatherer works that framed such communities as isolated from such systems of trade and economy, as detailed by Kelly (1995) who provides further references to a number of works on modern hunter-gatherer communities (1995:24). The resulting approach moved away from a 'man the hunter' model and into an interdependent model recognizing the co-existence of hunted and foraged foodstuffs with that acquired through purchase or exchange (ibid, see also Spielmann and Eder 1994, cited in Kelly 1995).

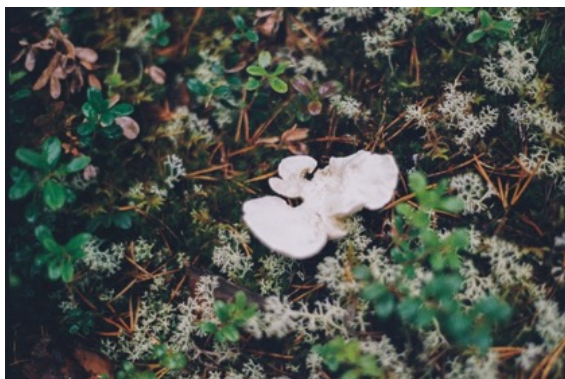
Lingonberries (L: *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*), pictured above, are small hard red berries used primarily in *lingonsylt*, a jam that is often sour and eaten with moose meat and reindeer but can be sweeter if more sugar is added. The *blåbar* is the same as the British bilberry or European blueberry (L: *Vaccinium myrtillus*) and is made into jam or more often used for blueberry crumbles and pies.



Hjortron, (cloudberries, L: *rubus chamaemorus*), are only found in the north of Sweden, growing in marshy areas in the forests and are considered a local delicacy, often pictured on postcards and tourist adverts. Seen in the above images these berries are picked by both locals and by professional pickers, often from Eastern Europe and Thailand, who camp in the forest and sell buckets at the roadside. The berries are often made into jam and served with ice cream or pancakes. They have a taste unlike anything I have tried before, bitter and crisp when just about to turn, then immediately rich and musty – an almost rotting sweetness that, at first, tastes like it is past its best. In all of the maps we made in Arjeplog each showed a berry picking area of some kind, either all kinds or some variation.



Mushroom picking was rarer as many did not feel confident in knowing the kinds that were edible and those that were poisonous, though most could recognise the elusive and coveted *kantarell* (chanterelles, L: *Cantharellus cibarius*) and Marianne could identify a number of edible varieties including the white *taggsvamp* in the image below. Berries, on the other hand, were everywhere and easily identifiable.



This foraging is in part aided by *allemansrätten*, - every man's right to be in the nature, pick berries and mushrooms and camp outside (see Skeberg 2017), as long as one is not too close to a private home. The moose hunt, in contrast, is highly regulated and controlled. It requires extensive training, an exam, and a firearm license registered with the police (Heberlein 2000). The hunt is not done on public ground but privately-owned land of individuals, joined together to form the team's hunting grounds. It is not an individual sport in Sweden as it is in parts of the U.S and the UK. Fishing also requires a permit for lakes outside of the individual's property (discussed more below)²⁶.

All of these forms are considered vital to life in Arjeplog and provide year-round sustenance in freezers throughout the municipality. What really dominated the discussions of the 'best food from the nature', however, was *älgjakten* – the moose hunt. In this chapter I focus primarily on the motivations of this hunt²⁷: how the meat is considered the best and how this is connected to ideas of the forest and of wellbeing, both for the moose and for the humans who will eat them. The forest is seen to be natural, and therefore the meat that they carve from the moose is the 'best food, from the nature'. In hunting moose, the local population also aid the growth of the forest and are motivated to keep it clean from pollution. Thus, the hunt is experienced as both the means to bodily wellbeing and also the wellbeing and future of the forest as an ecological management system – what I argue is bodily and moral personhood in relation to the nature of the forest.

²⁶ Hunting rights in northern Sweden were historically granted by the sameby but are now obtained from the County Administration, a cause of distress for the Sami as discussed by Green (2009). After my fieldwork, hunting rights were restored to Girjas Sameby after a 30 year battle (in *The Guardian* 2020) not in Arjeplog but further north in Gällivare municipality.

²⁷ Swedish *älg*, Latin: *alces alces*. Though the terms 'moose' and 'elk' were used interchangeably by my participants I will refer only to 'moose' in this chapter to avoid confusion for readers of North American backgrounds, for whom 'elk' is a different species.

The moose²⁸ hunt



During the first week of September Arjeplog's main square was eerily quiet. The Norwegian tourists had disappeared, driving away in their camper vans filled with alcohol and tobacco – cheaper this side of the border. The parking spaces throughout town were empty and shops had changed their opening hours, printed on signs that fluttered in the soft autumn wind. Shots rang out from the forest, breaking the silence in sharp fractures of sound.

Stina told me that most of her partner's staff disappear this week. It is understood, she said, that people will want to be out in the forest for the first week of the moose hunt. People don't want to miss it when the *jaktlust* (hunting fun) is highest and the weather still warm. Some go off for day trips, knives hanging from their belts, leaving early with their hunting teams. Sometimes they go for a few nights at a time, staying in small cabins in their hunting grounds or high up in the small huts on stilts in the forest.

Signs of the moose hunt are year-round in Arjeplog, woven into the fabric of the town. The local café (inside Viltbutikken – The Wild Shop) is decorated with animal skins and soft toy moose. Houses have moose silhouettes attached to the walls

²⁸ Two images courtesy of Åse from her September hunt. Such images of posing with the moose was unusual among my participants but not in the county more generally, where such images often appeared on social media during the hunting season.

outside, or horns and the skull of a catch from a former hunt, and a large moose proudly guards the entrance to one of the hotels.





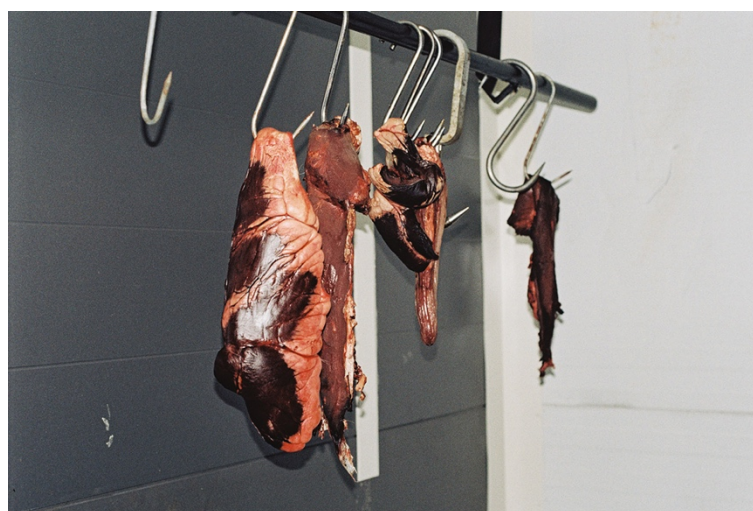
(Images kindly provided by Marianne and Maggie)

In September this presence becomes an absence, with most of the men disappearing out into the *kommun*. More and more women are out in the forest too these days, and Stina, Anna-Lena, and Åse are all hunters. Åse was the first woman in her hunting team when she was a teenager in the 1980s. For a long time though it was only men, and when discussing that first week of the hunt the focus was very much on ‘the guys’ being away. While the town was silent, however, the forest and small villages dotted around the county were full of life, gunshots, and the sound of knives on bone.

Mats could not take me hunting that autumn. He had an accident during the summer and, after his operation, could not be out with his *jaktlag* – his hunting team. As I was still relatively new in Arjeplog, access to the hunt was tricky. Teams could not just bring random researchers along to the forest due in part to safety but also the integrity of the hunt. My participants had to be sure that anyone following would not get in the way or be too loud and that they would understand the priorities of the team in working together to track any wounded animal to minimise suffering

and waste. Instead, Mats invited me to his team's butchery in a place deep in the forest so he could teach me how to butcher the moose they had caught and witness the importance of the bodily experience and knowledge of hunting practice.

Many hunting teams have access to a private butchery in the garage of one of the hunting party. This way they can shoot a moose out in the forest, take out the innards using a good sharp knife (leaving the intestines and stomach in the forest for the bears and foxes), drag the body in a small hunting sledge called a *pulka*, load it onto the back of a truck and then drive direct to the garage. In Lövlund, this garage belonged to Mats' friend Pelle and Pelle's mother Karen. Together with Mats and two other men this group formed a hunting team, a *jaktlag*, who combined the areas of their land and thus had a land-mass specific quota of moose they could shoot. The team would hunt together with a strategy or alone as individuals, calling the team once a moose had been shot so as to get help in cleaning and carrying it out of the forest. Every time an moose was shot in their area it would be brought back on the *pulka* to this garage. The organs, back, and the limbs of the moose were hung in the refrigerator built into the garage for several days until the meat smelled like bilberries and was thus ready for butchering.



It was a cold October day when I joined them in the garage. Lövlund was a higher altitude than Arjeplog and the air was crisp and the snow lay thick on the ground. Dogs ran around outside, barking, sensing moose tracks in the surrounding forest. Dogs were used during the hunt to track and bark at the moose, and to follow the animal once shot to allow the hunters to pursue and fire another shot if necessary. Leaving an injured moose in the forest was not an option, both in terms of the meat wasted if the team lost a moose – averaging 130 kg per moose (Heberlein 2000) – but also out of kindness for the suffering animal. Shooting moose in Arjeplog was never discussed as a sport for trophy hunting as it can be elsewhere, and while photographs of the dead moose were sometimes posted online (as with Åse's photo earlier) they were not often discussed in terms of individual success but the work of the team, together, hunting for the provision of food.

The trees came right up around the house in Lövlund, looming over the clearing in the low sun. The forest was not 'somewhere else', in Arjeplog, it was everywhere. Houses have been built into it and, even in the main town, the forest is always there just metres from the edges of the buildings. Forests are not 'empty' (Bird-David 1990; Tsing 2009; 2005; Turnbull 2015; von Hellermann 2013) and this is well-known in Arjeplog. They are full of life and history. These hunting practices invoke and strengthen the everyday connection and knowledge to landscape and place in Arjeplog. Personal relationships with the land, historical and multivocal, are reinforced with every moose hunt as teams strategize to use the same stretch of land in different ways to lure the moose out from the forest and along the 'pass' where hunters sit in wait. The same patches of forest are the base for these ventures every year, planned meticulously by the hunting leader and weaving in anecdotal experiences from the rest of the team. It is, as Gunnarsdotter describes of Swedish hunting teams, the 'ethos of hunting: the mix of excitement, being in the forest and

the spirit of community that has developed in a certain place over time' (Gunnarsdotter 2008:189). The forests are filled with both wild game and these known places of memory and encounters, not least with the moose, moving slowly through the mossy ground and eating the tops of young pines until intercepted by a hunter or the dogs in a meeting that will be remembered and shared over the fire during future hunts.

The hunt keeps the moose population low while allowing for a continued and sustainable growth rate (see Ericsson, et al. 2001), with each team allocated a quota based on their combined land and relative to the regional moose population that year. The moose eat the young forest, causing a huge problem for local forest owners and the big national companies, like Sveaskog, as the moose ate away at the livelihoods in the future timber (Boman, et al. 2011; Ericsson 2003). Those trees would be felled and shipped and made into IKEA furniture, toilet paper, and profit. The moose can also cause problems in the north if they run across the road in front of traffic (Boman, et al. 2011) and Arjeplogare often drive very slowly in the twilight. Accidents are not uncommon: Marianne told me once of a time when she hit a moose and it came through the windscreen. This connection between practice and ecological population control has been explored in environmental anthropology through the lens of ritual, where rituals can serve as a mechanism for ecological harmony (Mintz and Du Bois 2002:108). Rappaport argued this in his oft-cited research into the killing of pigs in ritualised warfare (Rappaport 1967). While Rappaport's article can be criticised in its lack of agency attributed to his research informants, the Arjeplogare are well aware of the ecological balance of the hunt. They know the quota comes from the *Jägareförbundet* – Hunting Association – and is based on a yearly population index. This is information given in the hunting exam, in the hunting manual, and often features in the hunting magazines adorning the

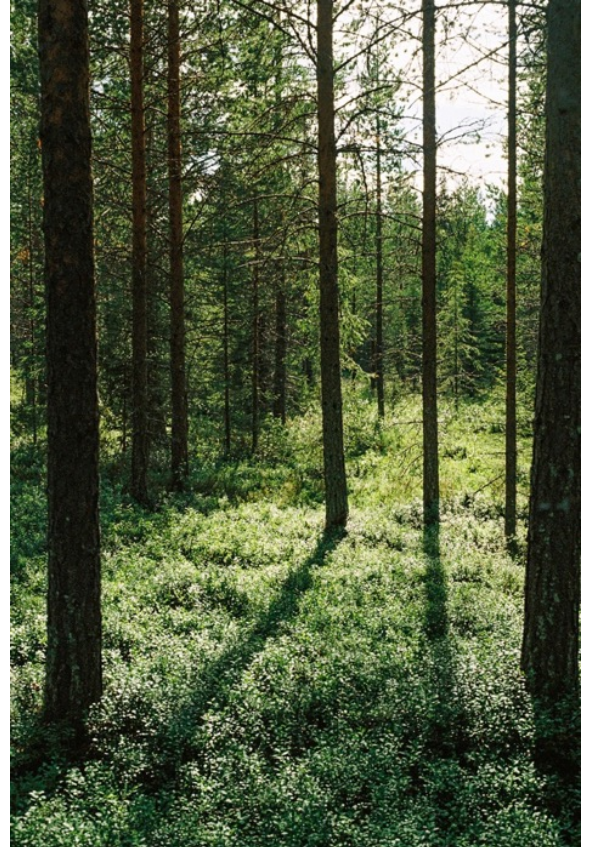
coffee tables of homes and hunting cabins. That moose eat the young forest is no secret, and Mats told me about the damage they can cause to industry. By hunting, he said, they could acquire meat from the forest while also protecting it.

After hot boiled coffee and cake inside the main house the team walked down to the garage to begin. It was cold and spotlessly clean, stainless steel surfaces glittering in the rising sun streaming in from the open door. Everyone had white plastic aprons and long blue gloves, mandatory, and each took a huge slab of meat and began working on it with a fillet knife. The garage was filled with sounds of cold meat slapping onto metal surfaces, knives cutting through flesh, and the high whine of the saw outside as Pelle cut through the bones, bone dust flying into the air and catching the rays of sun peeping low over the forested horizon. Mats was not interested in letting me stand and take photographs, he wanted me to learn.

‘Start with the neck,’ he said throwing it down on the plastic table in front of me, a big bony lump the size of my head. He handed me a filleting knife with a red plastic handle. This was different from the knives the locals carry daily: those were hand carved pieces of local handwork or made by the owner with wood and bone foraged from the landscape. This was a shop-bought filleting knife, bought in bulk to have ready for this job. ‘You always start with the neck when you’re learning. You can’t mess it up. Fredrik was the same. I told him – you can do a neck, then a neck. Then a neck, and maybe a neck. And then a neck. And then, maybe, something else.’

Everyone had a cut they were good at. Karen took the legs and carved into them with a filleting knife. She had been hunting since 1983 when she started following her partner out to the forest. She beckoned me over to look at the meat. ‘This is the best,’ she said, tapping the deep purple-reddish flesh with her knife and referring to moose meat in general.

'There is no better meat than this, anywhere. There are no chemicals, it is straight from the forest. This is the best meat. I wouldn't even know how or where to buy it, if we did not hunt it ourselves. Even the fat is okay, when it is wild like this.'



In this encounter in the garage, Karen showed me how the forest was not just confined to where the trees grew. The moose ate the forest, and that is where the two sides met: hunter and moose, in amongst the trees – what Gunnarsdotter has called the 'wholeness of hunter-forest-game-place-history' (2008:189). But after the moose was shot, and brought into the garage, the forest came with it. The meat, as Karen shows, is from that same place. The nutrients from the young pines is in the meat, it is all the moose has ever eaten. In the garage the plastic tabletops were a further site of interaction after the hunt: the forest, in the meat, on the table, chopped by the hunter. Later, that meat would be many dinners for the *jaktlag*, and while

eating it they know it is food 'from the nature' and that they are eating something clean and from the forest.

This forms a network as described by Empson, drawing from Latour to refer to a 'collection of material and immaterial, human and non-human relations' (Empson 2011:142), spreading out across the surfaces of the garage and later in meals made from the meat. There is both a network of forest-body-food, perceived by my participants as they acquire food directly from the nature (as I discuss more later in the chapter) but this also returns *back* to the forest conceptually in terms of care. A kind of moral personhood with the forest is created through the reliance on nature to provide the game, so rather than a one way movement of materials it is a constant flow between forest and hunter (following Ingold 2010). In this sense the tripartite network could be written in any order, with body-forest-food just as appropriate.



Once I asked Karen what one needed in order to be an Arjeplogare. 'You must be curious,' she said, 'and like the nature: to be out in the nature, to take care of it. And like hunting and fishing and get into a hunting team – that is a must.' The two exist together, hunting in the forest and taking care of the nature. Arjeplogare feed themselves and take care of the forest in turn to allow future hunting and preserve

the quality of the meat. This is the same with fishing. Locals want to keep the lakes clean and free from petrol spillages so they can continue to fish, drink water, and keep the beauty of their home landscape. Thus, the variety of environmentalism here (Guha and Martinez-Alier 1977) is a deeply local one, in which responsibility is entwined with human needs. This could be perceived as a humanistic relationship in which nature is seen as primarily a provider of human requirements (Fine 2003). However there seems to be a sense among my participants that the local nature should be protected for its own sake too, and in part for its beauty and their pride surrounding this. Thus, the humanistic relationship to the nature is a motivation for protecting it and hunting within set limits, as part of the network of 'hunter-forest-game-place-history' described by Gunnarsdotter (2008:189).

Karen followed as I went back to Mats, who was busy examining the enormous ribcage. It looked like a huge pair of wings, splayed on the table. She pointed to the ribs with her blue plastic fingers, where the meat and bone made a striped pattern of white and red. 'Photograph this part,' she said. 'the colours, aren't they beautiful?'



We butchered two moose that afternoon. They guessed it would be around 180 kilograms of meat. It was divided up into piles – a process in which one member turned their back to the table, another placed the individual’s knives, one at a time and differentiated by colour, upon the piles of meat and the one with back turned called out the names of the *jaktlag*. This way no one could knowingly decide who got which pile. They were all about the same, to me, organised by body-part into piles of similar size and weight. The integrity of the hunt, of working as a team, is extended even into the very distribution of the meat as a group exercise to obtain food within the network, rather than individual success. This mirrors many other hunting communities, especially in the arctic and subarctic regions across the polar north, in which the hunt is distributed among those who assisted and not kept solely for the individual who brought down the catch (see Hastrup , 2018a, 2018b, 2014; Ready 2018; Ready & Power 2018; Willerslev 2014).



