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The Swedish allemansrätt;

an embodiment of Swedishness

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to broaden the understanding of the Swedish “allemansrätten” as a cultural phenomenon and embodiment of Swedishness. The complications regarding the translation of concepts as well as problems in the general understanding of this public right will be brought to the reader’s attention. Neighbouring countries have been used for comparison as well as different perceptions of nature. Swedish identity and linguistic uniqueness cast a light on the importance of nature to them and for individuals' access to it.

Keywords: Public Right to Access Nature, Code of Conduct, Public Right to Roam, Cultural Anthropology, Social Anthropology, Environmental Anthropology, Dissonant Culture, allemansrätt

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Table of content

Abstract	2
Acknowledgments	3
Abbreviation and translations	5
Introduction	6
Research questions	7
Previous research and theory	8
Method	10
Authors background; limitations and delimitation	11
Disposition	12
1. Facts about allemansrätten	14
Linguistic uniqueness	14
A custom, the laws and praxis	15
2. Swedishness and allemansrätten	18
The Nature in Music, in Hearts, in Souls	20
Recreational landscape	21
The nostalgic outdoor recreation	26
3. Preserving allemansrätten	28
Nonprofit Organizations and Foundation with Allemansrätt at Interest	30
Individuals; we and them	31
Nudging, Place Attachment and Environmentally Responsible Behavior	35
Conclusion	37
Reference List	40

Abbreviation and translations

CAB	Länsstyrelsen Sverige / County Administrative Boards of Sweden
DNA	Naturstyrelsen /Danish Nature Agency
EPAS	Naturvårdsverket / Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden
EU	European Union
EU-SILC	European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions
ESD	UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development
	Friluftsförbundet / Outdoor Association
HSR	Håll Sverige rent/ Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation
LRF	Lantbrukarans Riksförbund / Federation of Swedish Farmers
SOU	Statens offentliga utredningar / Swedish Government Official Reports
SCB	Statistiska centralbyrån / Statistics Sweden
	Stiftelsen Skånska landskap / Scanian Landscape Foundation
	Svenskt Friluftsliv / The Swedish association for outdoor organisations
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization

Introduction

Allemansrätt is not just the name of IKEA's meatballs. It is the Swedish concept over the public right to roam freely in Swedish nature. This ancient tradition is uniquely preserved through generations in the hearts of Swedes and is deeply rooted in their identity (Beery, 2013: 9, 36). It has grown to be one of the central national symbols (Ahlström, 2008) of Swedishness with an infrastructure that alters their patriotic view on nature (Thurfjell, 2020: 165).

For the past ten years, I have been living and working periodically in both Sweden and also in Iceland, which is my original home country. After living for two years in Sweden I signed up for a seasonal contract as a ranger on a nature reserve in Iceland where I constantly met people from all over the world, visiting the Nordic island of ice and fire, for culture but mainly for nature experience. The wilderness is the main tourist attraction and the fact that one can roam freely and camp just about everywhere gives some guests the feeling of extreme freedom, as if there are no limits. This freedom that visitors had heard of in Iceland is called *almannaréttur* in Icelandic (and *allemannsrett* in Norwegian). A tradition remaining from old Norwegian laws (the so-called *Jonsbok*) from when Iceland belonged to Norway. In a poor country with very few roads and no train it was crucial to have the right to pass others' land on foot, or by horse riding and being able to rest for some nights while waiting off the stormy weather before moving further towards your destination. I can't remember when I first heard of it, but I remember my mom talking about some disagreement on who owned the berries we were picking halfway to a mountaintop, but at least the sheep wandering there freely didn't seem to mind.

During the first seasonal work period as a ranger in Iceland, I frequently read through the Icelandic environmental laws to ensure that I was fulfilling my duties. My curiosity led me to compare them to the Swedish environmental laws. I soon saw that it became beneficial for me when explaining to campers from other Nordic countries that unfortunately they had to move their tent to the camping place or outside the nature reserve since camping was not allowed within it. One couple explained it well to me "Ohh, sorry, we were told that we could camp everywhere, we are used to *allemansrätten* in Finland and Sweden and thought that it applied

here too.” I could then politely reply “Yes, we do have *Allemansrätt* just like in Sweden and just like there, camping is not allowed within nature reserves.”. The couple stuttered, both because I spoke Swedish and because I claimed to be more informed than they were. When I was back in Sweden I decided to make contact with a Swedish ranger working in Kullaberg nature reserve in Southern Sweden to see how they worked. He confirmed to me that most Swedes were not familiar with the fact that *Allemansrätten* can often be limited in protected areas. Multiple informants confirmed this and there my journey towards this paper began.

The aim of this thesis is to gain a holistic perspective on the phenomena of *Allemansrätten* as a part of Swedish identity or an embodiment of Swedishness. *Allemansrätten* is seen as a central national symbol (Ahlström, 2008), deeply rooted in the Swedish identity (Beery, 2013; Thurfjell, 2020: 165). If a Swede is asked to explain *Allemansrätten* they might have trouble forming a meaning that defines it in an informative way for someone who is a stranger to it. But if direct questions are asked of what is allowed and what not, then the same individual is likely to answer somewhat correctly. This indicates that *Allemansrätten* is so deeply rooted in the Swedish habitus that this goes without saying and becomes more like a feeling or a cultural norm (Beery, 2013) where it plays a big role in Swedish national identity and self-image (Sténs & Sandstöm, 2014; Thurfjell, 2020: 166). For an outsider, a stereotypical Swede is seen as an environmentally responsible nature lover (Thurfjell, 2020: 166). Might this phenomenon of *Allemansrätt* be the root of their environmentally responsible behavior and this strong affection for nature or vice versa? It is generally described as something unique Swedish but already I knew before looking into it that it exists in other countries too. My search for the uniqueness taught me a new perspective on how I perceive the *Allemansrätten* in Iceland, my former home country where I grew up. Icelanders are proud of being a part of the Scandinavian family and often look up to Sweden but the perception of *Allemansrätten* seems to have quite distinctive differences.

Research questions

Does the Swedish *Allemansrätt* differ from other Nordic countries?

Does *Allemansrätten* play a role in Swedishness?

Does *allemansrätten* provoke Swedes strong affection for nature?

Previous research and theory

Previous research on *allemansrätten* as a social and cultural phenomenon is poor.

Educational material is provided by the Naturvårdsverket (Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden). Naturvårdsverket has the responsibility to provide updated information on *allemansrätten* to all governmental departments and others concerned. Most published material comes from the authors Bengtsson, Ahlström and Sandell. All three authors have worked on material published by Naturvårdsverket. Bertil Bengtsson, a Professor of Civil Law, wrote the first handbook on the *allemansrätten* year 1966. Ingemar Ahlström is a specialist on *allemansrätten* and has published several books on the matter since 1992 and has also worked on material published by Naturvårdsverket. Klas Sandell, a Professor in Human Geography, has published several articles on *allemansrätten* from a historical perspective connected to tourism and the development of outdoor recreation in Sweden. Just like Ahlström, he worked for Naturvårdsverket although on national research on outdoor recreational habits (*friluftsliv*) in Sweden.

Thomas Harold Beery, a doctor of Education, wrote the paper *Nordic in Nature: Friluftsliv and Environmental Connectedness* (2011). There he explained well how significant and meaningful the relationship between nature-based outdoor recreation participation and environmental connectedness is in the Nordic mentality. Mainly focusing on the comparison of Sweden and the US.

Additionally to these three authors mentioned above, Wiktorsson (1996) (Civil Engineer) writes about the *allemansrätt* as some sort of myth and goes back in history, explaining how access to nature was before it got protected in Swedish laws. Ilgunas published the book *This Land Is Our Land: How We Lost the Right to Roam and How to Take It Back* in 2018 where he uses the Swedish *allemansrätten* as an example of how people's access to nature has been preserved and prioritized.

In mid-2020 David Thurfjell published a book about how nature became the Swedes church. Although only a few pages are dedicated to *allemansrätten* it describes well the reasons behind the ideology and how important nature is to the Swedish mentality. During the

covid-19 pandemic the interest of all sorts of outdoor recreations grew as other sorts of activities were limited and the focus on allemansrätten got even sharper.

In order to understand the cultural aspect of this phenomena, a material on Swedish mentality and identity is essential. Ideland (ethnolog) and Malmberg (professor of Education, Humanities and Social Science) (2014) discuss the dichotomy that fuels the cogwheels on what they call *Otherness machinery*. They describe how educational material from UNESCO is unintentionally widening the gap between ‘us’ and ‘them’ while intentionally strengthening the sense of belonging.

