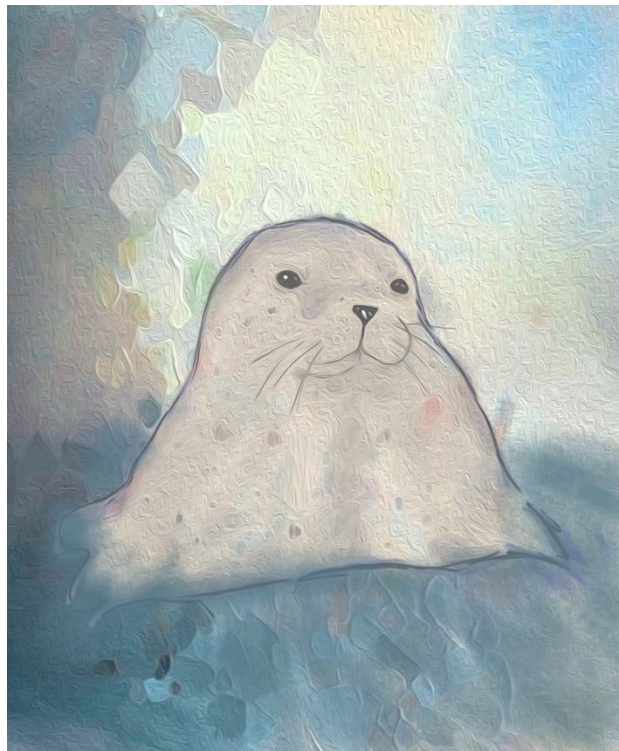


# **Trust between actors in wildlife management**

– *In the context of the Swedish seal management and small-scale fishery controversy*

Emily Montgomerie



**Master's thesis • 30 credits**

Environmental Communication and Management – Master's programme  
Department of Urban and Rural Development  
Uppsala 2018

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*– In the context of the Swedish seal management and small-scale fishery controversy*

Emily Montgomerie

**Supervisor:** Erica von Essen, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Environmental Communication

**Examiner:** Lotten Westberg, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Environmental Communication

**Credits:** 30 credits

**Level:** Second cycle (A2E)

**Course title:** Independent Project in Environmental Science – Master's thesis

**Course code:** EX0431

**Programme/education:** Environmental Communication and Management – Master's Programme

**Place of publication:** Uppsala

**Year of publication:** **2018**

**Cover picture:** Leonora Montgomerie

**Online publication:** <https://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

**Keywords:** trust, wildlife management, seal management, small-scale fishery

## Abstract

There is an increasing demand for participatory and collaborative natural resource management today. Such collaborative approaches require an understanding of how to create trustful relationships between the actors involved. This study takes a phenomenological approach to studying trust in the Swedish seal management and small-scale fishery controversy, in order to understand how the actors in this case of wildlife management experience trust, and to identify important components of trust. The findings show that we base our trust on our perception of how the other *is* (personal background, values, and competence) as well as how the other *acts* (meeting commitments, acting consistently and sticking to one's role). Meeting in person is also shown to positively affect our willingness to trust. Our perception of whether or not the other trusts us may also influence that willingness. Practical as well as theoretical implications of these findings are discussed.

*Keywords:* trust, wildlife management, seal management, small-scale fishery

# Innehållsförteckning/Table of contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1	Purpose statement and research questions	6
<b>2</b>	<b>Methodology and methods</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Research design	7
2.2	Data collection	8
2.3	Analysis	10
2.4	Application of theory	10
2.5	Ethical considerations	11
2.6	The role of the researcher	11
<b>3</b>	<b>Case context – seals, seal management and small scale fisheries in Sweden</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Theoretical background</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1	Setting the scene	19
5.2	Introducing the four themes	20
5.2.1	Trustworthiness	21
5.2.2	Reliability	28
5.2.3	Trust and the personal meeting	32
5.2.4	Metaperspective of trust	34
<b>6</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>37</b>
6.1	Possible consequences of decreased trust	37
6.2	The interrelatedness of trustworthiness and reliability	39
6.3	Difference in trust perception between actors	41
6.4	The importance of the personal meeting	42
<b>7</b>	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>44</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>51</b>
	<b>Appendix 1 Intervjuguide</b>	<b>52</b>

# 1 Introduction

In the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, most of the large mammals in the Swedish fauna disappeared or were much decimated in numbers. During the last century, and especially the last fifty years, these species have returned and increased in population size (e.g. Karlsson et al. 2007, SOU 2007:89, Naturvårdsverket 2014) While this can be considered a victory from a nature conservation perspective, it also creates challenges for people whose lives and livelihoods are affected by these mammals, as well as for the authorities that are responsible for wildlife management in Sweden. Most large mammals in Sweden are managed by the state, that is, goals and policies are set by authorities, and measures are taken to control population sizes, distribution, and to mitigate their negative impacts on human interests (e.g. SOU 2007:89, Naturvårdsverket 2010, Havs- och Vattenmyndigheten 2012a, b). This means that there is a human, top-down control on these species. The Swedish government has made attempts to make both the decision-making processes and the management of the species more participatory, including affected human actors in the local governance of these mammals (e.g. SFS 2009:1474, Söderman 2017). More participatory wildlife management may be necessary to create legitimacy for wildlife policies (von Essen and Hansen 2015) and although it has been argued that firm, state-regulated control might be needed to protect certain species, others argue that local, participatory processes are indeed more effective in protecting species due to the increased legitimacy of the management (Redpath et al. 2017).

A participatory approach requires well-functioning relationships and interaction between the different actors in wildlife management (Butler et al. 2015). One element that greatly affects and reflects these relationships and the interaction between actors is trust (Butler et al. 2015, Sjölander et al. 2015, Redpath et al. 2017). Several studies have evaluated or discussed trust in wildlife or other natural resource management (e.g. Cvetkovich and Winter 2003, Leahy and Andersson 2008, Needham and Vaske 2008, Smith et al. 2013, Sjölander et al. 2015, Coleman and Stern 2018). However, most of these studies have either evaluated predefined variables presumed to affect trust, such as level of shared values (Cvetkovich and Winter 2003, Needham and Vaske 2008) and dispositional trust, that is, the generally tendency to trust the government (Smith et al. 2013), or discussed trust briefly as part of the solution for an improved management situation (Sjölander et al.

2015, Butler et al. 2015). In addition, most reviewed studies have focused on public or stakeholder trust in authorities (for one exception, see Coleman and Stern 2018). In this study, trust is explored from a phenomenological perspective. This means that the phenomenon of trust is analyzed and described with the basis in the lived experience of what trust means for people working with or affected by wildlife management. Such a research design can illuminate elements of trust that are not captured in more quantitative studies. The study also includes both trust towards authorities and the authorities trust in other actors, and describe how the sense of being trusted or not affects interaction, and the willingness to be trustful. In this way, the study contributes to the understanding of an essential element of well-functioning relationships, and thereby to the improvement of participatory processes in wildlife management.

The context within which this study is carried out is Swedish seal management. This has been something of a hot topic recently, both in media (e.g. Dagens Nyheter 2017, Hedlund 2017, Nylén 2017) and in research (Lunds universitet 2017, Sälar och Fiske 2017). Seals are known to destroy fishermen equipment and feast on the catch, sometimes leading to considerable economic losses for the fishermen. This has created a controversy between the fishing industry and seal conservation (Lunneryd and Königson 2017). For this reason, this context has been chosen as an appropriate one for the study of trust between actors in a particular case of wildlife management. The context is further described in section 3 in this thesis.

## 1.1 Purpose statement and research questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the phenomenon of *trust* in the context of a specific case of Swedish wildlife management. The study uses a phenomenological approach, and empirical material is gained through in depth interviews with three different types of actors; authorities, scientists, and small-scale fishermen. Existing theories on the concept of trust are used to understand the characteristics and components of trust in this context. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of trust as an important factor in social relationships and human interaction in natural resource governance.

The main research question guiding this study is how the phenomenon of *trust* is described and experienced by people involved in or affected by seal management. Sub-questions that the study aims to answer are;

- What is described as the components of the concept of trust, and which components are given most importance by the interviewees? Is this similar or different between different actors?
- What do the interviewees describe as important factors for creating trust or generating mistrust?
- How do the interviewees describe the trust or lack of trust which they perceive the other actors to show towards them or their organization?

## 2 Methodology and methods

### 2.1 Research design

A phenomenological research approach has been chosen for this study. Phenomenology is a philosophically based research design, and is sometimes considered a complex and hard-to-grasp type of design (Silverman 2015 p. 42). Why has this design been chosen for this study, and what makes it in line with the aim of the study? Phenomenology was founded by Edward Husserl in the beginning of the twentieth century (Craig and Muller 2007), as a response to his observation that sciences, especially natural sciences, focused on investigating objects and events in themselves as natural objects, but the human experience of these objects or events was ignored or taken for granted (Lindseth and Norberg 2004 p. 146). Thus, phenomenology focuses on the lived experience of a phenomenon, and the question is, “how do we experience X”, rather than “what is X” (Craig and Muller 2007). Having analyzed the experience of the phenomenon, as described by the interviewees, the researcher may then identify the essential traits that constitutes the phenomenon, and thereby reconstruct the phenomenon, based in the lived experience told by the respondents of the study (Lindseth and Norberg 2004). Because of this, phenomenological studies do not necessarily start off with a particular theoretical framework, since the idea is to let the interviewees guide the description of the phenomenon more than anything else (Creswell 2014 p. 66).

The study aims to avoid as much as possible taken-for-granted assumptions about the character of trust, in order to learn from the interviewees what trust means to them in a context of wildlife management. Since the aim of the study is to explore the interviewees’ experience of a particular phenomenon, in order to better understand its various components and aspects, phenomenology has been chosen as a suitable research design for the study. Existing theoretical frameworks on trust are used, not as a model to apply to the material or fit the data into, but as a lens to help illuminate the characteristics of the phenomenon. In particular, scholars that theorize on trust in conflict management, as well as on the role of trust in dialogue,

have been reviewed, since these approaches for theorizing on trust were deemed to be the most relevant for the understanding of trust dynamics in natural resource management.