After coffee and cake inside the house we returned to the garage to clean up. The meat was carried out to trucks in plastic boxes, the bones slung into the *pulka*

outside. When I showed these pictures to Anna-Lena later, she pulled out that photo and said, 'THIS is Arjeplog. Throwing the bones into the sled we use to pull the moose. This is Arjeplog'.



A hose was brought out and the whole garage was washed down, the water disappearing into a drain in the middle. 'All you need is a cold room and warm water', said Karen, of the butchery.

Outside the garage, abandoned moose feet lay in the crisp snow.

'They can be planted and grown into moose trees', said Mats, pointing, with a wry smile. A return to nature: the forest which fed the moose being fed by the abandoned feet.

'Or carried off by the dogs.'



This *stykning* (butchering) would happen most weekends throughout the autumn. Not everyone in the hunting teams went out every weekend but many went as often as possible during the hunting season, which lasted until November. Arjeplog is not an isolated example in Sweden of hunting moose, fishing, or picking berries – this happens all across the country. These practises occupy a large place in the Arjeplog lifestyle, however, relative to the rest of Sweden. Perhaps this is due to the lack of accessible farming, as while there was livestock in Arjeplog in the past it is very rare today and sheep are a rare sight in the outskirts of the *kommun*. Arjeplogare rely on these practices to feed themselves well and cheaply instead of local farmed meat during the long and harsh winter months. Boman et al. argue that hunting in Sweden is for leisure but that ‘meat plays a role’ (2011:516). In Arjeplog the situation seems the reverse: the hunting is for primarily for meat with leisure playing a role in how the hunt is realised. Ericsson suggests that the examination of the hunt is often approached from ecological perspectives and that the human dimension of moose hunting is needed to get a better picture (2003). By moving from a discussion of the forest and bodily practice of managing the meat to an examination of the focus on the actual food and the consumption of the meat, we can explore such a ‘human dimension’ of this practice – one that is overwhelmingly centred around getting the best food from the local nature. Furthermore, this allows a closer look at the third part of the tripartite network or ‘flow’ of forest-body-meat discussed above (following Ingold 2010).

We ate moose meat a lot when I was staying with Mats and Marianne, as well as with other participants in Arjeplog. Mats would roast it sometimes, or fry it and add a little cream to the fat, or boil it for hours into *köttsoppa* – meat soup. Once he showed me how to smoke the moose meat, lighting a fire in a small hut outside and tending it for the whole day until the meat was tender and smoky and wonderful. It

disappeared in my mouth with the taste of soft smoke. Whenever I had been away from Arjeplog and came back, Mats would always ask if I had missed 'real food': moose and potatoes. From examining the practices of hunting and taking food from the forest, I turn now to the eating of the moose meat and how it is used in place-making practices and in opposition to the Swedish state and capital city – through a deeper look at this concept of 'real food'.



It was not just the meat from the moose that was used for subsistence and well-being, and which counted as 'real food'. *Blodpalt och mörghben* parties (bloodpudding and bone marrow) also occurred during my time in Arjeplog after the butchering had taken place, where dumplings made from blood and flour were eaten with bone marrow from the newly hunted moose. I went to two, in the same house in Lövlund, where this idea of the moose as real food cropped up again and showed the ceremony involved, not just in the hunting of the moose but the sustenance it gave and the social relations this entailed. As Caplan writes, 'food is never "just food" and its significance can never be purely nutritional'; it is 'intimately bound up with social relations' (Caplan 1997:3; see also Callaway 2004). The meat allowed a social occasion and a chance for the hunting team to celebrate with family, extending out from just the hunting team itself and inviting people to eat the best quality meat over a candlelit dinner.

Arriving to one such party, the driveway to the house was full of trucks and dogs and the air had a smell of boiling fat. Dead birds hung from the side of the shed after a hunt, and I saw a group huddled around an oil can. Steam was belching from the top. As we drew near they hauled out a huge bone from the rich smelling water bubbling like soup. The bone was carried to a workbench and sawn into smaller pieces. When finished with the boiling, the pieces were carried inside the house ceremoniously in a big white plastic box – the same used for the dividing of the meat after the butchering – and occupied pride of place in the middle of the white linen tablecloth, beside a water jug with breasts.





The kitchen was full of a warm, rich, iron smell. A huge pan stood on the stove, red and bubbling. Blood was boiled with flour and shaped into dumplings. These were passed around in a glass bowl, and bones were handed out from the box. Lingonberry jam and pieces of bacon were also sent around the table. Everyone looked at me, laughing, before it began. Pelle started, showing me what to do. He took a piece of bone from the box, put it to his lips like a trumpet, and blew out the marrow. Everyone else did the same and the room was full of a sound somewhere between blowing raspberry and inhaling a jelly. The marrow shot out in a neat, perfect tube. Some surreptitiously scooped out the rest with a fork. It was slick, oily and slimy, and tasted of iron and fat.

'This is real food,' Stina said.

This is incredibly important in showing the primary reasons behind the moose hunt. It is in part a sport, a hobby, but it is foremost a way to get 'the best' food from the forest, *real* food, rather than meat treated with chemical flavourings or shipped in from abroad. While it certainly was considered cheaper, given the amount of meat per bullet even considering the rifle and equipment, the quality was the main draw and is it this element I want to focus on here. It was the aspect that people brought up most often when preparing the food, inviting guests to candlelit blood pudding parties, and explaining why they hunted.

When I asked Karen about her main motivations for hunting, for example, she replied: '*Mat.*' Food.

'Now it is the food, the quality of it. Because,' she paused, 'the hunt is nice, I like to meet everyone and be around the fire and talk shit with each other. We joke and tell old hunting stories. But the main thing is to have food for the winter, and it feels like you are prepared – whatever happens, you know you have really good, *quality food* in the freezer'.

When Karen showed me the meat, she wanted to make it clear to me that the moose had only eaten from the forest. No chemicals were in its body or in the food in its final form. This presents a very interesting framing of the meat as natural, and as existing in opposition to the food which is deemed 'not real' and unnatural in some sense. The way the moose is held up as being 'real' by Stina and by Mats, too, implies there is something 'less real' in the other nutritional options available.

One reading of this response could be the aspect of 'meat', especially red meat which has been variously linked to masculinity (Caplan 1997:10) or to strength (Fischler

1988:279-280). However there were instances which pointed elsewhere: that 'real' food was about being from the nature, without chemical manipulation or additives added after the fact for flavour. For Stina this 'reality' of the meat was in part due to its lack of sugar. Stina is a local doctor in Arjeplog and is committed to the LCHF (low carb, high fat) diet for her patients by eliminating sugar, and the meat was perhaps 'real food' as it was not made with processed sugar. Similar ideas about additives or unnatural elements came up in other moments of fieldwork, for example when Marianne compared farmed salmon with wild salmon, describing the latter as more 'natural' and therefore better to eat. 'Real food', in contrast, was foraged or hunted from the local natural environment with little meddling. Jane Bennett quotes Thoreau in her book *Edible Matter*, for whom even the act of picking and transporting berries was enough to destroy the superiority of food foraged direct from the wild for the poet and philosopher:

The fruits do not yield their true flavour to the purchaser of them, nor to him who raises them for the market . . . It is a vulgar error to suppose that you have tasted huckleberries who never plucked them ... The ambrosial and essential part of the fruit is lost with the bloom which is rubbed off in the market cart.²⁹

(Thoreau, in Bennett 2007:142).

In his work on food and identity Fischler discusses the changing attitudes to food in industrialised society, pointing to a number of responses to food seen as 'problematic': the origins of the food are unknown, the preparation is largely done before the food arrives in the home (in factories), it is less identifiable through processing and packaging and therefore 'stripped of its sensory characters', and more processes are used to 'mask, imitate and transform "natural" or "traditional"

²⁹ From *Wilden* 116-117.

products' through artificial flavourings and preservatives (Fischler 1988:289). These practices were selectively rejected by my participants: sauces were bought from the supermarkets, but the meat should never be meddled with.

The consumption of the moose, furthermore, reinforced physical links with Arjeplog's nature and the identity of the hunters. Fischler discusses the act of eating 'in which we send a food across the frontier between the world and the self, between "outside" and "inside" our body', and through doing so incorporate the properties of the food itself and 'become what we eat' (1988:279). Similarly, Bennet calls this a 'mutual transformation' in which the boundaries between inside and outside are blurred (2007:134). As she argues, food is not simply a passive object in consumption but is a 'coparticipant' with 'agentic capacity': it affects the bodies that consume it (ibid). My participants in Arjeplog never explicitly talked about their bodies in relation to the meat, but many talked about the importance of the practices of *eating* something as natural as the berries, the moose meat, and the reindeer which have all come from their local home environment. While they ate and drank other produce from the supermarkets, including international goods and processed foodstuffs, the access they had to this 'real food' from the wild was a deep source of pride. Battaglia (1990) has written of food's relationship to the physical body and to personhood, what it means to be a person and connecting to the relationship between the 'outside' and the 'inside' as described by Fischler (1988). Her research with the Sabarl island society explores the relationship between food and the *physical* person, examining the effect on the body of consuming different foodstuffs and how this makes both the physical person *and* the person as a socially recognised being (1990:17).

Battaglia's concepts and categories are useful to consider in the case of the Arjeplogare, with the physical consumption of meat playing an important role as it does not contain harmful chemicals and comes directly from the forest (or lake). This raises interesting questions of the perceived impact on the body from the local meat versus meat that has been treated with chemicals, which is not something my participants explicitly discussed with a direct link to their bodies but was in the background of these conversations about food.

The specific categorisation of wild game was crucial: when I left Arjeplog to travel south I was often on my way to my partner's parents' organic farm. There I could eat organic beef and lamb meat, pasture fed, certified organic animals. My participants knew of this farm and my occasional work there, yet still referred to the real food of the north – Mats asking if I had missed this 'real food' when I came back to Arjeplog. Thus, the moose meat was both truly wild game *and* place-based, connected to the pride of that specific wilderness. It did not matter, perhaps, if I had eaten organic meat, or even game shot in the south. Battaglia's concept of 'relational personhood' – the concept of 'self in relation to significant relationships with others' (1990:188) – is especially interesting in the context of Arjeplog, where this idea of 'real food' was notably place-based and positioned as in opposition with the capital and with 'other' places of the south. When Mats asked me if I missed 'real food' when I was in Stockholm, I realised that he thought this kind of food was missing in the city, and that this was an underlying theme in some Arjeplogare's discussion of the north versus Stockholm specifically. Hunting was not uncommon in the south and around the capital, but there was a frequent framing of Stockholm as apart from nature due to its status as the capital.

Mats told me once that he had read how Stockholm would last only days if it was cut off from the rest of Sweden, as it did not know how to procure food. Food in the city was transported in from surrounding farms or factories, it was not hunted or foraged in the same local scale as in Arjeplog. Returning to Fischler, 'human beings mark their membership of a culture or a group by asserting the specificity of what they eat, or more precisely – but it amounts to the same thing – by defining the otherness, the difference of others' (1988:280). Fischler goes on to give examples of how nations view other nations' cuisines, but this point is applicable here in the difference between Arjeplog (as rural north) and Stockholm (as representative of urban south).

Food was used by many of my participants in place-based practices of identity, therefore, both in Arjeplog but also as an opposition against Stockholm. Caplan discusses the term 'identity' in terms of food, reminding us that it is a term that has been critiqued for essentialising certain descriptive categories such as ethnicity and race (1997). However, Caplan argues, there has not been a suitable replacement for the term, and we can therefore use it with caution, keeping in mind the agency of our participants and not reducing the concept simply to 'lifestyle' (1997:14). Identity can be thought of beyond individual manifestations, as socially constructed 'politics of locality' with links to anthropological research into the person and the self (Caplan 1997:14). Basso writes that place-making is a way of constructing both personal and social identities, that 'we *are*, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine' (1996:7). Writing of the Apache understanding of land, he argues that such conceptions work 'in specific ways to influence Apaches' conceptions of themselves, and vice versa, and that the two work together to influence patterns of social action' (1996:67). He is therefore demonstrating that understandings of place have an impact on realisations of the people who live there and that this works reflexively

too: places make people just as the people make the places. The conversations about meat in Arjeplog, and about picking berries, were used by the Arjeplogare as a way to shape their understandings of place but also demonstrated how the place then shaped their own identities as inhabitants of that place. And this place-based identity seemed to be used in direct contrast with the rest of the country and with Stockholm and actively constituted with its counterpart. My participants used the properties of their local, natural food as a way to highlight not just the difference between Arjeplog and the capital, but also how it is *better* in the north.

In order to further explore this tension in the dichotomous positioning of Arjeplog and Stockholm, I now turn to a conversation that demonstrated the state as 'out of touch' with rural life in terms of sustenance and living from the nature. The state is seen as coming from Stockholm and comprising of people who have no idea of the trials of surviving in the sub-arctic rural north.

Bureaucratic interventions

There is a lot of literature on climate change that examines the impacts on hunter-gatherers who live in seasonal rhythm with their local nature, especially in the Arctic regions where the average temperature increase is much higher than elsewhere (see Ford, et al. 2007; Furberg, et al., 2011; Furgal & Sequin 2006; Krumpnik & Carleton Ray 2007; Hastrup 2018). These sustainable practices of hunting, growing and foraging in Arjeplog are seen as threatened not by the growing discourses of climate change in the nation but by the state itself. While the physical impacts of climate change on the land are surrounded by confusion and uncertainty, as I will discuss in the following chapters, the state's impact on the relationship to nature is understood

through their bureaucratic interventions and regulatory systems surrounding the consumption of game and fish. The state therefore occupies an important and disruptive place in this flowing network of forest-body-food. It is their paperwork and red tape that is hindering this self-sufficiency of living off the land and threatening the network itself. This, given the growing trend of self-sufficiency and living off the land as a response to climate change, is an interesting paradox. What's more, it leads to everyday resistances against the state, as we will see, following Scott (1985).

Towards the end of October, Mats and Marianne invited me to dinner with their friend Peder to eat Arctic char from one of the local restaurants licenced to sell fish from their lake. I asked about the impacts of climate change on fishing and was told that, while I could perhaps find examples of this up in the mountains, there were bigger problems at play. Fishing had changed for other reasons. Having once been about lifestyle and survival it was now a sport for outsiders, catching the biggest pike and trout as trophies rather than food. The biggest problem, however, involved the regulations of the state. These made it difficult to 'live as before', to live off the land.

'You can't', said Marianne, 'you can't be self-sufficient anymore'. In the past, she explained, you could get all the parts of a reindeer from Sami herders and make blood sausage and use the intestines in cooking. Now health regulations meant it all gets thrown away. Instead of using the whole animal, only the 'best bits' are sold and used. To go against this puts the herders in danger as they are not allowed to supply the offal to customers. 'People would have to break the law', she said, 'to live as we lived before.'

Peder was nodding. 'Now everyone has to shop at the supermarket, more and more', he said. 'Before people could live off the land. Before all these rules.'

They agreed that the state was making decisions based on something else, some other motivation, rather than any knowledge of the life here in Arjeplog. If they knew how the people used the land, they said, they would not make these decisions. Peder poked the fire with a long stick. 'And,' he added, 'all of this big business and these regulations are separating people from mother nature. And from the land. It is harder to live as we did before.'

Mats chopped the heads off the fish and fried the rest in a big pan with a little salt. Marianne roasted vegetables, onions and parsnips mixed with frozen vegetables from the freezer. As the fish sizzled in the hot butter, Mats gestured to me with a spatula. 'My food is ready. What will you eat?' he said, straight-faced but with the characteristic twinkle under his baseball cap. I nodded to my glass of wine, and a boiled egg leftover from breakfast, waiting quietly on the kitchen table. 'I will eat wine and eggs, like a meal from Jesus'. Mats let out a short laugh and then his eyebrows furrowed. 'If Jesus tried to feed people now they would complain that the bread has gluten, the fish is full of quicksilver, and none of it is organic'.

The fish was soft and pink and full of flavour. The whole kitchen smelled of the cooked char, butter and roasted vegetables and the light from the fire spread throughout the dusk.



The char is direct from the lake Reibnes, Marianne told me, caught by one of the owners. This should be obvious, that a restaurant would sell fish from its own lake, but this was in fact unusual. In Kraja, the holiday camping park on the edge of Arjeplog town, they serve white fish caught in the south of Sweden. I asked why, and she replied: 'the Rules'. A veterinarian needs to approve the area where the fish is cleaned and filleted before the fish can be sold, and the seller needs a licence (*yrkesfiskelicens*). If they got a licence, she said, and committed to serving local fish, maybe it would encourage other locals to sell fish to restaurants. Now, though, restaurants wouldn't touch fish that was not fished without a licence, or from an area without approval.

'But it is so silly, when there is so much good fish in Arjeplog' she said. Vuonatjviken, where the char was caught, has a licence to catch, sell and serve fish at their restaurant. They cannot serve moose there, however, even though it is right there in the forest beside the lake and would be the best and cleanest moose meat she could think of.

'Sweden is very afraid right now,' said Marianne.

The conversation that evening demonstrated the strong desire to live from the nature and be self-sufficient as much as possible, able to eat the best food without meddling from the state or from big corporations. Just as the food was seen as

important physical link between nature and the body, it was also an important part of personhood in terms of independence. It was a way to be sustainable from the local environment, though few Arjeplogare described it explicitly in those terms. For them it simply made sense to get as much food as possible from the wealth of their own nature rather than shipping in food from elsewhere without knowing where it came from.

Cindy Isenhour has written of nature and consumer culture in Sweden, specifically in Stockholm. She argues that there is a deep divide in the experience of nature for urban versus rural Swedish people. Rural Swedes, she argues, are more 'a part of nature' than the urban Swedes for whom nature is something elsewhere (2011:127). The dependency of technological solutions and 'expert voices' in the cities, she argues, poses the risk of missing other important discourses, including those from rural areas. What is especially relevant in Isenhour's work in relation to this project is her focus on sustainability. She points out that the Swedish government has a desire to 'lead an international shift to sustainability' (quoting Matti 2009), via a 'technocratic approach', but many do not realise the 'embodied cost' of the things they buy from elsewhere (Isenhour 2011:120). The approach of the government is more readily accepted by the urban Swedes who are in favour of technocratic solutions while rural Swedes, she argues, mistrust these solutions as they work more in cooperation with nature. In Arjeplog these 'solutions' have proven disastrous for beloved local landmarks and everyday experience of nature as we saw in the case of hydropower. What is more, locals in Norrland already live a lifestyle that would widely be seen as 'sustainable' regarding the bulk of their food. While supplementary vegetables and dairy products are bought from the local supermarkets, protein is overwhelmingly sourced from local fish and game and many plant their own potatoes and pick berries where possible.

Environmental discourses around the world and the internet are heralding 'eat local' approaches (Guha 2000; Heise 2014) and there is a palpable longing on Instagram for the days of going into the nature and foraging. Yet in Arjeplog where the 'eat local' approach is of prime importance, many feel threatened by the city itself. While Isenhour hopes for cooperation between the two groups, urban and rural, she is also clear in her argument that rural Swedes should not be overlooked in discourses of sustainable living and Sweden's future: 'localised understandings of nature are paramount for sustainability', she argues (ibid:127). However, this local understanding of nature in Arjeplog and the local food practices are seen as threatened not by the global discourse pushing the state and nation to consider its climate contribution, but by the state itself. This is specifically regarding the practices of hunting and fishing, seen as locally sustainable and the best food from nature. It is bureaucracy and regulation that are experienced as hindering these local practices.

