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# Why the Whiteness in Swedish Outdoor Recreation?

– a Discourse Analysis of Gender and Ethnicity in  
Swedish Environmental Policy and Practice

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**Credits:** 30 HEC

**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:** 2016

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

**Keywords:** Gender, Ethnicity, Environment, Nature Views, Diversity, Discourse Analysis, ENGO

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## Abstract

As of 2009, Swedish Outdoor Recreation is guided by public policy, pleading for everyone's equal value and right to experience and be outdoors, regardless of gender, age or colour (2009/10:238). Given Swedish Outdoor Recreation history of being founded upon the perspectives of a white, male middle class (Sandell, 2009), this opens up for the questions of how the goals of equality are achieved and what ideas about nature, gender and ethnicity are actually being reproduced.

The objective of this study is divided into three parts. First, a literature study of Swedish Outdoor Recreation is conducted to understand the context of study and its particular historical representation of gender and ethnicity. Second, the thesis examines public policy document Future Outdoor Recreation (Governmental bill 2009/10:238) to see how different ideas about gender and ethnicity are described in relation to nature and reflects upon its relation to the history of Outdoor Recreation. Third, the study presents a case study consisting of an analysis of how gender and ethnicity are framed in the practices of the environmental non-governmental organisation Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC).

The results show that in the policy document Future Outdoor Recreation, white, male persons were found to be more positively framed in relation to nature than females and immigrants. Being female, "immigrant" or/and "non-Nordic" was either less represented in text or images or specifically described as something negative, in terms of a need of education and training to be out in nature. Similar presentations of gender and ethnicity was also found in the case study of SSNC along with observed perceptions of difficulties for women and immigrants to feel welcome in the organisation. The study suggests that to reach the goals of equality in Swedish Outdoor Recreation, the negative stereotypes about immigrants and women in outdoor recreation need to be actively challenged by both public policy makers as well as SSNC, perhaps also through addressing the idea of nature and culture as separated.

*Keywords:* Gender, Ethnicity, Intersectionality, Environment, Nature, Discourse Analysis



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background to Swedish Outdoor Recreation

Swedish Outdoor recreation is defined in State Regulation on Outdoor Recreation (SFS 2010:2008) as “being outdoors in the nature or culture landscape with the purpose of wellbeing and experiencing nature, without any demands for competition”. Outdoor recreation is said to have started in Sweden about 100-150 years ago and its practices and organisations at the time were dominated by a white male upper class (Sandell, 2009; 2011; Emmelin et al, 2005; Lidskog & Sundqvist, 2011). Outdoor recreation has, however, never existed as one tradition, but has always been expressed or conducted differently depending on factors such as social class, age, gender and rural/urban areas (Sandell, 2009). The norms within outdoor recreation has furthermore been built upon a nature/culture dualism (Lidskog & Sundqvist, 2011) and a tendency to categorise and interpret nature as something distinct from and controlled by culture (Jones, 2009).

However, the nature-culture divide has been critiqued by various scholars. Eco-feminists criticize it for being patriarchal and relying on a false notion where the perceived domination of nature is also seen as causing men’s domination of women (Jones (2009) citing Griffin, 1978; Shiva; 1988; King, 1989). Other theorist (Jones (2009) citing Latour, 1993; 2004; 2007; Haraway, 1991; 1992) argue that the binary categorisation of nature and culture neglects the material actualities of everyday life, creating false conceptions about the relation between nature and culture (Jones, 2009). Jones (2009) even argues that some ecological problems are caused by the nature/culture divide.

Furthermore, how nature is understood and named will also affect what is seen as an environmental problem (Lidskog & Sundqvist, 2011) and who can own, control, and shape nature (Jones, 2009), having practical implications on people’s possibilities to define themselves in the outdoors recreational contexts.



## 1.2 Problem Formulation

Policy aim to regulate something, and the regulation of Swedish Outdoor Recreation is said to have been motivated by an increased urbanisation and immigration of people having another relationship to nature than Swede's traditionally have had (Naturvårdsverket, 2006). Given Swedish Outdoor Recreation history of being founded upon the perspectives of a white, male middle class (Sandell, 2009), this opens up for the questions of how the goals of equality are achieved and what ideas about nature, gender and ethnicity are actually being reproduced.

## 1.3 Aim of Study and Research questions

The aim of this study is to examine how ideas about gender and ethnicity are framed in Swedish Outdoor Recreation Policy and practice through a policy study and a case study and reflect upon its possible consequences on the social relations within the activities of Outdoor Recreation. The public policy document Future Outdoor Recreation (Governmental bill 2009/10:238) is studied to see how different ideas about gender and ethnicity are framed in relation to nature and reflects upon its relation to the history of Outdoor Recreation along with an analysis of how gender and ethnicity are framed in the practices and discussions of the environmental non-governmental organisation, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC)<sup>1</sup>.

In my 2 research questions, policy and practice levels are described as distinctive, but my analytical approach treats them as a connected whole, which means that this distinction in the analysis is treated as part of a social construction:

- How are gender and ethnicity framed in the Public Policy Future outdoor recreation (Governmental bill 2009/10:238) and its related and selected texts?
- How are gender and ethnicity framed in the practices of the environmental organisation SSNC, including the project Schysst Sommar?

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<sup>1</sup> Naturskyddsföreningen

## 2 Literature Review

In chapter 2, I describe the historical contexts and trends within Swedish outdoor recreation and give an in depth description of the Swedish political approach and policy on outdoor recreation 2009/10:238 and its relation to the Swedish E-NGO SSNC and practice.

### 2.1 Outdoor Recreation

#### 2.1.1 1900: National Identity and The Upper Class

Outdoor recreation in Sweden is said to have developed during the last 100-150 years within three industrial periods: the early 1900s, the 1930s and the 1960s, all through their specific welfare growth and development widening the access for different social groups (Sandell, 2009, 2011; Emmelin et al, 2005). Several organisations started during the late 1800's and early 1900s (Emmelin et al, 2005; Sandell, 2009; 2011) and these start-ups are said to have had international inspiration occurring not only in the Nordic countries but also in, for example, England and North America (Emmelin et al, 2005).

Various researchers, however, claim that there in a sense exists a “Nordic” outdoor recreation tradition, characterised with the Right to Public Access, “folklighet”<sup>2</sup>, and “simplicity” (Emmelin et al, 2005 citing Wiklund, 1995; Tordsson, 2003; Breivik & Lovmo, 1978; Sandell 1997; Sandell & Sörlin, 2000; Nedrelin, 1991; Haaland & Sandell, 2001; Gelter, 2000; Eichberg & Jespersen, 1986). In this early period of outdoor recreation, an important aspect was to establish national identity: the love for the nation. Emmelin et al (2005) quotes the founder of Swedish Tourist Organisation, who, in the late 19th century stated that “the one who does not feel the love for the land when getting the chance to admire it does not deserve to be called a Swede”<sup>3</sup>.

Sandell (2009) describes a relative lack of feudal history in Scandinavia, low population density, and the progression of the welfare state as shaping the Nordic sense of outdoor recreation. Sandell (2009; 2011) however, emphasizes that there has never been one outdoor recreation tradition but that this has always differed depending on socio-economic class, gender, age, urban/rural, and time period. The history of outdoor recreation has not necessarily been a social criticism, but has been started, run and organised mainly in a way which supports the current society and its leading groups (Sandell, 2009).

