**Tales of uniqueness**

Value creation in rural tourism development

Kronen, Manuela

2018

[Link to publication](#)

Total number of authors:
1

# Tales of uniqueness

## Value creation in rural tourism development

MANUELA KRONEN | DEP. OF SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND
SERVICE STUDIES | LUND UNIVERSITY

Tales of uniqueness
Value creation in rural tourism development

# Tales of uniqueness

## Value creation in rural tourism development

Manuela Kronen

| Organization | Document name |
|---|---|
| LUND UNIVERSITY | DOCTORAL DISSERTATION |
| Department of Service Management and Service Studies | Date of issue 27th April 2018 |
| Author(s): Manuela Kronen | Sponsoring organization |

Title and subtitle: Tales of uniqueness - Value creation in rural tourism development

Abstract:

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse value creation in a rural tourism development project. In order to analyse value creation, I investigate how participants of a rural tourism development project define and understand uniqueness of that particular rural area as a lever to developing a touristic offer. The empirical research question guiding this work is: How do participants of a rural tourism development project apply ideas about uniqueness of the rural area as a means to develop a touristic offer? I interpret the participants' ideas of uniqueness with theoretical notions of authenticity - object related, experience related, and host related authenticity - as my analytical tool. I define that different notions of authenticity are embraced by the wider notion of valuation proposition. Valuation propositions are propositions about a potential value of a tangible or intangible object; and it is people who make valuation propositions with a specific purpose in mind. The analytical research question of this dissertation is: How can value creation in a rural tourism development project be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions? This dissertation contributes to the literature on authenticity in tourism studies by viewing the different notions of authenticity as different and compatible expressions of value. I do not pose the question whether a touristic offer is essentially authentic, but I address how different notions of authenticity together are activated for assigning value to a touristic offer. This study also highlights the process of value creation in a project for rural tourism development, offering insights into the opportunities and challenges that arise when authenticity is activated for the purpose of rural tourism development.

| Key words: value creation, rural tourism development, authenticity, uniqueness, LEADER-method | | |
|---|---|---|
| Classification system and/or index terms (if any) | | |
| Supplementary bibliographical information | Language: English | |
| | | |
| ISSN and key title | ISBN: 978-91-7753-612-3 (print) ISBN: 978-91-7753-613-0 (pdf) | |
| Recipient's notes | Number of pages: 166 | Price |
| | Security classification | |

I, the undersigned, being the copyright owner of the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation, hereby grant to all reference sources permission to publish and disseminate the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation.

Signature *Manuela Kronen*          Lund, 9th March 2018

# Tales of uniqueness

## Value creation in rural tourism development

Manuela Kronen

**LUND**
UNIVERSITY

# Contents

# Acknowledgements

Writing a doctoral dissertation involves the thoughts and help of many. I want to say thank you to…

… Fredrik Nilsson for guiding my writing process with care, patience and persistence.

… Johan Hultman and Hervé Corvellec for detailed reading and commenting of my text.

… Jan Henrik Nilsson for encouraging the progress of the dissertation with both feet on the ground.

… Malin Zillinger for structured readings and putting things into the right order.

… Michael Hall and Erika Andersson Cederholm for reading and discussing my dissertation at several turning points in my research.

… Johan Alvehus for making me think freshly on the meaning of social constructivism.

… Su Mi Dahlgaard-Park for genuine interest as a teacher and colleague.

… Christer Eldh for insightful support while being the head of department.

… Gunilla Steen and Jerker Jacobsson for your kind attendance regarding administrative questions whenever needed.

… my doctoral colleagues for companionship and inspiration, mentioning in particular Ida de Wit Sandström and our reading sessions, Ida Wingren and our lively discussions, Emma Samsioe for your sharing and loyalty, Alma Raissova for giving courage and cooking *a lot!*, Tomas Nilsson for pointing out new perspectives.

# Introduction

My head rests heavily in my left palm while my eyes brush line after line. I am a detective on mysteries concerning rural tourism. "Gräsö is an ideal island for cycling: a unique historic landscape with pristine outer islets and lush broadleaf forests" (Visit Uppland, 2013: 44), I read in the brochure in front of me. I close the magazine, grab the next one, and start to turn the pages. And here it is again, as in the many brochures before: "This attractive rural area possesses unique natural surroundings and cultural heritage sites. Its features include the sea, forest, farmland and many interesting villages" (Jordbruksverket, 2010: 114). And I wonder: Why would somebody associate uniqueness with something so common as the sea, the forest, farmland and villages?