The implications of this tension are very important. In Ferguson and Gupta's work on the spatiality of the state (2002), they argue that state infrastructures are realised through what they call 'verticality' – that the state exists above other citizens enacted through 'social and imaginative processes through which state verticality is made effective and authoritative' (2002:983). Working from Foucault's notion of governmentality (1991), Ferguson and Gupta argue that governance is enacted upon citizens from this imagined 'top-down' position through discourse, regulation, discipline and institutions (2002:989). Among the Arjeplogare, there was an awareness of this position of the state attempting to govern from a constructed position 'above' the region's inhabitants. The Arjeplogare with whom I worked were not passively standing by and accepting this paradox embedded in the sustainability narrative, or the perceived interferences of the state in their traditional practices.

Small resistances, following the work of Scott (1985), emerged in response to these regulations and bureaucratic interventions. As I discussed in chapter two, Scott argues that resistance does not always need to be on the level of mass protests or violence but can play out in everyday conversations or 'hidden transcripts' just as important as the headline grabbing resistance movements (Scott 1985, 2005; Amoore 2005).

In Arjeplog, in response to the perceived shortcomings of the state, a few of my participants discussed when they would buy the fishing cards required if one wanted to fish further afield than the lake surrounding their own private property. While the hunting licences were discussed with the utmost respect and seriousness, these fishing cards were seen as a little more flexible. The money from the sale of the cards went either to a small association, who maintained the fishing grounds of that locale, or it went to the state. In the first case, I was told, it was supporting Arjeplog to pay a small association who worked to care for future fishing. Paying money to the state, however, was seen as a pointless endeavour in which the money would become 'part of the system' of Sweden and not come directly back into Arjeplog. Likewise, a few would not pay if there was a personal family connection to the lake in question even if they themselves did not own the land. This resistance is incredibly focussed on traditional hunting and fishing, the idea of Arjeplog-as-place, and as diametrically opposed to Sweden-as-state. If the money is seen to contribute to sustainable food practice it is worth paying. If it benefits the state without benefiting Arjeplog, some Arjeplogare would prefer not to pay it.

I argue that these actions form such everyday resistance as described by Scott (1985, 2005). Specifically, these practices fit his concept of 'infrapolitics', in which resistance takes the form of 'disguised, low profile, undeclared resistance' (2005:70)

against the perceived top-down verticality described by Ferguson and Gupta (2002). The Arjeplogare who discussed not buying the cards did not talk about it in terms of direct resistance against the state, but it was framed as not wanting to be part of the system and not contributing to the Swedish state which did not directly provide for them. Thus, it did blend into their lives as a commonplace act, as Amoore describes 'the more mundane gestures of everyday life reveal significant sites of political struggle' (2005:7). Furthermore, Amoore writes, Scott's idea of the hidden transcript should not be seen as 'poor substitutes for real resistance' (2005:7). Just because there were not angry protests on the streets does not mean the sense of injustice is not felt or acted upon. Lotten Björklund Larsen wrote a fantastic ethnography of Swedes carefully selecting the percentage of their income they would happily hide from the state as 'black income' (2018). She argues that Swedes stop declaring everything once they feel the reciprocal relationship with the state is not being honoured, so they pay enough and then they do certain business off the books. In Arjeplog, the money for the fishing cards would disappear into the pockets of the nation and many expect it would not come back to the municipality. They were lacking investment in key areas such as healthcare, along with the above regulations seen to be interfering with their attempts to continue traditional subsistence practices.

These small resistances are directed at the state in the context of environmental management, but it would be a stretch to define them as environmentally motivated. They are a response to the perceived disinterest of the state in rural affairs and simultaneous meddling of their policy which effects the northern lifestyle. In Guha's work with the Chipko movement he argues that the resistance against the dams and state intervention were classified externally as environmental, but it was really a peasant movement defending rights in the forest (2000a, 2000b). The conflict, he

argued, was 'embedded in very different understandings of the social role of the forest' (2000a, xiii). In Arjeplog, the situation is not (yet) an open conflict, but an ongoing tension and conflict of interest. We could argue that this particular conflict is itself 'embedded', as Guha writes, but in in the different understandings of the relationship between humans, place and food – the role of accessing food locally.

Forest-meat-body versus the state

In this chapter I have described an integral, fundamental part of my participants' relationship to nature: food. Their practices of fishing, foraging and in particular hunting are collectively a source of pride and independence while also crucial to their relationship to the forest, creating a forest-body-food network that is a crucial part of their dwelling in and with nature. Consuming the meat from the moose hunt constitutes their physical personhood in relation to nature, as well as their moral responsibilities of taking care of the forest and local landscape, and is also actively used in contrasting their lifestyle with that of Stockholm. This positioning can be understood further through the examination of the perceived interference from the state, disrupting the network and seen as further evidence of the state as 'out of touch' with the rural northern lifestyle. The small resistances can be seen as a rejection of the state's interference and disconnection from Arjeplog's subsistence practices. This rejection will be explored again, in chapter five, when I examine how the latest global and national environmental concern – climate change – is rejected in Arjeplog as a further example of an out of touch urban elite putting pressure on a small community.

4. Climate Change & Nature



During the intensely cold³⁰ and snowy winter of 2017-18 I went to visit Åse's workplace, out on the test tracks she prepared with her family's company. She showed me the ice, the machines, the daily grind of ploughing away the night's heavy snowfall in time for the engineers to drive out in their test cars. Over coffee in the *fika* room I asked about the weather, seasons, and if she thought climate change had come to Arjeplog:

It is impossible to talk about in Arjeplog because it has always been so changeable, season to season. The only thing I know is that there is a winter, a spring-winter, a summer, and an autumn. How those are, who

³⁰ The two images show the hot summer of 2018 to the left, with the banks of Hornavan lake covered in families at the annual festival, beside the extreme snowfall of winter 2017-18 – taken outside my house as the snow piles almost covered my wheelie bin.

knows. You can't talk about climate change in Arjeplog because how do you measure the change? That is how it was for my grandparents, you never know. It is always different here. Like last year when we were out working on the lake there was half a metre of water on the ice. And we thought 'yeah yeah, is this climate change then? Is it time now, will it be like this every year?' But then this year it is winter with full-force. There have been no plus-degree days, we haven't had a winter like this since the 1930s. It is a shit cold winter. Everyone can say 'ahh climate change and greenhouse effect blah blah' but we could also end up in an ice age, right? If the gulf stream is bumped away from us. The only thing we know is that it has gone up, down, up down. Warm, cold, warm, cold. We don't know if it is a forty years cycle or 100 years, no idea. Here it has been a desert, a jungle, so I don't believe we can cause the changes. 10,000 years ago, it was a kilometre of ice. Maybe in 10,000 years it will be a jungle again. And naturally we cannot just throw away more, we should recycle and take care, I think. It should be clean. But I don't believe we can have so much of an effect.

In order to examine how climate change is perceived in Arjeplog as another form of outsider inference, we need to look first at how weather and climate are understood as within the natural realm. While the forest-body-food tripartite discussed previously places the human within a relationship to nature, the way weather and climate change were discussed moves nature into its own scale distinctly separate from human manipulation. Despite this, of course, it was embedded in everyday life in many ways, practices, and habits (Ingold 2005, 2010) and discussed at length.

The weather during my year of fieldwork was, everyone said, very strange. Yet, at the same time, this strangeness was largely experienced as 'normal' and, while many Arjeplogare discussed it frequently, it was not immediately linked to climate change or considered something of long-term concern. The weather has never been predictable, argued many of my participants, and there has always been extreme variation across summers, winters, snowfalls and ice cover. Global warming is perceived as a natural phenomenon linked to the local idea of weather as reliably unreliable. Climate *change* is understood as, in part, natural workings of the earth's system and as a continuation of massive fluctuations through Earth's deep time. This draws upon the narratives of climate change in the media, and in what Morton (2018) has called the often confusing 'information dump' of climate communication as well as broader understandings of nature and its power as a force untouchable by human action.

Weather & climate

It should be clarified here that climate and weather are not the same thing, though they may be 'fudged' and confused by climate variability and anthropogenic (human caused) impacts (Rayner 2003). Climate is the expected, average pattern of weather over a longer period of time measured through averages and trends (NASA 2005; Ogilvie & Pálsson 2003), making it an abstract and statistical phenomenon that people understand rather than experience directly. This does not mean, however, that there is such a thing as a stable and unchanging 'typical' climate (Hulme 2009): they are themselves in flux, yet people are often taught 'climate' in school as something permanent and reliable.

Weather, on the other hand, refers to the physical manifestations of climate in the atmosphere: the everyday, changing-by-the-minute part of landscape as

experienced by the body (see Roncoli, et al. 2009; Strauss & Orlove 2003) and understood in seasons. As Vedwan and Rhoades warn, however, seasons are also conceptual modes and not reliable factual representations (in Roncoli, Crane, & Orlove 2009), and memories of past climate and weather are influenced by 'idealized stereotypes' of seasons (Rayner 2003:289). Furthermore, climate itself should be understood not as fixed or static but always changing (Ogilvie and Pálsson 2003) – something often overlooked in the early anthropological examinations of these topics (Rayner 2003).

Any understanding of climate *change* both as idea and as physical phenomenon in Arjeplog must first begin with an understanding of how weather and seasons are experienced in place. This is something which Ingold has argued has been missing from anthropological inquiry, but is necessary as weather is a part of landscape both physically and experientially (Ingold 2005, 2010). As discussed in the introductory chapter, there has been a resurgence in interest in weather after the 20th century avoidance in the topic, a retreat in response to the legacy of climate determinism (Peterson & Broad 2009; Rayner 2003). There are now many scholars examining lived experience of weather, climate, and climate change, and Strauss and Orlove's edited volume *Weather, Climate, Culture* (2003) contains different perspectives of the north: weather in the Icelandic Sagas (Ogilvie and Pálsson 2003) and knowledge of the climate in the Canadian Arctic (Henshaw 2003). This was followed by the RAI's 2016 conference 'Anthropology, Weather and Climate Change' and it is telling, too, that the 2019 meeting of the American Anthropological Association was named '*Changes d'air*', which while comprising of many changes within the discipline also had a notable climate change focus within the Anthropology and Environment society – a leap from the 'first' mention of climate change at the AAA annual meeting by Steve Rayner in 1988 (Rayner 2003).

During my year of fieldwork, not one season behaved as desired. Marianne, Fredrik and I went hiking during my first summer and it rained the whole time. The temperatures were low, and everyone complained of the incessant rain and cold winds that prevented them from going out and doing what they usually did in the summertime: fishing and swimming in the 8727 lakes across the *kommun*. Fredrik said he hadn't swum at all. During my bigger exhibition at the museum it was these activities that were seen as missing from the red walls of Silvermuseet. Some visitors peered at the images of summer and asked, 'where are people swimming?' before a pause and, 'Oh, but we didn't swim at all last summer, it was so bloody cold'.



The rains continued into autumn, and Anna-Lena started longing for the snow. The golden burst of colour from the birches was lost in an endless sleet of grey. In the mountains, where they would usually be shining flecks that picked up the low autumn sunlight among the dark pines, they hung limp in the onslaught. Town was cold and wet and grey, hoods pulled down over faces hunched against the world, and the hunters in the forests came back dripping. Marianne, Mats, Fredrik and I sat

in the Revi house and watched the rain pour onto the lake outside as the nights drew in. Puddles were everywhere and full of sodden orange leaf mush. Snow would make it beautiful again, Anna-Lena said. Everything looks better in the snow.





But, when it came, it came every day. It never stopped. It snowed more than anyone could remember, and with no *blida* weather (a milder period, always in mid-January) to compress the snow, it became deep and troublesome. ‘Shit weather’, people would say, as the thick flakes fell like a curtain outside the windows. Trucks worked around the clock to keep the roads clear. Mats, Fredrik and I had to push the snow of the garage roof, which they had never had to do before. All through town people were pushing snow of roofs, balancing precariously without ropes as they tackled this extreme assault on their homes. People couldn’t go out in the forest on their snowmobiles because they would fall through the soft powder and get stuck, altering their experience of familiar places and their now unreliable mobilities. Uffe showed me how to drive out on the lake and we felt the snow give way under the snowmobile, hitting the wet slush atop the ice. Many of the Samis’ reindeer died in the deep snowfall, too, without the thick crust to support their weight. After a miserable summer, the winter turned out to be even worse.

The snow continued into spring-winter, meaning the beloved activity of *pimplar* (drilling a hole in the ice to fish) was off the table too and people were unable to go out to their familiar spots on the ice. We tried, once – Marianne, Fredrik and I – when my mother was visiting, snowmobiling out to the lake in the snow. It was ice cold and painful. This was also something missing from the exhibition, which some wrote on the feedback paper I provided. When an acquaintance from the museum looked around at the photographs, she said it was interesting that I had missed some of these ‘classic’ things due, in part, to the strange weather.





After the misery of snowfall, the spring came fast and warm, high temperatures beginning even in May. Sitting in Revi with Marianne, Mats, Anna-Lena and Dan after two days of 20+ degree weather, jokes abounded that it had already been two days longer than summer the year before. We were out of our jackets and into the sun, basking in the relief of the warm weather and swimming in the newly melted lake water. The temperatures didn't cease, however, and soon forest fires were spreading around the country. Helicopters stationed in Arjeplog flew out every night to check surrounding forests, and the *kommun* was on edge as fires crept closer and closer. Small brooks dried up in the forest and familiar routes became confused: rivers as points of reference no longer flowing, the ground crisp and hard even in dense forest. The lakes stayed warm, and the small beaches edging the lakes were full of sunbathers and swimmers enjoying the warmth after last year's dismal summer. While Anna-Lena asked if this was the beginning of climate change, and the national media began to link it to global warming, others replied with reminders of the summer of 2014. That summer came up regularly as an example of the weather being just as hot, with the lake water reaching 26°C. Although, as one woman reminded her friend, that was just five weeks. This summer of 2018 was closing in on four months.



During that year, where nothing was as it should be, conversations about weather were everywhere: in the bank, the supermarkets, the *fika* tables, the knife course. This might well have happened had the weather been 'normal', too, and in the following year's trips to Arjeplog the weather was discussed in person and on social media when it was undramatic, when unusually good, and when rainy or cold. This demonstrates how weather in Arjeplog is definitely a social event. It was not just subconsciously experienced, but socially understood and conversationally important, with previous years always on hand for comparisons.

Ingold has written of the way landscape, including weather, is felt in the body (2000, 2005, 2010). He details how physical realities are felt without conscious reflection, a polemic against the Cartesian dualisms of mind and body in which he states the world is not consciously reflected upon (Ingold 2000). While I certainly do not dispute his argument against Descartes – as the world very much *is* felt in the body and through all the senses and not just in the mind – this aspect of life in Arjeplog demonstrates how the weather is felt consciously *alongside* the feelings in the body. Weather is a social phenomenon, too, in how it is understood through conversation and compared through the years. Golinski has shown this with British weather conversation, as a social act that overcomes class boundaries in everyday encounters (Golinski 2003). What makes one year a 'good weather' year? People deciding it is, using former years as comparisons. They feel weather in their senses and bodies, but they also talk, compare and understand. As a part of lived landscape, weather is thought about and theorized.

As I noticed this weather-focus throughout town, I expected a link to be made between the strange seasonal weather and the climate reports variously linking

both extreme precipitation and heatwaves with climate change. People were clearly very focussed on weather in Arjeplog, and it effected their experience of landscape, nature and home. The many conversations and comparisons of the year's weather with former seasons provided a good entry-point for me to ask about climate change.

Frequently I asked, 'do you think this strange weather is climate change?' Frequently I was told 'nah'. There was no clear, local suggestion from within Arjeplog or from the local media that the heavy snowfall specifically *was* climate change. Some reports indicated that changes in the north of Sweden would manifest themselves as higher levels of precipitation (Climate Change Post 2017; SMHI, 2015; The Swedish Commission on Climate and Vulnerability 2007) and other reports suggested the Arctic warming can result in colder weather elsewhere, for example in the UK (Hanna, et al. 2017) and the US (Gibbens 2018). It was only in the summer of 2018 that climate change became a visualised local discourse in Arjeplog, in the form of national media headlines responding to the drought and forest fires.

There was, however, media representation and acknowledgement of the climate threat within Arjeplog among the Sami reindeer herders. This is important to note here as although the participants in this dissertation were not specifically Sami, I did not wish to exclude Sami or reindeer-herders' voices from this discussion. As I mentioned in my introduction, not *focussing* on Sami experience was a deliberate choice due to the articles - academic and otherwise - being written from within the Sami communities themselves, as well as their reluctance to speak to more researchers. I did speak with a number of people who were engaged in reindeer herding. For reindeer herders in the north of Sweden, climate change is a discourse many engage with publicly. An article published in *Silverbägen* magazine detailed

the impacts of climate change in Arjeplog for local herder Anders-Erling Fjällås, who discussed the vulnerabilities of herding and shifting seasons (Söderberg 2017). I asked my acquaintance at the museum, Malin, about this and about the weather so far. She is Sami and herds reindeer and she explained their relationship to *Sveriges meteorologiska och hydrologiska institut* – Sweden’s meteorological and hydrological institute (SMHI):

[SMHI] came to the Reindeer Herding Association 10 years ago to talk about climate change. They had predictions for what would happen in 50 years, and what is scary is that we are seeing those predictions now. That is really scary. The weather has been strange since 2006. It has been a mess. And herders know this, they know that 2006 was a mess.

From 2006 herders had to start feeding their reindeer all winter when previously they would have been finding their own food. There had been one ‘normal’ winter since 2006 but all the others had been chaos. Malin explained how the economy could recover with one normal winter but they really needed two or three to get back to how it was before. From 2006 onwards, it would snow and then rain, melt a bit, and then it became ice, so the food on the forest floor was always mouldy. Reindeer use their nose to find food, and even if they could get to the food through the new ice, they wouldn’t eat it; they would reject the food even after breaking through the ice because the lichen and moss was destroyed by mould. No herders would say that the snow that year was climate change, however. Malin explained how it happens every fifty years or so, and herders know this. It happened before in the winter of 1987, and a lot of reindeers died and herders quit. The problem they are experiencing is more the shifting of the seasons and the freezing of the rain.

This brief sidestep away from my main participants demonstrates the multiplicity of voices present in Arjeplog with regards to weather and climate. It shows that people experience weather very differently and that, in one place, certain people 'feel' and closely observe the effect of climate change while others do not: the non-reindeer herding community are experiencing the same weather patterns in Arjeplog and they are not engaging with national and global climate change discourses in the same ways. For the Sami reindeer herders, a change was definitely happening, and it was specifically related to the reindeer and their food. That is how they knew. They saw and noticed climate change as those observations of nature were crucial aspects of reindeer husbandry. This is not to say that all Sami in Arjeplog discussed climate change in this way, but Malin suggested it was definitely acknowledged among the herders in the region.