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<sup>2</sup> ‘folklighet’

<sup>3</sup> Paraphrased by me.

### 2.1.2 1930: Democratization and Holiday Legislation

Swedish democratisation processes during the 1930's made outdoor recreation and its, up until then upper class male-dominated traditions accessible for wider groups in society. New holiday legislations and a generally increased welfare made the outdoors more accessible (Emmelin et al, 2005; Sandell, 2009; 2011). Health aspects started being incorporated in policy, and women and peri-urban areas became more visible in the scenery of outdoor recreation (Emmelin et al, 2005).

### 2.1.3 1960: Commercialism

An improved material standard after World War Two contributed to the materialising of outdoor recreation with an increased consumption of caravans, boats, and advanced technology (Emmelin et al, 2005). The Swedish state's interest in outdoor recreation also increased during this time, and is reflected in how the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), established in 1967, were given outdoor recreation as one of its main responsibilities (ibid). The public policies surrounded the limiting of "hinders" such as lack of information, parking, and walking paths (ibid).

### 2.1.4 Present-Day Outdoor Recreation

Claims about the more recent trends within outdoor recreation should perhaps be stated with care, but as Sandell (2009) argues, the earlier social and ideological influences to the changes in outdoor recreational practices have in more modern times been weakened, and have therefore had a more difficult time establishing itself as a political area. But in this process, research still suggests some trends.

The interest for national unity, the inclusion of all within the territory, and the fascination for the preindustrial traditions, people, and knowledges, are seen as significant for the shaping of outdoor recreation (Sandell, 2009). This is reflected in how, in the early 1900's, outdoor recreation required quite extensive knowledge in order to move safely in outdoor recreational environments, whereas today, information, rules, and guides exist in an attempt to make outdoor recreation accessible for a much larger group.

More present-day influences are described as processes of commercialisation, and adventure- and eco-tourism (Arnell, 2006; Sandell, 2004). Sandell (2009) argues that outdoor recreation has always been a social marker symbolising social belonging and what is expected from different groups in different times. The importance of this social marker and the expectations are pointed out as having bearing on the future norms of outdoor recreations, for example, for "new Swedes" (Sandell, 2009, citing Johansson, 2006; Karlsson, 2006).

Sandell (2008) also makes a point of outdoor recreation being a male domain in which, if something adventurous happens to be performed by a woman, the fact that it is performed by a woman is often lifted as extraordinary. Also peri-urban and

children oriented activities tend to be associated with expectations on the female role (ibid). As is pointed out by Sandell (2009), the understanding of outdoor recreation is rather ironic when concepts such as sustainability, environment, and climate are said to be prioritised by all, but at the same time, Thailand is becoming one of the more popular outdoor areas.

#### 2.1.5 Research on Gender and Ethnicity in Outdoor Recreation

A limited amount of research seems to have focused on how gender and ethnicity issues are framed within Swedish outdoor recreation. Different surveys have been carried out in order to map people's relation to and understanding of nature and outdoor recreation (Fredman et al, 2008:1; Fredman et al, 2014; Fredman et al, 2008:2; Fredman et al, 2008:4). Although this research is of great interest, the approaches were to inform planners of how the Swedish population related to and understood nature and outdoor recreation rather than critically examining how his come to be.

Research from neighbouring fields, however, suggests that gender and ethnicity tend to be expressed as a male whiteness norm (de los Reyes, Molina, & Mulinari, 2005). Arora-Jonson (2013) suggests that within the field of gender and envirometal management there is a need for an intersectional perspective, taking into account how cross-cutting categories such as sex, age, and ethnicity interact to create power relations and structures of discrimination. This means that discrimination against women as a group cannot be sufficiently understood with just gender, since factors such as age, ethnicity, and education also are part of establishing power relations. An intersectional understanding of gender has also been shown to offer a theoretical frame to analyse how power is constituted based on socially constructed differences embedded in each other, changing in different spatial and historical contexts (de los Reyes, Molina, & Mulinari, 2005).

Research on democracy and NGOs in Sweden shows that recent discourses on immigration in Sweden have tended to frame oppression of women as something belonging to cultures other than the Swedish—sometimes outside of Europe (de los Reyes, Molina, & Mulinari 2005: 14-26), thus defusing the fact that oppression of women is also an expression within Swedish culture.

Research further shows that Sweden's integration politics have tended to be based on an "us-and-them thinking" where a dominating group plans the integration of a usually stereotyped and subordinate group (SOU 2005:41). It displays a way of thinking where ethnic white Swedish people are constructed as a superior "us", facilitating the integration for a subordinate group of "them", or "immigrants" (ibid). In the public document, State's support for Women's organizations (SOU:2004:59), gender researcher Mulinari (2005) discusses a perceived lack of migrant women's

organisation in Swedish social movements. Seen as based on an understanding of women according to more Western/modern views, (understood in contrast to a non-Western/traditional view) normative values associated with the female are women's liberation and independence. On the contrary, migrant women's histories seem to be filled with activity within social movement for women's rights, also in Sweden.

In their research on structural discrimination and political participation in Sweden, Dahlstedt & Hertzberg confirm the normative understanding of migrant women within Swedish social movement (SOU 2005:112). de los Reyes et al (2005) argue that there is a need to study the mechanisms that construct people as different in terms of gender and nationality/ethnicity, and how different groups are identified and assumed to be. Katarina Mattsson (Bortom vi och dom. SOU2005:41) discusses how the development towards a more heterogeneous contemporary Swedish population contributed to the construction of Swedishness defined as a normative social construction of what it means to be Swedish. She connects an observed increased Swedish interest and perhaps idealisation of what it "means" to be Swedish, with the (perceived) change of Sweden turning into a "country of immigration."<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 Nature Views in Sweden

In this chapter, I describe research on nature interpretation in Sweden.

### 2.2.1 The Socially Interpreted Environmental Problem

The environmental sociologists Lidskog & Sundqvist (2011) argue that environmental problems are interpretations created in a context of political processes where the problem is both defining and defined by an ideal society. What is considered an environmental problem can therefore be found in society (for example in policy) and not in nature, by looking at how different actors understand and relate to environmental problems (ibid).

### 2.2.2 The Paradox of the "Pure" Nature

The interest for nature is considered to be big among the Nordic population and many appreciate "being in" and "caring for" nature (Lidskog & Sundqvist, 2011). However, when looking into what is commonly meant by nature, an image of a pure and by human culture untouched nature appears (ibid). This idea of pure nature tends to be defined in contrast to pollution, dirt, and exploitation, and in relation to things affected by mankind: culture (ibid). Cronon (1995), however, interprets the want to preserve an "untouched" nature existing in the nation before the industrialisation's

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<sup>4</sup> My direct translation from the Swedish concept of *invandringsland*

destruction of nature as a myth. Before the late 1800's, nature tended to be viewed as wild, unorganised, and as a place where "God did not exist" (ibid).