I gaze over the documents on my desk. All of them deal with rural tourism in Sweden. There are tourism brochures from rural areas, project plans on rural development projects and national strategy documents for rural development. The plans stem from initiatives at places all over Sweden. I scan through document by document, and the longer I stay in that peculiar activity, the more I get the impression of a recurring topic in the texts. Basically, every spot described, embracing places all over Sweden, seems to hold plenty of unique values of nature and cultural interest. These unique values are supposed to motivate a visit to these areas. But what exactly is considered unique and how is uniqueness used in the purpose of rural tourism development?

A couple of months later, further investigations start. Once again, I sit at my desk a late evening. Now it is summer. My mind has caught the attention of a project for rural tourism development called Silenceville. The initiative is located in Scania, southern Sweden, and according to the final report of the project, it has "identified the unique cultural values" (Silenceville, 2013: 1). Attracting visitors to the area has been one of the goals of the project. Ten biking trails have been created in order to fulfil that ambition. I need to find out more about the Silenceville project and how the participants went about in identifying the unique cultural values. Maybe this can help me to understand what is supposed to be unique and how uniqueness can be used for rural tourism development.

That summer I am a biking detective researcher with a tent. My tour leads on tarmac and gravel, past historic sites such as earth cellars, past flowery heaths, cows, sheep, alpaca and wild animals such as kites and storks. Of course, the tour not at least leads into the homes of people who open-heartedly share their stories about the work with the biking tours. Indeed, the meetings with the people on site offer pieces to solving the jigsaw on uniqueness for value creation in rural tourism development; and suddenly I realise it has happened. I find myself saying that the area I have been discovering will always be special to me. Actually, I had so much fun, saw all the cute animals, ate spontaneously nettle soup for dinner, and enjoyed gorgeous sunsets, the silence, the trees, and the bird-songs; I even got to know the bus driver by name. Stepping into the role of a tourist while doing the research, I must have stepped into my own trap, starting to tell about uniqueness, without being aware. Yet, how are these tales of uniqueness told so that they will contribute to rural tourism development? Solving the myth of uniqueness must continue, now with a pile of empirical material to my support.

# Rural tourism development, value creation and uniqueness

This dissertation deals with the issue of value creation in the field of rural tourism development. I view value creation as a creative act of assigning value to something (see Dewey, 1939; Vatin, 2013). More specifically, in the context of rural tourism development, I define value creation as carried by people who collaborate for tourism development in rural areas (see e.g. Verbole, 2000; Verbole & Cottrell, 2002; McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011; Sims, 2009). These people who collaborate realise value creation through the process of creating the touristic offer. I view the notion of the touristic offer as an umbrella term for the outcome of the rural tourism development project, which can be used and experienced by visitors. The empirical focus of this dissertation rests on how uniqueness is employed to build value into a touristic offer in a LEADER-project for rural tourism development.

LEADER-projects are part of the rural development politics in the institutional context of the European Union. Since the 1990's the European Union has acknowledged functional and demographic changes on the countryside of member states as an issue to be addressed. In order to stimulate economic diversity and to enhance the quality of life in rural areas, a variety of funds have been introduced. Funding through LEADER is one of the incentives. In the last

completed period of the European Commission's rural development programme, 2007-2013, the LEADER-approach was named the LEADER-method. LEADER-projects under this multi-stakeholder method are carried out in partnership between public, private, and non-governmental stakeholders. LEADER is the acronym for the French expression "Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de L'Economie Rurale", meaning "Links between the rural economy and development actions" (European Commission, 2016).

In light of a changing countryside, the LEADER-method applies to rural tourism development in Sweden. The Swedish rural development programme (*Landsbygdsprogrammet*) sets the framework for the implementation of the LEADER-method. The rural development programme prescribes that several LEADER-areas should be formed in each of Sweden's regional administrative districts (*län*). The sub-regional LEADER-areas are called Local Action Groups. The Local Action Groups formulate strategies; bottom-up initiatives can apply to these administrative boards for LEADER-project funding. Most of the Swedish Local Action Groups' strategies and many of the subsequent LEADER-projects deal with elements of tourism. A report from the Swedish Board of Agriculture indicates that almost the entire Swedish territory is connected to the LEADER-method and that the category of projects with the largest proportion are projects focused on rural *tourism* development (Jordbruksverket, 2012). Towards the end of 2011, which means in the middle of the programme period of 2007-2013, more than 250 projects, which account for about 29% of the projects, were connected to tourism (Jordbruksverket, 2012: 51).