One response I received with regards to climate change was, '*ask the Sami. They live closer to nature so they feel the impacts more*', which raised interesting questions of the nearness of nature; while Arjeplogare lived arguably close to nature through the hunting, fishing, and foraging practices, the Sami were seen as living closer due to their cultural reindeer herding traditions of moving across the landscape every year with their herds. When this reference came up it was almost certainly describing herders specifically as it was often in the context of reindeer and seasonal migrations, although this assumption has been problematic for the Sami in the past as not all Sami herd reindeer and this was a State-imposed definition (see Green 2009; Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008). The separation of nature and culture for the reindeer herders was thus described almost as blurred, yet still separate. They did not live as part of nature, but *closer* to it than others. This is also a point made by Furberg, et al. (2011), where they argue that the Sami are exposed to the effects of climate change more than others as they live closer to nature. They experience

changes in seasons as well as the rising treeline, sunburn for the reindeer, and a 'disjuncture' with the traditional knowledge they rely on, all leading to increased pressure in the already threatened reindeer herding industry (ibid).

For the non-reindeer herding Arjeplogare, any strange behaviour in the weather was discussed but was also contextualised within the history of weather in the region, with experience and knowledge of weather used as evidence. 2014 was often used as an example of a former 'hot' year to argue that 2018's summer was nothing new. Sometimes the examples stretched back to the 1930s.

Mats explained to me how weather in Arjeplog had always been deeply unstable. We were at the *stuga* at Långudden, his parents' main cabin. We had driven up with Anna Lena and Dan to celebrate the first of May (*Valborgsmässafton*), and make a weekend of it, piling reindeer skins onto the snowy benches and grilling hamburgers in the spring sun as the dogs capered in the undergrowth.



One afternoon I was sitting at the big table indoors, idly driving a toy tractor over my fieldnotes as the snow drifted down in the bright, high sunlight – a final swansong before the summer. The others were sleeping after the late-night jollities of the *Valborgs* party the night before.

Mats emerged from behind the curtain separating the sleeping area of the *stuga* from the main living space with the fire. He stared at my notes for a while, bleary eyed from his nap. He asked what I was doing, and I asked about the weather.

‘This strange weather, all year,’ I asked, ‘that is not climate change?’

He looked at me for a while, thinking, and I sensed a measuring taking place. It was not a simple question here in Arjeplog; it carried a weight, and conversations became noticeably heavy when I asked.

'No.'

I stared at my notes under the wheels of the tractor, kinship diagrams in bright crayon that I had attempted with Fredrik, who had found the whole thing a bit strange. 'Do you think climate change happens at all in Arjeplog?'

He shrugged and said, 'njaah... maybe slightly milder winters, a little. But if there is climate change here it does not matter so much. It does not make such a big difference. It is not so dangerous. Maybe milder winters, wetter summers, that is what they say. But more rain - that does nothing'. He rubbed his eyes, pulled out a chair and sit down. He told me a story; one he would tell me again when I next asked about the 'strange' weather.

There was a guy, back when people went by horse over the lakes in winter. This guy, one year he could get across the lake to the church to celebrate Midsommar in June. He went across the ice! The next year, the lake had barely three weeks of good ice. So, you see... it is always changing in Arjeplog. One year can be cold even until May or June. And then it can be no ice. It is never the same.

This anecdote contextualised in part the responses I had heard when asking about climate change before. The strange weather of 2017-2018 was not linked to climate change by the non-reindeer herding Arjeplogare. The weather of that year was understood as part of a long history of unpredictable weather fluctuations. Some

years are warm, some are cold, some have a lot of ice and some years have none. This is not just an Arjeplog phenomenon, either. As Andersen wrote, while some engineers attributed the varying rainfall to climate change there were others who contextualised the heavy rains to the cyclical nature of weather in Arequipa, in which dry years were followed by wet years and this was nothing new (Andersen 2014: 47).

As Mats' story suggests, extreme weather can and will be contextualised in terms of such cyclical or unpredictable weather patterns in Arjeplog. The strange thing, it would seem, would be if the weather became reliably *one thing* – if it warmed over a period of many years, with summers always warm and winters always mild.

I asked Mats about the voices saying the arctic areas are already being hit by climate change, with faster impacts compared to the global averages³¹.

'Yeah', he said, 'but that is higher up. More north. Here, we are somewhere in between. And the question is, is this natural change or something we have done?'

³¹ See ACIA 2004; Crate, 2009; Hastrup 2018a, 2018b; Callison, 2014; Campbell, 2018; Furberg, et al., 2011 Henshaw 2003.



This question of humans' moral culpability in climate change is complex and interesting and threw me into a web of methodological and personal uncertainties during my fieldwork. Prior to my arrival in Arjeplog I had lived in London for seven years based variously at universities or at arts institutions. During those years, there was a notable shift in the way media reported on climate change and how it was discussed within both arts and academic institutions. It went from being something large and uncertain – a mammoth issue lurking in the background, covered with impartiality – to an 'accepted truth' covered with certainty of the impending crisis faced by humanity. This is not to say *all* media organisations were accepting of this narrative, however (far from it), but in 2017 the BBC told its staff to no longer treat anthropogenic climate change as a theory³² and to cover it as a fact in its reporting. They no longer needed to have voices representing the 'other side', representing any

³² As I discuss later in this chapter, it has been argued that climate change is so complex and evolving that journalists responded with 'balance' by giving the perspectives from climate change skeptics, which was in itself a standpoint by allowing them to gain media time and therefore traction (Hoggan and Litemore 2009; see also Boykoff and Boykoff 2004)

scientific doubt, in order to be impartial in their reporting. Anthropologists, too, were writing of the *fact* of climate change as a 'global event' (Crate 2009; Fiske et al. 2014). In 2018, sixty academics, environmentalists, and politicians published an open letter 'saying they will no longer debate with those who deny anthropogenic climate change, refusing to enable any false equivalence between the two positions' (in Crockford, 2018). Thus, in many discursive circles, especially those liberal academic spaces of which I was a part, the idea of doubt was eradicated as academics, environmentalists, and politicians attempted to quash the idea of a balanced disagreement.

What felt certain to me in London was problematized in Arjeplog. There, the cause of climate change was by no means understood as certain or black and white. It was enmeshed in uncertainty, in doubt, in understandings of nature and in distrust of the voices seen to be coming from an out-of-touch and environmentally polluted urban capital. While many anthropologists write of the threats and adaptations of climate change (Fleischmann 2018; Peterson and Broad 2009; Roncoli, Crane and Orlove 2009), relatively few have focussed on the questioning or outright repudiation of such discourses. This presented me with a significant personal and methodological challenge: how to write about rejections of the climate science I had hitherto experienced as fact. My very funding application proposed to examine relationships between climate change, landscape and personhood, with the naïve assumption that climate change was certainly being felt in northern Sweden. This was complicated further by the fact that climate change burst onto international headlines during the last summer of my fieldwork, and I was then involved in producing an exhibition portraying the impacts of climate change in the Arctic at the

Nordic Museum in Stockholm³³. My own positionality therefore became an issue within my role as researcher when I discussed this upcoming exhibition with Arjeplogare in the field. It did impact my relationships with people in Arjeplog who knew I had this research interest that they perceived to be a Stockholm or city perspective, and I talk about this more in the following chapter regarding the difficulties this created during fieldwork and conflicting discourses between urban and rural communities.

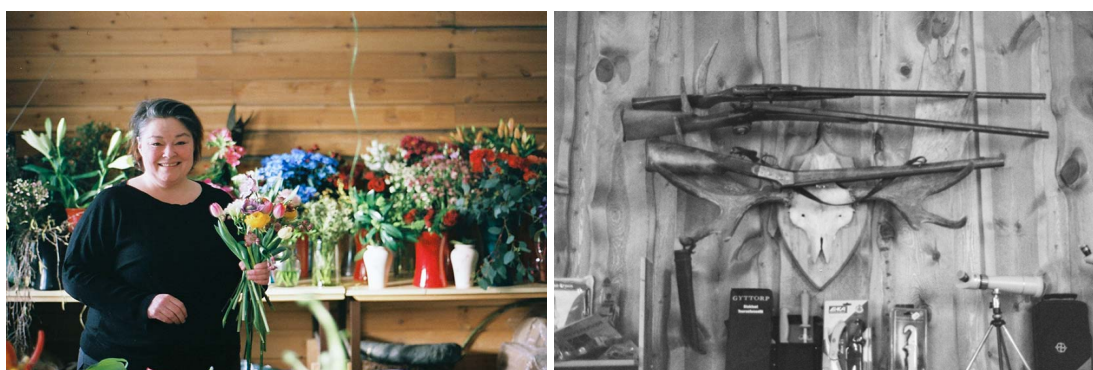
Instead of the simplified threat/adaptation narrative I had envisioned in my earlier proposal, I was faced with something that challenged my assumptions of how climate change is received, how it entangles with political economic history, and how it intensifies existing tensions of landscape and place. As Herskovitz reminds us, however, reflecting on Boas's work in the Arctic, 'how many of us, that is, have not had the experience of going to the field with conceptions of the people and their life, and with problems that have had to be revised, often radically, in the face of the actual data?' (Herskovits 1957: 116).

In the following I explore how the cause of climate change is understood as natural in Arjeplog, an extension of the idea of the natural weather fluctuations but adapted to the global scale – in which nature occupies a role outside of human influence. As Latour argues, there are *only* local views of climate change: no one can see the whole Earth (2011:6).

³³ Arktis: medan isen smelter (The Arctic, while the ice is melting) opening October 2019. A CHASE funded placement in which I produced a film about Arjeplog car testing and worked with the publication of the exhibition catalogue.

Understanding climate change as natural

I talked about climate change a lot with my close friend and participant, Anna-Lena, who teased me about my 'climate anxiety'³⁴. I spent a lot of time at Guns and Roses during my fieldwork, helping out at the flower shop and drinking coffee in the little office. It had become a sort of unofficial local café, where friends would drop in and catch up with Anna Lena and Dan between customers. They finally put in a thermos into the main shop, after I left, so customers could sit and drink coffee among the flowers.



At several points during the year Anna-Lena asked if the weather changes were climate change. Sometimes I was not sure if she was asking me directly or asking herself – a way to think out loud when the weather began to get in the way. The first time was during the moose hunt in September, when she had not been able to go out hunting because the wind was coming from the wrong direction and the moose would hear the approach. She asked again during the summer, after weeks of high temperatures and no rain: 'Is *this* climate change?' Her face was full of uncertainty.

³⁴ A term used in both the UK and Sweden (klimatångest) to refer to anxiety occurring as a result of the global threat of climate change.

It was the middle of July, the summer heatwave was in full force and the temperatures were dancing around the thirty-degree mark. Lake Hornavan was 21°C in places and town was full of tourists, sitting outside eating ice creams after buying fishing gear from GK's Fiske och Cafe. Anna-Lena and Dan had carried all the flowers outside the shop and set them on large tables beside an outdoors till, protected by a little tarpaulin roof.

'Isn't it amazing weather?' she called to me as I approached, bending to pat Yrsa and Nikki as they barked and jumped in the sun. We had a cup of coffee outside at the little grilling-place they had built at the front side. Outdoor fires were forbidden now due to the dry ground and forest fires roaring across the news, so we had to make the coffee indoors and carry it out. After coffee we took refuge from the heat inside, spreading the plastic map out on the office table. We kept the edges of the curled plastic flat with coffee cups and candlesticks, and Anna Lena began to draw her map, her Arjeplog.

She was excited to do it, spreading out the colour crayons on the office table and comparing her drawings to tracks of ants through the forest. 'This is so fun! I feel like a child!' She drew lines wiggling out from Arjeplog to the mountains, occasionally popping back into the shop to help a customer. Outside, the sky darkened and became heavy. We started talking about the weather and how warm it had been. I told her I had seen a headline warning '*This is only the beginning*'.

'Of warmer weather?' she asked. She leaned back in her chair and looked at me seriously for a long time, thinking. A deep rumble of thunder made Yrsa look up from her place on the rug.

'Hmm... I can't take it seriously when we had it so cold last summer, when it was seven degrees for the whole summer. What should I believe?' She stared at me,

rolling the crayon gently on the table and biting her lip. Another growl of thunder came from much closer, and rain began to spatter at the windows.

But, I think that it is not just about the global warming. I think it is combinations and natural fluctuations. I have read a lot about the Gulf Stream. A number of researchers believe that the Gulf Stream continues to change direction and that can mean several things. If one changes the direction, then we will move towards an ice age, eventually. But it will be warmer first, because all of the ice will melt in the Antarctic and then presses on the Gulf Stream even more. So, I don't know, but I don't think it is exclusively one single thing. Solar winds can also be part of it, and they certainly affect each other, I think. I don't think that one can blame only global warming.

She took a sip of coffee.

But it is quite nice that it is so warm, because we can be outside all day and in the evenings. It is not often that we have so many days outside. Maybe five days last year, so it is really very nice. And we still have a lot of water in Arjeplog so we feel safe with that; we won't have a problem with water for many years because we have the big lakes.



Anna-Lena had done a lot more research into global shifts and climate patterns than many others I spoke to in Arjeplog and she was curious about these changes. What is more, as she describes, if climate change was behind the warmer weather that year then it was not so bad. People embraced the sun that summer, diving into the lakes and sunbathing on the beaches, rejoicing in the days of warmth. Arjeplog is an example of higher summer temperatures being enjoyed by people emerging from long, cold winters, and this is not an isolated phenomenon. Warmer weather can be experienced without the cognitive link to a global climate shift. As Henshaw has also shown, sometimes climate change can manifest as a positive change alongside the negative impacts: she argues that climate change has offered useful potential for Inuit hunters in Alaska in terms of hunting and tourism (Henshaw 2003).

This conversation with Anna-Lena also demonstrates the everyday reception of climate science, media discourses and the confusion of what Timothy Morton has called the 'information dump' (2018) inherent in climate science communication. There is a vast amount of media coverage focussing on climate change, originating in press releases from both the IPCC (The International Panel on Climate Change)

but also from sources invested in confusion, producing doubt in the conversation on behalf of oil and gas companies via scientists paid for by interested think tanks (see Hoggan and Littlemore 2009; Oreskes and Conway 2010). The scientific discourse on climate change can be confusing with seemingly contradictory statements being released, and the uncertainty of some aspects being incredibly difficult to communicate (Cash, et al. 2006). Callison argues that it is a 'democratic ideal' that citizens will seek out information about climate science and inform themselves (2018:19). However, as she demonstrates, scientists are not the best at communicating their findings to the media and this often results in confusion, as well as the fact that the reports are coming so frequently that science journalists cannot keep up with the pace of climate change (ibid).

Anna-Lena was seeking information about the climate and changes in Northern Sweden, an example of this 'democratic ideal' described by Callison (2018:19). She could not take the threats of climate change seriously when the summer had been so cold, however, and therefore her own experience and memory was at odds with the media coverage of global warming. Through her own online research, she found evidence of climate change as natural – as a complex system of interdependent events and phenomena that dictate weather across the Nordic region. She identified the gulf stream and solar winds, using this as reasoning that climate change was in part a natural process. This implicates nature as an actor in climate change, as a cause for the global shifts and any strange weather events in Arjeplog. It explains, too, why some summers could be much colder than others instead of an upward trend towards year-round warming. This echoes a study by Ragnar Löfstedt, whose work in the northern city of Umeå explored lay understandings of global climate change (1991). Löfstedt found that while some interviewees described warmer

temperatures, few connected it with energy use and associations were made instead with ozone depletion as a cause for global warming (Löfstedt 1991).

I want to examine this idea of how science is received and understood further using one very specific motion that I witnessed many times during my year in Arjeplog when asking about climate change. The 'arm wave' demonstrated the ways in which scientific discourses are drawn into understandings of the world, and to the body itself.

The arm wave: graphs in the air

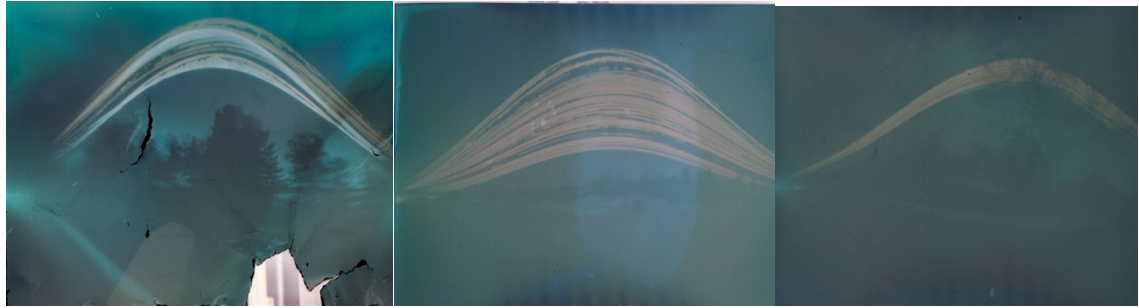
During my exhibition at Silvermuseet, Janne - a friend of Marianne - came to see the photos and tell me what was missing. As he ate a piece of Victoria Sponge and drank his coffee we talked about the weather and the snow. He was interested in measuring the local weather and he had a barometer to measure air changes. He said it had not been a bad summer, the one before the heatwave in 2018. He actually thought it had been warm, but he couldn't remember when I asked if he thought it had been cold and wet. But when I asked about climate change, what he thought of it and if it was difficult, he replied, 'there are always these natural changes, fluctuations' he said, 'it is always hard to know with weather. My mother remembered a very warm summer in 1930s, she always said so. And people in the south can't believe how warm it gets here but it is because we have the Gulf Stream'.

As he said those words, his arm moved through the air in the shape of a wave, endlessly flowing like an air-bound snake. This movement completely fascinated me. I had seen it before in Arjeplog and it would reappear throughout the rest of my fieldwork in different conversations with people across the *kommun*. Always the same, the arm rising and falling in a continual movement of earth's deep time.

This was a visual and bodily communication of the earth and its history: of an ice age melting to warmer times, of mini ice ages, and now of the recent warming and its place in this rhythm. The arm, softly gliding through the air, placed understanding of post-industrial warming within a natural, repetitive, embodied pattern of the world's climate. I saw the arm wave again in the forestry office, where a woman explained how climate had always fluctuated and had been even warmer than this before. I saw it when talking to Åse, asking if she was worried about climate change effecting car testing. These arm waves were often accompanied by stories of different weather patterns in childhood: of colder winters, snow on the ground, and more dependable 'Christmas weather' in the south of Sweden that has given way to wet and dreary Decembers. One woman described how grapes had once been grown in Sweden to make wine, and so this warmer period now was just the next 'up' point of the natural wave.

Where did this bodily symbol come from? Had someone done it in Arjeplog first, locally, or on television? Or were people embodying graphs shown to them by scientists or politicians?

The idea for the sun-tracks, discussed in chapter one, was originally about exploring light and landscape with my participants in the field. Once I started scanning the photopaper in the late spring, however, I recognized the shape from the arm waves and could not help connecting the two. When pieced together the sun tracks show the rising and setting of the sun in a constant daily rhythm. This is the same rhythm I saw in discussions of the Earth's climate – the peaks and troughs as a natural cycle, repeating and flowing throughout the history of the planet on a much larger scale.