Lidskog & Sundqvist (2011) critique this worship of a pure and beautiful nature as ironic. That is to say that it was the most urban, educated, and upper class that tended to gain most from the urban, industrial, and polluting capitalism, but at the same time these groups were most likely to support and reinforce the ideas of this pure nature to protect and flee to.

### 2.2.3 Critiquing the Nature/Culture Dualism

The nature/culture dualism is described as rooted in what came to be understood as a sort of "modern knowledge" which, according to Jones (2009), was built upon a tendency to want to separate, define, classify, and explain phenomena, creating a rationality now known as science. Through biology, chemistry, physics, and geology, nature was to be understood. To be able to do this, the natural world needed to be distinguished from the human and was so done by viewing humans as unique in relation to nature and in terms of capacities, language, technology, and so forth. (ibid).

This nature/culture divide has been critiqued by various schools and theorists. Eco-feminists critique it for being patriarchal and for relying on a false notion where the perceived domination of nature is seen as also causing man's domination of women (Shiva, 1988; Griffin, 2015). Other theorists (such as Latour, 2004; Haraway, 1992) argue that the classification of nature and culture neglect the material actualities of everyday life, creating false conceptions about the relation between nature and culture (Jones, 2009). In food production, GMO, power production (Jones, 2009), and in how technique is part of our daily lives in the shape of glasses, hearing aids, and various medical implants (ibid), the dualism is, according to many, said to be a false representation with different negative implications. Jones (2009) argues that many of the ecological emergencies are rooted in difficulties based in this nature/culture divide.

### 3 The Two Studied Contexts

By combining the two contexts of public policy and an E-NGO, I hope to explore not only the normative tendencies relating to gender and ethnicity, but also to try to explain why they are the way they are.

#### 3.1 Swedish Public Policy on Outdoor Recreation

Few studies have examined discourses within Swedish policies on outdoor recreation and its implications on participation in relation to gender and ethnicity. However, the Swedish government has been part of framing how nature and culture is talked about and understood within the Swedish outdoor recreational context.

The Swedish government increased their emphasis of the value of nature protection for outdoor recreation and public health during the 1990s and 2000s (Naturvårdsverket, 2006). A new Unified Approach to Outdoor Recreation was launched in 2006, said to be motivated by an “increased urbanisation” and “abroad born Swedes” having a different relationship to nature than Swedes traditionally had (Naturvårdsverket, 2006). Against this background, the first governmental bill on a specific politics for outdoor recreation was released in 2009, Future Outdoor Recreation (2009/10:238), stating new guidelines of organisation and funding.

Spokespersons for Svenskt Friluftsliv argue that the objectives for outdoor recreation are not being matched with appropriate funding and that Sweden’s work with outdoor recreational objectives shows limits in its implementation on local levels (Silvander & Westberg, dagenssamhälle, 150428). Petersson Forsberg (2012) states in her doctoral thesis on outdoor recreation and nature tourism that at the time of writing, it was too early to say what effect the new goals and “national interests” of bill 2009/10:238 would have on local spatial planning of outdoor recreation.

Recent studies of current outdoor recreational trends show that outdoor recreation in Sweden, managed in a context of “strong conservation ambitions”, show a lack of clear strategies (Stenseke & Hansen, 2014). Concerns that outdoor recreational projects tend to be led by biology professionals rather than professionals of the social sciences have been shown to coincide with a need for management guidelines and formal process agendas (ibid).

Boman et al. (2013) showed that for a number of outdoor recreational activities there were a positive relationship between income and tendency to be outdoors. However, for activities closer to home this relationship was not as clear, suggesting that policy measures should be adapted to the type of activities managed (ibid).

### 3.2 Case Study of the Swedish E-NGO SSNC

In terms of studies examining gender and ethnicity within E-NGOs, there are only a few, and they tend to have a European focus rather than a Swedish. Gillham (2008) examined participation in environmental movements in the EU, examining motivating factors such as values and practical circumstances.

Külcür (2012) published her doctoral thesis on the subject of gender in E-NGOs in the UK and Turkey, and confirms the idea of gender within E-NGOs as an under-researched area. This study looked at contextual factors for women's successful or hindered participation. Külcür (2012) found that although women made up the majority of the member base, white, middle class men tended to be in charge of the decision-making processes. Külcür (2012), however, did not examine why this seems to be the case, but put the focus on breaking what she refers to the earlier "gender blindness".

A study conducted by the organisation Föreningars Interna Antidiskrimineringssarbete, examined different experiences of internal discrimination within a number of Swedish NGOs. The study showed many examples of people feeling discriminated upon gender and ethnicity within the internal work processes in the organisations (Höglin & Karlson, 2011). However, no environmental organisation participated in the study. This research provides an overview of what seem to be an under-researched area of discourses on gender and ethnicity within Swedish E-NGOs.



## 4 Research Design

The theoretical framework of this thesis has a basis of social constructivism, as I, using a hermeneutic approach to Discourse Analysis, examine how discourses on nature/culture frame ethnicity and gender.

### 4.1 Social Constructivist Approach

The theoretical base of this thesis is one viewing reality as socially rather than objectively constructed. As Vivian Burr (2003) puts it, reality is seen as understood or interpreted through language, categories, and categorisations which are culturally and normatively assumed to be true within that given context. This means that how reality is understood is historically and culturally relative, and that meanings depend on the economic and social contexts of groups and individuals (ibid). Knowledge can thereby be viewed as produced through spoken, written (or represented in image) symbols; i.e. language (Burr, 2003; McCall, 2005). Social constructivism does not reject the fact that there are real problems or situations but simply see these problems as socially interpreted and defined.

This knowledge, or social constructions, are in this thesis understood in terms of the system of meaning they are interpreted within. These systems, or structures of meanings, are defined as closely related concepts of frames (Lakoff, 2010) and discourse (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002; Bachii, 1999). A discourse can be described as the language, concepts and ideas that frame an issue in a certain way and shape not only what can and cannot be perceived within this way of understanding, but also what action people are likely to take (Bachii, 1999). A frame is defined in a similar matter as the subconscious structures of systematically associated words (Lakoff, 2010). One word can in this sense be seen as defined in relation to other words that together create a schema/structure/frame where semantic and social roles are defined according to this frame (ibid). As Lakoff (2010) puts it, framing cannot be avoided - the question is rather whose frame is being activated and whose is not, and what the consequences of this are.

The way I apply the concepts of frame, framing, and discourse in this thesis is by viewing frame and framing as the building blocks and processes that construct the resulting discourse. More specifically, the purpose of this thesis is to examine how the discourse of nature/culture within Swedish outdoor recreation policy frames gender and ethnicity in outdoor recreation practice through verbal and non-verbal language. This means that I view nature, ethnicity, and gender as socially constructed through this system of meaning. Depending on what frames and framing (words systems) dominate texts and images, I am able to draw conclusions about

what the normative ways of framing gender and ethnicity are. The dominating framings are normative in the sense that they say something about how different gender and ethnicities are understood in relation to nature, and to what degree this framing of gender and ethnicity is positive or negative. The normative implications can in turn be seen as having practical consequences as people are likely to act upon the dominative framing of gender and ethnicity.