In the Swedish context of LEADER-funding the feature of uniqueness for rural tourism development catches the eye. A brochure published by the Swedish Board of Agriculture describes the 63 Swedish LEADER-areas that were subject to the programme period 2007-2013. A search in the brochure for the terms "unique"/"uniqueness" displays 18 counts in the Swedish version of the brochure. One significant example of a description of LEADER-areas is the goal aimed at by the LEADER-method in rural tourism development: "enhancing the unique values of the natural and cultural landscape, which is the primary resource for the local visiting industry" (Jordbruksverket, 2010: 114). In this quote it is claimed that the LEADER-method is geared for value creation; and uniqueness is highlighted as a particular resource towards this value creation in rural tourism development. Starting off from this observation we can ask how value creation by rural tourism takes place and how uniqueness becomes a driver for this value creation.

# Community based value creation for rural tourism development

Previous research on rural tourism development highlights the issue of value creation as a community-based process. The literature shows two aspects of community-based value creation. The first aspect is economic value creation; the second aspect is social value creation. In the economic aspect, value creation is expressed in terms of increased income and work opportunities (see Wilson et al., 2001; Sharpley, 2002; Joppe et al., 2014). The aspect of social value creation is connected to synergy effects and quality of life (e.g. Partalidou & Koutsou, 2012; Hwang et al., 2012; Moscardo, 2014). In order to arrive at any of these two aspects of value creation the need for participation of community members is emphasised.

Participation of community members is stressed as a success factor for community-based value creation in rural tourism development. However, research also underlines that difficulties arise in the attempt to establish a balance in participation. Reid et al. (2000) pinpoint that community members voiced the need to be heard to a greater extent in rural tourism development processes. The authors state that coordination requires appropriate tools such as tourism development plans. They also call for an increased dialogue between stakeholders that includes community members as a bridge toward planning and consequently coordination of development activities. Verbole (2000) emphasises community participation as essential to rural tourism development. The author cautions that a community is not one coherent entity but a conglomerate of stakeholders who enter the development process based on their individual perspectives and goals. Verbole's observation of heterogeneous communities is reinforced in Verbole and Cottrell (2002). In particular, Verbole and Cottrell (2002) find that a small group of stakeholders may have major influence over decisions taken, despite vast community involvement.

Synthesising contributions of Reid et al. (2000), Verbole (2000) and Verbole and Cottrell (2002), it can be concluded that participatory and community based rural tourism development has a potential to add value to the community. The rural tourism development process, however, is also said to encounter the challenge to involve a large variety of stakeholders. Previous research has attempted to resolve some of the participatory issues and to facilitate community based value creation in rural tourism development by set frameworks. One such framework is the framework of integrated rural tourism, which is introduced in the following section.

## Integrated rural tourism for value creation

Research on rural tourism development has stressed the importance of community participation for value creation on the countryside. For the conduct and analysis of participatory rural tourism development action, frameworks have been constructed (e.g. MacDonald and Joliffe, 2003; Koster & Lemelin, 2009; Zou et al., 2014). In the institutional context of the European Union one framework is particularly relevant regarding community based value creation in rural tourism, which is called integrated rural tourism. The literature on integrated rural tourism is closely connected to a research project called SPRITE, which was also funded by the European Commission. SPRITE is the abbreviation for "Supporting and Promoting Integrated Tourism in Europe's Lagging Rural Regions" (Ilbery et al., 2007: 442). As the title implies, research covering the outcome of the project focuses on areas' comparably lower economic competitiveness in the socio-political context of the European Union. Research on integrated rural tourism was carried out in the United Kingdom and addresses issues such as the breaking up of borders, networking among tourist stakeholders, and local governance.