## 2.2 Data collection

Nine semi-structured one-to-one interviews and one group interview constitute the empirical material of this study. Unstructured interviews may seem more in line with the fundamental ideas of phenomenology, but a pilot interview done in preparation for this proposal showed that in such a contested issue as seal management, the interviewee tends to focus much on technical questions around the topic, rather than the interaction between actors, the former of which is less relevant for this thesis. Therefore, some open-ended questions were prepared, if needed to bring the interview back to the phenomenon under study. The interview guide first had some context specific questions, regarding seal populations, small-scale fishery, and important actors in the management of seals. These kinds of questions were followed by more relationship-oriented and possibly more sensitive questions. The intention of placing the questions in this order was to allow the interviewee to feel as comfortable with and engaged in the conversation as possible when more sensitive questions were introduced. These questions could for example be “*would you describe your trust in organization/person X?*”, “*would you give an example of when you have interacted with X, and tell me how you experienced that?*” and “*would you describe the trust you believe that X has for you/your organization?*” (see Appendix I for the full interview guide). However, as all interviewees were first asked if they would give their own account of the seal management situation, the exemplified questions were often asked in connection to a situation that the interviewee had described. This was done to ensure that the interviewees could be as specific as possible when describing their experiences of trust in this context. Unless the interviewees brought it up themselves, a follow-up question, “*what would you say are important characters of a trustworthy person?*” allowed for more general reflection.

Some key actors had been identified prior to the study. As each interviewee was asked which they perceived as the most important actors in the matter of seal management, additional respondents were contacted. Some actors identified by the interviewees have deliberately not been included in the study due to time limitations. These actors were politicians, representatives of the involved ministries, and the Swedish Board of Agriculture. However, the majority of the involved actors are represented among the interviewees. Since the aim of the study is to explore trust as a phenomenon and not to give a full account of the seal management issue, the exclusion of some actors can be accepted. The following actors are represented:

- Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (HaV)



- County Administration Board of Halland
- Swedish Natural History Museum
- Research program Seals and Fishery (Program Sälar och Fiske)
- Swedish national organization for fisheries (Sveriges Fiskares Producentorganisation, SFPO)
- A team of local small-scale fishermen in Scania
- Swedish Association for Nature Conservation (Naturskyddsföreningen)
- WWF Sweden
- Swedish Hunting Organisation (Svenska Jägareförbundet)

It is important to note, however, that it is the personal experience of the interviewee regarding trust and interaction in the seal management context that have been asked for, and not the official or collective experience of any institution or organization. To ensure as much anonymity as possible, the quotes are simply cited authority, researcher, ENGO, fishery and hunting organization.

Five interviews were conducted through meeting in person, either at the office of the interviewee or in a café. The other interviews were conducted via Skype or phone. Face-to-face interviews were always the first choice; only when this was not possible due to time limitations for the researcher or the interviewee was Skype or phone chosen as an option. The one-to-one interviews were all about an hour of length, and the group interview (with the fishery team) was conducted in about two and a half hour. All interviews were recorded and transcribed word by word for the analysis.

A final note regarding the interviews concerns the possibility of biased answers to the interview questions. In a thesis exploring the experience of trust, an interesting question is to what extent the interview answers can be trusted to be the genuine account of the interviewees' experiences. Some interviewees were also politically engaged in the issue. Would there be a tendency to exaggerate some aspects of the issue? Were some statements rather political statements intended to affect the interviewer's sympathies, rather than personal reflections on the experience of trust (Alvesson 2003)? These possibilities were considered during the analysis, however, since the thesis aims to describe the phenomenon of trust, and not to give a full account of or any recommendation for the Swedish seal management itself, it was not seen as something that would distort the findings of the study. The reason is that such political statements also reveal something about what we believe to be important trust components. If I try to affect you to think less of someone by depicting that person as inconsequential for example, I thereby reveal that I believe that being inconsequential is an undesirable trait. In this way, regardless of whether an answer is a heartfelt experience or if it is rather a strategic statement, this will allow for an analysis of what is considered important characters of trust and trustworthiness.

## 2.3 Analysis

The analysis follows the strategy suggested by Lindseth and Norberg (2004), designed for phenomenological inquiries. In this approach, each transcript is read three times, and the steps of the analysis follow these readings:

- First step – naïve reading – simply reading through the transcript to create a feeling for the text, and an overall meaning of what is being said. These impressions are written down by the researcher
- Second step – thematic analysis - a thorough reading of the transcript with the aim of identifying themes, based on the research questions and segments of meaning (essence) that the interviewee expresses regarding the phenomenon (in this case trust)
- Third step – comprehensive understanding – the texts are read again, when naïve impressions and themes have been developed, and the transcripts are reflected upon a third time in relation to these impressions and themes, as well as in relation to existing theoretical concepts

## 2.4 Application of theory

The theoretical concepts have a dialectic relationship with the identified themes. On one hand, in the third step of the analysis, the themes that emerge from the empirical material are discussed in relation to the theoretical frameworks described in the theory section. On the other hand, these theoretical concepts also guide the identification of themes in the second step of analysis. Some phenomenological researcher might object to this approach, arguing that a predetermined set of theoretical concepts obscures the “pure” experiences told by the interviewees (Harrington 2005 p. 113). This study, however, rather agrees with Lindseth and Norberg (2004), who claims that related literature should be used, in the dialectic sense described above, in order to illuminate aspects of the phenomenon, just as the empirical material allows us to reflect on our theoretical frameworks. Indeed, it is important to recognize that one always works with preconceived ideas of some sort, and that the role of a theoretical framework is in part to make such preconceptions transparent and systematic (Cudd 2015 p. 30).

A review of theories on trust was made prior to the empirical data collection. Three scholars were identified as particularly relevant (Levicki 2006, Gillespie 2008, Allwood 2014) for illuminating characters of trust that may emerge in the empirical material. However, one of the themes that were identified during the analysis of the empirical material, “the personal meeting,” could not be explained by any of these theories. In other words, this theme was an inductive finding. To be able to discuss this finding in a theoretical context, a revisit was made to the scientific literature on trust. This illustrates the dialectic approach to theory and empirical material used in this study (Lindseth and Norberg 2004). As Cudd (2015

p. 30) states, “theory should be responsive to evidence, in the sense that it should be able to accommodate a wide arrange of evidence, but it should not insulate itself from all possible counterexamples”. This has been the aim of the theoretical framework of this study. The theory should enable discussion about a wide arrange of findings on a more general level, but there is also room for counterexamples, and findings that are not explained by the theoretical framework, to emerge to from the empirical material.

## 2.5 Ethical considerations

Wildlife controversies can be sensitive, and the interviewees may be sharing sensitive stories or information (Nuno and St John 2015). This was acknowledged by the researcher (who was also conducting the interviews) in each initial contact with a new respondent. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, how the interview material would be used, and who would have access to the final report as well as the transcript/recordings when asked to participate. The interviewees have been anonymized, using only the name of the organization in the list of interviewees, and the actor group for quotes. However, it is acknowledged that due to the interviewee’s position, or the small size of the communities, total anonymity may not be assured by this method. Therefore, the interviewees were told that, upon request, the transcripts could be sent to them for revision and approval before they were used in the study. Three interviewees asked for the transcript. All respondents approved the use of the transcripts for this study without revision of their interview answers.

## 2.6 The role of the researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher generally has a more active role in interpreting results and drawing conclusions than in quantitative studies. Therefore, the researcher’s background should be presented in order to be transparent about and open up for discussion on potential biases (Creswell 2014 p. 187). The researcher responsible for carrying out this study is a master student of an environmental communication program. She has a bachelor in ecology and is familiar with the general procedures of Swedish wildlife management. This may be advantage when interviewing authorities and scientists, since procedural or technical issues are understood by the researcher, but may create a bias towards an ecological perspective. This may be especially problematic when interviewing small-scale fishermen. The pilot interviews done in preparation for this proposal show that some fishermen may be skeptical towards a researcher with a background in biology, whereas some scientists can be careful about talking to a researcher with a social science background. Since the researcher has a background in both these disciplines, one

concern was that this would affect the interviews, if interviewees were unwilling to share their experience with a researcher they did not trust. The way that this was dealt with was for the researcher to be transparent with her background, and to be clear with the aim and purpose of the current study. The potential bias towards an ecological perspective was met by discussions with the supervisor of the project, who has a social science background. The researcher is Swedish, which means she should have an understanding of the basic cultural and political setting of the study, as well as ensuring that the interviews could be done in the interviewees native language.

### 3 Case context – seals, seal management and small scale fisheries in Sweden

Three species of seals occur along the coast of Sweden (Karlsson et al. 2007). Grey seals occur in the entire Baltic Sea basin and can move over large distances (HaV 2012a). Harbor seals are more stationary, and populations exist along the west coast of Sweden (Skagerrak, Kattegat, and southwestern Baltic Sea) and in Kalmarsund (HaV 2012b). The ringed seal inhabits the northern parts of the Baltic Sea (Karlsson et al. 2007). All three species were significantly decimated in numbers in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century primarily due to high hunting pressure and environmental toxins, and began to recover in the decades of 1970-1980 (Harding and Härkönen 1999, HaV 2012a, 2012b). Since 1988, only protective hunting approved by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) is allowed (Lunneryd and Königson 2017). Protective hunting can be granted if seals occur in the proximity of a fishing site and there have been seal damages (Mårtensson 2017). While protective hunting decisions remain with the SEPA, the management of the seal species is carried out by the Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management (hereby referred to with the Swedish abbreviation HaV).

While seal population numbers rise, the number of small-scale fisheries in Sweden has decreased considerably in recent years. This can have negative effects on rural development and livelihood of traditional fishing communities (Fiskeriverket 2010, Lunneryd and Königson 2017). The disappearance of traditional rural livelihoods such as small-scale fishery contributes to the depopulation of local communities, creating a “bad circle” where a decrease in infrastructure and service in these communities may motivate people to leave these communities although they would otherwise have chosen to stay (Fiskeriverket 2010 p. 146). Fishing communities along the coast of Sweden have a long history, and small-scale fisheries are seen as bearers of important cultural values (Miljövärdberedningens promemoria 2006:1). Thus, the disappearance of traditional fishing communities leads to a loss of cultural values. Additionally, archipelagic communities constitute an important recreational site for many people (Samuelsson 2016). As one interviewee from a fishery organization points out, “most Swedes want a living country-side for at least two months a year”. The fishery communities, typical for archipelagic villages, are thus also important for the sustainment of such recreational sites.

The environmental impact of small-scale fisheries is in several ways smaller than that of large-scale fisheries, since the equipment generally is less destructive and more selective, and shorter travelling distances lead to a lower use of fossil fuels (Fiskeriverket 2010 p. 147). Today, however, small-scale fisheries have troubles competing with the large-scale industry, and the profitability is low. Several factors contribute to the difficulties facing small-scale fisheries (see Fiskeriverket 2010 p. 114-145). Strict regulations and demands for administration more adapted to large-scale industries have proven to be a challenge for small-scale fisheries worldwide, and studies show that many fishermen perceive the laws and regulations for small-scale fisheries as illegitimate (Gezelius 2002, Hauck 2008, Boonstra et al. 2017). Fishermen argue the development erodes the fabric of fishing community and that it sows seeds of mistrust toward the state (Gezelius 2002, Boonstra et al. 2017).