## 4.2 Policy Discourse Analysis

As this thesis studies public policy, I complement the methodological framework with Bacchi's policy discourse analysis which focuses on problem formulations in relation to their logically reflected solutions (Bacchi, 1999). Bacchi (1999) defines discourse as the language, concepts, and ideas that frame an issue in a certain way and shape what can and cannot be perceived, but also what action people are likely to take. A "what's the problem?" approach acknowledges that there are real social problems, but sees them as interpretations formed by dominant discourses. Bacchi (1999) argues that this approach is relevant for any policy field, and I apply it to outdoor recreation and its related framing of gender and ethnicity.

Relevant for my analysis is to theorize on the possible consequences of the so called solution to the problem representation, as well as the consequences of matters left unproblematized or not addressed within a certain problem representation (ibid). Bacchi (1999) underscores that within one policy document or "committee-produced" document, there may be several problem representations, but that this is also important for the analysis.

I examine problem representations in relation to nature and people, by looking at both textual descriptions and images. I look beyond what is problematic in a natural science perspective by examining how people are framed differently in relation to nature. The analysis includes analysing how certain gender or ethnicity categories are given more or less social value in relation to nature.

Additionally, I use the theoretical concept of *frame*, defined as the subconscious structures of systematically associated words (Lakoff, 2010). A word can in this sense be seen as defined in relation to other words that together create a schema/structure/frame where semantic and social roles are defined according to this frame (ibid). As Lakoff (2010) puts it, framing cannot be avoided—the question is rather whose frame is being activated and who's is not, and what the consequences of this are.

### 4.3 Hermeneutic Analysis

In my analysis, I have a hermeneutic approach (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009), arguing that the meaning of norms within SSNC cannot be fully understood unless related to its whole of Swedish outdoor recreation, which is reflected in my analysis and discussion where I move between the whole and its part to continuously analyse how words related to outdoor recreation, nature protection and conservation have consequences and meanings on both an individual and societal level. This approach entails that I do not claim to be neutral in my analysis, but rather that I acknowledge my own role as interpreter and part of the same system I aim to critically examine (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009). By striving for transparency in the analysis, I hope to provide a reliable contribution to the debate on ethnicity, class, and gender within Swedish Outdoor Recreation. My specific method consists of looking for symbols, words, and categories describing nature and people, and how these are framed as relating to one another in terms of being framed as problematic or not. I look for the assumptions and connotations for these frames, whether the gender or ethnicity frames are negative or positive in relation to nature and in relation to other people.

### 4.4 Definition of Analytical Key Concepts

#### 4.4.1 Nature/Culture

I study nature from a social constructivist perspective which means that I do not study nature in an ecological sense, but rather how nature is socially interpreted or constructed. Culture in this sense refers to how the texts (as cultural descriptions) reveals ideas and ideals about how society should relate to nature, rather than something that is inherently or naturally constituted.

Furthermore, the concept of binary dualism is used to describe a view of reality as consisting of two opposing parts. McDowell sees a binary thinking as deeply embedded in the Western thought, categorising the understanding of society as inherently divided into two parts (1999). This binary construction, which can be seen as characteristic for how both nature and gender is understood, also tend to be hierarchical, having a power dimension where one is seen as inferior of the other (McDowell, 1999).

This, however, tends to be embedded in the discourses and structures of Western thought, meaning that it is not always apparent for its participants/practitioners (*ibid*), which is why the study of these discourses and constructions becomes so important. Another concept used to describe a non-binary understanding of reality is pluralism, which for this thesis is defined as a view of reality as consisting of more than two opposing parts.

#### 4.4.2 Gender

Gender is the social dimension of sex, and in this study referred to as how social difference is ascribed to different gender categories (Hawkesworth, 1994). More precisely, this means that I study how different characteristics or capabilities or roles are assigned to different gender categories. The study is however qualitative and textual, meaning that I cannot analyse any gendered relations (how power is ascribed differently to different gender), or any actual gender roles (how certain tasks or behaviours are ascribed differently to different genders), but rather only reflect what gender roles or relations are reinforced by the texts. The purpose of the study is not to forbid any gendered expression, but highlight the stereotypical tendencies to open up for a higher tolerance for other gender roles and relationships.

These gender categories tend to be described in a binary matter, with the female and male body as the primary categories (ibid). However, for this thesis, I let the gender categories come from the material, allowing the analysis to take non-binary gender descriptions into account.

#### 4.4.3 Ethnicity

Vertovec (2007) argues that ethnicity and country of origin can sometimes be used interchangeably, but that religious affiliation, kinship, tribal affiliation, and many other categories of collective belonging tend to dominate the different interpretations of ethnicity. This thesis' approach to ethnicity includes a deconstruction of the term where it is examined in public policy and practice by looking at how the texts contain categorizations of people according to different collective characteristics, such as country of origin, religion, or whatever comes out of the material. The systematic approach entails an examination of these categories of ethnicity in relation to gender and nature/culture.

In the exploration of ethnicity, the term *whiteness* is used and seen as a social construction of ethnicity built upon a binary categorisation of skin colour which divides people as different in terms of groups of white and non-white (Mattsson, 2005). This categorization also tends to have a hierarchical dimension where norms associated with the white body tend to be viewed as more positive than norms associated with the non-white body.

Additionally, Mattsson (SOU2005:41) also uses the term *racialization* to conceptualize processes of structural discrimination. Racialization can be understood in three ways: 1) the process of ascribing so-called white people with positive structural advantages (economic, political or interpretive prerogative), or 2) as in how this "whiteness" is expressed in the shape of discourses and systems of meaning, and 3) how certain cultural practices that are not explicitly understood as white still constitute a criterion for how other cultures are judged and valued (de los Reyes, Bortomvi och dom. SOU2005:41., 2005). The first definition implies that individuals who

see themselves as antiracists can still have privileges by being perceived as white, and to fully understand structures of discrimination, one needs to take into account other systems of privileges such as age, class, and sexuality (ibid).

## 4.5 Material and Collection of Data

The documents I analyse are a selection of both public policy and SSNC documentation as described in the following two paragraphs. The purpose of examining texts from both a policy level and a practical, organisational level, or macro and micro level, is to gain an understanding of and insight into the more overarching discourses within outdoor recreation and how they are expressed in but also shape outdoor recreation practice. From a hermeneutic and social constructivist perspective, the understanding of gender and ethnicity will be stronger if both the whole and its specific parts are studied in a combined matter. By examining how nature/culture discourses frame gender and ethnicity, I hope to illuminate normative structures within Swedish outdoor recreation and inspire a debate about how outdoor recreation can be more inclusive in the future.

### 4.5.1 Public Policy on Outdoor Recreation

To answer the first research question about nature/culture discourses in Swedish outdoor recreation policy, a number of public texts were selected for analysis, consisting of the first Swedish bill 2009/10:238 and its related framework for implication such as texts that describe the goals, expectations, and legislations of current policy on outdoor recreation.