Furthermore on that topic, anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1995, 2004) explains the binary opposites of us and them and how we identify ourselves. His perspective on what unites and divides is useful to understand how individuals and groups identify themselves and perceive others. While people tend to feel safer when they can identify themselves as a part of some group they simultaneously exclude themselves from other groups. The side effect is that the stronger the connection, the bigger the gap grows between us and them. This need of belongingness then forms our choices and behavior.

Yusra Moshtat (2008) published a report for Naturvårdsverket (Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden) stressing the importance of teaching immigrants how to enjoy nature in order to immigrate better in Sweden. Explaining the dissonant cultural heritage where various groups contribute with a different perspective on how to interpret nature. Mont, Lehner and Heiskanen (2014) also published a report for Naturvårdsverket but on how to use the concept of nudging, a known method from behavioral science, as a tool to make it easy for people to behave in a desired way, or to “do right”, when out in nature. This method can work well regardless of cultural background because it guides us through our natural instincts as mammals

Method

This research is based on comparative secondary data and empirical material, from observation and interviews where the focus is on Sweden and the Nordic countries while simultaneously taking a brief peek at other western countries. The insight immigrants bring to Swedish culture and its dissonant cultural heritage has been brought up with the purpose of narrowing down the possible threat to old customs, identify a possible target group for future work towards the maintenance of allemansrätten and as an important factor in gaining as holistic perspective as possible within the time limits of research. Interdisciplinary approaches from other behavioral sciences such as geography, tourism and psychology proved not only to be beneficial but necessary when gathering reliable information about allemansrätten and in general how nature is preserved in Sweden.

Participation in both regional and national seminars on outdoor recreation in Sweden held in March and May 2019 (Tankesmedja för friluftsliv) proved to be a valuable platform for gathering information on the value of allemansrätten. I listened to presentations and spoke with various stakeholders and others accountable for outdoor recreation or with it at interest. Participants were academic researchers, a representative from National parks, County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen), Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket), Outdoor Association (Friluftsrådet), Federation of Swedish Farmers (Lantbrukarnas Riksförbund) and Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation (Håll Sverige rent) amongst others. I additionally participated in a seminar at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in January 2021, with the title; The Art of Communicating Allemansrätten.

Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were applied to gain a deeper understanding of Swedes' own perspective on what allemansrätten is. Informants were common citizens, employees within the Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden, the Danish Nature Agency (Naturstyrelsen), County Administrative Boards of Sweden, Scania Landscape Foundation (Stiftelsen Skånska landskap), landowners and others working within non-profit organizations. Skype interviews, meetings, seminars and email communication were used to gain data from informants. In total 12 individuals were formally interviewed but I also had countless conversations with strangers or acquaintances I've scrambled across. Only half of them are cited in the paper. While I was working as a ranger maintaining protected areas in

Kristianstad municipality I often had the chance to discuss this matter to other rangers on our long drives between work areas. One of my close friends is a farmer and a landowner who grew up in Northern Sweden but is now a farmer in the Southern part. He's not just a landowner and a hobby farmer but also a former scout, an ergonomist and working as an advisor for The Rural Economy and Agricultural Societies (Hushållningssällskapet). Just before finishing this paper I met three Swedes on a holiday in Iceland and we had a long informative conversation about this topic while sitting in a natural pool out in Icelandic nature. That's an example of how easy it seemed to find informants. Most Swedes seemed genuinely interested in the topic.

Administrators for allemansrätten with the Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden say that there hasn't been any big changes over the years regarding the threats to allemansrätten. The same issues are dealt with now as before (Interview taken before the pandemic). The modern way of recreation is what threatens, that is tools and wheels that leave marks and the growing tourism. Stiftelsen Skånska landskap (Scanian Landscape Foundation) shared their insight on the matter, clarifying with the example that guests in their areas for outdoor recreation often disagree on their rights, depending on if they are walking or biking. They are working strategically with nudging and taking surveys to follow the changes within their protected areas. It is through this foundation I first got introduced to the concept of *nudging*. They had a talk on one of the local seminars I participated in while doing an internship with the County Administration Board in Skåne.

Quantitative material was collected mainly from governmental Statistics Sweden (Statistiska centralbyrån) and two reports on Swedish outdoor recreation habits published in 2008 and 2018, by the Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden (cooperation between Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden, Mid Sweden University (Mittuniversitetet) and SCB. ULF/SILC (Undersökningar av levnadsförhållanden/ Statistics on Income and Living Conditions).

Authors background; limitations and delimitation

After ten years of residence in Southern Sweden and six months of internship with the Administrations Board in Skåne County (Länsstyrelsen Skåne), chances are that the location

influences the outcome of this research although information from all over the country has been included to minimize the regional impact. Through this internship my access to informants, events and information got broader and easier. Before the internship I managed to capture people's interest by informing them I was a student at Lund University and that I'd been working as a ranger in Iceland. The concept of a ranger is not very known in Sweden and I've had to explain it countless of times but when I approached individuals working within protected areas it was a nice icebreaker.

While my own background as a Scandinavian citizen might be a limitation when conducting participant observation, it can also be valuable access towards an understanding of Scandinavian culture. Being able to speak Swedish and to read the Germanic Nordic languages has proved beneficial when gathering comparative material on the subject. Some limitations follow with my lack of understanding of the Finnish language when striving to gain a holistic view of the Nordic countries. The Scandinavian countries or the Nordic countries consist of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland. They are often seen to have a homogenous culture but although their history often merges, each country has its unique culture. The definition of the *allemansrätt* varies between these countries from having little to huge value on each nation's culture.

Disposition

This paper is divided into three main chapters that each represent a certain angle of allemansrätten. Those different perspectives are crucial in order to understand the basics of what purpose it serves and what meaning it has to Swedes.

First chapter gives insight into the legal framework of allemansrätten, the linguistic meaning and the challenges of translating the concept to other languages. Here the definition of the word is found and the challenges of its translation explained. Laws that are directly and indirectly connected to it and serve as the skeleton for the preservation of the concept are made clear.

Second chapter is aimed to explain the cognitive meaning of allemansrätten for Swedes. Common symbols that represent their love for nature are mentioned as well as the historical formation of the tradition.

The third chapter summarizes how the government is actively working on preserving allemansrätten and why they stress to maintain it. The framework that keeps the tradition alive is explained with examples of how it is executed.

Last follows a conclusion in which I come back to my research questions and summarize my findings.

1. Facts about allemansrätten

Linguistic uniqueness

Thomas Harold Beery (2013) emphasizes the limitations of the English language in his attempt to translate the Swedish words *friluftsliv* and *allemansrätt*. He also points out that there is no single word in English for *friluftsliv* but using the translation *nature-based outdoor recreation* is as close as the language comes to covering the concept. Even Swedes themselves are uncertain on what activities shall and shall not be included as *friluftsliv* (Beery, 2013; Fredman, Stenseke, Sandell & Mossing, 2013). This indicates a certain cultural dissonance where several cognitive interpretations can be put in one concept by individuals within the same culture. That is different perspectives on the same things. Beery furthermore points out that *allemansrätten* is another Swedish word, just like *friluftsliv*, loaded with deeper meaning than a single English word can express. The importance of accurate and highly professional translation between languages can make a crucial difference in how foreign, English speaking visitors adapt to the rules in Sweden. That's even more important when *allemansrätten* can be considered as a perception or some unwritten rule that can be hard to explain or understand without some knowledge of how to read correctly in each situation. Numerous Swedish informants have also noted how insecure and limited they feel when traveling in countries with more strict owners' rights. This will be explained more thoroughly later with examples from interviews.

Learning a language is probably the best way to get to know the core of each culture and the words *friluftsliv* and *allemansrätt* are two crucial words in understanding what it means to be Swedish. Remarkably, we humans have come up with a common understanding of a meaning put into multiple variable sounds we call language. Those group's common understanding is often used as a fundamental argument for creations of nations and functions as a glue that unites, includes and gives a sense of belongingness. So language can be a tool to both include or disclude.