In the 1980's, damages done by seals on different types of fishing gear increased to an extent where it started to have an economic impact on coastal fisheries in Sweden. Seals eat the fish that get caught in gears, damage the fishing gears themselves, and scare fish away from fishing sites (Lunneryd and Königson 2017). Total economic losses for the fishing industry in Sweden were calculated to 33 million SEK in 2013, not including so called hidden costs, such as fish that are taken from the nets not leaving any trace behind, or fish being scared away from fishing sites. While this figure has remained constant for a decade, the number of active fishermen has decreased, which means that the cost per fisherman for seal damages has increased (Havs- och Vattenmyndigheten 2014, Lunneryd and Königson 2017). The types of fisheries that are most affected are fishing with passive fishing gear such as nets, hooks, and fish traps, and especially for the species cod, eel, and salmon, but other types of fisheries can be affected as well (Havs- och Vattenmyndigheten 2014). Compensation can be granted to professional fishermen for economic losses due to seal damages. "Seal safe" fishing gear, that is, gear where seals cannot get to the fish nor destroy the gear, is a continuous subject for research and innovation, and some are already in use. Protective hunting can be used as an attempt to mitigate impacts (Lunneryd and Königson 2017).

Decreasing catches due to seal damage have led to a controversy between the fishing industry, especially small-scale and coastal fisheries, and seal management (Lunneryd and Königson 2017). Recently, several newspaper articles have been published where small-scale fishermen express their discontent with the Swedish seal management (Dagens Nyheter 2017, Hedlund 2017, Nylén 2017). For this reason, this context has been chosen to study trust and distrust with regards to wildlife management. This will give an indication as to whether the fishermen's discontent with seal management could lead to a more general distrust towards state regulations of fisheries. The seal management and small-scale fishery controversy also renders a possibility to study trust dynamics in a particularly situated wildlife issue. The conflict is most centered on the question of hunting in order to reduce seal numbers (eg. Karlsson and Bruno 2013, Niblaeus and Hellander 2013, Wirtén 2013, SFPO 2018). A notable difference between seals and other large mammals that have returned to the Swedish fauna, is that only specific groups of

people are negatively affected or even come into contact with these animals. Land-based carnivores such as wolves and bears can incite fear among the public by trespassing and predating on domestic animals (Frank et al. 2015), wild boars cause visible damage in crops in gardens, and a significant portion of ungulates cause traffic accidents (Naturvårdsverket 2010, Nationella Viltolycksrådet 2018).

In contrast, most citizens are not directly affected by seals in any similar way or magnitude. Negative effects are largely restricted to those on fisherman communities. The controversy is thus situated in and localized to a particular context. This situatedness may make particular elements of trust easier to study. As has been confirmed by the interviews carried out in this study, since there are few people in Sweden actively involved with the seal/fishery controversy, *most of them know each other and have had personal contact*. This has made it possible for the interviewees to reflect both on their trust for other organizations or actors on a more abstract level, and on personal traits that make someone more or less trustworthy, as well as how this can change over time. In addition, it makes it possible to study the relationship between generalized or organizational trust and interpersonal trust and how one type of trust may affect the other. This allows the study to analyze these forms of trust in wildlife management contexts. Understanding the dynamics of trust in this context illuminates potential causes of distrust. Since distrustful relationships may hinder communication and collaboration (Hallgren and Ljung 2005, Allwood 2014), being able to prevent causes of distrust facilitates a constructive dialogue between affected parties, and in turn, the process of finding common solutions that are seen as legitimate by all parties.

## 4 Theoretical background

Although most of us know exactly what we mean when we use the word “trust”, it is a phenomenon that has proved to be notoriously elusive when trying to investigate it in a scientific way (Blennberger 2009). As Grosse (2009 p. 60) phrases it; “trust can be everything, or nothing” (my translation). This suggest an inflation of meaning and a possible loss of analytical utility. Grosse continues to describe how trust is researched in a multiple of social science disciplines, such as philosophy, theology, political science, sociology, economy, and psychology. However, in recent years there has been a trend to study *social* trust, premised on a concern that trust is decreasing in many modern societies and that this erosion of trust will undermine the legitimacy and thereby the functionality of modern constitutions (Trägårdh et al. 2009). This idea traces back to such early scholars as for example Locke (1988), who saw trust as a necessary element for the formation of the modern state, for people to choose the structure of government (acting for the common good) before the natural state of every man acting only for his own good. Today, publics in post-modernizing societies are increasingly characterized by an emancipatory ethos towards authority, and report lower trust levels and a turn toward individual autonomy (Inglehart and Welzel 2005 p. 60).

Most scholars concerned with trust in social institutions and governance in contemporary societies have been primarily interested in measuring levels of trust or distrust, and explaining possible causalities and or effects of trust, in other words, quantitative studies dominate this field (Trägårdh et al. 2009). These are important, insofar as certain thresholds of trust, when unmet, can precipitate resistance on the part of the public who feels alienated by authority (Brisbin 2010). In the reviewed studies on trust in a natural resource management context, which can be seen as a particular type of governance, the case has been the same (e.g. Cvetkovich and Winter 2003, Needham and Vaske 2008). This study predicated on the same assumption, that trust is an important component in the relationship between actors in natural resource governance, in order to create both legitimacy and efficiency for the management strategies. However, rather than focusing on measuring or explaining trust, the aim is to explore the very phenomenon of trust, as experienced by these actors. Inasmuch as Grosse (2009) intimates the concept



stretching of trust in the scholarly literature, then, a phenomenological account of trust remains rooted in the experiences of real people.

To be sure, this is by no means a new method for investigating trust, although it seems less common in research about trust in the context of different forms of governance. Within the sociological discipline, qualitative methods for exploring the concept of trust are more common (Markova and Gillespie 2008, Trädgårdh et al. 2009). To study trust phenomenologically draws from the school of social constructionism, in the sense that trust is not seen as an independent object for study 'out there', but as a phenomenon seen through the human mind, through the meaning that we (or in this case, the interviewees of the study) give to it. Social constructivist approaches can be applied to make sense of how people, structures and discourses relate and construct a range of 'natural' and social phenomenon, but it may be especially pertinent when one is investigating a relational phenomenon like trust, which has little 'objective reality' (Lindseth and Norberg 2004 p. 146).

In some phenomenological studies of trust, no explicit theoretical framework is used, to avoid letting theoretical concepts overshadow the themes that emerge from the empirical material (Creswell 2014 p. 66). The proposed study, however, will use a set of existing theoretical concepts and ideas around trust, not in order to fit the data within a particular model or framework, but to illuminate and be able to discuss different aspects of trust that may otherwise be overlooked in the empirical material. The core concepts that will be used are presented below.

Lewicki (2006) presents a theoretical framework of trust that allows for distinction between different types of trust or distrust. The two main types of trust are:

- Calculus-based trust, typical of professional relationships or interactions where the actors trust each other to carry out particular tasks, and to keep agreements.
- Identification-based trust, more typical of personal and more intimate relationships, where actors have gotten to know each other well, and identified with the needs and desires of each other in such a way that one can be trusted to act for the benefit of the other, even or especially in the absence of the other.

Distrust can also be characterized as either calculus-based or identification-based, and every relationship can contain elements of both types of trust and distrust. In this study, this framework is used to assist in characterizing what type of trust is described by the interviewees, and whether this differs between actors. It is also used to discuss how an actor can be trusted in some aspects or situations, but not in other. Lewicki's categories are broad and encompassing in their capture of trust and its various situations, though as this study will show, important phenomenological sub-categories of these must be considered.

Allwood's (2014) theoretical framework on trust also assists in characterizing trust, but rather than identifying different types of trust, Allwood (ibid.) describes the different levels of trust:

- A basic level, where I trust you as a rational being to see and treat me as a rational being,
- A collaborative level, where, I also trust that you and I have the same goal in a particular context (for example, to understand each other in the context of dialogue)
- A cooperative level, where I, in addition, expect you to treat me ethically
- A commitments and obligations level, where I trust you to keep your commitments to me, and finally,
- A competence level, where I trust your competence in a certain context.

In addition, Allwood defines a difference between lack of trust and mis- or distrust, where lack of trust means that I doubt I can trust you, whereas mis- or distrust means I believe that I *cannot* trust you. These types of non-trust can occur at any level described above, and depending on what level non-trust occurs, the interaction is affected in different ways. This theoretical framework is used in this study in a similar way as that of Lewicki (2006), by helping characterizing levels of trust expressed by interviewees. The distinction between levels of non-trust, and the terms and definition of these made by Allwood (2014 p. 198-199) are used consequently in the report.

Gillespie (2008) theorizes trust from a social interactionism perspective. The part of this theoretical framework that is used in this study is the discussion on the ability to have a meta-perspective on trust, that is, not only can I decide whether I trust you or not, I can also (and do) create a perception of whether you trust me or not. This discussion facilitates in answering the research question of how the interviewees experience themselves as being trusted or non-trusted by other actors, and how this affects their own trust as well as the interaction as a whole.

The theme of “the personal meeting” was an inductive one. To put this finding in a theoretical context, a compilation of studies on trust and familiarity is used. Familiarity with another person has been shown to affect trust. As we get to know another person, the preconditions for trust change (Levin et al. 2006, Freitag and Bauer 2015, Alarcon et al. 2016). According to these studies, getting to know another does not necessarily increase trust. However, Levin et al. (2006 p. 1163) notes that “the influence of group categories on attention and comprehension (e.g., stereotyping) should lessen with time as one observes another and begins to infer intentions and make attributions on the basis of that person’s behaviors”. This indicates that as we get to know somebody, our judgment about that person’s trustworthiness is affected by our experience of interacting with the person, rather than by preconceived perceptions based on the person’s group identity. A propensity for suspicion towards an abstract other is discussed from a variety of disciplinary fields: from moral cosmopolitanism discussing the challenges to producing solidarity between “strangers” (Straehle 2010, citing Shue, 1988, p. 693), to sociological studies on gossip as means to solidify trust with insiders and exclude outsiders (Foster 2004) and the applied natural resource management literature that observes how various social distancing processes (such as coming in as an outsider, transacting with locals with money rather than social norms and more) direct mistrust toward strangers (Gezelius 2004).