This SPRITE related body of literature defines integrated rural tourism as based on local features. Oliver and Jenkins (2003) propose that integrated rural tourism "can be defined as tourism that is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human structures of the landscape in which it takes place" (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003: 296). It is further stated, "it is tourism that has clear connections with local resources, products and inhabitants" (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003: 296). The notion of integrated rural tourism is related to seven dimensions of integration, namely (1) networks, (2) scale, (3) endogeneity, (4) sustainability, (5) embeddedness, (6) complementarity, and (7) empowerment (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003; Clark & Chabrel, 2007). The framework of integrated rural tourism with its seven elements is supposed to define value creation in rural tourism development.

Research organised under the paradigm of integrated rural tourism approaches value creation by means of concepts included in these seven dimensions. For instance, Clark and Chabrel (2007) conduct a measurement of what the authors call "integration value". Building on the seven dimensions of integration it is compared how stakeholders rate the tourism integration between 1992 and 2002. From the comparison they draw conclusions on increased value in quantitative terms. In another study, Bousset et al. (2007) focus on the significance of collaboration between stakeholders for integrated tourism. They find that collaborative negotiation may facilitate stakeholder organised joint endeavour. They conclude that the effects of integrated rural tourism are not foreseeable at its outset, since the results of an integrated development process are dependent on

how the community is being engaged - and in fact does engage - in the processes. Cawley and Gillmore (2008) focus on core stakeholders, which they term "resource controllers". In a qualitative study with focus on western Ireland the authors investigate these core stakeholders' perspectives on value added or value reduced in tourism between 1992 and 2002. They claim that the integrated approach is appropriate to mend shortcomings on sustainability. Ilbery and Saxena's (2011) cross-border study in the English-Welsh border region builds on the concept of integrated rural tourism. Their investigation focuses on how policy-makers deal with strategic, administrative, and personal tasks. Other applications of the integrated rural tourism framework are provided by Panyik et al. (2011) who confirm the significance of the integrated framework for national tourism in Hungary, particularly highlighting the aspect of sustainability. Saarinen and Lenao (2014) note that the integrated rural tourism framework might be applied to a greater extent in other geographical contexts than the European context.

In short, all the research contributions in the framework of integrated rural tourism relate value creation to the seven categories that the framework imposes. That also means that studies connected to integrated rural tourism use these seven categories as core assumptions and thus conduct field studies to confirm and refine the seven dimensions of the paradigm. Processes of integration, which may not fit into any of the chosen categories, will then be obscured by this approach. In addition, the research based on the integrated framework does not realise the potential of fieldwork that engages in the processes of rural tourism development at the research site. More specifically, the research contributions do not mirror research strategies that would gain insights in the projects while they were at work. In this dissertation I will adopt an ethnographic fieldwork strategy. While the empirical context of my dissertation is similar to the empirical context of the studies in the integrated framework, I start by participating in an event and letting contributors to the rural tourism development project lead me further in the fieldwork. In other words, the fieldwork that I conducted unfolded as I had already started to generate material. The evolving fieldwork strategy enabled me to gain an insight into the processes on site in a close-up view.


## Networks for value creation

Studies in integrated rural tourism provide examples of how networks add value in projects of rural tourism development (e.g. Cawley et al., 2007), however, they also point towards challenges to reach value creation efficiently (e.g. Kneafsey et al., 2010). These studies on networking ranging in the integrated approach (e.g. Cawley et al., 2007; Petrou et al., 2007; Saxena & Ilbery, 2008; Kneafsey et al.,

2010; Ilbery & Saxena, 2009), once again, do not attempt to involve closely in the processes on site. In research beyond the integrated rural tourism framework value creation in networks is highlighted in a variety of approaches. In the following section I will present some contributions on networking that do and that do not follow the integrated rural tourism framework. I chose these contributions to highlight a recurring topic in rural tourism development literature on networking: the question whether networks bring economic and social benefits to its members. In this section on networking[1] for value creation I want to highlight two issues: the issue of integrating levels in networking and the issue of economic versus social benefits of networking.