In this discussion, the Swedish identity will be referred to as Swedishness. *Friluftsliv* will be referred to as outdoor recreation but *allemansrätten* will not be translated in this context due to

its complexity. Direct translation, Everyman's Right as Finland has chosen to use, does risk a false understanding of its meaning for it is not only an individual's right but also a responsibility. Translating it as the Right to Roam only covers a part of its meaning. It has also been translated as a Code of Conduct and the Public Right of Access to Nature amongst others. When it's summarized as freedom with responsibility it may seem more logical to refer to as a Code of Conduct rather than anything else to underline the importance of the individual's showing a responsible behavior toward nature as well as properties belonging to others. That responsibility is underlined by the Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden (EPAS, Naturvårdsverket) with their informative simplification "don't disturb, don't destroy" (Inte störa, inte förstöra).

While this word, *Allemansrätt*, did not exist in The Swedish Academic Dictionary as a single word until 1998, it has been used orally for more than a hundred years or since the movement of outdoor recreation started in the mid-19th century (Sténs & Sandström, 2014). This term is defined in today's dictionaries as "Everyone's right to roam or temporarily stay on others land for overnight staying, picking berries and etc., although with certain limitations."

Furthermore, this word or concept can be found in all nordic countries except for Danish. In Norwegian its *Allemansrett*, in Icelandic its *almannaréttur* and in Finnish its *jokamiehenoikeus*.

A custom, the laws and praxis

Many different theories have been formed in an attempt to find the origin of *Allemansrätten* in Sweden. In Swedish texts, the *Allemansrätt* is often described as an ancient Swedish custom, as something uniquely Swedish (Valguarnera, 2016). Same ideology can be traced elsewhere in both time and space. In ancient Roman law (449 BC) and the Bible traces of this ideology can be found that served to ensure the individual's right of access to the coastline and the right to consume what's edible for survival while traveling between places.

The *Allemansrätt* got written into law in 1994 (The Instrument of Government 1974:152), without being seemingly defined by a legal provision, when Sweden became a part of the European Union. The laws say that *everyone has the right of access to nature in accordance with Allemansrätten*. In the Environmental Code (1998:808) this right also goes on to explain

that *he who uses the public right (allemansrätt) or otherwise stays in nature must show consideration and caution in their association with it*. This is written in the Constitution where the nation's fundamental principles of democracy are protected (RF 2:15).

The concept of allemansrätten in Swedish laws is mentioned in the Constitution and twice in the Environmental Code. In the Constitution the allemansrätt is written in the same context as ownership rights where these concepts are binary, contrasting each other. Just like allemansrätten, the owners' right is not defined in detail and therefore a legal praxis is mainly based on traditions and very few cases have been brought to court. Sandström (political scientist) and Stén (historian) claim that if allemansrätten is made more precise it might have more negative than positive impacts since it risks everything outside the written code to be interpreted as forbidden and therefore it has remained unchanged (Sténs & Sandström, 2014). The American lawyer Brian Sawers confirms this in his article *The Right to Exclude from Unimproved Land in the United States* (2011). Then he (ibid: 665) writes “the Court, however, has not addressed whether this right must extend to unimproved land. In many states, the law presumes that unimproved land is open to the public until affirmatively closed by landowners.”

The public's right to roam on unimproved land in the United States was the norm until the nineteenth century (Sawers, 2011). The elastic nature of these concepts is therefore seen rather as their strength than a weakness. It should be noted that allemansrättens survival depends on the elastic owners' right and goodwill while the owners are not dependent on allemansrätten in any way. The writer, Ken Ilgunas, who wants to bring back the public right to roam in the United States, however, claims that in order to succeed with reinventing this, a detailed description by law is needed and that rights, based on custom as in Sweden would not work (Ilgunas, 2018: 199). In the Environmental Code, allemansrätten is mentioned in a context with the protection of nature. The emphasis is on the responsibility that everyone must show consideration while roaming or overnight staying. Here the short explanation by Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden (EPAS, Naturvårdsverket) “don't disturb, don't destroy” really sums it up quite well while relying on some sort of *common sense* that in fact is characterized in cultural norms or traditions that we could also sum up as Swedish habitus

Protection of property and the right of public access

Art. 15.

The property of every individual shall be so guaranteed that no one may be compelled by expropriation or other such disposition to surrender property to the public institutions or to a private subject or tolerate restriction by the public institutions of the use of land or buildings, other than where necessary to satisfy pressing public interests. A person who is compelled to surrender property by expropriation or other such disposition shall be guaranteed full compensation for his or her loss.

Compensation shall also be guaranteed to a person whose use of land or buildings is restricted by the public institutions in such a manner that ongoing land use in the affected part of the property is substantially impaired, or injury results which are significant in relation to the value of that part of the property. Compensation shall be determined according to principles laid down in law. In the case of limitations on the use of land or buildings on grounds of protection of human health or the environment, or on grounds of safety, however, the rules laid down in law apply in the matter of entitlement to compensation. Everyone shall have access to the natural environment in accordance with the right of public access, notwithstanding the above provisions. (The Swedish Constitution, chapter 2 §15)

Paragraph 13 in the Environmental Code, about shore protection areas, was originally thought to ensure people access to the shore, although today it is equally important regarding the protection of nature. The general rule is that 100 meters from the shoreline in both directions are protected although the distance can be greater.

The consideration part of allemansrätten is what sets delimitation (Sténs & Sandström, 2014) which demands ethical thinking and sometimes some knowledge about rural conditions. Interpretations are supported by laws and regulations that by their origin don't belong to allemansrätten. That is, for example, the Environmental Code (1998:808), Land Code (1970:994), Penal Code (1962:700) and other codes regarding littering, vandalism, off-road driving to name some and privacy areas in the nearby surrounding area to a residence.

The right of access to private land etc.

§ 1 Any person who exercises the right of access to private land or is in the countryside for any other reason shall treat it with due care and consideration.

Shore protection areas

§ 13 Shore protection applies by the sea, lakes and watercourses. The purpose of shore protection is to assure public access to outdoor recreation facilities and to maintain good living conditions for plant and animal species on land and in water.

The Environmental Code (1998:808), Chapter 7: Protection of areas

Sweden's neighbouring countries have similar laws and as mentioned before, this concept is also found in their language. Finland conducts the same principles as Sweden although the laws are not as clear on the matter. Icelandic and Norwegian laws are quite alike regarding this subject, which seems logical considering how big part of those countries consists of uninhabitable mountains. But despite that, the overall idea is the same and is mentioned in both countries' constitutions. The only Nordic country that does not have this concept in their laws or language is Denmark. According to my informant, that works with strategic planning of outdoor recreation in Denmark, Danes relate this concept with Sweden. And Danes have moulded their outdoor recreation policy using the good pieces from Swedish allemansrätt.

2. Swedishness and allemansrätten

Despite the lack of legalized clarification on allemansrätten, most Swedes are familiar with the concept and seem to be somewhat aware of how to interpret it although often having difficulties putting it in words. That does not only count for the public, due to its complexity, even individuals working with subjects affected by it feel uncertain if asked to define it. This is something my informant, working for the government on preserving allemansrätten, confirms. On the official website of Sweden (sweden.se) allemansrätten is claimed to be a part of national identity. It is a national symbol, a feeling, a cultural norm and rooted in the Swedish identity (Ahlström, 2008; Beery, 2013; Sténs & Sandström, 2014).

A brief analysis of texts, both in Swedish and Norwegian, indicates that allemansrätten is strongly connected to their national pride. They don't want to identify themselves with one another since it's seldom described as a unique Scandinavian or Nordic tradition when the uniqueness is underlined. This is a sign of national identification by sorting people into two groups of belongingness, we-hood (we-as-subjects) and us-hood (we-as-objects) (Eriksen, 1995). One embodiment of this can be seen when a Swede is asked to explain allemansrätten.

They might have trouble forming a meaning that defines it in an informative way for someone that does not have any knowledge of it but if direct questions are asked of what is allowed and whatnot, then the same individual is likely to answer somewhat correctly. Indicating that allemansrätten is so deeply rooted in the Swedish culture that this goes without saying and becomes more like a feeling or a cultural norm (Beery, 2013) where it plays a big role in Swedish national identity and self-image (Sténs & Sandström, 2014). Public understanding of the responsibilities and privileges of allemansrätten is the key to its successful survival (Campion & Stephenson, 2013). Therefore, continuous work towards its maintenance is crucial if the intention is to preserve this national custom.