Understandings of climate hinge ‘on local perception of time’ – organizing ‘cyclical and linear time into segments’ write Roncoli, Crane and Orlove (2009:94 citing Puri 2007). And, of course, my own understanding of Arjeplog took place at a very specific moment in time, in 2017-18, and would have been quite different had I done my research during any other year or moment.

Using the sun prints, we can recreate a rhythm of time visually: each strand in the individual image is a 24-hour cycle of the sun, each image is a six-month cycle as the earth spins, and the three together represent this idea of the earth’s deep time cycle of climate as the planet warms and cools. Each scale is understood as a repeating rhythm of nature – a cycle. The climatic fluctuations are described in the same way as the fluctuations of weather described earlier in this chapter, but on a much bigger scale and with ‘nature’ as an identifiable actor behind the phenomenon. If weather is a small wave, fluctuating year by year, climate is a vast one in which nature pulls the earth into warmer and colder cycles.

Åse once asked me, ‘how can we affect nature? We are so small, we can’t possibly.’ For her, nature was an enormity and the natural fluctuations were outside the realms of influence. Environmental care was scaled instead to the immediate: to keeping local nature clear of rubbish, a visible impact on the nature in which they live and a form of environmentalism that comes from within the community, rather than the forms seen as coming from outsiders. The idea of nature as too big to be

affected means that climate change is often understood as natural fluctuations. However, understanding climate and weather as fluctuating also reinforces the idea of nature as an outside force. It is therefore impossible to find a direction of causation in this relationship, following Rayner (2003:286): is it weather and climate shaping culture or is it ideas of weather and seasons that are shaped *by* human behaviour? The 'fashionable resolution' that Rayner offers is 'coproduction', in which these relationships affect each other in loops (2003:287).

The arm wave incorporates some of the climate change science circulating in the media, but not all of it. In the consensus of climate science³⁵ the wave takes a sharp turn in the mid 20th century where human impact causes the warming to increase dramatically following the industrial revolution. This aspect of the planet's warm periods is left out when embodied by the arm wave.

I asked Johan about this when I was at his office one day in July. I was trying to stay cool in a blouse and the only pair of non-winter trousers I owned, having not expected 33°C heat in the north, and as I walked into the little room on the high street he joked I looked like a yoga instructor. The blinds were pulled down against the sun, already high in the sky by nine o'clock, and we were talking about the hydropower and Arjeplog's shouldering of the responsibilities of renewable energy. Johan began to explain how climate change was not a problem for Arjeplog, how people did not see it yet, and how annoyed he got when warm weather was linked to anthropogenic climate change:

³⁵ In the information distributed by the IPCC, for example, and see Oreskes (2005) for her original paper showing the consensus of scientists that climate change is anthropogenic (human caused).

What I object to is that the moment it gets warm, the people who say that we are destroying the environment say “you see! Now it is getting warm and it is because of us”. And I fail to see the connection. It is warm, yes. But is it natural, or is it us? It doesn’t answer the question, you know, when it gets hot like it is now. It doesn’t... there is no evidence that it is because of something we are doing. And there are peaks like this dating back to the 19th century or the 20th, and also before that. So, it is not like it is something new and unique.

I had a good relationship with Johan. He teased me often and was jovial and kind. I felt little resistance from him in talking about these matters; instead it felt as though I was a naïve schoolchild and he was teaching me the ways of the world. He had opinions on everything, had a lifetime of experience in Arjeplog and abroad, and liked to discuss things. Because of this I felt able to press him a little and offer a counter argument that I often felt unable to do with other participants for whom climate change was a thorny subject.

‘But the peaks are bigger now, aren’t they’, I countered, ‘They are not the same as before?’

Johan smiled and held his hands up in a shrug.

‘It depends how you draw the lines’ he said, leaning back in his chair.

I am not saying that we are not causing it. I am saying that the way the discussion is *done* is what I object to. As in, because it is definitely happening *then* it is us doing it. And I fail to see how you can use that as some kind of evidence. If it did not happen then it wasn’t us, you see?’ he said, laughing. ‘I like to discuss many topics, but I like to know what we

are talking about. Because the scientists are definitely not agreeing on what causes it. And some people around here are 100% sure that if we stopped driving cars so much the glaciers would prevail. And I don't think so.

The glaciers to which Johan is referring are not just abstract glaciers somewhere in the world but include two very specific glaciers in the region. Sweden's largest glacier, Salajekna, resides in Arjeplog's *kommun* and has been melting for the past 200 years with increasing rapidity. One local journalist, Maria Söderberg, has been documenting the melt along with Stockholm University Glaciologist Per Holmlund (Holmlund 2012; Hofman 2014; Söderberg 2017). They fly annual helicopter tours up to the glacier followed by a lecture at the Arctic circle camp Vuoggatjålme. I could not afford the fee to go up in the helicopter and look at the glacier from above but followed along to the lecture afterwards. Holmlund discussed at length the rate of melting and the cause: climate change. But the attendees were those who had been up in the helicopter – a handful of people, mostly journalists. The message spread in its own way around Arjeplog. People knew of their work and sometimes only vaguely of the glacier. As one participant and member of that day's tour, Sofie, told me, many did not even know that the glacier was there. She herself had not known for a long time until she visited herself. If people were going to pay to go up in a helicopter it was to access hiking paths in the mountains or as a luxury to see Arjeplog from above. When I asked my participants what they thought about climate change I sometimes received the response: *'I think if you asked Maria, she is interested in climate change, she could talk about it'*. This echoed with what people said about the Sami too – *ask them, they know about it*. It seemed global warming was happening if you had reindeer or a vested interest in the glacier, but not otherwise.

For Johan, the perceived disagreement of the scientists meant there was insufficient evidence for him to think of climate change as anthropogenic. The fact that doubt existed among them was enough for him to be doubtful himself, and the graphs showing an increase in temperature in the last fifty years were part of the continuing fluctuations of earth's climate, just zoomed in. The implication, from that conversation, was that if one zoomed out far enough on the graph the new peak would just be part of a continuous rhythm and would be nothing unique at all.

The idea of imbalance and disagreement among scientists is worth exploring here, as it has roots in part in a longstanding campaign by interested parties working with the 'production of doubt' primarily in the US (Hoggan and Littlemore 2009; Oreskes and Conway 2011). The consensus on climate change was originally shown by Oreskes in her 2005 article reviewing 928 scientific articles focusing on climate change. President Reagan was briefed on the climate crisis as fact in 1988, and Thatcher began educating her cabinet on global warming and including it in speeches (*Margaret Thatcher- Green Originals* 2019), before the opposition mobilised and began searching for scientists willing to sidestep the peer-review process and publish articles throwing the consensus into doubt or directly undermining colleagues (Hoggan and Littlemore 2009; Oreskes and Conway 2011). For a long time, media outposts within and outside of the US felt obligated to represent both actors: the peer-reviewed scientists and those disagreeing, whose salaries were paid or bolstered by think tanks such as the Heartland institute, itself backed by fossil fuel companies (Hoggan and Littlemore 2009).

This demonstrates the important role that media plays in understandings of the global discourse of climate change. The amount of information available online is staggering, and if media sources still represent 'both sides' of the debate as equally

weighted it comes across as an uncertainty (Boykoff and Boykoff 2004). This is not the only way the processes of climate change communication are complicated and mistrusted in Arjeplog, as I discuss in the next chapter, but it is an important aspect regarding the reception of climate data and climate discourses in the world.

Looking at all forms of climate science, including the peer-reviewed science and the dissenting voices, the processes of accessing this knowledge are always social. As Callison argues, there is no simple line between science as it is produced and as it is received (2014). Climate change, she argues, may have begun as a scientific concept but it 'flourished' as it engaged with people through different interactions and media (Callison 2014:247). As Latour has argued through much of his life's work, the entire process of scientific knowledge production is entangled in social³⁶, human networks (Latour 1993, 1999). This does not mean we should throw doubt into the science itself in a relativist or constructivist understanding of scientific processes, but that we should recognise that science does not exist in a vacuum outside of social processes, and therefore its reception should also be examined as entangled in such networks of human communication and understanding. We can ask, as Callison does, how the climate science travels and is received in place (2014). It is a process which is not yet normalized in the same way as other, more established scientific discourses such as gravity (Henderson & Long 2015): such theories are no longer questioned as the opposition is now so small, whereas climate science is still undergoing this process of material and social relations in order to be 'normalized' (ibid; see Latour 1993).

In Arjeplog, we can see this process in action as people grapple with the science they receive, entwined within media discourses and their own experience of weather as

³⁶ Where social is understood as traces of associations within a network (Latour 2005).

constantly unpredictable. They do not reject scientific voices, quite the contrary. They embrace the science that parallels their understanding of weather as fluctuating. Climate change is therefore not often considered a threat or a human-caused certainty to many Arjeplogare not directly involved in glacial research or reindeer herding. There is a disjuncture between evidence as experiential, building on what people see and hear and remember about the local weather, and evidence in the form of media discourses communicating climate science. People do not simply disbelieve certain media reports over others, but have their own evidence to support what they engage with. As we see in the next chapter, this is also entangled in who is perceived to be making the claims and what their own evidence is understood to be.

Examining causation

There are some anthropologists who discuss the differing understandings of causation and what climate change actually is: Novellino (2003) examines this in the Philippines, where droughts and flooding are seen to result from incest, taboo, or adultery, focusing on the implications of conservationists overlooking the local cosmology and situated understanding of what is causing the strange weather; Anderson's work in Peru (2014) discusses how there is not an agreement over what is classed as climate change; and Crate's work in Siberia (2009) mentions how the Viliui Sakha see the Soviet rockets and link this with the changing weather. Crate acknowledges the Viliui Sakha have an understanding of causation in Siberia that differs from the 'consensus' of climate scientists, but she still writes of the landscape

changes as anthropogenic climate change and calls for advocacy among anthropologists (Crate 2009, 2011).

As I show in this and the following chapter, Arjeplogare are not voicing concern for climate change despite living very close to the Arctic circle – an area widely cited as being the first and most vulnerable region to be hit by anthropogenic climate change (ACIA 2004; Callison, 2014; Campbell 2018; Crate, 2009; Hastrup 2018; Henshaw 2003). If I were to write of the landscape changes they are experiencing as anthropogenic climate change, and more importantly if I positioned them as victims³⁷ of this crisis, I would be betraying the many situations in which I was told that climate change is not happening in Arjeplog, and would be a part of the disconnected urban ‘other’ imposing my activism on their experience of nature.

A number of scholars point to the potential contribution of this discipline and the ethnographer’s ‘particular angle of vision’ (Rosaldo 1989,19)’ (Strauss 2009:166; see also Crate 2009; Henshaw 2009; Roncoli, Crane and Orlove 2009), being able to look at different voices and perspectives in climate change. I argue that this also extends to a place-based examination of rejections of climate change as anthropogenic, and an overt focus on how climate change is understood as a central part of ethnographic enquiry. The following and final chapter continues this argument, closely examining the reception of the discourse of climate change and how it is perceived to be a continuation of the meddling discussed in the earlier chapters.

³⁷ Antrosio and Han (2015) have a useful critique of the ‘victims and villains’ narratives emerging as a theme in climate change research. They discuss how it patronizes communities and denies their resilience as well as removing the complex positions societies can occupy as both producers of carbon and as vulnerable inhabitants, citing McMermott’s research in Trinidad and Tobago (2013). This is discussed more in the following chapter.

5. A Threatening Discourse

I awoke last night to the sound of the helicopter engine starting up and the spokes whirring into action across the harbour. We kept the window open to let in some air but it stayed warm all night. We are in the middle of a heatwave, blazing through Sweden and northern Europe according to the news. It hasn't rained in weeks and forest fires are spreading across the country. The helicopters fly out most nights to check for new blazes, and more and more machines are being called in from Poland to tackle the fires. The earth around Arjeplog is a dusty brown and the water in Hornavan is a balmy 21 degrees – great for swimming. No one swam last year, it was too cold, but now the lakes are full of families and boats. Everyone is swimming to cool down. The front page of Aftonbladet, one of the national newspapers, burst out of the ICA newsstands with the headline: 'DET HÄR ÄR BARA BÖRJAN',

'THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING'.

FIELDNOTES, 18TH JULY 2018

"Maybe that is too much for people to manage. We all recycle here, but what else can we do? It is too much to think about, that climate change is happening. It is too big."

ANNA-LENA, NOVEMBER 2017



In this chapter I argue that it is not the science of climate change that my participants distrust but the voices bringing the message, and the local implications the message has for responsibilities in care of nature. I explore how the messengers of climate change are perceived as out of touch with the Arjeplog lifestyle: environmentalists are seen as urban, naïve actors who do not understand northern rural lifestyles or the need for petrol in daily travel and industry, and the message is seen as an ironic interference from the cities. Their collective use of the discourse includes moralistic sentiments pertaining to responsibilities in the climate crisis, seen as hypocritical and not relevant for the tiny community of Arjeplog who take care of their local nature. Complex configurations of environmental justice and relative responsibility are therefore raised, challenging the victim/villain narrative within discussions of climate change (see Lazrus 2009; Mcdermott Hughes 2013) and presenting a challenge in turn for me as a researcher.

Discourse

In the Introduction I discussed how climate change anthropology can be broader than only examining how climate change is experienced physically in place: it can also examine how the science is received by communities (Rudiak-Gould 2011). I

examined the reception of climate science in the previous chapter, but here I examine the reception of the *discourse* of anthropogenic climate change and its source.

In his book, *Why we disagree about climate change*, Hulme writes in great detail of how 'Climate Change' exists as a discourse as well as a physical phenomenon, where the use of capitals signifies the discursive event rather than physical changes in the world (Hulme 2009). We do not experience climate in the way we experience weather, he argues, as climate is a constructed idea in itself, climate *change* is a discourse, and 'no message is neutral' (2009:226). Over the course of his book, Hulme argues that disagreements over climate change stem from many different ways of experiencing the world: we disagree over the role and operation of science, especially as it can be uncertain³⁸; we disagree over economic value and costs of climate change; we disagree over fundamental beliefs, fears and risks, as well as the roles of government in governing climate crises (Hulme 2009).

Discourse as a concept comes from the fields of linguistics and refers in its widest sense to written or spoken communication. The discourse of environmentalism, Milton writes, is thus 'the field of communication through which environmental responsibilities (those which make up the environmentalist quest for a viable future) are constituted' (1993:9). As revealed in this definition, responsibility is woven through the very idea of environmentalist discourses. What constitutes a 'viable future', however, is an interesting question with emplaced variations. The implication in Milton's text is a viable *global* environmental future. In Arjeplog a 'viable future' is arguably one in which the community can continue living in the

³⁸ See also Scannell and Gifford 2011 for a psychological study of why people do not embrace the message of climate change in British Columbia, including uncertainty, communication and lack of perceived relevance to the participants.

region with a central industry (car testing), the local environment is kept clean and free from rubbish, and the youth stay in the community and learn the 'old ways' of net fishing and hunting. Their viable future seems to be one rooted in Arjeplog, not the environmental condition of the earth as a whole – which as Latour argues is a scale outside the realms of understanding (2011).

Marino and Schweitzer use a Foucauldian framework³⁹ in their discussion of the public discourse of climate change. They outline how the first phenomenon of climate change is the global event with local effects and the second phenomenon is the 'rise of climate change as discourse in the Foucauldian sense', by which they mean the term itself having power that alters speech (Marino and Schweitzer 2009: 209). Their work examines how the scientific consensus of climate change is woven into consciousness through such discourse rather than through local experience. This caused a problem for them in the field as there was a disconnect between the local changes in the landscape and the discourse to which their participants had been exposed – a more generalized language of climate change that did not meet their participants' own lived experiences. As they argue, 'the global discourse on climate change is bounded and limited; with a predetermined field of knowledge, agents of knowledge, norms of discourse, and acceptable concepts and theories' (2009: 216). They recommended *not* talking about it instead.

Alongside experiencing the physicality of weather, therefore, people everywhere experience some kind of conversation about climate change through media, predictions, politicians, friends, and the internet. This is the 'idea' of climate change that Hulme discussed and is, Finan argues, 'part and parcel' of the public domain (2009:175). Candice Callison's work is a wonderful example of a focus on the

³⁹ Foucauldian discourse analysis is that which accounts for the power relations of a historically situated and regulated language or set of statements (see Foucault 1972, 1977).

reception of climate change. Her multi-sited ethnography *How Climate Change Comes to Matter* (2014) explores five communities in which the discourse of climate change is embraced in profoundly different ways. She writes, 'it is the way that climate change is articulated, used, circulated, and understood that creates its particular form of life and hence its meaningfulness for individuals and groups' (2014:11). Its understanding and reception hinges on its form.

Furthermore, as she demonstrates, it is sometimes the actors using the discourse of climate change that matter more than the message being conveyed (ibid:22, see also Hodges 2019). The messenger can be of paramount importance in discussions of climate change, and this was the case in Arjeplog with environmentalists and politicians. Such messengers, in Arjeplog, were perceived as profoundly disconnected with the realities of everyday life and experience of place.

Petrol, Place, and the Messengers of Climate Change

'All the measures they propose hit harder here than in Stockholm'.

JOHAN



PHOTO © BÖRJE GRANSTRÖM COURTESY OF THOMAS GRANSTRÖM

Thomas showed this monochrome photo from his father's archive at the annual film festival along with the image of Arjeplog before hydropower. When it appeared on the screen it was met with sighs and laughs and people calling out the names of the photographed. It shows a scene incredibly common in Arjeplog today: people of all ages, including children, out in Arjeplog on their snowmobiles. The vehicles are flashier now, more modern, as we can see in the earlier image I took when out on the lake with Anna-Lena. Yet despite the modernizations the setup is much the same. Similar images appear on social media during spring-winter when everyone travels out to the nature to fish or have a day in the sun, a group of machines with winter-

clothed Arjeplogare smiling. There are in fact so many snowmobiles in the *kommun* that there is more than one per person, and when Marianne showed me her old photographs, two emerged that showed just how normal this is in daily life: Fredrik and a friend, on their first snowmobiles as children.



PHOTOGRAPHS © MARIANNE HOFMAN

The vast mountainous area in the west of the *kommun* is often referred to as '*fjällen*' or '*naturen*', ('the mountains' or 'the nature'), a place apart from the small communities populated by Arjeplogare, and used for helicopter tours, hikes and daytrips on snowmobiles⁴⁰. The experience of this landscape as a natural place was a source of great pride among those with whom I spoke, and nature was discussed almost in reverence as a place to go to from their houses in town. The photographs I took of these parts were picked out and stared at with pride, and local photographers often focused on the wildlife and natural splendour of the *kommun*. When I asked about life in Arjeplog, many of my participants described how lucky they were to have this natural world on their doorstep, and how they would go out

⁴⁰ And reindeer herding for the Sami, though the herders' knowledge of the area is no doubt very different due to the practice of herding and it may well be less generalized as 'the nature' in this context.