## 5 Findings

### 5.1 Setting the scene

The case context section outlines the background for the seal management/small-scale fishery controversy. Here, a more detailed picture is presented – based on the aggregative picture given by the interviewees. It is the setting for the scene, as perceived and experienced by the interviewees; the most important actors, the role of these actors, the most important issues, and some historical background to it. The main characters, according to the interviewees, are:

- Authorities;
  - SEPA (hunting regulations and decisions on protective hunting),
  - HaV (management of seal populations and fish),
  - Swedish Board for Agriculture (fishery industry and seal product trading),
  - County administration boards,
  - Ministry of Environment and Energy,
  - Ministry of Enterprise and Energy, and
  - politicians in general.
- Research programs;
  - SLU, on seal behavior, seal safe fishing gear and the impact of seals on fisheries, and
  - Natural History Museum on population dynamics and health status of seals.
- Interest groups;
  - Fishery organizations,
  - ENGOS, and
  - Hunting organizations.

Groups representing for example seal safari, animal welfare organizations, or local communities in the archipelagos are mentioned by some but not seen as main actors. International agreements such as EU regulations and the HELCOM agreement (the Helsinki Commission or Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission), as well as relations with neighboring countries, influence the issue, largely as putting a frame within which the Swedish discussions occur. The main controversies concern the hunting of seals, where some actors (fishery organizations, some researchers, and to some extent hunting organizations) advocate a more active management of the seal population, limiting the population growth or decreasing their numbers. Others, primarily ENGOs, some researchers, and to some extent national authorities, sees such an extensive hunt as either practically or legally impossible, too risky for the seal populations, or both. The seal is also described by the interviewees as a symbolically important animal for the environmental movement. Several interviewees describe the issue as being less conflict-laden now than a decade ago. As seal numbers increase, there is less concern for the stability of their populations, and hunting as well as the acceptance for hunting has increased lately. However, interviewees representing fishery describe an increasingly difficult situation as seal populations grow and expand their range. There is an ongoing dialogue between the actors mentioned about how to deal with the controversy. Those of the interviewees who have worked with other types of wild life management all agree that the issue is less conflict-laden, than for the land-based carnivores. The discussions are less spiteful and there is less polarization in the different views of the actors involved. This lends the possibility to explore the dynamics of trust and non-trust in a controversy that is rather on the verge of conflict than an already full-blown and infected conflict characterized by a high level of distrust between actors, where it may be hard to trace how that distrust began to develop. The insights gained from this study may help in understanding the dynamics of trust and distrust in an early stage of conflict, and in turn, can aid in finding tools to prevent such conflicts from escalating. Thus, the question asked is, how is trust experienced in the Swedish seal management controversy? What important components can be identified?

## 5.2 Introducing the four themes

Four main themes emerge in the interview transcripts; (1) *trustworthiness*, (2) *reliability*, (3) *the personal meeting*, and (4) *metaperspective of trust*. The two first themes relate to different aspects of trust; trustworthiness is the theme were the interviewee describe the *being* aspect of trust; how *is* a trustworthy person? What are important characteristics? How does our identity affect our trustworthiness? The theme pertains to primarily to Lewickis (2008) identity-based trust, and Allwoods (2014) first three levels of trust (basic level, collaborative and cooperative level of trust). Reliability, by contrast is more about *doing*. How does a trustworthy person act? What do we expect and what happens when expectations for action are not met? This aspect of trust mostly relates to Lewickis (2008) calculus-based trust, or

Allwoods (2014) fourth and fifth level of trust (trust with respect to commitments and obligations, and with respect to competence). The personal meeting relates to the topic of how trust differs between someone we have met in person or at least spoken to by phone, and the more abstract and imagined other. Finally, metaperspective of trust is the theme where the interviewees' perception of the other is presented, if we believe that we are trusted by the other or not, and how that affects our willingness to trust the other in return.

### 5.2.1 Trustworthiness

As stated above, the theme trustworthiness emerged from the empirical material as a category of how we want another person to be, or features that we want them to have, in order to be worthy of our trust. This theme has to do with matters of identity, competence, and values. Each of these topics have been given a separate section under this headline, but before these are presented, some general characters of a trustworthy person, as depicted by the interviewees of the study, will be presented. Honesty and openness are leading words used by the interviewees. How do we judge if a person is honest or not? What characterizes an open person? Another word that the interviewees seem to connect to honesty is transparency:

Then I would try to explain that we have to take several things into account, and am honest, we make this decision because we value this and that.

- ENGO

Of course we do not agree in all questions, they think it should be dealt with in another way. But I am happy then that you have an open discussion about it and respect each other anyway.

- Authority

There are also examples of suspicion when the interviewee perceives a lack of transparency:

... it was a very non-transparent process, where we principally were just allowed to look at ready-made drafts...

- ENGO

I mean it is something fishy in all of this, one does things each and everyone in their own way...

- Fishery organization

If transparency is the concrete manifestation of honesty, openness seems to be about showing that one can discuss a matter from different angles. The ability to see things from both sides is repeatedly mentioned by the interviewees as an important trait of a trustworthy person, whereas single-mindedness tends to create mistrust or lack of trust:

... you cannot just have the same opinion all the time... or yes you can, wrong, you can have the same opinion but you cannot be so incredibly focused on one side and never see that there are other things. That makes you wonder.

- ENGO

This... that you don't only hear one side of it, that sort of... then you get a bit suspicious, one knows that you can see the matter in different ways. So when the person shows that there are different sides of the same thing, then it feels trustworthy.

- Researcher

Then creating trust, it's a lot about as I said before to listen and try to see beyond locked opinions sometimes. [...] Point them out and see that there are other perspectives...

- Authority

So, I asked, have you checked now what I told you, so that I don't just speak for my own side? No, well, she had visited the website of the Swedish Association for Nature Conservation but there it said that it was threatened. Yes... what was I even to reply to that? Yes, I said, maybe you should look at other sources too I said.

- Fishery organization

A question that may arise with this finding, is whether this mistrust towards single-mindedness is consistent, or if we are less discerning when the single-minded person speaks for our own beliefs and opinions. The empirical material indicates that we tend to be more suspicious of a single-minded person who does not share our own beliefs. This is highlighted again in the section about similar/different values.

### *Identity*

Traits that we cannot help – where we come from, including our dialect and background also affect our trustworthiness, according to the interviewees of this study, at least on an initial stage. The classical controversy between city and countryside, commonly permeating natural resource management issues (Ekengren 2012), is apparent also in this study. People from the city do not understand what it is like out there on the countryside. A local fisherman, having had the same profession all his life, has difficulties seeing the full picture of the problem.

I should not go out to the countryside and speak. [...] Everything is wrong. Yes but it is, I have a Stockholm dialect, and I am well aware of it. So the first impression is a threat. Big city, academic, represent an ENGO. Everything is against me.

- ENGO

“Yes you may fish but you can’t use this or that”, yes but then I cannot survive, “no, that’s a pity, blah blah”. And they are at an office in Malmö. Yes, what the hell do they care? [...] There it is warm and cozy year round.

- Fishery organization

He was angry, to say the least, very upset, and scolded, and at last he went in and said that “you there in Stockholm, you don’t understand a thing when you sit there” and then I felt that no, now I have to answer back a little bit and said that “I am actually not from Stockholm, I am from [other county in Sweden]”, I said at last. Because I am. And he just turned completely. “Oh!” And then somehow... the whole discussion was milder, then, he was not happy, but he stopped scolding.

- Authority

Other aspects of a person’s background and current interests also seem to affect his or her trustworthiness:

And a little bit maybe because I, during what is it, 20 years, was educated and worked with hunting. Because that tends to annoy, or so to speak trigger a reaction in some people.

- Authority

... they have pushed for this earlier, and partly that had to do with the fact that the person they had responsible for working with this in an international context, was from [county] and seal hunting was his hobby.

-ENGO

The interviewees also talk about how one becomes a bit more careful when someone speaks in their own interest. Both fishery organizations point out that they are aware of the fact that their statements are often not seen as neutral, but as biased by their interests. A “fact” stated by a fishery organization is not trusted in the same way that a “fact” based in scientific research is, it would seem based on the interviews. This may seem like an obvious truth to some academics, as the way things should be, but the empirical material reveals a notable insight in how different perceptions about legitimate knowledge may affect trust.

### *Competence and knowledge*

One of the levels of trust described by Allwood (2014 p. 194-195) is trust with respect to *competence*, that is, trusting others based on our perception about their capability on a particular matter. In the empirical material, complexity is added into this theory; not only do the interviewees ask for competence in order to trust someone in a specific matter, but it also matters what kind of competence, or rather, what type of knowledge, the other has. The interviewees of the study show different views on what type of competence or knowledge that is most highly valued. The two main types, that are given different level of importance by different interviewees, are scientific knowledge and experience based knowledge. Most interviewees seemed to value scientific knowledge higher, although some also talked about the importance of more experience based knowledge and the difficulty of weighing these against each other when discussing the problem of, and solutions to, seal damages. With a few exceptions, for example when the research was seen as un-nuanced or biased by the researchers own interests, in these actor groups there was a high trust for scientific results. Although experience based knowledge is acknowledged as valuable, especially by some interviewees, it is generally described as less trustworthy since it is not systematic, and could be influenced by emotions, self-interest and prejudice. The actors that break this pattern are the fishery organizations. Here, experience based knowledge is preferred, and the local fishery organization interview express a distrust towards scientific results:

... so then someone has a degree and have made a report and sais this, and then, it doesn't need to be facts, if it is only well written then that's the main thing.  
Yes then that becomes a fact.

The problem is that the researchers don't know what the behavior was before. That only the fishermen know. Those who are out every day, see all these little changes. You don't see them if you are out three times a year doing a test trawl.

While speaking about this topic, frustration is also expressed about the general tendency to prefer scientific knowledge:

Yes, even if we yell and say it is so – no.  
No it has to be research.  
“Do you have any proof?” they'll say.

Interviewees from all actor groups talk about how dialogue, especially when there is a disagreement, benefits from being based on what they call “true facts”. What types of truths however that are seen as trustworthy, differs between different actors. So the question of whether someone is trustworthy with respect to their competence is not only about whether the person has knowledge in a particular area, but what kind of knowledge they have, and *how* the person has acquired this



knowledge. This is connected to what kind of competence is most highly valued. In the next section, it will be presented how similar/different values on a more general level may affect trust.