Research by SOU (Swedish state public reports) in 1994 revealed that environmental topics were significantly concerned and that the future of the allemansrätt was the public's second biggest worry regarding the entry into the European Union. The majority continued to feel strongly about protecting this right while ongoing debates regarding entry into the EU. From the public perspective, it might supposedly threaten their privilege to freely roam in nature regardless of the owners' allowance if the landowner's ownership of nature would increase. Comparable concepts and legal terms were barely found in other European countries and mostly limited to the Nordic countries. The rapport did, however, conclude that the membership in the EU would not affect the allemansrätt in legal terms (SOU 1994:7). Sweden accessed the EU in 1995 without any compromise to the allemansrätt.

One of my informants described how he'd felt while visiting friends in Denmark and England. With his agricultural education he felt quite confident of his ability to read the landscape and being able to pass without disturbing or destroying anything for the landowners. The locals, however, felt the need to guide their foreign visitor to a marked trail to make sure not to get in trouble with the locals or the authorities. Another story I was told was from Swedes visiting France taking a forestwalk. They wanted to wander off the track into the forest in order to be a little bit more for themselves but felt insecure whether or not they were allowed to do so. A man came walking towards them shouting something in a foreign language so the Swedes ran away without speaking to the man only assuming they had trespassed on private land.

I listened to multiple stories describing the same uncomfortable experience from Swedes travelling abroad. Not once have I met a Swede that isn't familiar with the concept of allemansrätten while it varied a lot when I spoke to citizens of foreign origin.

The Nature in Music, in Hearts, in Souls

One embodiment of the importance of nature in the Swedish mentality is their national anthem that mainly embraces the natural beauty of mountains, green fields, the sun and the sky, its joy, its kindness and freedom. Although this was originally written about Scandinavia (the peninsula which covers Norway, Sweden and northern Finland) Swedes chose this as their anthem and best representative for their national pride.

*Thou ancient, thou free, thou mountainous north
Thou quiet, thou joyful [and] fair!
I greet thee, loveliest land upon earth,
Thy sun, Thy sky, Thy climes green.
Thou art thrones on memories of great olden days,
When honoured Thy name flew across the earth,
I know that Thou art and wilt remain what thou wast,
Yes, I want to live, I want to die in the North.*

-Swedish national anthem by Richard Dybeck (1844)

National anthems are bound to strengthen nationalism and bring the nation closer together. According to this, the freedom of the people and the beauty of nature are highly valued in the Swedish mentality. The American national anthem can represent the exact opposite of the Swedish one, where the emphasis is on warfare, power and strength, in *the land of the free and the home of the brave*. There they embrace the glory of rockets and bombs fitfully blowing after the red glare has busted the air as they fought the winning war towards their independence. Judging from these examples of the national anthem, the core of the national pride varies greatly.

Another nostalgic song that most Swedes are well familiar with and reached quick popularity right after it was written is *Öppna landskap* or Open Landscape from the '80 written by Ulf Lundell. It's close to many Swedes' hearts. A song about the peaceful joy of Nordic summer

days in solidarity in an open landscape near the sea, where both the mind and body can be nourished. The simplicity of enjoying listening to the sound of the wind in the trees followed by a quiet night where the stars can be seen and braiding a wreath of tree leaves while admiring old runes who were carved in a stone long time ago, describes nature close relationship Swedes have and in what way they prefer the nature to be consumed.

Other examples are the famous and greatly adored author of Swedish children's books, Astrid Lindgren, that wrote the song *Ida's summer song* (*Idas sommarvisa*) whom many of my informants mentioned to be their favorite summer song. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that more than half of Swedes' top 100 common last names in 2018 are related to nature, for example; Berg, Björk, Ek, Lind, Lund, Holm, Strand, Blom and Ström (scb, 2019)¹.

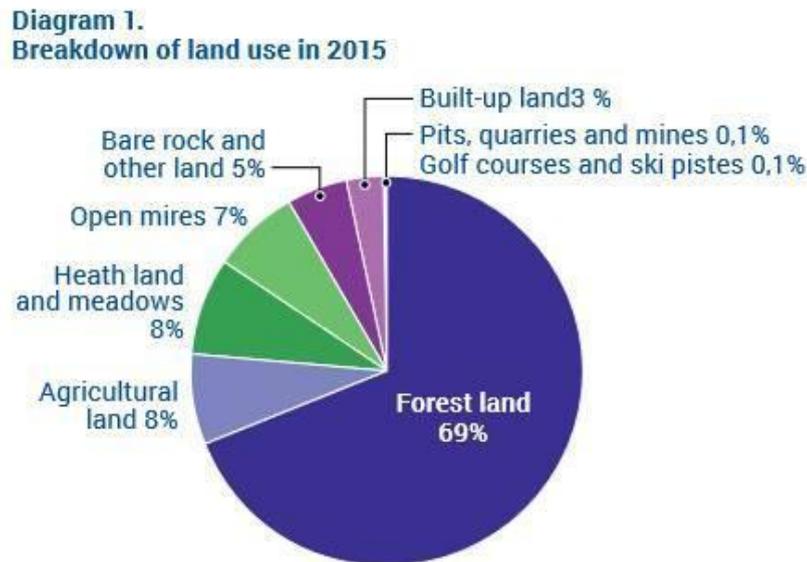
Numerous examples like those can be mentioned on how close to heart and mind nature seems to be in the souls of Swedes.

Recreational landscape

But why is this concept so strongly rooted in Sweden? As mentioned above, outdoor recreation was originally connected to status, being wealthy enough to have spare time for strolling to the mountains. With increased welfare in Europe, a greater number of rich westerners could afford the status symbol of traveling for outdoor recreation. In postmodern Sweden, individuals with higher education and higher income value the allemansrätters' existence more than others (Fredman, Ankre, & Chekalina, 2019). But socio-economic welfare is not the only logical explanation for the difference in values. The greater part of Europe's forests is a part of the vast taiga forest belt that stretches across Canada, Russia and Scandinavia. The total land area of Sweden corresponds to 41.3 million hectares, of which:

¹

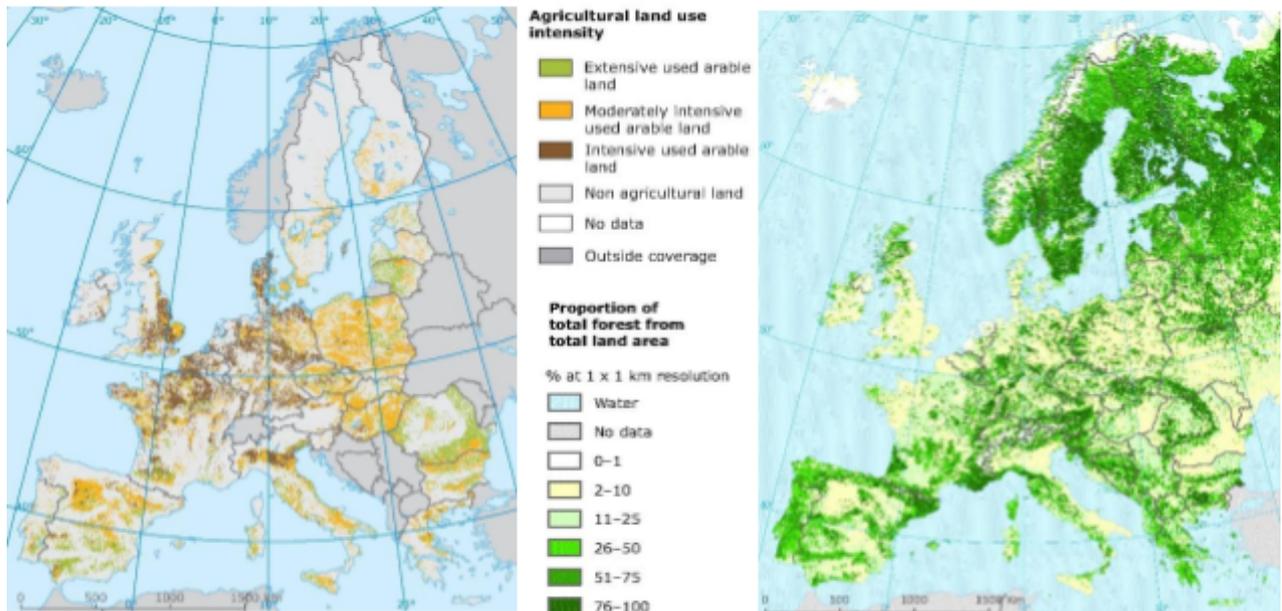
<https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/statistik-efter-amne/befolkning/amnesovergripande-statistik/namnstatistik/pong/tabell-och-diagram/samtliga-folkbokforda--efternamn-topplistor/efternamn-topp-100/>



Source: Swedish National Forest Inventory (SLU), Swedish Board of Agriculture, and Statistics Sweden

Two thirds of Swedish land area is covered with forest and adding the other categories in the table above, that offer a recreational possibility, combined is over 75% of Sweden's total land area. That gives the country some possibilities towards a sustainable recreational area where people can take advantage of allemansrätten. Comparing maps of European forests and one of population density show sharply contrasted sides of each other (Moström, 2014). The population adjusts to the landscape and the possibilities it has. When we look at the maps we see clearly how vastly Sweden differs from the rest of Europe when considering the amount of forest and agricultural landscape.