My systematic approach to policy means that I want to understand bill 2009/10:238 not only in relation to its historical background described in a previous chapter, but also in light of other public texts that are part of building the policy framework, problem formulations, and analysis of these problems. The texts selected to be analysed in relation to public policy 229/10:238 are: bill 2009/10:238 *Framtidens Friluftsliv*, Communication 2012/13:51 *Mål för Friluftspolitiken*, Naturvårdsverkets rapport 6476 *Förslag till mål för friluftspolitiken*, SFS 2010:2008 *Förordning om stadsbidrag till friluftorganisationer*, and the 2012-2014 evaluations and reports from *Svenskt Friluftsliv* and the Swedish EPA, reporting on the results on the state funded projects on outdoors recreation.

The material was downloaded mainly from the official webpages of the Swedish government, the Swedish EPA, and *Svenskt Friluftsliv*.

#### 4.5.2 SSNC

To gain insight into how the traditional nature/culture dualism of Swedish Outdoor Recreation is present in current practices, a case study of SSNC was conducted, examining more general policies as well as the specific youth project Schysst Sommar. Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) is a non-partisan/religious / profit environmental non-governmental organisation founded in May 1909 (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2015), working towards adapting society to environmental capacities (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2011). SSNC had a member base of about 220 000 persons in 2014, making it one of Sweden's largest environmental NGOs, and therefore relevant to study. To gain overview understanding of how ethnicity and gender is expressed in SSNC, activity plans, reports, and financial reports accessible through the SSNC webpage, covering a publishing period of 2008-2015 (its content, however, covers a history going back to about 2003), was collected. To gain more specific insight into the more detailed dynamics and possible effects of the gender and ethnicity discourse, the thesis examines the SSNC project Schysst Sommar<sup>5</sup> — a youth project launched in 2009. Schysst Sommar has been working with outdoor recreation and other activities in order to “create an environmental awareness within the target group” (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2012: 39); described as youth from segregated areas in terms of ethnicity, and social status (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2014) (hence the relevance of studying the project). For Schysst Sommar, activity reports and one 30 minute in-depth interview with a project manager, was used as data.

Furthermore, to complement the texts, some unpublished documents have been used, such as a Diversity Plan. Additional material has been observations from a Discussion Forum on Diversity, held by SSNC in March 2015, where discussions about the SSNC participation history and goals were discussed, including topics such as gender and ethnicity. The forum, held in March 2015, ran for about three hours, and I was invited in my current role as volunteer intern with no obligations to act as an intern, but could use the discussion forum for my thesis. The participant group consisted of eleven people: employees at the main office, project leaders, and board members. Of the eleven participants, ten were female and one was male, and the group explicitly and self-critically described itself as “white, middle class and around the ages of 30-40”. The background to the discussion forum was by the organisational developer described as SSNC wanting to gather people with a strong interest in diversity in order to reach a common understanding and strategy as the topic had been discussed for a long time, but with no clear strategy adopted. The discussion forum, as well as the interview, were consented to be audio- recorded using my telephone.

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<sup>5</sup> Roughly translated to ”Cool Summer” where the first word “cool” hints both to “fun time” as well as “juste”.

#### 4.6 Ethical Considerations

I, as a young, Swedish born, white, university educated woman and previous intern at SSNC, need to acknowledge my own role in the context I am studying: I am part of co-constructing a certain way of understanding a reality. I hope to show transparency in the analysis and by so doing, create a reliable analysis. As the study aims to examine how a societal discourse on nature/culture shapes conceptions about gender and ethnicity by studying SSNC, the results of the study will not reflect the opinions or perspectives of any individuals but are that of a public discourse. This makes it even more important to keep respondents anonymous in this study along with thanking them for their courageous participation and work for a more inclusive Swedish Outdoor Recreation.

## 5 Analysis and Results

In chapter 5, I present the emerging discourses on gender and ethnicity as they relate to the different research questions. Section 5.1 presents the discussion of results as relating to bill Future Outdoor Recreation (2009/10:238). In section 5.2, I present the results relating to SSNC, and conclude in 5.3 with discussing the implications on future environmental policy and practice. I present my results by continuously relating to theory and discussing the relations between them.

### 5.1 Gender and Ethnicity in Public Policy

In this section, I answer the research question: “How are gender and ethnicity framed in the environmental policy Swedish outdoor recreation policy in bill 2009/10:238 and its related and selected texts?”. I show how nature is constructed as a dualism to culture, which in turn frames gender and ethnicity in relation to masculine whiteness norm.

#### 5.1.1 Establishing Outdoor Recreation as its Own Area of Politics in 2009

In bill 2009/10:238, new goals for Swedish Outdoor Politics are suggested: nature should be available for everyone; personal and non-profit engagement should be put central-stage; the Right of Public Access should be protected; the sustainable farming take needs of outdoor recreation into account; the municipalities have responsibility for nature near the cities; outdoor recreation should contribute to rural development and regional growth; protected areas should benefit from outdoor recreation; outdoor recreation has a major role in schools’ activities; physical activity and relaxation should strengthen the public health, and decisions on outdoor recreation are made with good knowledge (2009/10:238).

From 2011 and onwards, on behalf of the Swedish government, the umbrella organisation Svenskt friluftsliv<sup>6</sup> allocates about 28 million SEK on a yearly basis to NGOs working with outdoor recreation. The funding is regulated according to the document *Förordning om stadsbidrag till friluftslivsorganisationer* (SFS 2010:2008), policy 2009/10:238, a specific delegation order for Svenskt Friluftsliv, and also specific instructions from the board to the deciding committee in Svenskt Friluftsliv (Svenskt Friluftsliv, 2015). The requirements include: “safeguard the simple, nature near, and long term sustainable outdoor life”; create “a safe and se-

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<sup>6</sup> Svenskt Friluftsliv consist of about 24 member organisations (NGOs), and 2 million individual members. The organisation represent the NGOs in Sweden. The overall objectives of Svenskt Friluftsliv are to promote outdoor life, strengthen the Right of Public Access, attract children and youth in an active outdoor life, and strengthen the financial conditions for outdoor life’s organisation (ibid).



cure outdoor life” and to “work for increased knowledge about and care for nature- and culture environments as well as the Right to Public Access” (Regeringskansliet, 2010:2)<sup>7</sup>. The projects are evaluated on a yearly basis both by Svenskt Friluftsliv reporting to the Swedish EPA, and the Swedish EPA reporting to the Swedish government.

### 5.1.2 Nature/Culture Dualism

Descriptions of nature in for example in the EPA report of future goals for outdoor recreation show through its imagery of outdoor recreation in the EPA report (Naturvårdsverket, 2012) shows nature scenes outside the city in which people are shown skiing and fishing and by so suggesting a nature/culture dualism in the sense of nature being something to travel to and doing specific activities in, rather than something that can be found in the city.

In the Public Policy texts describing Swedish Outdoor Recreation and its objectives, the analysis shows that culture is framed as superior to nature in the sense that humans are seen as capable of controlling their impact on nature. As this is a construction of nature and culture which was shaped by a white male middle class, this further framing of nature/culture rely on language and symbols more likely to activate frames belonging to the white male middle class as described by Sandell (2009), and to a lesser degree others (non-white/non-male/not middle class) (see Lakoff (2010).