### *Similar/different values*

Some studies of trust in natural resource management contexts have shown a correlation between levels of trust/distrust, and perception of shared values between actors (Cvetkovich and Winter 2003, Needham and Vaske 2008). Cvetkovich and Winter (2003) describes a model, in which, basically, more similar values between actors predict a higher level of trust between these actors. Needham and Vaske (2008) also found a positive relation between shared values and trust. One of the themes emerging in the empirical material of this study is similarity/difference in values. When talking about the relationship with other actors, interviewees describe similarities in views and values as a sign of a good relationship:

Today, there is no problem with SEPA or HaV, we have the same opinion in a lot of questions, there is no conflict there at all.  
- ENGO

A fishery organization, after having described a good contact with the CAB in the area, motivates:

Well those at the CAB here, they are a lot for fishery at least. They are of the old, they say that the environment should get some and the fishery should have some, the younger ones that come, there it is all about environment...

A researcher also motivates the high trust many fishermen have in a research program in the same manner:

The fishing industry, well they think our group does a good job, then, it hasn't always been conflict free, but after all we do really work for them, practically. To find solutions.

Although the interviewees do not explicitly connect this value similarity with higher trust, it becomes clear as the interview continues that when it comes to actors with perceived similar values, the interviewees trust that these actors are on their side and will consider the needs and goals of the interviewee when trying to find solutions to the seal/fishery controversy. This indicates that value similarity primarily affects one component or level of trust, described by Allwood (2014) as collaborative trust, that is, trusting that both parties work for a joint purpose or goal. Lewicki (2006) describes a similar aspect of trust, when he states that the basis for what he calls identity-based trust is a sense that both parties "can effectively understand and appreciate one another's wants" (p. 96). From the empirical material of this study, it seems to be this component of trust that is most affected by

whether or not the actors perceive that they share values or not. This becomes especially visible when interviewees talk about actors that they perceive as having different values:

...it can be one of those environmental fanatics [at the CAB], who only does things for the environment [...] Yes, then all one can do is close shop immediately.  
- Fishery organization

...then the ENGO's, out of their interests, or their members and their focus, then they sort of want... they want it grand, it should be buffer zones and all that. And that the fishery has difficulties understanding. Or they understand, but they don't agree and they are the ones that suffer from it.  
- Authority

...they will have no trust in civil servants at HaV [...] that is a very big conflict area, so that... that is clearly a failure. [...] Well that is because you have decided to prioritize other things than coastal fishery. You don't say it out loud, but that's the sum of it.  
- Researcher

As can be seen in the quotes above, this type of distrust is primarily expressed by, or assigned to by other actors, small-scale fishermen. On a couple of occasions, this mistrust was described on a level where the interviewees doubted that the other actor even wanted to understand their perspective:

...you can tell after a while, they don't want to understand.  
- Fishery organization

No, but it's like our organization, we have invited [name of politician] a couple of times, but no, she's not interested she does not want to come. She probably wants to be able to... then one cannot claim that one has informed and spoken to her.  
- Fishery organization

The two types of values that are most prominently spoken about as opposing in the interviews, is that of rural development versus environmental protection. However, several interviewees, both from fishery organizations and ENGO's, remark that these values need not oppose each other; a "living countryside" and its cultural values are seen as part of environmental goals, small-scale fishery is seen as more sustainable than the large-scale industry, and one fisherman describes himself and his colleagues as being the ones who notice when things change in the sea and can report about it:

... so we see changes over time, and like, no one else has that check on what's going on. And if we disappear... then things can happen unchecked without anyone noticing.

So the question arises of whether it is really about having different values, or whether it is a difference in opinion about more detailed matters. When looking at the interviews from authorities, ENGOs, the hunting organization, and one researcher, this is the picture that emerges. Here, it is repeatedly pointed out that although the actors may disagree on matters such as details about regulations for seal hunting, largely they agree with each other. Examples of the matters where the interviewees claim to agree are that small-scale fisheries have a difficult situation, and seal damages must be mitigated, that some hunting can be allowed on the seal populations, and that this hunt should be ethically conducted. In these interviews, there is also no indication for the form of mistrust expressed by fishery organizations, where the other actors are sometimes seen as working with an agenda where the wants and needs of the small-scale fisheries are not considered. It would thus seem, in this context, that as long as we perceive that we are all working towards a common goal, having different opinions on exactly how to reach that goal does not decrease trust the way that perceiving that our ultimate goals differ significantly does. Two interviewees also pointed out the importance of having different opinions, and value pluralism:

Yes, we have a bit of a different view on things, and it must be allowed to be that way, that's the thing in a democracy, one should be allowed to express different opinions, and that's like perfectly fine.  
- ENGO

Then I'm sure it will always be the case that we have different, as with all animal species really, that different groups and interest have a different picture of what is a good amount [in Swedish original *lagom*] and what is good. I think that's a perfectly okay situation...  
- Hunting organization

To sum up, who and how we are seem to affect our perceived trustworthiness; specifically our background, our kind of competence, and our values are factors that seem to condition out trustworthiness in the eyes of others. This category of trust-affecting traits connects to what Lewicki (2006 p.96-97) calls identity-based trust, which has a lot to do with familiarity; we have high identity-based trust in someone whose wants, needs and preferences we understand, and we trust that the other will take our needs and desires into account when making decision that may affect us. Transparency and flexibility in perspective taking are traits that we can work with in order to become trustworthy. The other traits, on the other hand, are harder to do things about. Our background is what it is, and we may not want to change our values. So what can we do to increase trust? How does things we *do* affect trust? The answer to this, given by the empirical material in this study, will be presented in the next section about *reliability*.

## 5.2.2 Reliability

In a conflict situation, where trust between actors is generally low, the first step, according to Lewicki (2006 p. 111) is to try to create reliability, that is, the actors must act consistently, and meet commitments they have set out to deliver. This theme can be found in the empirical material as what we can do, how we can act, to gain trust, or to be reliable. It connects to Allwood's (2014 p. 194) fourth level of trust, trust with respect to commitments and obligations. Meeting obligations and being consistent are important for trust, according to the interviewees, and so is clarity. Vague rules and roles can create a lack of trust towards people, institutions and systems. Roles and trust was a prominent theme in the interviews, and will be presented in a separate section below.

The ability of unmet, or delayed, commitments to create problems is highlighted by a local authority, when describing the system for economic compensation for seal damaged fishing gear:

If it was a misunderstanding, or whatever it was, but the demand for this year then was to make sure to deliver it in good time so that we can handle it. And then we can say if they call and wonder when they will get their money, what the heck is taking so long? Then we have to say that [...] we haven't gotten the decision and money yet.

Lack of forward planning also seem to decrease trust, as exemplified by one of the fishery organization interviews:

... so what we need in this, that is forward planning. So that we know what will happen, at least five years ahead, preferably ten. Now it's like... in December we often don't know what will happen [next year].

The problem with vague rules can be exemplified by a piece in one ENGO interview:

The current law cannot handle that, and that creates problems, you interpret it in different ways, there are no clear regulations.

The common theme for these three quotes is lack of predictability. When we do not know what to expect, trust tends to decrease (e.g. Hallgren and Ljung 2005, Lewicki 2006 p. 107). One thing that several interviewees mention as problematic when it comes to predictability is lack of consistency across key principles:

For 20 years we have fished here. And it has been said all that time from the first meeting I went to, it has been said, we must do all that we can to improve for the small-scale coastal fishery. [...] I can't, if I think 20 years back, I can't come up with a single area where it is better now.

- Fishery organization

I mean, of course we must have a management based on consultation, based on science and all that, so there must be a precautionary principle, but it's obviously okay to buy fish from other countries where you have no control whatsoever. Where traceability equals zero. To me that is very strange.

- Authority

When I was up here then at [a meeting] then I said that, a wolf came to Stockholm and he was not allowed to stay, but that there are 100 000 seals in the sea, that you don't care a lot about.

- Fishery organization

The three quotes exemplify different types of inconsistency that are brought up in the interviews. The first quote reoccurs in different formulations in the fishery organization interviews, where the inconsistency is in the form discrepancy between what is said, and what is done. This topic returns in the section about metaperspective of trust, since it seems to be closely linked to the feeling of being taken seriously by other actors. The second quote is also on a recurring topic, relating to consistency in prioritizing environmental values. For example, as in the quote, that Swedish fishery is strictly regulated and controlled, but it is still seen as okay to buy and sell fish from other countries with less control, or that seals are protected regardless of whether they may negatively affect threatened fish stocks. It is said by interviewees of different actor groups, but always when talking from the perspective of fisheries. It may seem rather like belonging to the theme of similar/different values, since it can also be seen as simply a difference in opinion about what is most environmentally friendly. However, it is presented here because it is phrased by the interviewees as a discrepancy, and often in a way that indicates that this discrepancy makes the actor that behaves in this way less reliable. The third quote is similar but slightly different. Here, the interviewee sees that the other actor makes different decisions in situations which the interviewee perceives to be similar (implying that the decisions should be similar as well), and this is seen as an inconsistency. In summary, inconsistency across time scales, policy and contexts erode the reliability of an actor.

### *Roles*

Allwood (2014 p. 195) explains that most commonly, we have what he calls conditional trust for other people: "We do not simply have trust or distrust: instead, we very often only have limited trust. We trust in certain respects, or trust given

certain conditions.“ The empirical material contains examples both of *trusting others as individuals, but not in their formal roles*. Reflections indicate the latter can and ought to create a sense of knowing what to expect, and thus some reliability. They also show that breaking with these expectations connected to one’s role can decrease trust. It also shows how understanding another’s role and the frames that person has to work within can be used to explain for example perceived inconsistencies in that person’s behavior. In these cases, lack of trust or mistrust is redirected to a system or institution, rather than to the person him- or herself.

Roles seem to become especially important in a situation that often occurs in natural resource management; the meeting between people with a formal role, for example authorities, and individuals who are personally affected and engaged with the issue. When asked about what makes a person trustworthy, several interviewees from the authority and ENGO actor groups emphasize the importance of understanding and respecting different roles:

I am not there as [name] but I am there as [ENGO], and that you treat each other respectfully. Without personal attacks and such things because I feel that is like so low and it doesn’t lead anywhere. And to understand each other. Each other’s positions and why you say what you say and so.  
- ENGO

And it’s hard to keep sometimes, to be very formal when you stand alone against a lot of people who are personally affected by this. But I believe I have tried, back then, I tried to be very clear when I noticed that “no, now...” and so to speak showed my name tag and said that this is [authority], think about that, we have a formal task, we have laws and regulations to keep to. And that has been respected.  
- Authority

Authority interviewees also point out that being clear with their role and what mandate they have is important. When fishermen turn to them with complaints and want something done, the interviewees describe the importance of explaining that it is not within their power to do so, and who to turn to instead. Confusion about another actor’s mandate can create expectations that are not met, which could, in turn, lead to lack of trust or even distrust. A form of confirmation of the authorities and ENGO’s emphasis on being clear with their roles and mandates can be found in the interviews with fishery organizations. When reflecting upon the actions of other actors, these interviewees can sometime explain discrepancies by referring to the system, laws and regulations, or institutions, that the person acts within:

If we explain this and that to them, and they believe us, that’s really good. But then if they go up to Stockholm, to their staff up there and say that now we have found this and this out, they have to change political party or something. [...] they have their line to follow.