As previously mentioned, a recent report on Swede's friluftsliv (2018) shows that 85% of Swedes find it important to cherish the allemansrätten. Three statements were read up for the participants regarding allemansrätten and they asked to answer with *true* or *false* and the greater majority answered correctly, indicating that their knowledge on the subject is

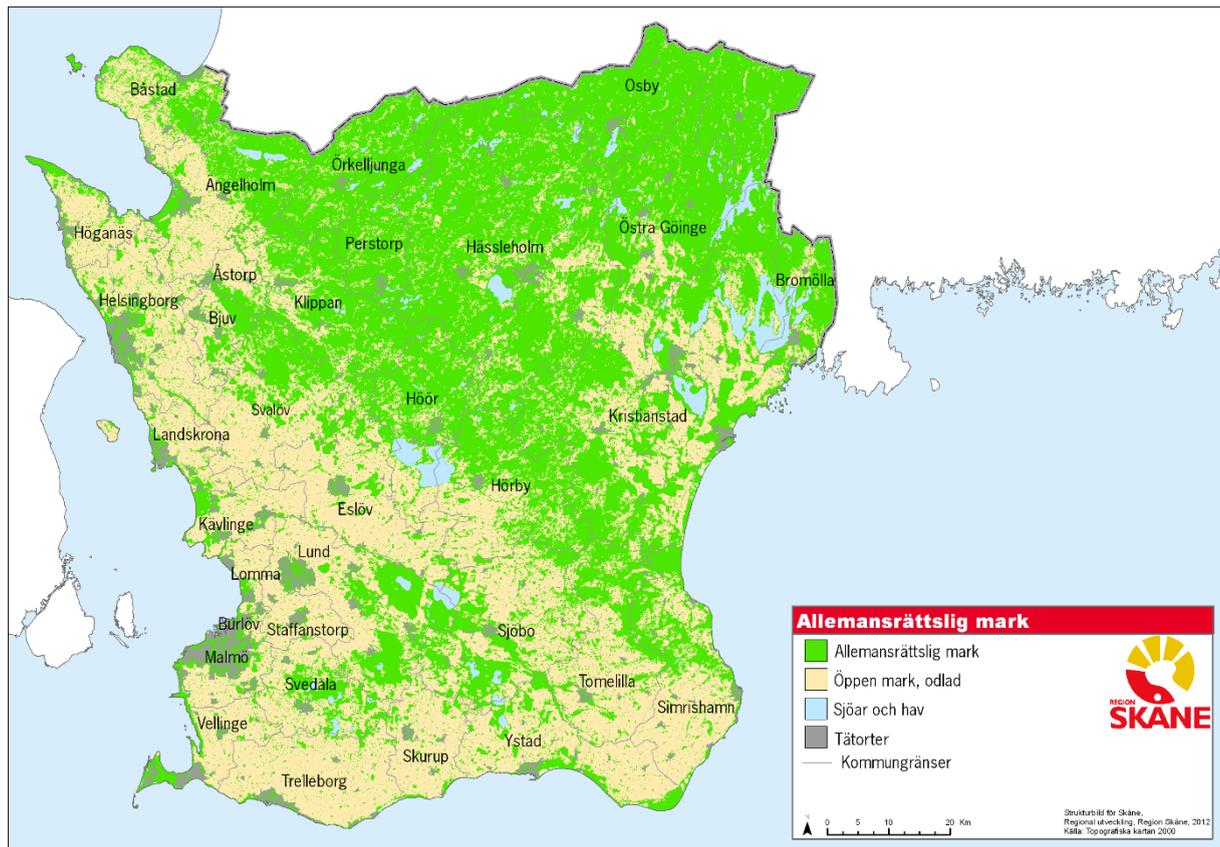


generally good. It should however not be overseen that Sweden has a growing multicultural population of ten million. In 8 years the number of Swedes with foreign background went from being 6,7% (the year 2010) to 9,1% (the year 2018) of the population. Despite the dense population, the number of citizens is growing as well as the number of tourists and the greater the mass the greater the influences are on nature, on local people and landowner's tolerance.

When furthermore examining the maps, it shows clearly that the southernmost part of Sweden, Skåne county, has different characteristics than the greater part of Sweden. Its landscape, as well as population density, has, in fact, more similarities to Denmark. This part has been a Danish state for many periods in history but has belonged to Sweden now since the mid-17th century. Today there are clear signs of Danish influences in Skåne, not only regarding the landscape but in the form of buildings and the Swedish dialect spoken in the area has been strongly influenced by the Danish language. Danes don't claim they have any allemansrätt, like the other Nordic countries do, in their contemporary Denmark although some similarities can be found in laws and regulations for public right of access to nature. Danes have never had the geographic landscape to offer such access for the public. Nearly all of Denmark's nature is impacted, just like half of Skåne country is. As the maps indicate, the area is mainly of an agricultural kind. That sort of land is sensitive for public encroachment and therefore the Danish government hasn't followed the other Nordic countries in this matter. But allemansrätten does nevertheless clearly state that the traveler needs to make sure not to be of any negative impact for the landowner. Passing a cultivated landscape is therefore not

allowed. This does not appear to have any significant problems although occasions occur (Campion & Stephenson, 2013). The Federation of Swedish Farmers (LRF) even supports allemansrätten and does not see benefits of having it more detailed codification although they stress the importance of having a dialog with the mark owners to maintain the sustainable use of allemansrätt. That clarifies that allemansrättens existence does not have any significant negative impact for the landowners if there is mutual respect and individuals strive to behave responsibly. The Danish Nature Agency (serves as both the Forest Agency and Nature Protection Agency) claim that this is a Swedish make-believe that really isn't as perfect or unique as it sounds. Danes guideline on nature access had been improved over the last decades largely using the Swedish model for reference (description from an informant via email).

According to information from the Danish Nature Agency, Danes have gradually reclaimed their public right of access (in 1917, 1937, 1969 and 1992). After the millennium, written guidelines and regulations regarding camping in Danish nature were published. The vision of expanding the public right of access is inspired by the idea of allemansrätten, but with adjustments fitting the Danish landscape. What differs in allemansrätten between the countries can be explained mainly as adjustments to various types of landscape characteristics, each area's traditional exploitation and its economic situation. The lack of mountains, forest and wild nature in Denmark is, therefore, a reasonable explanation as to why they are the only country in the North claiming they haven't preserved the tradition of allemansrätt. Despite that, Danes have many great recreational areas where all sorts of outdoor activities can be practiced.



The conditions for nature recreation or friluftsliv are different in each country. Norway has the tradition of allemansrätt and, just like Sweden, likes to own it by claiming it is a unique Norwegian tradition and national pride (Beery, 2013: 33-36). How their customs differ from Swedish allemansrätt seems like a natural adjustment to their rough landscape of steep cliffs, deep fjords, high mountains and socioeconomic situation. The owners rights in Sweden, and other Nordic countries, has historically not been as important ideologically between different social groups as in the rest of Europe (Valguarnera, 2016). The Nordic legal system is considerably more based on the Germanic than the Roman model which explains the tradition of weak owners rights in the contrast to unlimited disposal of their land as in the Roman model (Stén & Sandström, 2014). In countries, such as New Zealand, Australia or the USA, where the owners' right and laws on trespassing is strong it might seem unthinkable to establish allemansrätt (Campion & Stephenson, 2013). Ken Ilgunas traces the history of the USA and how they lost their right to roam in his book *This is Our Land: How We Lost the Right to Roam and how to Take it Back* (2018). He translates the allemansrätt to “every man’s right” (just as the Finnish do) and describes this as the most generous roaming rights in the world (Ilgunas, 2018: 92). He mentions that Heidi Gorovitz Robertson, law professor, claims

that by the time that the bourgeoisie obtained power in Sweden, land rights had already been well established, making it too late for the elite to fiddle with. That perspective harmonizes with Frykman and Lövgren's (1979) theory, that late industrialization in Sweden is the reason for why Swedes are still closer mentally to nature than many other nationalities. The explanation could also lie in the weight that's put on educating Swedes early in their upbringing, their emphasis on sustainability or the idea of Sweden being home for everyone.