### 5.1.3 Outdoors Recreation “For All”...White?

Despite relying on frames speaking to a white male middle class, a main message in the bill is that outdoor recreation should be accessible “for all”, regardless of age or background (2009/10:238:11). For this to happen, outdoor recreation is described as relying on measurements of integration and gender equality (ibid: 15). Integration is defined as equal rights, obligations and possibilities “for all”, regardless of ethnical or cultural background, whereas gender is not defined but rather described as the increased insight of a need for activities to suit women equally as men, as well as to acknowledge that outdoor recreation has tended to be dominated by men (ibid).

Despite these formulations stating goals of challenging gender norms as well as ethnical or cultural norms, only white-looking people are represented in the imagery of the EPA report as well as a majority of men compared to women (Naturvårdsverket, 2012). An older man is fishing, an older woman is cross country skiing together with that looks like a man in the same age, and a blond young girl is having a break from her downhill skiing (ibid).

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<sup>7</sup> Original quotes: ’1. värnar det enkla, naturnära och långsiktigt hållbara friluftslivet, 3. främjar ett tryggt och säkert friluftsliv, 5. verkar för ökad kunskap om och hänsyn till natur- och kulturmiljön samt allemansrätten.’

In the sense that the images show activities that are relatively simple in terms of equipment and costs, they seem to confirm the “folksiness”<sup>8</sup> and “simpleness” (Emmelin et al 2005, citing Wiklund, 1995; Tordsson, 2003; Breivik & Lovmo, 1978; Sandell 1997; Sandell & Sörlin, 2000; Nedrelin) argue is characteristic of a Nordic understanding of outdoor recreation. This means that despite what might have been an attempt to frame outdoor recreation as simple and accessible for all in the sense that they are not necessarily expensive, the images still reflect frames belonging to a Nordic norm and sense of identity.

Although one image displays a white woman, this woman is in the company of another white man who she stands behind as he takes first row examining the surrounding forest. I interpret this as not necessarily challenge the male norm: it might as well confirm an idea of a male protection of the female as the man is in the foreground looking ahead and the women behind him. This image is therefore more likely to activate frames of those who see themselves as white as well as reinforcing the framing of men as dominating women. I would assume that if the image of the older white male fisher would have been a woman, the more traditional gender norms would have more clearly been challenged, and thereby also the more traditional gendering of outdoor recreation.

The combination of images with white looking persons, the Nordic nature/culture dualism, create what I would call Swedish whiteness norms, where desired behaviour, views, and traditions are framed by and for white people rather than those who are perceived as non-whites. I classify this structure of meaning as a process of racialization, as defined by Mattsson (SOU2005:41), since only white people are portrayed in images and texts, framing them as the main carriers of norms and values compatible with outdoor recreation. This in turn, might reinforce a subconscious idea that whiteness would be superior to non-whites in terms of relating to nature.

#### 5.1.4 Gender

Moreover, to reach an outdoor recreation “for all”, gender equality and integration are described as a must for activities (2009/10:238: 15). Gender equality is related to a system of power where men are said to have dominated outdoor recreation for a long time. Men are said to “still dominate” many outdoor recreation activities, and in order to improve, activities are required to be suited for women as well as for men (2009/10:238:15). In this way, gender equality in Outdoor Recreation is formulated as a right for women. It is, however, slightly unclear what strategy this right require,

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<sup>8</sup> ‘folklighet’

whether new activities should be designed, specifically for women, or that the current activities should be changed so that women feel more included.

According to Lidestav et al (2011), a common strategy to reach gender equality is to try to convince women who do not participate to participate instead of addressing the norms that stop them from participating from the start. Lidestav et al (ibid) argue that for work towards gender equality to be efficient in practice, it requires an approach reinforcing gender and equality awareness within the participating group, and that the group tries to understand why activities and projects do not appeal to women; and thereafter try to change those norms towards a more inclusive approach.

However, the challenging of gender norms is not described in the policy Future Outdoor Recreation (2009/10:238), which is why I see the risk of projects that might focus more on targeting new groups of people rather than trying to change the norms that make certain people unlikely to participate. One can, however, argue that if more women would participate, the norms would be likely to change in the long run, but I would assume that the process would be more time efficient if at the same time, the norms were actively challenged by the planners and not only by the participants. If these planners/project managers/employers do not outspokenly challenge masculinity norms, one can assume that these norms will live on longer than if they were challenged by them.

Last but not least, this framing of gender as an issue between women and men might run the risk of reinforcing a binary understanding of gender, which would go against the anti-discrimination goals of the bill.

#### 5.1.5 Integration

Furthermore, in contrast to the concept of gender equality and its relation to power, the term integration is referred to in terms of equal rights and obligations regardless of ethnical or cultural background (2009/10:238:15), without mentioning any type of domination. Despite integration being described as a “must” in bill 2009/10:238, the term is barely present in other related texts (Naturvårdsverket, 2012; Regeringskansliet, 2010). In the EPA report suggesting the goals for outdoor recreation (Naturvårdsverket, 2012), integration is only written once in a table with evaluations of positive or negative national economic effects with the comment “none” on the possible negative effects of integration, and the comment “decreased depression” on the positive side. Instead, equal treatment<sup>9</sup> is introduced as a concept and strategy.

Given that the analysis so far has shown how Swedish Outdoor Recreation seem to rely on a white middle class framing of nature/culture, the term “integration”

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<sup>9</sup> likabehandling

itself seems a bit strange. Integration almost seem to refer to assimilation and the forcing “the other” to obey the rules established by the superior group as “Outdoor recreation”.

#### 5.1.6 Incoherent Terminology

There is an incoherence in terminology within the politically produced texts. Integration, equal treatment, diversity, gender, etcetera, are used in the different documents; sometimes interchangeably and sometimes not. The EPA report offers definitions of some terms, such as equal treatment and diversity.

The equal treatment is referred to in terms of diversity, gender equality, independency, rights, and resource perspectives (Naturvårdsverket, 2012). Equal treatment is defined as giving all people the possibility to participate on equal terms, despite sex, race, ethnic origin, religion or belief, functional ability, age, or sexuality<sup>10</sup> (ibid). Diversity is further defined as a diversity of values and lifestyles, and that peoples’ possibilities and conditions differ, depending on sex, ethnicity, cultural or socio-economic background, home district, sexuality, and function, et cetera (ibid). Diversity is also defined as a diversity in opinion, which is seen as differing in relation to sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and so forth. In contrast to this, in the evaluations of the projects, discrimination and gender equality are, however, not even mentioned—only integration is (Svenskt Friluftsliv, 2015).

What this seems to suggest is that, within the policy texts and practices of outdoor recreation, there seems to exist different concepts and strategies in order to create outdoor recreation “for all”. The lack of coherency and clear definition of core concepts in the work towards achieving outdoor recreation for all, might run the risk of undermining the credibility of the statements as what is considered important and how the goals are believed to be achieved.

## 5.2 Gender and ethnicity in SSNC

In chapter 5.2, I answer the research question: “How are gender and ethnicity framed in the practice of the environmental organisation SSNC, including the project Schysst Sommar?”. I show how a dualist framing of culture dominates the discourse within SSNC but that a pluralism perspective also was found. Moreover, I describe how gender and ethnicity are framed in a way reflecting the traditional perspectives of the white male middle class, having racialisation and inclusive subordination as an effect for members of SSNC and Schysst Sommar.