In the quote above, the fishermen explain how they think some politicians of a local party may be open to listen to them, that is, they trust that the politicians will take the fishermen's wants and needs into consideration. However, they explain, these politicians will still be restricted by the line of their party, and the directions from their headquarters. Another fishery organization representative explain how he thinks the people he had contact with at the authorities did their best to consider the requests of the fishery industry within the regulatory frames in which they worked:

I believe, when I was at the top of the organization, I had a really good collaboration with the authorities. Then that we have different opinions, that is another thing. But I mean I'm sure they did their best, tried to twist things as much as they could.

One fishery organization interviewee also describes his collaboration with a large ENGO. He explains how he believes the ENGO really has ambitions to help small-scale fishery, but that it constantly fails because they have their policies to follow, so they can have good discussions but then, when it comes to action, the ENGO do not have much leeway to act for change. Another way that the interviewees explain discrepancies in what is being said and what is being done, is to talk about the sensitivity of the issue, and the other actor's fear of consequences:

No they [authorities] are so afraid of... like it's such sensitive issues so...  
- Fishery organization

But at the same time, people who engage in this, they soon realize that it is very difficult, if we decide to deal with it, how do we do it? So... yes, I think that some choose to, "we focus on something else instead" which is easier to deal with.  
- Hunting organization

Whereas it seems like explaining discrepancies by referring to the frames that someone is restricted to tends to be a way to enable us to trust an individual, but not the organization he/she is representing, it is less clear whether explaining discrepancies by fear of consequences have the same effect. In the material, sometimes organizational roles would seem like extenuating circumstances, and sometimes they appear as something that makes the person less reliable – he or she does not stand up for his or her beliefs or values, but is co-opted by the authority. On the other hand, if one would dare to break with policies and the rules associated with one's role, this can also create suspicion and lack of trust:

Very interesting. That researchers are involved in this part, for personal reasons.  
- ENGO

Reflecting more about this statement, the interviewee describes how his expectations of the role of a researcher probably affect his perception about the conduct of researchers; if a fisherman speaks for his own interest, this does not make him/her less credible, but since a researcher is expected to be neutral, a biased statement from a researcher may make him or her seem less credible.

The above indicates that we find some comfort in predictable roles, and we can trust them, even if we do not agree with the other actor. However, one example of the opposite is found in the interviews:

You have to say things to attack us, for the sake of the members. So there are lots of these things, when you speak about trade organizations on a higher level, that you have to be able to show your members that you have done something.

- ENGO

The respondent adds/added that this has a potentially limiting, predetermining effect on the discussion, saying that "this you must be aware of, but then when you go beyond that you can have a different discussion."

It is explained that this occurs in both fishery organizations and ENGO's. Here, trust may exist between two individuals, but in their formal roles, they distrust each other. Other studies have found that the formal roles of stakeholders can limit the possibilities of deliberative discussions and make collaboration difficult (von Essen and Hansen 2015). The possibility of creating trust between individuals, even when these individuals represent different positions, will be presented in the next section, about the difference in trust between a familiar and an abstract other.

### 5.2.3 Trust and the personal meeting

While the categories of trustworthiness and reliability adhered to the theoretical framework designed before starting the empirical collection, the theme of 'the personal meeting' was inductively discovered finding. In the empirical material of this study, there are strong indications that, at least in this context, trust tends to increase when we have met personally. There is more mistrust towards the imagined other. Several interviewees describe how it is in the personal meeting that trust can be created or improved:

But most often I explain how we see things, speak matter-of-factly, and they realize I am no threat really, I'm also trying to solve this. [...] and then it usually works, but to gain trust you have to have time to get to know each other.

-ENGO



Well, right or wrong, but I have heard that 80 % of what we say, we say with our bodies, and 20 % with the mouth. And I think that goes especially when it comes to difficult and sensitive issues that... you can get a completely different trust towards a person and a whole different understanding if you meet in person.

- Hunter organization

And then when you meet these people sometimes at other meetings or, and they feel that they can call too, and you know who it is, that is significant again when you see each other and ask questions.

- Researcher

Yes, there can be some confusion. Maybe not, or especially not in those groups where we have an ongoing collaboration, because there I believe that you start to understand, or there you do understand the roles pretty well.

- Authority

In one researcher interview, the interviewee describes how she sees that a particular meeting broke down prejudices that she and other actors had against each other, indicating that the personal meeting could even transform a relationship characterized by lack of trust to a trustful relationship:

... I think that we were both surprised that we would agree so well.

[...] one has, like, well, silly prejudices about each other.

In the fishery organization interviews there is also a tendency of speaking in a more understanding manner about people you have had personal contact with, than about more abstract “others” belonging to organizations or institutions that are perceived to have different values. The type of explanation of discrepancies presented above under the section on roles occurs when the interviewees have established a more personal relationship with another actor. The reasons that personal meetings seem so effective in trust building may be, based on the interviews, that prejudices are challenged, understanding of the perspective and role of the other increases, and misunderstandings can be cleared up immediately instead of building up frustration and mistrust. As one interviewee phrased it; “Swedes are good at talking”, explaining that the discussion climate of meetings about seal management was generally good and allowing.

The interviewees explain how media can play a role in increasing prejudices and position the actors as more diverging in values and opinions than they truly are:

... if you look in media, they will want to put black against white, more than the grey zone, because then it becomes... also in debates they want us to beat up each other.

- ENGO

... I mean you read, it's a bit like we have said, that you seldom read an article about fishery, it's always overfishing and depletion. It almost never says "fishery", it's all these other words in it then. That you connect it to something negative.

- Fishery organization

So if you are a fisherman and don't sit in these meetings and have a dialogue and have met, but have just read the newspaper and such, then I think you feel like "bloody [ENGO]" a bit like that.

- ENGO

The ENGO added that media polarization undermined their representation: "...we are depicted as a more unreasonable actor than we are."

#### 5.2.4 Metaperspective of trust

The last quote of the previous section reflects another aspect of trust – our ability to reflect on how others see us, and whether they trust us or not. The question to this part of the analysis is how, if at all, this perception affects our own trust in another actor. Assisting this inquiry is the theoretical discussion by Gillespie (2008), outlining how we constantly take the perspective of the other when we interact. Thus, as we interact, we do not only have our own perception of the other in mind, but also how we believe that the other perceives us. When reflecting consciously about the question of how other's trust in us affects our trust in them, it would seem like this is not an essential part of our choice between trust and non-trust:

The fact that they trust me probably does not affect whether I trust them, it's what they say, do, and show, that's what makes me trust them.

- Researcher

However, there is one recurring theme, especially in the fishery organization interviews, which seem to indicate that the metaperspective dynamics do affect our willingness to trust. It is about the sense of being taken seriously. It would seem that when the other does not take us seriously, we start doubting their intentions and our ability to work towards a common goal (relating to the component of trust presented under the section on values, perceiving that the other understands our needs and wants):

Yes, that's what we must try to say, we can't just, and when we can't fish because there is so much seals and cormorants, and there are so many rules, then we shouldn't just put that aside and say, no you

can open a restaurant and you shall refine and such moonshine instead, and seal safe fishing gear in which we catch nothing, I mean you have to deal with the problem instead. That's smarter.

But it will never happen.

No we have to quit first so that there are no fishermen. So that they wake up. Then maybe.

- Fishery organization

Expressing exasperation at the foreclosure of a dialogue between equals, a fishery organization argued: "They know best so it doesn't matter what we say."

Several interviewees confirm that in order for us to feel that we are being taken seriously, the first step is that we are listened to, but that it is not enough; we also want to see that what we have said is really considered by the other:

But you can't say "I understand" because then it sounds like from above again [...] It doesn't say much, but I think you have to show it by arguing for the truth in it. That it is a problem [seal damages].

- ENGO

... "we have to protect the small-scale fishery". I mean one is so tired of hearing it, it's just to go about and prove it.

- Fishery organization

But it's just words. When you meet and speak to whichever fisherman, they will have experienced that it just gets worse and worse [...] So it's one thing what it says and then in practice it's different.

- Researcher

As Gillespie (2008 p. 280) explains we often base our trust or non-trust on our perception of the other's intentions. Simply put, if we perceive that the other has bad intentions, we don't trust them, and we trust those whose intentions we perceive to be good. So how do the interviewees in this context separate between good and bad intentions? Judging from the interviews, when the interviewees perceive the other actor to have a fixed agenda (with goals that differ from the interviewees' own wants), trust may decrease:

It's politics, so therefore they don't listen to facts, we'll never get them to listen to any facts.

- Fishery organization

...then I said you should not participate, it doesn't matter if you come with real facts, they will not listen, because hunting issues are more important.

- ENGO

The two quotes are very similar in character, and both contain the word “facts”. The question of having different opinions on what facts are is presented under the section on competence and knowledge above. The important part in this section is not what is meant by facts, but that the interviewees perceive the other actor not to be open for genuine discussions, but that they have fixed intentions and don’t intend to consider the statements of the interviewees. The interviewees then start doubting that the other actor has any intention to collaborate and find possible common solutions. This seems to decrease the interviewees’ trust in that interaction.

## 6 Discussion

The concept of trust has received much attention within natural resource management studies in recent years. Many studies are primarily quantitative (e.g. Cvetkovich and Winter 2003, Needham and Vaske 2008, Hamm 2017), but qualitative studies are becoming increasingly common, and these attempt to describe and explore the multifaceted character of trust and related concepts (e.g. Leahy and Anderson 2008, Sharp et al. 2013, Coleman and Stern 2018). A major focus of the latter is to try to identify the main components that comprise the complex phenomenon of trust. The findings of this study contributes to understanding and unpacking this complexity, since it explores the main characteristics of trust as experienced by actors in a case of a conflict-laden wild life management in Sweden.