'och vara I naturen' – 'and be in the nature' – and thrive there. To know Arjeplog, to *'be in the nature'*, often requires a motor⁴¹. While there were some who skied to their cabins and eschewed the snowmobile, all of my participants used them or had used them to get around outside of the town.

There is very little public transport in Arjeplog. A few buses make the journey up to the polar-circle camp for hikers, but these are usually tourists backpacking their way around Scandinavia. Arjeplogare, as Åse explained, drive to their cabins and unload the snowmobiles, or set off directly from Plass'n and zoom off across the lakes. In the winter the whine from the engines could be heard zigzagging across the terrain, louder in the northern region closer to the mountains where snowmobile 'highways' appeared etched into the surface of the frozen lakes. Smaller roads veered off in curves towards the shoreline and the smell of the motors hung in the frozen air. The sound became part of the fabric of winter, following either marked snowmobile trails or a surprising interruption to outings in the usually quiet forest.

⁴¹ Not everyone in Arjeplog would agree with this statement, as was made clear during my exhibition in a feedback form full of indignance and arguing that there are Arjeplogare who 'do not leave tracks' in the nature. However, the majority of my participants used snowmobiles or had owned one and, as I discuss below, the number of snowmobiles in the county is more than the number of permanent inhabitants.



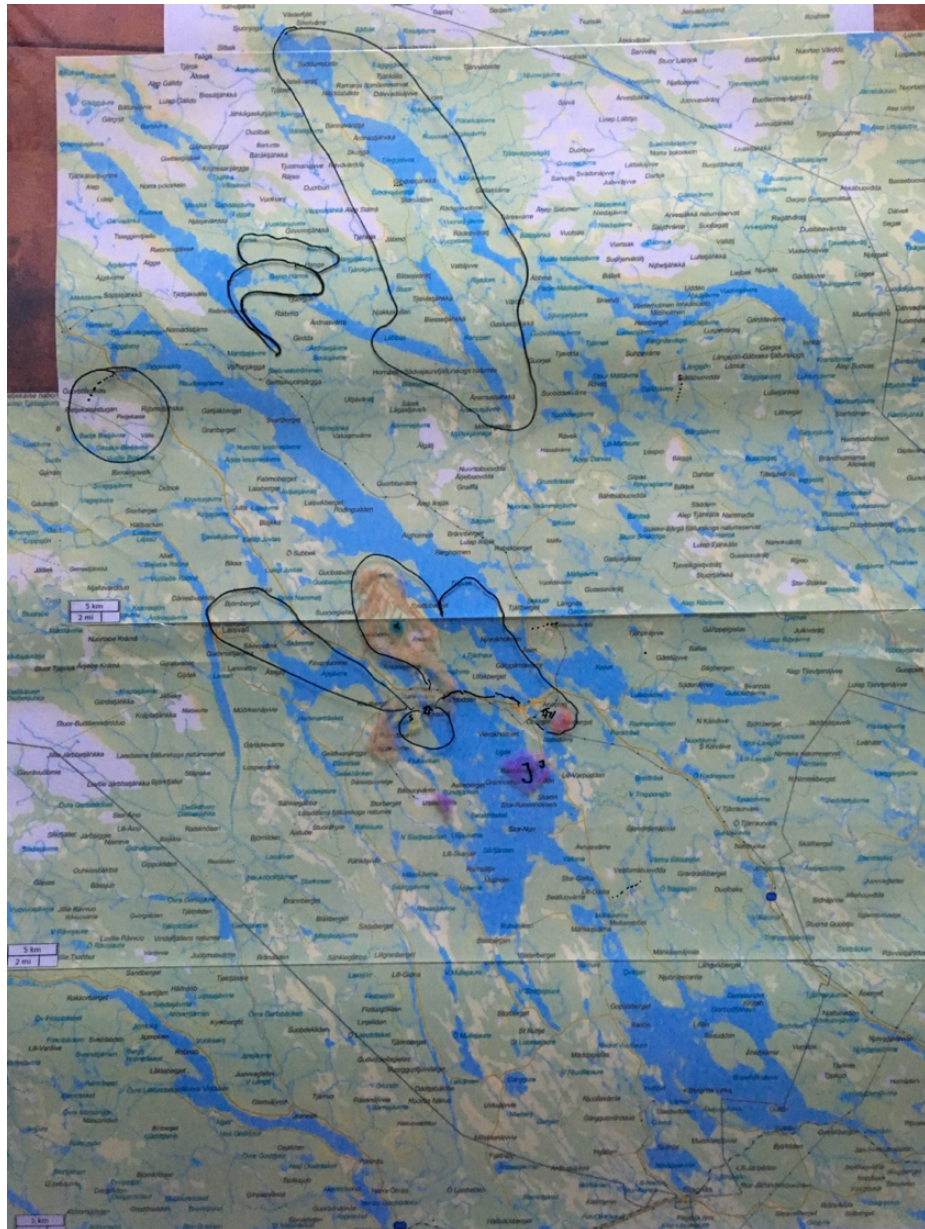
The snowmobiles were often used for leisure but also for accessing hunting cabins, fishing spots, and visiting relatives across the ice. The mappings project that I introduced briefly in chapter one was very successful in exploring my participants' mobility by snowmobiles as well as cars and boats: their tracks around the *kommun*, their personal histories of being in the nature and their knowledge of place.

Initially I was on the lookout for actual maps of Arjeplog, but they were divided either into hiking maps slicing through the *kommun* or they were too small. In the end Marianne and I compiled a map of the *kommun* from a digital map of the region. The idea of annotations allowed me to combine the maps into an eventual amalgamation of movement and tracks, inspired in part by Hugh Brody's mappings of hunting trails in British Columbia (2002).

Every time I went for a sit-down interview at someone's house I brought the map rolled up in a tube with some empty sheets of the laminate paper. I would spread both out on the kitchen table, the blank plastic sheet overlaying the original map. I made a rough key on the original map with crayons, the colours representing different berry picking spots as well as mushrooms, fishing areas, ice fishing spots, and moose hunting areas to try and locate the relationship between food and place described in chapter three. Small symbols represented home, work and the *stuga*. Dashed lines represented habitual car travel, with short dashes for hiking or skiing. A thick solid line was for snowmobile travel.



Åse thought the map was great fun when I brought it round to her home on one bakingly hot day in June along with a large cinnamon bread. I met Åse in the winter when I accompanied Marianne to her home for an interview for Marianne's newspaper. She was in her early forties and had grown up in Arjeplog, working from a young age with her father at his company Car Test, one of the companies working to prepare the ice for the international car testers arriving steadily between November and March. She loved maps, she said, using them for the moose hunt and 'studying all the small places' so that she doesn't get lost. Her snowmobile tracks looped around from Arjeplog town, around her specific *jaktområdet* (moose-hunting area), and separate loops up in the north of the *kommun* towards the Norwegian border. Those loops were her day trips, where the snowmobile would be packed into the trailer and they would drive up and unload the machines, driving off across the snow. Not everyone drew in the car routes, including Åse, so the northern loops appear unlinked to the town. But the journeys were connected, and within the single loops would be many journeys and variations.



‘If I drew in all my routes,’ she said, taking a piece of the cinnamon *fikabröd*, ‘the map would be totally black!’ While I ensured her that this would be an interesting thing, she kept the loops as singular to allow her to find the other spots where she picked berries as that was an important part of living in Arjeplog and she wanted to get it right. She leaned over the maps with the crayons to find the mountain spots

accessed on snowmobiles for daytrips from known cabins owned by friends of family.

She found it hard locating the specific areas as the place names were Sami, and usually very different from the Swedish. When she located certain places, she would cry out, 'oh it was so beautiful here, it is a good place to be', or 'we usually go here and do big trips around in a loop during a day or two, in the mountains'. These things made Åse incredibly proud of life in Arjeplog, that the *kommun* was so beautiful, that she could be self-sufficient in terms of her food, and independent in terms of her travel to get there. Getting to those places, while not often marked on the map, always involved a motor and *benzine* (petrol).

Overlaying the transparent layers gives a spidery mesh of lines extending out from Arjeplog town and snaking over the *kommun*, mostly in a diagonal strip from the northwest down to the Southeast, following the direction of the vast lake Hornavan.



The zigzagged lines follow the major roads in and out of Arjeplog town, with the mass of solid lines showing the habitual snowmobile tracks of my participants looping around the cabins or outwards from home. These tracks present a stark contrast to the imagery from the youtube film shown in chapter two showing Norrland as an uninhabited wilderness. Combining this map with more transparencies, and with the Sami reindeer herding routes, would give an even clearer picture of the *kommun* as far from wild. Even as it is now, with relatively few layers, it serves as a visual representation of the whole region as a lived space, traversed for both food and foraging but also for wellbeing and leisure.

On the ground these real-life tracks overlay with other forms of movement not recorded in the mappings. The snowmobile tracks provide a solid base as the snow is compressed by the weight of the machine, and it is easier to ski on this surface compared to the deep soft snow. Below is a picture I took of such an interaction, of cross-country ski marks showing the uphill movement of someone using the snowmobile tracks as base.



'One can read movement and direction from a footprint,' Ingold writes, 'just as one can from an inscription ... a record of changing pressure distributions at the interface between the walking body and the ground' (2010:128) or, in this case, the cross-country skiing body and the snow, compressed by the weight of a snowmobile. And, following Ingold, the ground is soft because of the weather, or covered in snow because of it (2010). So, while the track photograph shows interactions with landscape and with other tracks, it also shown interactions with the weather itself and the climate of Arjeplog. The weather is a part of the landscape they move through, leaving temporal and ephemeral tracks in their wake (Ingold 2010; see also Bartlett, forthcoming). This is a limitation of the mappings project as it implies tracks overlaid on a natural backdrop rather than what is shown in the photograph: that people move *through* landscape in all its enmeshed layers.

What the images hold, and what the conversations around the mapmaking reveal, is the way place is made and known through travel. Places are produced through movement in a 'meshwork of paths' (Ingold 2008 in Pink 2015) and are the product of embodied material practices (Massey 2001). The maps were an attempt to visually portray this 'meshwork', and through the accompanying interviews my participants communicated how they knew *their* Arjeplog: the sites of meaning, the journeys of significance, and life histories threading throughout the expanse of the *kommun*. It was a way to visually represent the network of forest-body-food described in chapter three, with the mesh of lines representing the physical movement around this network and how these places and foodstuffs are accessed.

The maps alone only go so far: they are superficial visual representations of the act of storytelling about place and ideally should be filmed or animated with the stories that accompany them. As an entire process, however, the map-makings were

enlightening as what Howes calls the emplaced 'body-mind-environment' (2005:7), how people know and experience place.

Mobility was dependent on *benzine*, petrol, accessed via two petrol stations in Arjeplog town: Shell, part of Royal Dutch Shell, distributing oil from Canada, the Gulf of Mexico, and the North Sea; and OKQ8, a company consisting of both OK Ekonomisk Förening and Kuwait Petroleum International, processing crude oil from Kuwait. The snowmobiles are simultaneously machines used to know this very specific local place *now*, and are powered by millions of years of carbon – ancient ecosystems compressed into liquid miles away from Arjeplog (Marriott & Minio-Paluello 2012). This fuel powers the movement through landscape and weather, producing emissions from the burning of fossil fuels that, themselves, have ancient foreign histories and future global connotations.

Latour argued that phenomena such as the ozone layer and global warming showed that nature and culture have never been separate (Latour 1993): they overlap, interweave, and impact each other. We can see this enmeshed reliance in in this daily interaction of person-snowmobile-weather-landscape-oil. How does one begin to separate what is nature and what is culture in this interaction? The snowmobile, and the petrol, are crucial parts of how landscape is known in Arjeplog. It is thus incredibly local yet with material and global implications.

Another aspect of petrol that is highly important in Arjeplog, besides being a key ingredient in placemaking, is being able to survive through industry and livelihood. The Car Testing industry provides both seasonal work and extra income for the Arjeplogare, as the 3000 engineers descend on the town every winter and most of the inhabitants hire out their homes and move in with extended family or into caravans or cabins. This provides the permanent residents with extra income to renovate their houses, increasing their potential income for the next season as they can increase the fee for a more modern home.



Though many of the cars tested on the ice are now electric, the trucks and tractors needed to prepare the ice tracks run on petrol. Furthermore, Arjeplogare know that the electric cars are not yet ready for the brutal climate of the north. The cars tested on the ice are stripped of all extras in order to run in the sometimes minus 30°C cold: no heating, no radio, nothing that will draw the power from the engine. Johan took me along to a press day for Hayundai, where the Korean company was unveiling one new hydrocarbon car and one electric to a crowd of journalists. The cars would run on the ice and across the roads of the *kommun* for a very short time before being returned to the base for charging. The charging ports, during my fieldwork, were only at the car testing offices and none for public use in town. In 2018 the electric car market was not an option for Arjeplogare driving long distances in freezing temperatures for work, leisure and family.

A couple of my participants told me that ‘normal Arjeplogare’ wouldn’t want to talk about climate change but that they personally believed that those working with the car testing would be getting worried.

‘They say they are not when I interview them’, Sofie said to me once, ‘but there is a glitter in their eye... I think they are worried’. As this was not something ever told to me directly, however, I found it of more interest to focus on this notion that ‘normal Arjeplogare’ *wouldn’t* want to talk about climate change.

When I sat in Johan’s photography office on the high street, talking about his life in Arjeplog and his thoughts on climate change and hydropower, he discussed how he had been in a group to try and save the rivers from the disastrous effects of water regulation. ‘It was a big organization, like any other environmental organization’, he said, ‘and it was looked upon as if you said you were a *miljöpartist* in Arjeplog. It is

probably the worst thing you can be, because people don't believe, they don't believe in the message. Because we don't see [climate change] here.'

Miljöpartiet is a political party in Sweden, most closely comparable to the Green Party in the UK. Its full name is 'Miljöpartiet de gröna', directly translated as 'The Environmental Party the Greens', known as 'Green Party' in translations, and abbreviated to MP. It was founded in the early 1980s partly in response to the referendum on nuclear power and the failure of the existing parties to tackle the rise in environmental and anti-nuclear sentiment (Ljunggren 2010). They joined the Swedish parliament in 1988 and formed part of the 2002 coalition, though national support for the party is relatively small compared to the larger parties.

'Not believing in the message', as Johan put it, was largely due to the fact that many Arjeplogare believe climate change to be in part a natural phenomenon and not a consensus among scientists. But when I asked Johan why Arjeplogare hated Miljöpartiet specifically, he went on to explain:

Because all the measures they propose hit harder here than in Stockholm. The price of petrol for somebody who lives here with a boat and a snowmobile and cars and another car and a quad, and what else... a chainsaw, and everything we have here is run on petrol. So, when the price goes up it is a lot of money. And for somebody who lives on Södra in Stockholm⁴² it doesn't matter, they can still buy their T-centralen subway card and travel around for almost nothing. So, those measures always hit us. And because we are vulnerable, we don't have ... we don't

⁴² The southern island of the Stockholm archipelago, often used in popular culture as a hipster neighbourhood – likeable to Shoreditch or East London more generally. Or Brooklyn in New York.

vote. I mean it is 3000 people in Arjeplog, what can we do? We can't even... that is what goes into the subway 'croud' every minute in Stockholm. That is why people hate them.

This position was echoed throughout my fieldwork when climate change and environmentalists were mentioned. Arjeplog was seen from within as so small and yet so dependent on petrol because of this. People in the city, on the other hand, occupied a naïve and pampered place in which they did not need to think about petrol consumption as they had public transport throughout the city and rarely ventured into the real nature.

Johan thought the resulting hatred was a little unfair, but that MP and its followers have chosen to go down this path and it is why, he argues, Sweden Democrats (SD) are getting so many votes in Arjeplog lately. SD, he said, offer simple solutions instead of the complex ones, saying 'we are gonna fix it' instead of 'oh it is very difficult, but we will do our best'. SD are the Sweden Democrats, comparable to UKIP in the UK: a rapidly growing party, quickly gaining more votes in Arjeplog⁴³ and across Sweden.

In the 2014 *riksdag*⁴⁴ election, Miljöpartiet received 3,46% of the vote in Arjeplog, compared to the 14,75% won by Sweden Democrats. The Swedish Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna) won the highest vote share in Arjeplog with 44,19%. Following my departure from Arjeplog, the 2018 *riksdag* vote took place and the numbers shifted even further apart. SD gained votes, increasing to 20,30 % of the

⁴³ But with no one willing to claim the seat on the council as they don't want to reveal themselves as SD.

⁴⁴ The Swedish parliamentary elections as opposed to the county votes. Results accessed via Valmyndigheten (n.d).

vote share in Arjeplog (and becoming the third biggest party in Sweden overall with 62 seats). Miljöpartiet, on the other hand, dropped to only 2,16% in Arjeplog, with only 38 voting for the party. MP lost 9 seats in the *riksdag* as SD made the most gains of any party. Another form of elections is the *kommunfullmäktige*, the municipal council elections that decide who represents municipalities locally. The 2018 results of these elections in Arjeplog also revealed small hope for the MP, with just 0,5 % of the vote share – 9 votes. SD took 2,56%, 46 votes. As with the *riksdag*, Socialdemokraterna came out on top.

We cannot use these figures in isolation to make assumptions about commitments to environmental problems, as the dominant Social Democratic party do have their own environmental policies including for climate mitigation. But what the figures do show is the lack of support for the MP party itself, compared to the rise in support for SD. MP nationally had only 4.41% of the 2018 *riksdag* voteshare, so the Arjeplog turnout was not exceptional. It does however illustrate that even in Arjeplog, a place where people are expressive in their love for the nature and environment at a very local scale, the MP party falls short of gaining trust and support from local residents.

Johan's analysis shows the importance of the environmentalist discourses in the political web of Arjeplog and, quite probably, the surrounding region of Norrland. People's lives in the north depend on their petrol⁴⁵. A group who appears and says 'stop' will unsurprisingly ruffle feathers, threatening the local lifestyle while coming from somewhere so geographically and ideologically far away (and threatening a considerable rise in cost).

⁴⁵ This is also true for the reindeer herders, relying on snowmobiles for herding and facing increasing fuel costs that put an extra financial strain on the industry (Furberg, et al., 2011).

Sean McGraw gave a clear example of this phenomenon in his book about rural American rejections of climate change, describing how his interviewee Tanner was able to communicate climate risk to his fellow hunters. Tanner told McGraw that the other hunters only trusted him because he was one of them, but an environmentalist showing up in a tie die t-shirt and Birkenstock sandals would be 'highly suspect' (McGraw 2015:63). Environmentalists, McGraw described, were largely White, middle class, educated people of privilege who were awful at explaining the situation to regular Americans (ibid). We can see this, too, in Hoelle's article in which ranchers were suspicious of a foreigner and 'assumed *ecologista* (environmentalist) 2012:62' asking questions in Brazil (cited in Antrosio and Han 2015). Among the ranchers of Brazil, and in both rural America and Arjeplog, the messenger is of paramount importance in the reception of climate change discourses, or as McLuhan would say 'the medium is the message' (2003).