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<sup>10</sup> Referring to ”Handisam”: “Handisam” – Myndigheten för handikappolitisk samordning 2006-2014.

### 5.2.1 Nature/Culture Dualism and Pluralism

In the data collected from SSNC and Schysst Sommar, the analysis confirms the nature/culture dualism that Swedish Outdoor Recreation has been shown to be built upon. Examples of the framing of nature as separated from civilisation goes far back in the SSNC history, where a photo from 1909 shows a board meeting in a forest (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2015). Later images are consistent with this dualism: for example, in the activity plan of 2015-2018, where a photo shows nature with images of a tree with flowers, but no people, structures, or houses (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2014).

In addition, the statues of SSNC strengthen this dualism, in which the only photo shows a raptor and no civilisation. Along the line of the texts before 2014, the images of the 2014 annual report also include images of an apparent nature separated from the urban, showing wolves and coral reefs. By repeatedly using language of images describing nature as separate from civilisation, I analyse this as likely to activate frames of those (white, middle class, male) who has (or has had) a dualist view of nature/culture; i.e. be more appealing to this group than other.

Interestingly, unlike what was found in public policy documents, recent SSNC documents seem to break with the traditional nature/culture dualism. A pluralistic framing of nature is found in the more recent texts, displayed through images where no clear line is drawn between nature and culture, rural and urban, and non-human and human. For example, photos show urban environments with people on a beach and a man overlooking a rooftop landscape while holding a falcon (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2014). The tendency to want to challenge the male whiteness norm is also shown in the 2014 financial report, in which photos show almost twice as many females than males, and some ethnic diversity is suggested by having almost as many non-white looking people as whites.

However, when looking specifically at outdoor recreation descriptions in the 2014 activity plan, the nature/culture dualism is again confirmed through images and descriptions of nature as place to visit away from the cities (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2014) rather than something that could actually be part of a city. This again confirms that within the SSNC Outdoor Recreation practice, the nature/culture dualism dominate the descriptions, but that for other parts of the practice, there seem to be a tendency to break with this dualism.

### 5.2.2 Acknowledging a Whiteness Norm – but Challenging It?

When SSNC present their history on their webpage, the first (and only) picture show a white upper class group of men having their first board meeting in May 16, 1909. In suits, vests and ties, they are having a picnic in an environment without any symbols of surrounding civilisation. In this sense, older imagery confirms, or in a sense acknowledges, both a history of male whiteness norms but also its relation to

their own sense of separation and superiority to nature (by having the ability to protect it).

The middle class norm is also confirmed in some discussions at SSNC where in the forum where I did participatory observation, the narrow social representation in the member group was explained as partly caused by a member recruit strategy in the 1970s. As part of this strategy, SSNC targeted and called people with an income level above 400 000 SEK per year, living in the Swedish countryside while owning two cars. As was told during the forum, the SSNC leadership at that time came to perceive that the strategy had segregating results, creating a narrow member group consisting mainly of a white middle class, and opted for a change of strategy and a broadening of member base.<sup>11</sup>

In order to create a more representative, or what came to be called “diverse” member base, a new strategy was described as targeting youth and those defining themselves as having a non-Nordic background and along those lines, the project Schysst Sommar was launched (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2011; Naturskyddsföreningen, Verksamhetsriktlinjer 2011-2014, 2011). During the discussion forum, Schysst Sommar was referred to as “the not per definition immigration project”, which suggests an understanding of the new target group as targeted, or related to, upon their ethnicity rather than other characteristics. Schysst Sommar was designed to target a socio-economically weaker group (as compared to the average member), framed as “young urban people who has perhaps not yet come in contact with nature and environmental issues”. This group was chosen because “SSNC had the lowest presence in areas with a high proportion of rental apartments and low medium income” (SSNC, 2011).

Despite the effort of trying to break with the overrepresentation of a white middle class, as has been shown to be characteristic for the nature/culture dualism, the framing of ethnicity still remained on a whiteness norm. The taken approach specifically targeted those who were perceived as ethnically different (non-Nordic/immigrant etcetera), because of their thereby perceived lack of nature knowledge. In this sense, the strategy taken to achieve a more diverse member base managed to reinforce a hierarchical framing of ethnicity where the whiteness still remained norm in relation to nature and the type of knowledge that were seen as valuable. If SSNC had phrased the targeting of the new suburban youth as an opportunity for SSNC to gain and learn more about nature and environment from this group, the analysis would have been different as that would have restrained the otherwise reinforced “us and them” hierarchy.

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<sup>11</sup> There seemed to have been pressure put on SSNC by others actors such as SIDA, who in a review of SSNC critiqued SSNC for having an undemocratic representation and administration (SIDA, 2004).

### 5.2.3 “Diversity” Reaching Beyond Gender Equality?

Gender equality can be seen as being an established part in different plans during the last few years in SSNC, and the in 2014 elected national board was by its nominating committee during the year meeting in 2014 described as “female dominated” after “over a 100 years of male domination”. Seeing that the national board<sup>12</sup> has had more women than men for some years, one can assume that the reference of dominance was upon power structures.

The understanding of gender is binary where statistics regarding gender refers to men and women or “unknown” (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2013). Since “unknown” could refer to either men or women, this framing hides the possibility of statistically identifying for example transgendered identities which makes some gender identities hidden and unknown for the organisation.

Furthermore, when looking into the dynamics of gender, the male domination seems to remain. During the last few years, SSNC has had slightly more female than male members, where 3 out of 5 are women, and 3 out of 1000 are “unknown” (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2013). The female “domination” is also reflected in employees and in the national board (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2013; 2014), but not for the regional board, where 3 out of 5 board members are men (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2014). In SSNC, men are still more likely to get a position in a regional board and thereby influence activities and meetings than women are, which makes it seem problematic that SSNC wants to reach “beyond” a gender equality which they have not reached and replacing it with a term that seem somewhat unclear what it means.

The term diversity also faces internal critique from members experiencing the use of the term as stereotyping. According to a representative of Schysst Sommar, situations have occurred where Schysst Sommar members have been approached by other SSNC members specifically because they bring diversity by having a “foreign background”. This has made Schysst Sommar members feel like individual symbols for diversity in the shape of “not ethnically Swedish”, rather than of diversity of the whole organisation.

On another note, also in relation to gender, the discussion forum had almost only female participants. This was however not problematized, which suggest a risk for organisational development issues at SSNC being framed as female issues. Westberg & Powell (2015) argue might give it a lower status and less influence than traditional masculine approaches. Therefore, for the continued work with participation, gender, ethnicity and “diversity” issues to be successful, there might be of value to address the gender representation within that work in order for it not to be devaluated because of traditional, supressing gender roles such as described by Westberg & Powell (2015).

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<sup>12</sup> riksstyrelse

#### 5.2.4 Social Structures Between Schysst Sommar and The Rest of SSNC

The participatory methods for Schysst Sommar are described using the catchphrases “meet, show, and participation”<sup>13</sup>. With these three slogans, the project targets youths with “methods new in comparison with SSNC’s traditional activities” (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2012: 10) by trying to find out what activities and approaches the youths like, and by so doing establishing relationships with them (ibid).