In a comparative case study on two LEADER-projects, one in an Irish and one in a French region, Cawley et al. (2007) conclude that new governance structures facilitate networking coordination of promotional action. However, the authors identify shortcomings in anchoring the new structures. The authors state that a diversity of emerging developing actions may bring forth a heterogeneous development patchwork, with a variety of stakeholders and project goals working in parallel. In a network approach Saxena and Ilbery (2008) examine the significance of businesses and resource controllers for integrated rural tourism. Resource controllers are defined as stakeholders who "exert ownership, management, or service provision control on many natural and cultural resources for tourism" (Saxena & Ilbery, 2008: 235). A lack of coherence between the stakeholders is argued to exist and the grand picture of the area is found to occur in mismatch with individual perceptions. Kneafsey highlights that it is not always easy to engage local stakeholders: "Initial speculations suggest that the craft sector would be highly suited to a cultural economy trajectory. Yet interviews with producers revealed some of the complexities of attempting to use regional images or identities in creating and marketing their work" (Kneafsey et al., 2010: 306). Kneafsey et al. (2010) conclude that it is challenging for networks to develop both vertically and horizontally; meaning difficult to achieve embeddedness and

---

[1] In rural tourism development literature, networks are described in great variety. Tinsley and Lynch (2001: 368) use classification by distinguishing "structural", "categorical", and "personal" social relations in networks. They name "exchange networks", "communication networks", and "social [normative] networks" according to major operational issues (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001: 368-369). Ilbery and Saxena (2009: 2250-2252) use a social division between "friend-focused network", "kite network", and "cloud network". Tolstad (2014: 113) highlights qualitative network features, such as "weak and strong ties" and "sparse and dense networks". The variety of characteristics describing networks is large. Common for the network approach is the assumption that a connection between units of investigation brings benefits to the participating units. Also, networking in tourism development is sometimes conceptualized together with governance approaches (e.g. Beaumont & Dredge, 2010) or tourism clusters (e.g. Moric, 2013).

disembeddedness. They also mention that the enterprises that were part of the study cannot survive by selling their goods primarily locally.

There is also positive light on networks: "Networks enable actors to access information, search for, obtain and share resources, engage in cooperative actions for mutual benefit, develop collective vision, diffuse ideas and mobilize resources with a view to attracting visitors" (Saxena et al., 2007: 354). Petrou et al. (2007) analyse the significance of informal and formal networks for value creation in integrated rural tourism. The authors underline the importance of social relations in networks as a trigger for competitiveness. Petrou et al. (2007) highlight that networking follows trajectories, meaning that the development of a network depends on what has been before and who is participating under what circumstances. One main problem is the issue of time invested by the businesses. Petrou et al. (2007: 432) quote a respondent who says that in order to produce brochures they do not need to invest time in a project; producing brochures is something they can do on their own. There need to be some more benefits in networking. The authors state: "[t]ime rather than money is the unit of currency in these informal cost-benefit analyses on whether to network" (Petrou et al., 2007: 432). It is further emphasised that the sustainable tourism dimension is achieved as development activities engage resources in several key activities. Petrou et al. (2007) conclude that tourism should not become a substitute to agriculture, but a complement. A call for supporting formal networks and developing informal networks to become more organised is directed at policy makers. Ilbery and Saxena (2009: 2250-2252) illustrate the benefits of different types of tourism networks, namely the "friend", "kite", and "cloud network". Each of the types of networks has demonstrated a capacity to facilitate the construction and promotion of tourism offers. They state that a best practice approach would combine the strengths of all three network-types.

In a study on networking in Gudbrandsdalen, Norway, Tolstad (2014) finds that networking created value in two respects, the economic and the social. The author reasons: "Through joint marketing, all firms receive more value for their money than they would if they had to handle their own marketing individually" (Tolstad, 2014: 118). Thus, "networking is friendship and fellowship, which provide safety if one member's business fails as well as the comfort of access to like-minded people with whom to discuss ideas" (Tolstad, 2014: 118). The contribution by Tolstad reiterates this tandem of economic and social benefits of community based rural tourism development. Nogueira and Pinho (2015) pinpoint the variety of values prompted by networking. The authors find that rural tourism development enhances economic opportunities to care for

environmental aspects, as well as provides ground for the development of social and cultural features in the touristic offer.

Summarizing the main conclusions of these contributions, I find that two streams of value creation, which were mentioned in the earlier section on community-based value creation - the economic and social value created - surface once again. That means, concluding from studies on networking, value creation in rural tourism development is emphasised as taking place in the dynamics between economic gain and social gain, which are supposed to go hand in hand. In this dissertation I focus on the social gains of networking; in particular how the social aspect of networking supports value creation in the touristic offer. In the next sections I present studies on sustainable rural tourism development that deal with the dynamics between economic and social gains.