Hoffman (2015) explains how distrust of the messenger is one of four forms of distrust in the scientific evidence of climate change. The others are distrust of the process, of the message, and of the solutions (in Hodges 2019). In Arjeplog, there was little to suggest a distrust in the scientific process. As I showed previously, science was, in different form, embraced in Arjeplog to explain how climate was always changing and weather fluctuations were nothing new. Johan explained how Arjeplogare did not believe in 'the message' of climate change, and he linked that both with distrust of the messenger *and* a distrust in the solutions proposed. The messenger is not seen as the scientists, but environmentalists and politicians embracing environmentalist discourses in the urban south and perceived to be urging the county to stop driving cars, stop flying, and to stop eating meat. Understanding of climate change is formed based on the media as a translator

(Callison 2014) and when in Arjeplog the media discourse of climate change is seen to be dominated by environmentalists and politicians, distrust follows.

This is an interesting situation when compared with research done among urban Swedish communities. Isenhour's work examines the difference between urban and rural Swedes and how they perceive each other regarding environmental concerns (2011). While she works with Swedish people in Stockholm and their perceptions of rural Swedes, my research presents the other side: the perception of Stockholmers as profoundly out of touch with nature and how to take care of the landscape. Isenhour argues that for rural Swedes, humans are a part of nature and working in cooperation with nature is paramount in conversation of sustainability and environmental management. For urban Swedes, she argues, nature has a more romantic side – a legacy of romantic thought in the 19th century (ibid; Frykman and Lofgren 1987) – in which the forests and mountains are 'out there'. As I have argued, the idea of nature being 'out there' is also part of the way Arjeplogare treat nature as a conceptual realm. However, Arjeplogare talk of urban Swedes as even more far apart from the natural world both physically (by being in the city) and mentally (as not understanding rural environments or lifestyles). While Arjeplogare do not see themselves as threatened by the physical effects of climate change, not seen as a problem locally, the voices of environmentalism coming from the 'south' are perceived as a challenge to their livelihoods and experience of place.

Early environmentalism in the 20th century came from the wealthy nature-lovers who were disconnected from the lived reality of those for whom life was a hardship (Shrader-Frechette 2002). These environmentalists prioritized the non-human wilderness and 'nature as sanctuary' notion of the environment before grassroots

environmentalists joined the fore, fighting against human problems such as the implications of pesticides and pollution for the human body (ibid:5).

The kind of environmentalism mistrusted in Arjeplog seems to follow the legacy of this former kind: an outsider approach to the reality of living in nature, seen as seeking a wilderness or a non-human reality at the expense of the people trying to live and survive in their homeplace. This sits at odds with one of Isenhour's conclusions from her research with Stockholmers: that Swedes defy the Giddens paradox as they change their behavior, opting for more sustainable lifestyles, despite not feeling the effects of climate change (Isenhour 2013). The Giddens paradox asserts that only those threatened by physical impacts of climate change alter their behaviour (ibid; see Giddens 2009).

This fieldwork contests Isenhour's broad conclusion that 'all Swedes' are evidence of the paradox. Instead, we see that this may be true of Stockholm but not in the rural north. The Arjeplogare with whom I worked take care in their behaviours with regards to the local, immediate landscape but do not consider climate change to be a phenomena impactable by human activity. Suggestions to alter their behaviour for such a cause would not guarantee the same success as in Stockholm. As noted in the Introduction, Novellino has argued there is 'no universal ethic' for climate change (2003:173) and the Anthropocene and here we see there is no 'Swedish ethic' either: responses to environmental issues are tied up in relationships to place and to the voices carrying the message of environmental responsibilities.

Moral Responsibilities

The discourses perceived as coming from the south, the city and specifically Stockholm are especially frustrating to my participants given their incorporation of the notion of environmental responsibility. The voices coming from the politicians and from *miljöpartisterna* communicate what people *should do* to solve the climate crisis, for example the reduction in petrol consumption as described by Johan. For Anna-Lena, the idea of responsibility was both enormous and also the source of friction with those who called for change without doing by example.

One afternoon in November I was sitting in the office at Guns and Roses, drinking a cup of strong black coffee at the office table as Yrsa scouted the floor looking for bones and crumbs. Anna-Lena was sitting at her computer, her chair turned towards me as we talked. The snow was falling softly outside, the blue air of November thick with flakes and the ground covered in powder.



It had been snowing for a few days and showed no signs of melting away once the outside thermometers were steadily descending below zero. I had asked about climate change for the first time, and she became curious why no-one talked about it⁴⁶.

Maybe people don't want to think about climate change here because if we did, we would have to start thinking that it is something that we are responsible for. Maybe that is too much for people to manage. We all recycle here, but what else can we do? It is too much to think about, that climate change is happening. It is *too big*. People would have to start taking responsibility. We cannot affect it. We can recycle as much as we want, but either way they sell even bigger emissions-rights to big companies. They commercialize, and then the little people have bad consciences. Right? And I don't like that. Because most I know behave quite well. You try to recycle, sort rubbish, and make small efforts... so we shouldn't feel so bad. But you can be worried either way, it doesn't work.

She stared at me, eyes searching. She was angry at the capitalist system in which blame was attributed to the 'little people' while the state and big business continued their games with the environment. The argument that the cultural system itself being responsible has been the central claim of the Extinction Rebellion's protests throughout the world, and Latour has suggested the Anthropocene be renamed the 'capitocene', attributing responsibility to whom it really belongs when climate change is too big for individuals to bear (2018:7). In Joshua Karliner's remarkable book *The Corporate Planet*, he explains how the megalithic corporations operating

⁴⁶ This was before the record-breaking summer of 2018 and the subsequent newspaper headlines.

in their own state-like power structures are responsible for climate change, and actual nation states do little to curb their power (1997). He writes that 'transnational corporations- especially the global oil giants- are primarily responsible for this looming crisis' (Karlner 1997:26). For Anna-Lena these were real life questions in response to the perceived inequality and powerlessness in the face of big business and corporate politics. And it was not just the big business that was at fault, there was also intensely felt irony in the environmental politicians' messages regarding air travel:

'How can it be that the politicians in *miljöpartiet* can tell us not to fly,' Anna-Lena asked in anger, 'that flying is bad for the environment, but that they can fly to their meetings and their engagements because they are important? I get so angry, that they think that they can fly because they are important, but we cannot. I really don't like that those big things will make the little people have a bad conscience.' She chewed her lip and patted Yrsa on her little beige head.



There was a tangible sense of frustration with politicians when I asked about climate change. For Anna-Lena the dissonance between what they said and what they did was infuriating and added to the idea that responsibility was being shoved onto the 'little people' just trying to get by. Arjeplog municipality has a permanent population of circa 2900 people, outside the car testing season, and is the most sparsely populated municipality in Sweden. The word *glasbygdskommun* means 'sparsely populated place', or dispersed settlement, and was used often in local politics to refer to the struggles faced by small disparate communities such as Arjeplog. They had their own struggles unique to *glesbygd* and life was portrayed sometimes as tough, without the luxuries of the big cities where post was delivered to all the houses and healthcare was not something one had to fight for. By 'little people', Anna-Lena meant those who were not politicians or in big business, but it linked also to this idea of being from 'little Arjeplog' and feeling somehow overlooked by the state in other matters. And for Anna-Lena and many others the question remained, why should they feel guilty for global climate when they are so few?

On the other hand, there is an argument that a collective 'we' as a species are responsible for tackling climate change. While David Wallace-Wells acknowledges the prevalence of a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the threat (himself admitting he was downplaying the impacts and expecting someone else to fix it), and even states that individual life choices are to some extent meaningless (i.e changing to an electric car and giving up meat), his book presents the dire realities of climate change today and predictions of a future 4-degree warmer world (Wallace-Wells 2019). He uses the collective 'we', however, to remind us that climate change is here now, and not just a future problem. It targets all of humanity, and 'we must all share in the responsibility so we do not all share in the suffering' (2019:220). He argues that, in fact, industry emissions are only 40% of the global total (2019:149), and he

urges readers to vote in order to push governments and companies into action. Plastic pollution, he writes, is not on the same scale as global climate change, which is a much, much bigger problem. As he reminds us, 'three-quarters of a century since global warming was first recognized as a problem, we have made no meaningful adjustment to our production or consumption of energy to account for it and protect ourselves' (2019: 44). Wallace-Wells argues the cost of saving our planet is 'a decarbonised economy, a perfectly renewable energy system, a reimagined system of agriculture, and perhaps even a meatless planet' (2019:169). Rather than individual lifestyle change this is, instead, a 'a complete overhaul of the world's energy systems, transportation, infrastructure and industry and agriculture' (ibid:179). Hence his argument to exercise democratic power, vote for action, and challenge the systems that allow climate change to be this dire.

This seems to be what Norgaard is also arguing in her ethnography of climate denial in Norway (2011), that because people were not exercising their democratic power they were denying the severity of the climate crisis. The difference is her participants were actively discussing climate change and their concern for the future.

This collective 'we' can itself be problematised, as Wallace-Wells himself. For him, however, it is worth the 'imperious' tone as climate change is 'all-encompassing' (2019:220). In writing of the creation of smart cities and eco-friendly technology, Vanolo problematises the universal 'we' (2016:34) which obscures the very different situations of people regarding wealth, poverty, access to food and healthcare. Engaging with environmentalism and the environmentalist message in Stockholm is much easier given the availability of food and public transport, as Johan argued earlier. Furthermore, it raises interesting discussions of relative guilt and

responsibility, but also environmental justice and the complicated position that Arjeplogare occupy.

Morton reminds us that individuals are 'in no sense guilty' for global warming (2018:35). One person starting one car, he states, is not causing the problem. However, one billion cars are the problem. 'Guilt is scaled to individuals', he argues, 'but it is a collective problem', a 'heap of actions' in which the species is responsible (ibid:57). How does this manifest itself on the ground? In individualistic societies it is unsurprising that individual guilt is felt and problematized, as in Arjeplog. Clive Hamilton takes this one step further, regarding outright denial of climate change, arguing that we are *all* climate deniers as we have no grasp of the collective character, 'the anthropos of the Anthropocene, the human in the human-made catastrophe' (in Latour 2014:3). Furthermore, Latour argues, humanity feels powerless in ecological crises as there is a 'disconnect between the range, nature and scale of the phenomena and the set of emotions, habits of thoughts, and feelings that would be necessary to handle those crises' (2011:2). He shows how it would be difficult for any local population to embrace the idea of the 'global event' of climate change. In a 2014 lecture he argued that the question of human responsibility is raised as soon as human agency is held accountable for the new geological force of the Anthropocene but that it was widely recognised among anthropologists, activists, historians and philosophers that responsibility is not ascribed evenly throughout the world's population (Latour 2014).

This is precisely what Anna-Lena was arguing and reveals a situated example of the perceived injustice in the climate change debate. How could a small population of 2900, as Anna-Lena points out, feel responsible for the climate crisis? Especially as the environmental politicians driving the discourse were themselves consuming

fossil fuels and not seen to be living by example, and the other politicians were engaging in business deals with huge corporate enterprises.

It must also be said here that climate change was not directly killing Swedish people in Arjeplog in 2018. The countries suffering now are those with extreme temperature increases and where weather events are, in the present day, posing a threat to life. Wallace-Wells details the impacts of climate change using examples from around the world, including extreme flooding, storms, drought, as well as heatwaves that have already killed huge numbers of people in Europe (2019). Anthropologists are also working with peoples who are suffering from climate change impacts around the world, examining specific vulnerabilities and implications for culture, wellbeing, and survival. Crate and Nuttall, for example, argue that climate change is an immediate lived reality and a human rights issue (Crate and Nuttall 2009). They call climate change a result of global processes caused by those who are not directly in the firing line, who should not be responsible for mitigating its effects (ibid). In their volume, scholars outline the specific threats to communities in Torres Straits (Green 2009) and Greenland (Nuttall 2009), to the Inuits in Canada (Henshaw 2009), and the resulting displacement of communities due to climate change (Oliver-Smith 2009). Elsewhere Saleh Ahmed (2019) has written of climate stresses in coastal Bangladesh and Tanya Matthan (2019) has written of the unpredictability of the monsoon in India and the resulting impacts on soybean crops. This is just a small selection of the vast literature emerging from anthropology, focussing on the cultural implications of climate change but also the inequality embedded in climate vulnerabilities.

The term environmental justice refers to the concept of unequal distribution of hardships posed by environmental degradation, in which black, minority, poor and

indigenous communities often face environmental degradation or have their communities become the sites for toxic waste dumping (Schlossberg 2007). One common theme of environmental justice centers around minority groups who can't fight back against corporate power in environmental decision making, originally with a focus on toxic waste dumps and discrimination in the management of environmental hazards (see Shrader-Frechette 2002 for examples) but now increasingly linked to *climate* justice and the distribution of responsibility of global warming.

Environmental justice is an interesting concept even closer to home, with the Sami Arjeplogare. Reindeer *are* dying in Arjeplog, failing to access their winter food, and Sami herders are losing money because of it and acknowledging climate change and capitalism as the cause of this extra 'stressor' (Furberg, et al. 2011; see also Heggberget, et al. 2002). Furthermore, as Stoor, et al. (2015) have shown, threats to Sami identity can lead to an 'existential void' and even suicide. This, they argue, is embedded in colonialization and exploitation of land including hydropower and wind farms, and global warming is also a contributing factor (ibid). Environmental justice is therefore a thread of a complex web between the state, big business, Swedes who feel powerless against these dominant groups, and the Sami who feel the effects of climate change and for whom Swedes represent capitalism.

Arjeplog therefore occupies a complex place in discussions of environmental and climate justice. Because the politicians and big companies are often identified as the culprits, and the ones not committing to solving the problem, the notion of environmental justice is invoked. While the statements made by my participants therefore echo some of the discourse of environmental justice, Arjeplog is arguably a part of the capitalist system at the root of the climate change, as is the whole of

Sweden, and Europe. It is part of a country that, by way of a high relative GDP, is responsible for ameliorating the climate crisis following the climate agreements recognizing relative responsibility of rich nations (Posner & Weisback 2010). As Shrader-Frechette writes, 'since the *effects* of one's actions (e.g. burning fossil fuels and possibly causing the Greenhouse Effect) are not limited to those within one's country, the *constraints* of one's actions are not limited only to the basic rights of those in one's nation' (2002:169). She argues that people's actions have global implications and therefore they must be globally responsible, and that we must all take responsibility for the actions of our governments and businesses in democracy on behalf of those who suffer.

When the Arjeplogare start their snowmobiles, fly abroad, or drive around the municipality, their emissions add to the global circulation of carbon in the atmosphere and contribute to the global warming of the planet, as is true for the rest of Sweden and Europe. Thinking locally therefore restricts a global view that takes into account the global implications of local actions. No-one I spoke to in Arjeplog described themselves as wealthy, in fact many felt the struggle of the harsh winter and the complexities of a seasonal industry providing jobs for only part of the year. Many had to take on multiple jobs to make ends meet and to pay for their rent and *bensin* (petrol). They helped each other, Marianne said many times, as things could get tough. However, they were relatively comfortable when taking global poverty and inequality into account. They have the money to buy snowmobiles, computers, heating, and they have homes and cabins and cars. As a community of mostly White, comfortable capitalists, there is arguably a responsibility for thinking globally about those less fortunate. This is difficult, though, when they consider climate change as natural as shown in the previous chapter, and when the messenger is entangled in past mistrust.

Any exploration of climate change that becomes a narrative of innocent victims on the one hand and culpable villains on the other is problematic. Lazrus has warned against this in Tuvalu, a place often held up as the 'poster child' of climate change (in Antrosio and Han 2015) warning that we must not position the inhabitants as victims as this is patronizing. McDermott has further complicated this narrative with his work on Trinidad and Tobago, in which the country produced a high amount of hydrocarbon and carbon emissions, yet joined the Alliance of Small Island States representing those most vulnerable (McDermott Hughes 2013). McDermott Hughes speculated that people in Trinidad and Tobago might understand the repercussions of emitting carbon dioxide if they only saw the local Boomerang effect – how the emissions acted directly on the landscape there and returned the problem back to the source (McDermott Hughes 2013). Instead, he argued, they looked at relative global emissions and not their own. The opposite is true of Arjeplog, where locals look primarily at their local landscape. In Arjeplog, inhabitants do not describe themselves as victims of climate change nor as the problem behind global warming. Anna-Lena, as many others did, positioned herself instead as in opposition to the decision makers giving big companies the power to emit while suggesting the 'little people' take responsibility for the climate crisis. Furthermore, as the previous chapter argued, Arjeplogare do not see global warming as a purely human-caused problem. Therefore, the connection between fossil fuels and global change is not a simple fact but a complicated narrative coming from mistrusted voices and wrapped up in its own injustices of the state, especially when the voices of the state, the politicians, are not following their own advice.

We must look specifically at the voices carrying the message of anthropogenic climate change and the role this plays in the local response. Science does not drop into the laps of its readers (see Callison 2014; Latour 1993,1999) - raw data does

not appear unframed onto the screens and into the ears of Arjeplogare. My participants certainly did not mistrust 'science' as a whole discipline, it was the complex ironies and power dynamics behind those calling for change. Certain voices that call for environmental change in general, and climate change specifically, are ones that are not well-received in Arjeplog, and the questions of responsibility that they raise are seen as threatening to the local way of life from those who know little of rural survival.

Johan expressed concern about the implications for responsibility, but for him it was at the national level:

I am a little sceptic to Sweden being a country that has to with global warming. When you think about it, we are ten million people and there are about eight or nine *billion* people in the world, and yet we have to pull the biggest weight. And I mean we have always tried to be better than everyone else, and we are not.

This example of scale was often brought into conversations of environmental responsibility. The comparison was made that India (an oft-cited example) has far more people and is far more polluted than Sweden in terms of air and rubbish.



Arjeplog, in contrast, is seen as a clean place in which everyone recycles. In this way, the care of the *local* is invoked to show that people are doing all they can and for Johan this idea is also true of the national efforts with regards to global warming. As Löfgren argues, nature became a symbol of *Swedishness* in the early 20th century, and great importance was placed on a nature uncontaminated by human presence (1987:61). This need for an unpolluted nature, and wilderness, emerging in the early 19th century is what William's describes as 'picturesque' (1973:128; see also Hirsch 1996). Local environmentalism in Arjeplog was more centered around the relationship between the human and the non-human: recycling to keep the land clean, hunting in part to keep the moose populations in check, and historic fights against the pesticides used in the forests which caused cancer among the forestry men (Merchant 1989⁴⁷). When I asked Åse about climate change and car testing, at

⁴⁷ Merchant describes how Norrland women baked forest berries into jam and presented it to the Swedish parliament who refused to eat it, and subsequently became the first country to ban DDT. Though this topic did not come up overtly during my fieldwork among my participants, I know many husbands were lost to cancer originating from the DDT in the forests, and there is a yearly naked calendar in the village Jutis with its roots in fundraising for the community and in response to people impacted by cancer (described as the communities *sorgeperiod*, 'grief period').

the Car Test offices, she was very clear. She thought climate change was a problem beyond human influence and nature would continue fluctuating, and they would just have to adapt and find something else to do⁴⁸. However, she was very serious about one point in particular: wanting to keep the ice clean. Her priority was not on global warming but on the immediate nature of Arjeplog. In the film I made together with filmmaker Camilla Andersen, for Nordiska Museet's *Arktis* exhibition, Åse was keen to explain how environmentalists would accuse her and the industry of polluting the landscape with petrol. But, she argued, they were careful to keep the ice clean and minimize any spills because they wanted to be able to continue drinking the water, hunting moose, and living in a clean environment.