The nostalgic outdoor recreation

“The mountains are calling and I must go...” wrote the enthusiastic, Scottish-American activist and naturalist John Muir in a letter to his sister in 1873. How he saw the beauty in the scenic view of nature and the way he adored being outdoors was uncommon for a well-educated western man. To him, untouched nature, especially the mountains, were his true home which he felt spoke to him and gave him the feeling of being made whole. He wanted to save people from totally surrendering to materialism and became one of the most inspirational influences towards the preservation of wilderness and establishment of National Parks in the US (Yellowstone was America's first National Park established 1872). This vision spread, leading to increased outdoor- and nature tourism and conservation of wild nature, not only in the US but too. Sweden came to be a leading example for nature conservation in Europe by establishing the first nine European National Parks 1909. The Swedish Tourist Association (Svenska Turistföreningen) was founded in 1885, the Outdoor Association (Friluftsförbundet) in 1892 and the first trade unions in 1886, which all are pieces in the puzzle of creating a platform for outdoor recreation in Sweden. Those are some of multiple symbols established to strengthen nationalism in Sweden in the beginning of the 20th century (Thurfjell, 2020: 157).

In 1919 Sweden finally made the decision (after many decades of debate) to minimize the full-time working hours to 8 a day, 6 days a week. Saturday was just an ordinary workday until 1971 and these well-deserved days off, had to be spent well and how could it possibly be better spent than outdoors in nature, far away from the industrial dirt. During the 19th century many historical events occurred that had a significant meaning for tourism and recreation in Sweden, explaining the importance of allemansrätten (Sandell & Fredman, 2010; Sandell, 1997; Sörin, 2008). All these factors contributed to giving nature a new recreational worth.

The wild nature that had been loaded with dangerous stigmas in the form of ghosts, trolls and other frightening creatures that suddenly got more aesthetic meaning. To begin with, outdoor recreation was for the rich, brave adventure seekers (Sténs & Sandström, 2014) but as the common Swede got more recreational time and the beauty of the countryside was commercialized and romanticized through artists (such as Nordic Summer Evening of Richard Berg (1858-1919)) and nostalgic view on nature grew.



Figure 2: Nordic Summer Evening by Richard Berg, 1900

Parallely with the growing urbanization and increasing interest in nature tourism at the beginning of the 20th century, the relation to nature changes. Mythical creatures who lived in nature (who people lived in harmony with) had slowly faded and were displaced with scientific explanations, un-mystifying but at the same time romanticizing the relationship with nature (Frykman & Lövgren, 1979). But the un-mystified, logical thinking created a new complication. Since people were no longer manipulated by nature's creatures, new guidelines

had to be made to help people and nature to live in harmony. At this point, the unwritten rules had to be complemented with written rules. The tension between groups with different perspectives on nature and different interests at stake called for a different sort of approach that could better serve the public interest. The new approach wasn't all that new and was filled with gaps open for its own interpretations that even today can be seen both as the strength and the weakness of what became known as *allemansrätten*.

3. Preserving allemansrätten

The Swedish government is actively working with preserving allemansrätten with its policy on outdoor recreation (Skr. 2012/13:51). The policy underlines the importance of allemansrätten as an asset for free outdoor recreation and nature tourism, both for urban and rural areas, regional development and local tourist companies. It is described as a unique constitutional- and customary-based public access to nature that must be preserved. It provides access to nature and the opportunity to enjoy what nature has to offer and must be safeguarded, and conflicts of interest prevented. The primary goals of the policy are:

Nature should be accessible to everyone.

Personal and non-profit engagement should be at the center.

Allemansrätten must be protected.

The sustainable use of nature shall be planned with regard to the needs of outdoor recreation.

The municipalities must take great responsibility for nature near the urban areas.

Outdoor recreation should contribute to rural development and regional growth.

Protected areas should be an asset for outdoor life.

Outdoor recreation should have a given role in the school's work.

Physical activity and relaxation should strengthen public health.

Decisions on outdoor recreation should be made with good knowledge.

(Regeringens skrivelse 2012/13:51. Mål för friluftslivspolitiken.)

Sustainability and inclusion seem to be the driving force in Swedish policymaking, nourishing cultural traditions, solidarity and in one way preserving the stereotypical Swedish nature lover for the sake of public health.

Numerous diverse governmental agencies share the responsibility of preserving and maintaining allemansrätten, for instance, The Public Health Agency of Sweden, The Swedish Forest Agency, The Swedish National Heritage Board, The Swedish National Agency for Education and The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management. The Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden (EPAS, Naturvårdsverket) has the main governmental responsibility of policymaking in nature-based outdoor recreation (friluftsliv).-They provide a more-detailed definition of allemansrätten that serve as national guidelines. This serves as a code of conduct guiding towards an appropriate interpretation of how to show consideration to nature and other individuals utilizing nature.

Yearly, Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden (EPAS, Naturvårdsverket) organizes an event, Tankesmedja för friluftsliv, where all stakeholders and accountable of friluftsliv are provided a platform for a dialog, exchange experiences and cooperate towards a sustainable outdoor recreation on a national basis. This also serves as a step towards the UN's 17 Sustainable Development goals (SDGs). Allemansrätten is a vital subject on these national events due to its floating definition and since it is seen as a priceless platform for all outdoor recreation as well as a key prerequisite for nature tourism.

As previously mentioned, outdoor recreation in the western world has been connected to socioeconomics, the interrelation between economics and social behavior. According to the research Friluftsliv 2007 and 2018, Swedes with foreign backgrounds experience more obstacles for them to be able to endure outdoor recreation and have less knowledge of allemansrätten. Economical hindrances and lack of equipment, as well as difficulties finding an accessible place and someone to accompany them, were some of the main reasons. This, however, might indicate that this group needs further education on allemansrätten and its privileges to minimize the socioeconomic factor. According to the Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten), mental wellbeing is decreasing and individuals with backgrounds from outside the Nordic countries suffer more. Individuals with backgrounds from outside Europe seem in general to have a different relation to nature than Swedes. Fresh

air, exercise and experiencing nature has shown to have a positive effect on public health. Nature is free and accessible for everyone thanks to allemansrätten, and lack of equipment should not be a hindrance to enjoying nature experience and its benefits.

Nonprofit Organizations and Foundation with Allemansrätt at Interest

Various nonprofit organizations and foundations are concerned and depend on allemansrättens' existence. These organizations play an extremely important role in the survival of this tradition. Metaphorically, the state is the engine, the organizations are the fuel that drives the engine producing a product beneficial for the whole nation. This fuel maintains the allemansrätt by producing informative and easily understood material on all levels.

Friluftsförbundet (their own rough translation is Outdoor Association) is a non-governmental organization that has actively been promoting outdoor recreational lifestyle in Sweden since 1892. In the fifties, they contributed with the creation of the character *Skogsmulle*, a fairy tale figure in clothes of moss and leaves that plays and sings with children while revealing nature's mystery. This character is a nostalgic childhood figure for many grownups today and represents a protective nature lover. Skogsmulle is everywhere in nature unlike the American childhood figure Yogi Bear, born in the sixties, who lives in Jellystone Park and mainly wants to steal pick-nick baskets from the park guests. Skogsmulle is friendly and helps humans to connect with and enjoy nature while Yogi Bear is more educational towards national parks and park rangers' challenges in maintaining it. Yogi is more of an anthropocentric character where the humans are trying to influence or control wild nature while Skogsmulle invites humans to join his world in the wild. The effect these primary educational figures have had on their familiarity with nature through time is one of many factors that explains the



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 6:
Skogsmulle/Mulle



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 6:



Figure SEQ Figure * ARABIC 6:
Allemansrätten

sociocultural difference in how nature is conceived. A more recently created and less known character is Allemansrättan. A small rat that is an expert on allemansrätten and how to behave in nature. Both Skogsmulle and Allemansrättan are used for educational purposes in all stages of Swedish schools. As a response to the growing digitalization, a mobile app has been created where Skogsmulle guides young children to a fantasy world and wonders of nature. These characters help to make the learning experience more positive and fun while they foster a sense of nature and encourage outdoor experience. In general, Swedes' focus on educating children is great while other role models are not considered in need of any improvement. One of my informants is actively working for Friluftsrådet on creating motivating, simple and informative material that is free and accessible for anyone that wants to visit a specific area she focused on. I spoke with her on one of the breaks on the seminar we both participated in. She had been working actively with this for years before she realized that allemansrätten does not always apply in protected areas. That knowledge motivated her even more to educate and inform about it.