### 6.1 Possible consequences of decreased trust

Sweden, together with the other Nordic countries, ranks as one of the countries in the world with the highest level of social trust (Trägårdh 2009). In comparative studies of general trust in European studies, Sweden is repeatedly found at the top of lists of European high trust countries (Holmberg & Weibull 2011). Indeed, Inglehart (2006) suggests historically protestant societies fall into a 'coherent cluster' (p.123) with homogenous values and traditions, whereby trust in government and politicians is one discerning feature that sets these countries apart from other European cultural clusters. Studying trust in a high trust society like Sweden, where the general trust is high, may be particularly interesting when looking for the important components of trust; when cases of seemingly decreasing trust appear, which has been seen in other studies of Swedish wildlife management (Ekengren 2012), this is less likely to be due to a general disposition towards lack of trust than in low trust societies. This may make more particular aspects of trust more prominent.

To explain, the findings indicate a high general trust among the interviewees; most interviewees tell that they have trust towards other actors, and that they perceive

other actors to trust them. It is rather in particular situations or aspects that lack of trust or distrust is expressed or indicated by the interviewees. However, the expressions of distrust towards authorities, researchers, and ENGO's on the part of interviewees from fishery organization may raise concern. Why so? Why does it matter if fishermen do not have trust in the other actors in this matter? In other words, what may the consequences be of decreased trust in this situation? The studies of for example Gezelius (2002), Boonstra et al. (2017), and Boucuy (2017) show that when state regulations are no longer seen as legitimate by fishermen (that is, that they are not trusted), non-compliance with those regulations occur. Resistance, including refusals to cooperate, foot-dragging, non-compliance and rumor-spreading as a consequence of low trust in state legislation has been shown in several other cases of wildlife management as well (e.g. Holmes 2007, Mischi 2013, von Essen and Hansen 2015). A possible conclusion then, is that distrust towards seal management may lead to illegal hunting of seals by fishermen. Based in the interviews, it seems unlikely that this could happen to an extent that would actually harm seal populations. Interviewees tell how it is very difficult to hunt for seals discretely, as well as how few fishermen have the skill and indeed any interest in hunting in the numbers required. For the time being, it would thus seem that the negative consequences of such a course of events would primarily be social – if other actors would find out about fishermen illegally hunting seals, this would likely decrease their trust towards fishermen, further escalating the conflict.

Does this mean, however, that we can discard any negative environmental consequences of fishermen's distrust in seal management? Only if we also disregard any possible "spill-over" effects of this distrust to other areas, or cumulative effects. For example, Boonstra et al. (2017) show that small-scale fishermen in Sweden already feel disadvantaged by unnecessarily strict regulations (as the fishermen perceive it). Several interviewees in this study have also pointed this out. Naturally, this affects fishermen's perceptions of the seal controversy, and vice versa. Illegal hunting of seals may not, practically, pose an ecological threat, but what about illegal fishing? And if it is perceived that species and areas are protected "just because", that is, if these legislations are not seen as legitimate, may that not affect the perceived legitimacy of other protected species, or of environmental legislation in general? A quote from the fishermen group interview illustrates the need to consider such questions:

No, I'm going to go to Biltema [Swedish store] and check if they have one of those Jolly Rogers. And then I will run that flag up and then I will simply say go to hell as soon as they come and ask something.

Placed in its context, this statement seems rather an outburst of deep frustration than actually planning to become an outlaw. Nevertheless, it indicates a strong distrust in the regulatory organizations, in so far as the interviewee does not believe that engaging in discussions with the other actor will help anymore, and vigilantism seem to him the only solution.

So the possible consequences of decreased trust in users have been discussed. However, this study also aimed to include the experience of trust of authority representatives, researchers, and ENGO's. Why study how these actors perceive trust? What may be the consequences of decreased trust from this perspective? The discussion relates back to the previous paragraph, where the interviewee no longer believed in the usefulness of dialogue. Trust scholars argue that in order to engage in dialogue, we need to be able to trust that we will be heard and understood, that we can understand the other, and that it is possible to find a common goal (even if this goal is merely to try to understand each other) (Hallgren and Ljung 2005, Allwood 2014). There seems to be a tendency of viewing especially authorities as non-human organizations steered by a regulatory framework, thus neither trusting nor distrusting anyone. However, authority employees are very much human, and likely to follow the principles of trust in dialogue. As dialogue with authorities may be desired by users who perceive a current regulation or management as flawed, it could surely be seen as a negative consequence if the authorities distrust towards the users would lead to them refraining from dialogue. An example of this can be found in the interviews, when representatives from national authorities and ENGO express a lack of trust or caution when meeting countryside representatives of user organizations, since they expect these representatives to distrust or show suspiciousness towards the authority or ENGO employee. This example also illustrates another reason for including as many of the involved actors as possible when studying trust dynamics in a particular case; the metaperspective component of trust. In this example, authorities and ENGO's perceive that they are not trusted by the other, and thus, they become suspicious, maybe not distrusting the other actor per se, but lack trust in the possibility of having a satisfying dialogue with this actor.

## 6.2 The interrelatedness of trustworthiness and reliability

Having discussed the consequences of decreased trust, we dive deeper into the dynamics and components of trust that were found in this study. In the findings, two themes comprised of different components of trust are presented; trustworthiness, identifying personal traits that may affect trust, and reliability, which rather describes what actions may increase or decrease trust. One question that can be discussed in relation to this finding is how these two themes relate to each other. Naturally, the line between actions and characteristics is not a definite one, as actions constitute one's character, and vice versa. The subthemes may sometimes be on the brink of both themes. For example, could transparency rather be seen as something we can do to increase trust, rather than a personal trait? And could not reliability be seen as a personal trait in itself? Still, other studies make a similar distinction in their findings. For example, as mentioned in the finding section, Lewicki (2006) separates between identity-based trust, closely resembling the trustworthiness theme about personal traits, and calculus-based trust, resembling the reliabil-

ity theme about actions. Coleman and Stern (2018) distinguishes between affinitive trust and rational trust in a similar way. Although the line may be blurred, it is useful to consider these two types of trust components in relation to one another. As Lewicki (2006 p. 111) points out, the more personal form of trust takes more time to establish, and thus, in conflicted situations where non-trust characterizes relationships, creating a more formal type of trust can be a starting point. Hallgren and Ljung (2005) argues that to have trust in an interaction, we need some sense of predictability in how the other will respond to us. If there is, indeed, safety in predictability, it is reasonable to believe that when we cannot predict the other's behavior through familiarity/identification with the other (usually attributed to the more personal and experience-based forms of trust (Lewicki 2006, Coleman and Stern 2018)), we may turn to formal rules to create some sense of predictability instead. The findings point in this direction, when for example authority representatives say that one way to create trust, in a meeting where they know many participants disagree, is to be clear with and stick to one's formal role.

The question still remains exactly how the two types of trust components relate to one another. Can reliability really compensate for trustworthiness? Or are we unwilling to see another as reliable, even if the other meets all deadlines, is consistent and sticks to his/her role, if we do not perceive him/her to be trustworthy? Does reliability create trustworthiness in the long term? And is a trustworthy person always reliable? There is a philosophical ring to these questions, in particular such questions have been the preoccupation of virtue ethicists who ask what sorts of traits and actions that constitute a virtuous character (Jensen 2001, Sandler and Cafaro 2005). For our purposes, it may be more useful to look at the relationship between the components of trust that constitutes these two themes. For example, several studies have looked at the relation between shared values and trust in natural resource management contexts (e.g. Cvetkovich and Winter 2003, Leahy and Andersson 2008, Needham and Vaske 2008). The findings of this study also indicate that trust is harder to establish when values are perceived to differ between the actors. How does this component relate for example to the metaperspective component, that is, in these findings, the sense of being taken seriously? Some interviewees state that differences in opinions or perspectives are perfectly acceptable, or even desirable. It may be that we can accept differences in values, as long as we know that our perspective is taken into consideration by the other. This is further emphasized by the finding that open-mindedness, being able to show that you can see both sides of something, is seen as an important trait in a trustworthy person – at least if this person is someone we do not agree with. This could be important to keep in mind in wild life or natural resource management situations, where interests often clash. For example, for decision makers to create trust in, or legitimacy for their decision, it may be necessary to show how all interests have been taken into consideration, especially when it may not be clear from the decision that a certain interest have been considered.



### 6.3 Difference in trust perception between actors

One of the research questions considered whether the components of trust were given different levels of importance by different actors. Some differences can be seen in the findings. For one, the importance of respecting roles is most emphasized by formal representatives of authorities and national ENGO's. In natural resource management there is often a demand for dialogue between formal representatives of authorities and organizations and people who are personally affected by the choice of management. One challenge in this dialogue is that the rational discourse used by official representatives face a more emotional discourse used by affected actors (Buijs and Lawrence 2013). It would seem that for a formal representative, one factor that increases trust is the sense that the other actors understand and respect the formality and rules that the representative has to act within.

Another prominent difference is that, although most actors perceive scientific knowledge as the most valid type of knowledge, the fishery organization respondents break with this pattern and rather express distrust towards scientific facts. For these interviewees, experience based and traditional knowledge seems to be the most valid operational knowledge for seal management. The findings of this study are in line with those of Boonstra et al. (2017); scientific methods are questioned, and the fishermen question how someone who have done test fishing on a limited number of occasions can be more credible than someone who is out fishing every day. It is also obvious from the interviews that the fishermen do not perceive scientific knowledge as objective. Researchers need grants to carry out their research, and both choice of studies and how the results are presented are biased by this need, according to some of the fishermen respondents. Still, scientific knowledge is perceived as the only kind of knowledge that counts in discussions with other actors. Von Essen (2017) shows how the same phenomenon occurs in the context of Swedish wolf management. In this context, certain groups lacked trust in the public dialogue since they saw this as dominated by a scientific discourse, and thus withdrew from this dialogue. It is thus clear that difference in knowledge perception, when unacknowledged, can severely impede the constructive dialogue needed for conflict resolution. This is indicated in the findings of this study as well. If a discussion is held based on scientific knowledge, some respondents distrust this type of knowledge, and this is not addressed, it may add to the feeling for these respondents that they are "not heard", or not being taken seriously, which, according to the findings, can create further distrust. Additionally, some interviewees mention that a basis for a good discussion is that all participants depart in the same basic knowledge about the matter. Understanding different perceptions on trustworthy knowledge could facilitate in coming to such agreements.