There is a slight irony here in the scale of environmentalism in Arjeplog and that of the environmental movement as a whole. In her thought-provoking book of environmental scales, *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*, Heise (2008) explores the

⁴⁸ One of the other car test company bosses told me that they were already preparing for climate change to mitigate future risk, building cold chambers and more land tracks about it.

goals of environmentalism as calling for a return to the local, where the idea is that once people have a better relationship with their local environment, a global approach will follow. A local focus is exactly what the Arjeplogare have: an almost ferocious care for their direct landscape, and place. As Massey has argued, a sense of place provides a rootedness in a world of global transport and globalizing processes and that, while this is often accused of being a reactionary argument, she states that people *do* want a sense of place (1991). And as Latour has argued, in much the similar vein, 'it is the uprooting that is illegitimate, not the belonging. To belong to a land, to want to stay put and keep on working one's plot land, to be attached to it, has become "reactionary" (2018:53).

Is it therefore any surprise that a small, sparsely populated community, in a vast and beautiful landscape, would focus their attentions on protecting this local place instead of abstract climatic movements, largely understood as embedded in natural processes?



On researching climate change rejection: a note on positionality and 'denial'

There has been disciplinary call for climate change advocacy in anthropology. In 2014, the American Anthropological Association's climate change taskforce published their final report (Fiske et al., 2014) which highlighted the role of anthropology and that 'with its clear sense of the human-associated nature of climate drivers and impacts, climate change is one of the imminent global issues where anthropologists can and should take a stand on the core substantive underpinnings of the issue' (2014:15). In earlier work, Fiske argues that anthropologists should be 'actors' in policy making (2009:288), and Susan Crate (also involved in the taskforce) argues that the role of anthropology should be both policy making and advocacy to allow a greater contribution (2011:179). She frames this as wearing many different "hats", from that of academic researcher to advocate' (ibid).

This is not always easy or possible, as with this research, and Roncoli, Crane and Orlove (2009) write that as fieldwork becomes more 'advocacy-orientated', anthropologists will face 'new ethical dilemmas that arise from potentially conflicting commitments and accountabilities to research participants, scientific peers, funding agencies, and employers (Marcus 1995)' (2009:105). Their advice is to remain critical, and not 'compromise on core ideals of cultural sensitivity' (ibid). I read this advice in the context of advocacy, as the authors proceed to highlight the need for anthropologists to engage outside of the discipline and endorse climate change research.

The AAA taskforce also highlights climate change as a 'wicked problem requiring clumsy solutions (Rayner 2006)', (cited in Fiske et al. 2014). They acknowledge the complexity of the issue, following Rayner, and state that such solutions 'take advantage of multiple

perspectives on reality and a deep understanding of the problem's integration in social and cultural systems' (Fiske et al 2014, 16). The taskforce is therefore not solely calling for advocacy but recognizing the multitude of voices that climate change necessary involves as a global problem with many causes, solutions, scales and 'requiring the attention of numerous disciplines, addressing both the impacts the framing(s) of climate change' (2014:16). They address the fact that climate change is embraced or rejected in many different ways and that anthropologists are well-suited to examine this without falling into a prescribed paradigm.

Already in this thesis I have touched upon moments that complicated my place as a researcher asking questions about climate change in Arjeplog, focusing on the disjuncture between understandings of climate change discourses.

I was an 'outsider', as discussed in chapter one. I was never overtly called an 'outsider', but I was always introduced as someone from England who was trying to understand Arjeplog ways of life, and there was a noticeable increase in trust when Arjeplogare realized I had a connection to the town through my partner and his family. Asking questions concerning climate change and the potential climate threat to the region, however, complicated my physical presence in the town. Sometimes I was being seen as someone who was aligned with the voices of mistrust discussed above. When I asked questions about environmental matters during my fieldwork there was a shift in the dynamic between me and my interviewees.

Hunting, fishing, hiking and questions regarding specifics of everyday life were met with an amused curiosity. People delighted in discussing their favourite places and how proud they were of the nature. When I asked about hydropower, forestry, or climate change, however, I was often met with a more guarded look. One of my participants once recommended that I introduced myself as interested in 'car

testing' when I met one of their friends, instead of saying I was interested in nature and the environment. On another occasion, they had to ensure my interviewee that I was not an environmentalist motivated by a plot to bring down forestry and save the trees from the timber industry.

Hints began to creep out from these moments, strengthened by increasing mentions of Miljöpartiet. As Marianne reminded me, later, it is not just climate change conversations that people feel threatened by but the environment more generally: it is a further interference of the out of touch south in matters of which they know little about – surviving in the north.

This impacted the ways in which I engaged with my own environmental practice in the field and in my 'public' life on facebook and Instagram. I felt suddenly uncomfortable sharing news articles about climate change and environmental issues on facebook, in case locals in Arjeplog saw them and thought I had ulterior motives for asking questions about landscape, climate and nature. It also deeply challenged my expectations of the fieldwork. I had expected to hear worries about the threat to car testing, not the threat from environmentalists themselves.

I discuss this in order to show the importance in recognizing our own positionality within climate change discussions and environmentalist discourse. It is easy, perhaps, for many of us to assume that there is a global environmental 'correct' answer to the problems we face today. The dramatic voices of George Monbiot, David Attenborough, and further back to Rachel Carson in the 1960s suggest we must all be on the same page and understand the same threats. A sociological ethnography of Norway by Kari Marie Norgaard, entitled *Living in Denial*, examines climate denialism even from those acknowledging the increasing threat of climate

change⁴⁹ (2011). Norgaard demonstrates how her interviewees were worried about the visible impacts of warmer winters on the stability of ice but also the skiing industry, yet she argues they did not speak of it unless she asked and did little to fight the change: no one wrote to their politicians or stopped driving cars. Her account examines the sociological theories behind this everyday denial and lack of action (ibid). For Norgaard, denial is therefore a lack of action in the face of evidence of anthropogenic climate change. For Hamilton, as in the introduction, denial refers to us all as we collectively fail to deal with the issue (in Latour 2014).

Since returning from fieldwork, I have become more aware of the sharpened rhetoric accusing those in doubt of being ‘climate deniers’ across media, politics, social media and academia. Callison demonstrated that alarmist language has become so normalized that anything else is considered the wrong tone (Callison 2014:90-91). What this fieldwork showed me, and what I have tried to demonstrate in these pages, is that scales of perceived environmental threats depend on the specific location and population in question. If one were to discuss a president who denies climate change despite being briefed by those with experience and research in the field, responsible for policy, and who continues to publicly deny climate change because he has been directly funded by institutions that rely on its rejection, then ‘climate denier’ may not be so far off the mark. To direct such terms to everyday citizens, reading the news and social media and living in a different kind of way with nature, seems profoundly unhelpful.

As Callison has argued, scientists are not renowned for their communication in layman’s terms (2014). If climate science is too complicated even for science

⁴⁹ Norgaard’s account includes a comprehensive review of sociological engagements and studies concerning climate ‘denial’, including overlap with the above regarding the spread of misinformation, the size of the problem to be addressed and the complexity of climate science from a sociological perspective (2011).

journalists, responsible for transforming the dense press releases from the labs to the public (ibid), how on earth are people supposed to process the vast amount of data being thrown into their laps daily? Especially when it contradicts what they know about nature, climate, and weather, and when it comes from voices seen to be profoundly out of touch with their own lived experience of the world. Rancoli, Crane and Orlove have argued that we cannot prioritize the value systems of institutions and disciplines at the expense of the 'core ideals of cultural sensitivity' in anthropology (2009:105). We can therefore be critical of the both the structures within our fieldsites *and* those without and use anthropology's strengths to 'unmask dominant narratives' regarding the 'victims and villains' slot (Antrosio and Han 2015:9).

'In all corners but the most intractable,' argues Finan, 'the debate over climate change is over' and it has become an 'accepted reality' (2009:175). This statement from one of the earliest anthropologists working on climate change seems heavy handed in the light of this research and obscures many people's emplaced, everyday rejections of climate change that are embedded in their relationships with the state, nature, and historical interference in landscape. This cannot be an isolated response in the world. In fact, when I have discussed my research with others outside of academia, they often recognize these arguments from their own extended families throughout Europe.

Some media, politicians and academics portray climate doubt as denial, but surely these categories must also be critically examined. In the current climate of research, media coverage, and heightened contentiousness, it is interesting and necessary to examine the webs in which discourses of climate change exist. Anthropological examinations of the reception of these discourses allow for nuance and complexity,

to counter the single visions of the media and complicate the narrative of a nation, such as Sweden, in which everyone is fighting climate change on the same epistemological scale. This chapter has shown this discourse as threat to the realities of everyday life in rural northern Sweden, but also the perceived inconsistencies in the message: Arjeplog is a tiny community living in an extreme climate, recycling and trying to keep their immediate landscape clean out of a deep respect and pride for 'their' nature. Voices from outside are seen to be coming from a place without this respect for nature – namely the city.

Marino and Schweitzer argue that the discourse of climate change is limited (2009: 216), and they warn anthropologists to take care in their questions about climate change, arguing that they could influence the responses in light of the discourse. I would argue a further take on their warning: to take care when asking the questions in case the preconceived notions of climate change that *we have as researchers* are in fact threatening to those we wish to ask.

Conclusion: Moose, Motors, and Environmental Meddlings



When surrounded by anthropogenic climate change as certainty it is a challenge to begin learning to see it through the lens of doubt and, more importantly, through the co-existent and interdependent threads of life including politics, history, economy, place, aesthetics of landscape, memory, and ongoing relationships with the state. As I have shown throughout this thesis, climate change and environmental discourses are perceived among my participants in Arjeplog as the latest in a history of outside meddling that has stretched far into the past of the rural north. This experience of meddling among the Arjeplogare exists of course in a place with an even longer history of the State plundering resources before Swedish settlement. The tragic history of the Crown taking land from the Sami and building resource

extractive infrastructure for the benefit of the state (Green 2009; MacNeil 2017; Össbo and Lantto 2011) continues to this day in contemporary conflicts over land rights. For the Arjeplogare, alongside the impacts to those Sami who herd reindeer and have right immemorial to hunting and fishing, State meddling continues in the form of bureaucratic interventions in hunting practices and energy infrastructures. Thus the situation between the State, Sami, and 'non-Sami' (following Green 2009) is a complex co-existence whereby the Arjeplogare are both protected by the State in terms of their rights to hunt yet hindered in their experience of landscape and feel overlooked by the State in terms of healthcare. There is a sense that the State and Swedish politicians continue to treat the north as a goldmine of resources, caring little for those who live there.

The moose and the motor emerged as key aspects of identity and place-making in Arjeplog, both positioned as local sources of pride and necessity but also misunderstood by outsiders. But what is especially interesting about these two different objects is what they symbolize and what they become: through hunting and being in the forest, the moose becomes *meat*, and not just any meat but the best. And within the motor is *petrol*, which becomes the fuel by which Arjeplogare know their landscape. Both occupy central roles in the relationship to nature and the network-making processes seen in food and mobility, and both are wrapped up in knowing and caring for the local. The hunt is seen as sustainable at the local scale, and both meat and petrol are crucial to survival in the north yet seen to be hindered by state regulation or the moral warnings from urban environmentalists.

The state is seen to hinder the ease with which they hunt, and the discourses of environmentalism are perceived as threatening their mobility and daily practices through suggestions of raising fuel prices. All this exists under the cloud that is the

ecological failure of hydropower, which alongside forestry transports local natural resources south for the benefit of the very same urban voices seen to be hindering the local lifestyle. Thusfar, state attempts at renewable 'greening' of the energy the nation needs have had dramatic impacts on Arjeplog's water network and ecology. And as a few Arjeplogare pointed out to me, the more 'sustainable' the rest of Sweden becomes, the more electricity will be drawn from Arjeplog. For those outside the *kommun*, perhaps access to the cabins and rocky encounters in the water is less important than global warming, but it does and will have implications for climate policy as well as ideas of environmental justice concerning where the renewable infrastructures are developed.

I have argued that the rejection of climate change is thus place-based, hinging on a local understanding and experience of landscape and nature as well as the historical resource-extraction and implications of renewable energies. It involves both the local Arjeplog way of understanding weather, nature and climate, but also the local history of the relationships with state and with urban, southern voices.

While climate change poses an uncertain and dangerous future for many parts of the world, and anthropologists call for advocacy in our response to this crisis, we must also continue to examine it as a discourse as well as a physical, global event. This will allow an understanding of climate change reception (following Rudiak-Gould 2011) that takes into account the complexities of engagement with this problem. This will be useful in understanding why people reject climate change across the world, including those who have the power to change and to challenge politicians and big business. As I mention in chapter five, this research has opened up conversations with colleagues and peers who recognise these feelings in their social circles and families in comfortable, capitalist societies who are currently safe from

the dramatic effects of global warming. Understanding the rejection of climate change among White capitalist communities is a key part of asking, as Callison does, what it means to inhabit a future with climate change (2014:244) as we head to a much warmer world requiring immediate action from politicians and systems of power (Karlner 1997; Klein 2014; Thunberg 2019; Wallace-Wells 2019).

While a place-based approach has been utilised in examinations of climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation, this research realises the importance of such an angle in how the discourse is rejected. It also shines a light on the environmental concerns that people do talk about. This troubles the notion that a closer bond with local nature would lead to a sense of the global environment, as suggested by Heise (2008) and environmental advocacy. As Massey argued, it is not surprising that people want a sense of place and rootedness in this globalising world (1991). In Arjeplog, as I have shown, such emplacement is realised through hunting, fishing, foraging, and knowing the landscape through boat and snowmobile travel.

Such outings strengthen the bonds people have with their landscape, their place, and drive their desires to keep their nature clean and free from localised pollution. A photographic approach to methodologies of fieldwork allowed new ways to talk about place and landscape in an experimental way (following Grimshaw, et al 2013; Schneider and Wright 2006, 2013; Sánchez-Criado & Estalella 2018) and the liberal use of visuals throughout the thesis was a way to communicate these place-based encounters and priorities in relation to the text. It was a way to visually respond to (and communicate) the intense pride and beauty of a landscape worth protecting on the local scale, in a mirroring of the aesthetics of landscape art in Arjeplog and a appreciation of what counts as a beautiful subject (following Firth 1992).

Throughout this thesis I have tried to show this clash of the local emplaced experience of nature and landscape with both the national goals of the state and the global scale of environmental response creeping into these spheres, where these clashes of scale occur in and through environmental discourse and narratives of nature. These scales are navigated and negotiated through interactions but also through the very transcripts (Scott 1985, 2005) between my participants and myself. Our conversations were environmental resistances themselves (following Martinez and Guha 1997) as Arjeplogare gave voice to their grievances on record, decrying my offer of anonymization. I warned several that they could anger the state or the environmentalists of whom they spoke, half joking that busloads of Stockholmers could come angrily to the north:

‘Let them come. Let them see,’

was one response.

This research opens up new directions of research in the rural north of Sweden. There are questions I wish I had explored during my fieldwork that, sadly, I was unable to do given the available time. For example, what implications does this data have intergenerationally with the growing climate strikes of the young and is this now spreading to the north of Sweden? This question could be applied to many fieldsites around the world where the young climate strikers’ influence is spreading and perhaps sitting at odds with older generations within communities. Such questions can inform policy, science communication, and grassroots activism in

terms of nuanced approaches to the complexity of coexisting epistemologies of nature and environmentalism, fostering understanding of emplaced experience of landscape and past conflicts that continue to inform contemporary responses. There is potential for many other research questions concerning environmental management in the north, too, both concerning former mining communities but also new environmental knowledges and grassroots activism for protecting local landscape. More research in the rural north, more generally, can also serve to mediate the city-centric vision the northerners have of both native Swedes and interested outsiders.

These findings confronted my expectations in ways I could not have expected. Fieldwork is almost certainly a space of encounter with environmental perspectives that differ from the expectations of the researcher, as was the case in my own fieldwork. The specific scale of environmentalism may be vastly or subtly different from that of the anthropologist who has grown up with her own ideology of environmental management and activism.

As Antrosio and Han argue, 'in the age of the Anthropocene, the importance and relevance of anthropology rests on its traditional strengths: close empirical work that very often becomes a basis for the challenge to conventional wisdom and prevalent assumptions.' (2015:2). I argue this is also true of our own assumptions as researchers, as I have shown in the final two chapters. This approach, and the purpose and of anthropology, can also be applied to those instances where climate change is rejected in place. We can and should examine these meshworks (from Ingold 2010) of climate change not only in places where groups are suffering from physical impacts or resilient in their management of climate vulnerability. If we are to examine the phenomena of climate change, it must be a nuanced picture that

includes resistant to these narratives and emplaced understandings of weather, climate, nature and how Climate Change the discourse (following Hulme 2009) exists in the world.

Epilogue



I came back to Arjeplog in the summer of 2019, exactly a year after finishing fieldwork. We drove up to hike in the mountains and swim in the lakes, and I felt a wave of nostalgia for the crisp air and familiar faces. I had been back to the town a few times since finishing fieldwork, including filming for the Nordic Museum, a trip which was rescheduled given the delay in that winter's ice following a long and mild autumn. I went up then anyway to meet Marianne, Mats and Fredrik and put out nets under the ice that, although too weak to hold a car, could happily support our steps and the snowmobile which reflected off the glassy surface. During both winter trips I talked a little with Marianne about the direction in which my thesis was

heading, updating her curiosity about my experience of Arjeplog and how I was writing her home.

In the summer, however, we scheduled a proper sit-down where I could explain to her what I was in the midst of setting down into words now the thesis was taking proper shape. I had dinner with her one evening and afterwards we sat together on her sofa and I explained the overall argument, with the emphasis on conflicting environmentalisms and the idea of outsiders interfering with landscape.



She nodded quietly as I outlined the general structure, the chapters, and the themes. When I explained the argument behind climate change, and how it was another form of meddling, she replied, 'Yes. But it is not just climate change. It is all kinds of environmentalism, all kinds of voices of people who think they know better'. She leaned forward and folded her hands together.

'And,' she continued, looking into the distance, 'it is not specifically Stockholm either, but those who *take*. Sveaskog, for example, who are taking the forest. Or another

example is Skellefteåkraft who are taking the water and who are rich, taking money away from Arjeplog. We pay more fees here for electricity than in Skellefteå or Stockholm - it is cheaper in the capital because everything is close. Here, everything is far apart. We who give the electricity get nothing. It is those who are above us, those who want to come here and take. Everyone from outside who wants to control us... or decide over us.

And we don't like that.'



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