Keep Sweden Tidy Foundation (Håll Sverige rent (HSR)) is a national nonprofit organization, founded in 1983 by Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, that promotes recycling and as they put it themselves "...combats litter through public awareness campaigns, awards and environmental education. The Foundation strives to influence people's attitudes and behavior to encourage sustainable development.". They inform about allemansrätten while they endeavor to educate the public about the value of unspoiled nature. For this organization, it would be logical to use the translation Code of Conduct since its goal is to teach more environmentally responsible behavior. Their Littering Rapport 2019 shows that within Swedish culture a strong social norm of not littering and that the general tolerance towards littering is very low. It furthermore shows that three out of every fourth Swede feel that littering is a problem and half of the nation feels that littering is a growing problem. In their experience, there is a connection between growing nature tourism and more littering in nature. A various perception of nature or a lack of knowledge might be the cause, but the average Swede would probably not consider their own actions to be problematic, it is indeed the others who are the problem. The growth in littering is explained to have caused by various aspects

Individuals; we and them

The traditions of friluftsliv and access to nature (allemansrätt) are firmly and deeply rooted in the Swedish identity (Beery, 2011:8).

The Swedish National Agency for Education makes sure that allemansrätten is a part of the national curriculum in Sweden and that it contributes to its code of conduct to be carried on to younger generations regardless of their background. They are however not the only one producing material to educate about it. How informative material is presented inevitably influences peoples' views on normality. Ideland and Malmberg (2014) discuss the dichotomy that operates the cogwheels on what they call *Otherness machinery*. They analyze how UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) unintentionally maintains the difference between 'Us and 'Them in their textbooks on environmental issues used in Swedish schools. The material has a double gesture of exclusion and inclusion. They emphasize how Swedishness is represented as a stereotypical ideal norm for the western world, as a pure and good civilization with high morality, while *the Other* represents chaos, dirtiness and ignorance. Furthermore, they explain how a common self-image of Swede is that 'ordinary people' are not racist and do not litter. Unappropriated behavior is often linked to foreigners. That can be seen as a reflection of how Swedes themselves feel when abroad, like in those examples mentioned previously. According to several informants, their first reaction, when someone does not behave properly according to allemansrätten, is to blame the foreigner. They see themselves as well enlightened of how to behave acceptably when out in nature and do not wish to identify themselves with the "others". This perspective could be one embodiment of the influences of the educational material from ESD textbooks.

At a national conference on outdoor recreation in Sweden held in May 2019 (*Tankesmedja för friluftsliv 2019*) a voice from one of the participants in the audience points out "The problem with allemansrätten is not us who are here, we know this bit pretty well. The problem is that THEY don't know it". (Problemet är inte vi som är här, vi kan den ganska bra den biten. Problemet är DE, som inte kan den.). Seemingly, the attending participants, who are "we" in this context, are well informed and do not need to reflect on their own behavior. Who these "others" are, who are the problem, is not clarified but it is clear that "we" should not identify ourselves with them. It seems like "we" are already so well behaved that there is no need for

further reflection on how things can be done better. This was said as the last comment after LRF had spoken, where the emphasis was on communication and showing mutual respect saying, “if there is mutual respect it doesn’t matter if we think alike” (har man respekt för varandra behöver vi inte tycka likadant). The subject was not discussed further, neither was anything on the program an echo of this perspective. Although this doesn’t seem to be openly discussed, it is seemingly an underlying opinion for some and therefore an issue worth raising. While it might be obvious for the experts who work with questions related to allemansrätten or outdoor recreation that they as individuals are not causing any harm they might not always be as aware of how they can be detected or observed by their surroundings. Even though they themselves understand what needs to be considered they must be aware that proper and correct behavior is often learned by watching others and therefore they automatically (no matter if they choose to or not) become representative for desired responsible behavior. At the previously mentioned conference with over 300 participants whose work field is related to outdoor recreation in various ways, most had difficulties sticking to simple rules as to not bringing drinks to the conference room as was politely suggested with a note on the entrance door and an image of a cup of coffee with a red line over (like a traffic sign). The conference participants continued bringing drinks to the room until a servant was made to stand in front of the entrance door after a break and kindly ask each and everyone to leave their cups outside the conference room. So even experts bend simple rules or consciously ignore them when it fits them, so what is it then that makes it so crystal clear that we are not the problem, but they are? This also demonstrates that signs do not replace human interaction when informing about desired behavior.

Research done in 2007 on Swedes’ recreational habits shows that whether an individual has a non-Nordic background (or their parents) doesn’t seem to have any impact on how important or unimportant individuals found the allemansrätt to be (Sandell & Fredman, 2010: 300). The research was repeated in 2018 (although with some improvements) that it showed that respondents with non-European background did not have as good knowledge of allemansrätten as individuals from within Europe but in general the statistics of knowledge not change significantly between these years although decreasing a bit (Fredman, Ankre & Chekalina, 2019). When seeking answers to why the focus went from identifying Swedes and the Nordic countries versus all other nationalities to being European versus citizens of other

continents there didn't seem to be much thought put into it or at least I wasn't given any straight answers. That does nevertheless indicate that Swedes find it more important to identify themselves with Europe than with Nordic countries.

Paradoxically to the image of the modern civilized Swede being an educated nature lover and the ideal role model to the rest of the world, educational material might also imply that 'Others' are 'uncivilized' and thereby closer to nature and need to be saved (Ideland & Malmberg, 2014). The phrase "we know better" is used as an indicator that Sweden is better than Asian and African countries who live in a dirty environment while "we" are so delicately recycling and cleaning our water. Swedish qualities, like being organized, clean, helpful and moral, are hard to oppose but ESD textbooks (with all the best intentions) create a stronger sense of belongingness (we-hood) but simultaneously also widen the gap between 'Us' and 'Them'. That is in the binary contrast represented by chaos, dirt, helplessness and un-modernity that drives the cogwheels of the 'Otherness machine' (Ideland & Malmberg, 2014). If this sort of goodwill nutrition of Otherness is the fact in educational material in Sweden it might not surprise that Swedes focus on educating children and immigrants of allemansrätten as well as other proper ethical behavior related to nature. Thomas Hylland Eriksen, a Norwegian anthropologist, describes this as a reverse fridge that leaves all outside it in the cold while warming the inside (Eriksen, 2004). That is when we are bringing the group closer together by keeping it warm on the inside, and by decreasing the sense of belongingness within, it automatically freezes the outside, distancing "us" from "them". We are not them, wet is not dry, warm is not cold and so on we humans tend to categorize everything in binary contrasts. In order to define something, we must find the opposite of what it isn't.

The report Friluftsliv 2018 strengthens this assumption by noting that people who were born outside Europe (or had parents who were born outside Europe) had less knowledge on the allemansrätten compared to those born within Europe, clarifying a target group who needs more attention. In these 8 years, the number of Swedes with foreign background went from being 6,7% (the year 2010) to 9,1% (the year 2018) of the population (scb²). Growing multiculturalism in Sweden changes the stereotypical idea of a Swede and might weaken the common knowledge of the allemansrätt if the new Swedes are not informed of it. This is also

² http://www.statistikdatabasen.scb.se/pxweb/sv/ssd/START_BE_BE0101_BE0101G/BefUtvKon1749/

the group that seemingly knows less about allemansrätten, which may be the reason why they do not find it as important to preserve. Why should anyone care to preserve something they are unfamiliar with?

Yusra Moshtat (2008) reports on how to increase immigrants' interest in environment and nature for relaxation and recreation, and to furthermore develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and nature in both rural and global contexts. She emphasizes that people with Swedish backgrounds tend to take their relation to nature for granted and therefore work actively to empower immigrants towards environmentally responsible behavior and the benefits of nature not only for their own health and general wellbeing but also for benefits on a global scale. This indicated a dissonant cultural heritage where various groups contribute with a different perspective on objects or landscapes. How the responsibility on the global benefits is underlined indicates ethical importance on solidarity for the sake of all human race regardless of ethnicity or citizenship. Educating new Swedes on outdoor recreation and how fresh air, nature experience and exercise does everyone good is essential for them to migrate to Swedish culture (Moshtat, 2008). It is positive for them as individuals as well as citizens of the country.