The aim of Schysst Sommar is described as to “awaken their [the youth’s] interest for nature and the environment”<sup>14</sup> and “enlighten them about the condition of the world, nature, and outdoor recreation”<sup>15</sup> (ibid). Another aim of the project is to make the youth “feel a sense of belonging and that their opinions, actions, and daily choices matter in that context”<sup>16</sup> (ibid).

Despite the aim of having the youth feel a sense of belonging, the project participants of Schysst Sommar reflect lacking a sense of belonging to the rest of the organisation. In the Schysst Sommar evaluations, one reflection by a leader was that the project was seen as separated from the “usual” SSNC activities, and that the connection between the project and the rest of SSNC remained unclear and weak (Naturskyddsföreningen, 2012).

The weak connection between Schysst Sommar and the rest of SSNC was also reflected by a Schysst Sommar representative who argued that the lack of project goals reflects low expectations on the achievements of the participants, and that these do not feel comfortable in situations outside the Schysst Sommar project. Although Schysst Sommar has been around for about 7 years at the point of writing, but the members have not continued within other projects in SSNC, the integration of the Schysst Sommar member into the rest of SSNC seem to be staggering.

I would argue that this process of limited participation development for Schysst Sommar members shows signs of “inclusive subordination”, a concept created by de los Reyes to describe situations where an organisation tries to involve members of an underrepresented group, but that the organisation does this without actually challenging the norms that excludes that group, and therefore manages to create a situation where the new group is included in the organisation but kept subordinate due to the remaining norms (de los Reyes, Molina, & Mulinari, *Maktens (o)lika förklådnader: Kön, klass & ethnicitet i det postkoloniala Sverige*, 2005).

These results also reflect the findings of Lidestav et al (2011) in terms of the tendency for organisations to try to create new activities for those that they try to attract, rather than examining and challenging the norms and aspects of why this

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<sup>13</sup> ‘möta, visa, delaktighet’ (handbok, 2012: p. 10)

<sup>14</sup> ‘väcka deras intresse för natur och miljö’ (handbok, 2012: p. 10)

<sup>15</sup> ‘upplysa dem om tillståndet i världen, naturen och friluftslivet’ (10)

<sup>16</sup> ‘känna tillhörighet och få en känsla av att deras åsikter, handlingar och dagliga val spelar roll i det sammanhanget’ (10)



group is not likely to participate in the already existing activities. According to Lidestav et al (2011), if an organisation's norms and structures are not changed, the possibilities for a new group to establish and continue as members or interact with other activities or groups tend to be limited.

## 6 Conclusion and Discussion

### 6.1 Why the Whiteness of Swedish Outdoor Recreation?

The analysis shows that public policy Future Outdoor Recreation (Governmental bill 2009/10:238) frames white, male persons as more positively presented in relation to nature than females or immigrants. Being female, “immigrant” or/and “non-Nordic” was less represented in positive nature descriptions or specifically described as something negative, in terms of a need of education and training to be out in nature. Comparable presentations of gender and ethnicity were found in the case study of SSNC along with observed perceptions of difficulties for women and immigrants to feel welcome in the organisation.

The material brought forward how difficult it may be to break with whiteness norms unless challenging the nature/culture dualism it is constructed upon. This was exemplified in how SSNC, where despite acknowledging and attempting to challenge a whiteness norm, the organisation still seemed to, at times, reinforce it. The white middle class member base was in texts and discussions framed as problematic mainly in terms of hindering future member growth, and the solution was predominantly seen as targeting suburban youths because of their perceived lack of nature knowledge and therefore a potential nature protector and future member. If instead, the targeted group would have been framed as having a different type (rather than lack) of nature knowledge, this nature/culture dualism might have been challenged as well as the whiteness norm.

In more recent SSNC texts, where both nature and people were framed in a more pluralist manner, more urban environments and non-white people were also displayed, suggesting that the close relationship between nature/culture dualism and whiteness norm might be challenged more in future material/work. However, when it came to specific outdoor recreation descriptions, the more traditional nature/culture dualism and whiteness norm dominated through imagery, descriptions, and strategies.

Another example of the difficulty to move beyond this Swedish (male) whiteness norm when being within the nature/culture dualist discourse of outdoor recreation was the ambiguity in the gender and integration strategies which consisted of an incoherent terminology between public policy texts and practices. The gap between policy and practices was exemplified in both evaluations from Svenskt Friluftsliv as well as in how SSNC used the term diversity, used in public policy, defined as a positively coded term for intersectional equality, while being perceived as a negative stereotyping symbol for non-whiteness by non-whites (SSNC). However, it can be noted that the study suggests that the critique towards the term “diversity” lies

within the negative stereotype upon nature knowledge and ethnicity rather than the term being inherently negative.

In relation to the rest of SSNC, the framing of ethnicity showed signs of what can be referred to as inclusive subordination (de los Reyes, 2005) where project members of Schysst Sommar experienced hinders in terms of the communication and relation to the main organisation. Lidestav et al (2011) describe this as common when for example trying to attract more women to a male dominated organisation: new projects are perhaps made to attract the underrepresented target group, but the norms of the main organisation are not necessarily challenged, which keeps the new members included but still subordinated.

Last but not least, within the dualist nature/culture discourse found in both policy and practice, gender tended to be framed using binary categories such as male and female both in statistics and in descriptions. I argue that this way of representing and describing gender categories might hide the existence and experiences of non-binary gender identification and in that sense speak to those who identify within the normative gender roles, and would not speak to those who do not. In this I see a risk of this reinforcing existing power dynamics in terms of gender relations and norms. I further see a risk of having organisational development issues framed as female issues, seeing that the discussion forum had almost only female participants. This was actively not problematized despite being mentioned several times, which Westberg & Powell (2015) argue might give it a lower status and less influence than traditional masculine approaches.

## 6.2 Implications for Future Research and Practice

As an implication for practice, the study suggests a need to create more coherent terminology within policy and develop competences to create participatory processes that acknowledge the different experiences gender roles and relations, ethnicities, and relations to nature. For this to happen, more research on how these processes can happen in a way which includes and unites more people rather than exclude some, is needed. Acknowledging more nature experiences and knowledge as important for Swedish outdoor recreation might open up for more inclusive norms both in terms of gender and ethnicity. However, more research on how groups are identified and assumed to behave within outdoor recreation in Sweden is needed in order to inform policy makers and practitioners, especially in the intricate work of targeting and including groups traditionally not part of the activities or defining the norms.

In order to develop policies and practices that better correspond to processes of non-discrimination upon gender and ethnicity, there is both a lack of evaluations of

experiences relating to this, and thereby a need to better evaluate practices in relation to this. If SSNC wants the main organisation to learn from the Schysst Sommar projects, and increase the movement of members between projects, more thoroughly performed evaluations would give more feedback to both Schysst Sommar leadership as well as SSNC leadership. As the nature/culture dualism has been shown to construct the whiteness norm, the analysis suggests but does not conclude that actively moving towards a more pluralist description of nature and culture as interrelated could be a strategy.

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