## Sustainablility for value creation

Literature on sustainable rural tourism development treats sustainable development connected to frameworks of sustainable development, including institutional frameworks. This literature discusses finding a balance between frameworks and community involvement. The issue of balance is discussed in different national contexts (e.g. Unwin, 1996; Augustyn, 1998; Hall, 1998; Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012; Amir et al., 2015). The study of McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) shares the institutional context of this dissertation carried under the LEADER-framework. McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) contemplate on sustainable rural tourism development by means of investigating a LEADER-project in Great Britain. They propose that the directions of the LEADER-method need to match the institutional structures at the sites of implementation. Otherwise, as explained by McAreavey and McDonagh, implementation of the LEADER goals of sustainable rural development is not feasible. In particular, the authors point out that conflict is inevitable as "different groups value different aspects of sustainable tourism" (McAreavey & McDonagh, 2011: 189). More precisely, they find enterprises to be more conscious about the economic dimension of sustainability, while non-profit organizations were more aware of the social and environmental dimensions. In their study, McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) recognise that sustainable rural tourism development may be a means towards value creation for a local community. The construction of value, yet, is accompanied by creating value from a perspective towards a certain purpose. From this follows that sustainable rural tourism development is connected to embedded processes. The value created for one group of stakeholders does not necessarily imply value created for a group with a different approach to

the process. The statement that different people and groups have differing interests in a process of rural tourism development is central to this dissertation. In the next section on local resources for value creation I will highlight the tension between these differing interests through the example of local resources for value creation.

## Local resources for value creation

Sustainable rural tourism development literature also pays close attention to local circumstances, highlighting sustainable rural tourism development by means of local resources. I identify contributions that address local resources as static and contributions that suggest local resources as dynamic. Local resources are addressed as static by Oliver and Jenkins (2003). Again, relating to integrated rural tourism, Oliver and Jenkins (2003: 296) propose integrated rural tourism "can be defined as tourism that is explicitly linked to the economic, social, cultural, natural and human structures of the landscape in which it takes place". Further, "it is tourism that has clear connections with local resources, products and inhabitants" (Oliver & Jenkins, 2003: 296). The authors cast light on features of the area that are proposed as being the core of sustainable rural tourism development. They also state that integrated rural tourism thrives thanks to the availability of local resources. The latter statement suggests that the local resource is readily available for integrated rural tourism to develop upon. Similarly, Hall (2004: 173) points towards "natural, cultural and economic resources to provide the basis for tourism organised and sustained through locally owned small enterprises as a vehicle for integrated rural development". In this citation Hall offers a connection between "resources", "sustainability", and "local". By mentioning these three aspects side by side, a connection between local resources and sustainability is established in the context of rural tourism development. The connection between resources and (sustainable) tourism suggests resources as assets to tourism. These assets, in turn, pose a demand on sustainable tourism development. The examples provided illustrate a connection established between local resources as an asset and sustainable rural tourism development. Concluding from the summary of Oliver and Jenkins (2003) as well as Hall (2004), the local resource is in these research contributions regarded as an asset that is readily available in order to create value in a sustainable manner. Still, getting back to McAreavey and McDonagh (2011), how these resources may be employed for the purpose of rural tourism development may be difficult to agree upon in a community. Presupposing a static perspective on the resource, the resources may

be commonly defined, but different parties will most probably have different opinions about what development trajectory to choose.

There are also contributions addressing the local resource as dynamic. Garrod et al. (2006) call for re-conceptualising the rural resource as "countryside capital". The authors intend to stress the need for a dynamic view on territorial features - that is a dynamic view on the resource - as a way forward for rural tourism development that could be sustainable. George et al. (2009) express that cultural capital is a driver for overall sustainable rural tourism development. The authors claim that cultural capital is one way of relating to local assets that can be used for rural tourism development. In their dynamic view on resources, Garrod et al. (2006) and George et al. (2009) raise the question on how to use the resource - or capital, as they express it - in a context where access is limited and needs maintenance.