It should nevertheless be noted that a part of the tension and cultural misunderstanding can be explained with the way nature is consumed. Åke Daun describes how natural it is to a Swede to enjoy the solitude in nature (Daun, 1998: 76-79). Others might connect solitude in nature with danger but that doesn't seem to be the case for Swedes. According to Daun this importance of being alone has to do with their sense of independence. This peace and quiet is important for them to feel independent and free to be completely themselves. Therefore, sharing nature with many individuals who consume nature as a meetingplace to party in may be hard for the Swede.

Nudging, Place Attachment and Environmentally Responsible Behavior

Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden (EPAS, Naturvårdsverket) (2014) published a rapport on how the concept of nudging, a concept from behavioral science, can be a tool to encourage people towards better decision making, that are beneficial both for each individual

and the society in general. In the report is a table (Mont, Lehner & Heiskanen, 2014: 16-17) describing two systems of human thinking. In system one, where humans are thinking fast and intuitive, reactions are automatic, unconscious and effortless relying on stereotypes. With this rapport, EPAS is providing a national guideline to assist professionals, first and foremost, but also individuals towards good decision making towards sustainability and welfare. Nudging is a libertarian paternalistic method for making it easy for individuals to do right, both for themselves and their community. Libertarians, because individuals have a freedom of choice and are not forced to do anything with nudging, and paternalism because it will steer them towards their own welfare (Mont, Lehner & Heiskanen, 2014: 31). When remembering that we, human individuals are a herd of mammals and that we naturally and unconsciously act according to it, it becomes easier to understand how a conscious *nudging* can have a big domino effect. Nudging is what parents do when gently steer their offspring towards their own best without telling them directly what to do. To obtain a strong, healthy nation governmental experts can adopt this theory in action in various ways.

Study shows that place attachment increases environmentally responsible behavior (Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Russell, o.a., 2013) and nudging can be a tool in achieving that. This seems to have provoked the responsible nature lover that the stereotypical Swedes are often seen as (Frykman & Lövgren, 1979). Place attachment is achieved by involving the citizens in decision making and encouraging them to get to know the area they will develop attachment towards. The most common form of place attachment is the feeling of being homesick. John Muir (as mentioned before) was feeling some sort of homesickness when he felt drawn to the mountains, he bonded with nature and felt he belonged there. He felt nature had to be preserved and contributed towards the future protection of it. He wrote, “And into the forest I go, to lose myself and find my soul”. To simplify, visualize yourself moving into a house. When you receive the key, you know a thing or two about the property, at least enough to have made the decision of making it your home. After spending some time there, you start to notice some cracks in the painting or stains on the floor that you hadn’t noticed before and maybe you decide to fix it, do an extreme makeover that fits your character or maybe you just hide it or maybe you don’t do anything at all because this is your home characteristics. A home is not just a place of residence but can rather be described as a sense for a place where one can identify with, feels attached to and depends on.

Sténs and Sandström (2014) note that when the greater part of Swedes realized that the Swedish landscape was a national treasure, people felt proud and wanted to be a part of it by experiencing it (Sténs & Sandström, 2014). Increasing awareness of nature- and environmental problems, both at a global level and individual level, where benefits in the form of health and happiness are raised, are reached with evolving and including all inhabitants (Russell, o.a., 2013; Moström, 2014). This is one embodiment of how environmentally responsible behavior is evoked, by involving the citizens and fostering them to experience and respect nature. As previously mentioned, it is crucial to educate immigrants of this highly important contact to nature for their possibilities to adjust and immigrate to their new country of residence to help them migrate and to feel they are equally good as other Swedes (Moshtat, 2008).

The government has assembled Outdoor recreation goals (friluftsmålen) that serve to increase social welfare by making nature and outdoor recreation accessible and inclusive for everyone. This serves as a tool for local communities and municipalities to further develop a flourishing environment for their inhabitants. Involvement affects connectedness and a sense of belonging. In connection to nature, it will inspire or nudge towards environmentally responsible behavior for one's own well being as well as for harmony with nature and society. Nudging makes it easier to behave according to allemansrätten and it holds hands with the idea of encouraging more environmentally responsible behavior.

Individuals' background can be relevant in this context as confirmed in Rapport 6642 from Naturvårdsverket when they describe social norms (Mont, Lehner & Heiskanen, 2014: 29-30). These social norms are divided into prewritten rules and descriptive norms. The former one is steering towards indicated moralities (what to do and what not to do), while the latter one is learning norms of how to do things, learned through observations of others in their surroundings.

Conclusion

Even though allemansrätten isn't exclusively Swedish, the fact that it's protected by the Swedish Constitution is unique and underlines the importance of it. The allemansrätt elastic nature gives the inhabitants a freedom with responsibility because of Sweden's soft

governance. Swedish allemansrätt isn't a unique phenomenon (Sténs & Sandström, 2014) but in praxis it is, because other countries don't have this right guarded as strongly in their constitution. However, the privilege and responsibilities that it includes can hardly be considered as unique and the way Swedes want to own it says more about how strongly they feel about it than the actual truth of its origin. This civilian responsibility, parallelly with education and propaganda, provokes a general environmental responsible behavior amongst the common Swede. It can however be asserted that it is thanks to the rooted solidarity and generosity in Swedes mindset that allemansrätten has developed into this symbol of Swedishness. The uniqueness is, for most parts, cognitive.

Translating cultures is a complex and challenging task. The distinguishes of each language are characterized by the nature and habits of the individuals speaking the language and that also forms the culture. Defining culture as a mutual understanding within a group of individuals of how to interpret things. The concept of allemansrätten symbolizes the Swedish (and Nordic) need for having the freedom to enjoy nature and having the possibilities for outdoor recreation. It also reflects that where the Swedish language is spoken, the recreational landscape can be found, and therefore friluftsliv and allemansrätten can be conducted. Sweden is rich in a landscape that offers a possibility for outdoor recreation and they have established a sustainable way to help it's inhabitants to benefit from it.

In comparison with Denmark, it is notable that even though Sweden is privileged with a greater variety of landscapes, it is nevertheless possible to establish a good system towards suitable public access to nature. The southernmost part of Sweden consists to a large extent of a landscape with the same characteristics as Denmark but allemansrätten applies there just as it does in the rest of Sweden. The main difference between these countries lies in the embodiment of language development. Language development adjusts to the needs of those speaking it. It also adjusts to the conditions in each area, explaining the complex uniqueness of each language and dialects. Due to the Danish geographical and political landscape, it has not had the need for creating a single word like allemansrätt to describe nature recreational acts. Norwegian and Finns however have needs that are more similar to Swedes and therefore their regulations for public access to nature are more alike. Allemansrätten is not something that Swedes were given but rather a tradition that has developed and adjusted to a more modern lifestyle.

It should not be overlooked that while exotifying ‘others’ by separating ‘Us’ from ‘Them’ creates a gap between groups but it also brings the individuals within the group closer together.

Study shows that place attachment increases environmentally responsible behavior (Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Russell, o.a., 2013). Allemansrätten makes it possible for everyone to enjoy various outdoor recreation that makes people care for the area and therefore encourages environmentally responsible behavior. The Environmental Protection Agency of Sweden simplification, “don’t disturb, don’t destroy” (Inte störa, inte förstöra), sums it all up quite well. When reflecting on all the interviews and spontaneous conversations I’ve had and listened to, I see that all they had in common was that in the end its all about respect. Respect for people, properties and nature.

The national anthem strengthens the sense of pride for nature. While many other anthems focus on warfareas as their strength that provokes the nationalist independence for each nation, it is the peace and harmony of nature that brings Swedes together. Beautiful, peaceful and unspoiled nature is therefore what symbolizes Swedishness core and what they will defend and stand for.

In a press release from the County Administration Board of Skåne in December 2020 it is noted that the access to nature has become even more important than before for Swedish citizens. The number of visitors to most outdoor recreation areas has increased. One of many consequences of the pandemic is that individuals are increasingly taking advantage of the easily accessible nature for recreation. The Swedish Outdoor Association also mentions how nature increasingly served as a safe harbour for individuals when the pandemic seemed to threaten everything else in our daily life. Year 2021 is celebrated as The Year of Outdoor Recreation (Friluftslivets år). This event had been in preparation before the pandemic but turned out to have even more significant meaning for the society during these times. Stressing that the access to nature isn't just important for Swedes but for human kind.

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