The finding on differences in perceptions of trustworthy knowledge also has theoretical implications. For example, Allwood (2014) discusses trust in the respect of competence (p. 194-195). However, the findings of this study raise the question, not only of whether a person is competent or knowledgeable enough, but also *what kind* of competence or knowledge the person possesses, and whether or not this

type of knowledge is seen as trustworthy by a particular actor. A situation of difference in knowledge perceptions can be discussed, for example, from a metaperspective angle (Gillespie 2008). If I perceive that you do not see me as credible, although I am a well-known researcher, may that not lead me to question your ability of judgment, that is, to question your credibility? It would thus seem, that without an understanding about how different kinds of knowledge is perceived as legitimate by different people, we may very well end up in a negative spiral of non-trust regarding each others' competence and credibility.

A more overarching difference that may still be worth noting is that, in the interviews, authority representatives, when asked about what creates trust or distrust, tend to talk about how to instill trust in themselves, or in the authority. This is noted in contrast to other interviewees, who talk about how another person should act or be in order for *them to trust* that person, or mention both. This mirrors the reviewed literature on trust in natural resource management, where the focus is not symmetrical but often on characterizing and finding factors influencing trust towards the responsible authorities. Considering the findings of this study regarding the metaperspective component of trust, it may be valuable, both to study, and for official representatives to reflect on, authority employees' trust in other actors, and how this may affect the full dynamics especially in a case of more participatory or collaborative natural resource management.

## 6.4 The importance of the personal meeting

One of the most prominent findings of the study was the connection between trust and the personal meeting. Distrust seem to be higher in the imagined other than in people that the interviewees have met in person. Coleman and Stern (2018) observed a similar dynamic in their study of trust collaborative natural resource management. Affinitive trust, one of three types of trust identified in the study as essential for well-functioning collaboration, was much associated with getting to know the other stakeholders personally, "talking to them informally, riding with them in a truck on a field trip" (p. 29). A few quantitative studies have also looked at the difference between trust in the interaction with someone we have never met, and someone with whom we are familiar (Alarcon et al. 2016, Freitag and Bauer 2016) as well as how trust changes over time as we get to know another person (Levin et al. 2006). The studies found no direct positive relationship between familiarity and increased trust – trust in the other could either increase or decrease with increased familiarity. However, the studies show that the basis for our decision to trust or not to trust another changes as we get to know each other. Levin et al. (2006 p. 1168) concludes that in very new relationships, identity-related characters such as being of the same gender mattered more, whereas in older relationships, trust was rather based on the experience of the other's conduct, and on personal knowledge of shared values. Transferred to the context of this study, this would mean that for initial contact, trust decisions may be based on personal traits

such as dialect and group belonging (ENGO or big city resident, for example). On the other hand, as actors get to know each other, or meet in person, stereotypical perceptions cease to determine levels of trust, and the experience of interacting with the other becomes the most important influence for whether to trust the other or not. The findings of this study indicate that this may indeed be the case, since interviewees describe how, when they meet in person, prejudices fall away and they notice that they did share values to a degree that they had not anticipated before the meeting.

## 7 Conclusions

This study aims to explore the trust dynamics between human actors in a particular case of wildlife management. The context of the study is the Swedish seal management and small-scale fishery controversy. The three seal species in Sweden (grey seal, harbor seal, and ringed seal) are increasing in numbers all around the Swedish coastline. As seal number increase, small-scale fishermen are experiencing more and more difficulties as seals damage the fishing equipment and feed on the fish caught in the nets. However, seals are still protected in Swedish legislation, and there are ongoing discussions and debates on how to manage the seals in a way that mitigate the negative impact on small-scale fisheries.

Respondents working at the authorities, as researchers, and in interest organizations have been interviewed in this study to explore how trust between actors is experienced in the seal management context. Although most relationships are described as trustful, some examples of distrust, especially from fishery organizations, towards the managing authorities have been expressed. Reasons given for this distrust are, for example, lack of transparency in decision-making processes, discrepancies in what is being said and what is being done (or decided for), and failing to show if and how the interest of small-scale fisheries have been considered in the decisions.

The study has also explored the phenomenon of trust, aiming to identify some of the components that constitute this concept. The findings show that trust components can be separated into two themes (albeit with a blurred line); trustworthiness, including components that describe how a person should be in order to gain trust, and reliability, describing how a person should act in order to gain trust. The *being* component of trust show that our willingness to trust is affected by the other's personal background, where they come from, and if their values are perceived as similar to ours. The *acting* component shows that, to be perceived as trustworthy, the other must act consistently, be clear with their role and mandate, and meet their commitments. The findings also show the importance of the personal meeting. Higher levels of distrust are expressed by the interviewees towards an abstract other, and trust seem to increase in the personal meeting. When meeting in person, preconceived ideas about the other are replaced with personal experience of the

other's conduct as a basis for trustworthiness, and interviewees describe how they often notice that they have more common values than previously thought as they get to know another person.

One of the aims was to explore the metaperspective of trust, that is, does my perception of whether or not you trust me affect my willingness to trust you? The findings indicate that this is indeed the case when one actor perceives that the other does not take them seriously. Fishermen explain how they perceive that other actors (primarily authorities) do not trust their competence and knowledge about what is happening in the sea, and thus, do not take their warnings and complaints seriously. This seems to increase the fishermen's distrust towards these actors. It also captures another important finding of this study. The interviews show that a person's trustworthiness is related to their competence; however, different actors perceive different *kind* of competence or knowledge as trustworthy. Whereas most actors consider scientific knowledge as the most valid type, fishermen tend to consider experience-based knowledge (from being out at sea every day for many years) as the most valid kind of competence.

This study contributes to the expanding body of research on trust in natural resource management contexts. The majority of these studies have taken a quantitative approach to explaining trust, measuring levels of trust in certain groups towards other groups or organizations, or examining relationships between levels of trust and other factors such as familiarity and shared values. This study has chosen a qualitative approach, exploring trust as a phenomenon, as experienced by actors in a particular case of wildlife management. This approach allows for a "bottom-up" understanding of trust, illuminating aspects of the phenomenon that may otherwise have been overlooked.

As basic as trust may be to the human nature, to science it has proved to be an elusive concept, resulting in a vast number of definitions and explanations of trust and distrust. However, it is essential that we continue to investigate and explore trust and the role it plays in natural resource management. High levels of trust between actors facilitate dialogue and collaboration, both of which have become increasingly important as more participatory processes are asked for within the field of resource management and environmental justice. Trust in the decision-makers and decision-making processes is also important for the perceived legitimacy of laws and regulations for nature protection and management. If such regulations are seen as illegitimate, they are often inefficient in protecting wildlife species and habitats.

The study does not claim to have given a full account of all the intricacies and complex dynamics of the phenomenon of trust in a wildlife management context. However, it has illuminated some elements that may be important to understand in order to build trustful relationships between actors in natural resource management. It may also inspire further research into this complex phenomenon. For example, as trust seemed to increase between people who had met in person, it may

be interesting to study trust dynamics over time, and explore how different components of trust may vary in importance in different stages of a relationship. The findings of the metaperspective dynamics of trust may encourage further studies of authority representatives' trust in other actors and stakeholders, and how this may influence the decision-making processes. It is also likely that the experience of trust varies in different contexts. Studying trust in several wildlife management situations may help us understand how we can govern wildlife species in a way that is seen as legitimate by the people affected by the regulation, and which works both for the conservation of the species as well as for the people living with them.

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## Acknowledgements

I am very grateful for the unfailing support of my supervisor, Erica von Essen, who somehow always knew exactly what kind of support I needed to move forwards.

My special thanks also to all the interviewees of this study, who generously shared their experience of and engagement in the world of seals, fishes, and the people involved in the management of these species. Naturally, I could not have done this without you.

And to my dear family and friends, who patiently listened as I shared the ups and downs of the process of writing a thesis. You know who you are. Thank you.

## Appendix 1 Intervjuguide

Inledande information: Vem jag är. Påminn om syftet med studien. Intervjun spelas in, inspelningen kommer bara jag att ha tillgång till, transkriptet kommer jag, min handledare och eventuellt examinator att se (erbjud att godkänna transkript? Inte rapporten!!). Rapporten publiceras. Namn eller titlar anges inte i rapporten. Är det något annat du skulle vilja fråga innan jag ställer mina frågor?

Frågor till S-G samt Erika: Vilka typer av fiske är mest utsatt? Vad skulle du säga karakteriserar problematiken på västkusten?

Hur skulle du beskriva den sällförvaltning vi har idag?

*På vilket sätt är du engagerad i frågan/vilket är din roll i förvaltningen?*

*Hur ser du på den lagstiftning som finns idag? Fungerar den väl eller skulle något behöva ändras? Vad?*

*På vilket sätt påverkar det politiska klimat vi har idag den här frågan tror du?*

Vilka aktörer ser du som viktigast i frågan?

*Vilka aktörer ser du som mest inflytelserika?*

*Vad tror du är "målet" för dessa aktörer i den här frågan? Hur vill de att situationen ska utvecklas tror du? Skiljer det sig från vad du/din organisation vill, i så fall hur?*

Hur ser samspelet ut mellan dessa aktörer (med X)?

*Vilka av dessa aktörer har du/skulle du kunna ta direkt kontakt med?*

*Kan du berätta om något tillfälle då du/din organisation haft kontakt med X? Hur upplevde du den kontakten?*

Hur skulle du beskriva ditt förtroende för X (ex myndigheter) när det kommer till frågor om säl?

*Följdfrågor, speglingar, be om exempel*

*Vad skulle kunna förändra ditt förtroende för X? Till det bättre? Till det sämre?*

*(fr a fiskare): Hur tror du att dina kollegor tänker runt den här frågan? Vad har de för erfarenheter av att ha kontakt med X?*

*Finns det andra sammanhang/frågor där du har större/mindre förtroende för X? (ge exempel)*

*Nu frågade ju jag generellt om ditt förtroende för X, men finns det någon särskild person du har större förtroende för inom X? Vad är det, tror du, som gör att du har större förtroende för den personen?*

Hur skulle du beskriva Xs förtroende för dig eller din organisation?

*Följdfrågor, speglingar, be om exempel*

*Varför tror du att det är så?*

*Hur tror du att det påverkar din tillit till X?*

Aktörspecifika frågor:

Miljöorganisationer: Har sett remisserna, på vilka andra sätt är ni engagerade i säl förvaltning?

Forskare: Vilka kan du kommunicera dina resultat till? Om de ifrågasätts, vad är det som ifrågasätts? Metoderna? Objektivitet? Kompetens? Vilka andra aktörer kan du ta hjälp av i din forskning? Fiskare?

Är det något du tycker att jag borde få med mig som vi inte pratat om ännu?

Tack!! Kontakta mig gärna om det uppstår frågor. Kan jag kontakta dig om något är oklart? Osv.