The issue of maintenance is exemplified by Sharpley (2007). Sharpley investigates how a local resource is applied in the dynamic sense to the end of sustainable rural tourism development. Sharpley follows the development of Alnwick Garden in England. Sharpley finds the Alnwick Garden to be an example of successful implementation of a flagship attraction to the end of sustainable rural tourism development. The flagship attraction value was created in terms of drastically increasing visitor numbers and strengthening territorial identity. The flagship attraction can be viewed as a constructed resource for rural tourism development. Remaining in the view of the local resources as dynamic, Sims (2009) has added one feature that leads closer to the core of this dissertation, the notion of authenticity. I will elaborate on Sims' contribution in the next section.


## Authenticity for value creation

Sims (2009) investigates the potential of local food as a means to sustainable rural tourism development. Sims (2009: 322) claims "developing a thriving 'local' food industry can generate the kind of all-round benefits for hosts and guests that are sought as part of the drive to promote Integrated Rural Tourism". Sims connects the local resource, being food, to the overall approach of integrated rural tourism. In Sims' approach, local food is supposed to provide an authentic offer. Sims' study indicates that sustainable rural tourism development by food tourism can be achieved, as food acts as a mediator between the community and the tourists. Further, the sustainability image of local food is suggested to propel tourists' identities of the sustainable consumer. Sims' research focuses on authentic food experiences for sustainable rural tourism development as a dynamic resource for

rural tourism development. Sims' study goes as far as to address authenticity as a value-creating asset in rural tourism development.

In a study on rural tourism on the Danish island Bornholm, Prince (2017) investigates craft-art as a broker for the value of authenticity in the tourist experience. The island of Bornholm is a summer destination with local crafters exposing and selling their work during the tourist season. Prince highlights that the meetings between the provider and the customer are regarded as creating value. The meetings are experienced as positive by the providers when customers return. The author concludes that the value of the craft-art sold is enhanced by the crafters experiencing themselves as authentic in the meetings with their customers, as they are representing an authentic Bornholm and authentic local products. In summary, Prince's study brings up rural tourism development relating to local products being craft-art. These products are sold in a context that relates to the value of authenticity in the touristic offer. Both Sims (2009) and Prince (2017) connect rural tourism development with reflections on the value of authenticity in the touristic offer. In this dissertation I will apply notions of authenticity to analyse value creation in a touristic offer of a rural tourism development project.

# Uniqueness for value creation

I started this chapter with a short story on discovering the phenomenon of uniqueness. I voiced the observation that value creation in rural tourism development projects encompasses the phenomenon of uniqueness. In the literature review on value creation in rural tourism development, I highlighted that value creation is viewed as a community-based process that contains economic and social benefits, and pinpointed that previous research deals with frameworks for rural tourism development that would enhance these economic and social gains. In particular, I have introduced the framework of integrated rural tourism development that consists of seven dimensions.

A framework, such as the one of integrated rural tourism, can offer a clear normative ground for rural tourism development projects. At the same time, the framework of integrated rural tourism limits the opportunities for understanding value creation processes on the preconditions of the project setting and its stakeholders. In the literature review I have further developed on two tools to value creation in rural tourism development, being networks and sustainability. Earlier research connected to networks stresses the significance of the interplay between the economic and social aspects of community-based value creation.

Previous research on sustainability and value creation in rural tourism development partly deals with institutional frameworks for sustainable development, partly with the literature that focuses on local resources as an asset for sustainable rural tourism development, and thereby value creation.

Despite many contributions on community-based value creation in rural tourism development, there are few examples in the literature that highlight in detail how the value creation process is taking place while the project is at work. The contributions of Sharpley (2007), who describes how a flagship attraction increases the number of visitors to a particular region in England, and of Sims (2009), who examines local food as a means to create a value of authenticity, may be the most close-on contributions. Indeed, Sims' study directs attention to value creation through the local resource by introducing the notion of authenticity into her study, and she highlights authenticity as a feature to value creation in rural tourism development. In a later study, Prince (2017) investigates how craft-art, sold on the Danish island Bornholm, promotes the value of authenticity in the touristic offer. Sims (2009) and Prince (2017) engage the notion of authenticity and offer an analysis on rural tourism development by means of local resources, namely food and craft-art. The question how notions of authenticity are employed as a driver for value creation in a community-based rural tourism development project remains unanswered, which leads us to the aim of the study.

## Aim of the study

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse value creation in a rural tourism development project. In order to analyse value creation, I investigate how participants of a rural tourism development project define and understand uniqueness of that particular rural area as a lever to developing a touristic offer. The empirical research question guiding this work is: How do participants of a rural tourism development project apply ideas about the uniqueness of the rural area as a means to develop a touristic offer? I interpret the participants' ideas of uniqueness with theoretical notions of authenticity - object related, experience related, and host related authenticity. I define that different notions of authenticity are embraced by the wider notion of valuation proposition. Valuation propositions are propositions about a potential value of a tangible or intangible object; and it is people who make valuation propositions with a specific purpose in mind (Dewey, 1939). That means the analytical research question can be formulated as: How can value creation in a rural tourism development project be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions?

My study contributes to the literature on authenticity in tourism studies by viewing the different notions of authenticity as different and compatible expressions of value. I do not pose the question whether a touristic offer is essentially authentic, but I address how to use notions of authenticity together for explaining how value is created in a touristic offer. Also this study highlights the process of value creation in a project for rural tourism development, offering insights into the opportunities and challenges that arise when authenticity is activated for the purpose of rural tourism development.

# Disposition of the text

The remaining chapters of this book encompass, firstly, the foundations of this work, secondly, the results from the analysis and, thirdly, the conclusions. The foundations of this work are provided in chapters 2 to 4. Chapter 2 presents the concept of authenticity and the most deep going discussions on the issue of authenticity in tourism studies. The chapter highlights researchers' discussions about how notions of authenticity are related to the value of a touristic offer. In chapter 3 I introduce how I engage the notion of authenticity in order to analyse value creation in the rural tourism development project that I investigate. The concept of valuation propositions is central in this respect. Chapter 4 then explains the research design and fieldwork strategy. In order to generate material that can explain how value creation is taking place I apply a case study research design and an ethnographically oriented research strategy. This chapter concludes with a description of the analytical processes, which generated the findings.

The chapters 5 to 9 present the results of the analysis in five analysis chapters. The succession of the chapters illustrates the process of value creation in the touristic offer. The first analysis chapter deals with valuation propositions on uniqueness. Three groups of valuation propositions are pointed out, namely intrinsic values, reverse values, and complementary values. In the second analysis chapter I present positions from which valuation propositions are made in the project. The third analysis chapter treats the selection of valuation propositions until the fixation of valuation propositions into the touristic offer. In the fourth analysis chapter I analyse how the touristic offer is promoted. In the final and fifth analysis chapter I highlight how the host community performs in the touristic offer and thereby adds value to the touristic offer. In chapter 10 the findings from chapters 5 to 9 are summarised in a concluding discussion.

*Chapter 2*

# Authenticity for value creation in the touristic offer

The research issue of authenticity has been prominently and vividly discussed in tourism studies since the 1960s. In the early 1960s Daniel Boorstin published a critique on the tourism of his time. Boorstin (1961) was critical of, what he called, "pseudo-events". Boorstin's criticism was directed towards touristic experiences that he regarded as detached from their geographical and cultural context. Boorstin's statement provoked a moral discussion on the ethical conduct of tourism and provided an early contribution on the possible value of authenticity for tourism. A decade later, in 1973, Dean MacCannell introduced a stepping-stone in the discussions on authenticity in tourism studies. MacCannell researched how providers of touristic offers arranged spaces in which tourists could experience personal aspects of the people and sites visited. These arranged spaces, however, were not in fact the private spaces of the providers, but spaces that should invoke an impression of personal contact to the visitor. MacCannell's analysis of artificial personal spaces gave rise to the term "staged authenticity" (Timm Knudsen & Waade, 2010: xv, 10).

Since the contributions of Boorstin and MacCannell the issue of authenticity has been constantly reflected upon in tourism studies. In conceptual contributions the notion of authenticity has been described as emergent authenticity (Cohen, 1988), constructed authenticity (Bruner, 1994), existential authenticity (Wang, 1999), and performed authenticity (Stephensson Shaffer, 2004), among others. As the examples illustrate, the contributions on authenticity are manifold. Timm Knudsen and Waade (2010: 10-12) have summarized these various understandings of authenticity under the headlines of "object-related authenticity", "subjective authenticity", and "performative authenticity". The object related authenticity contains notions of authenticity that are directed towards the toured object. The subjective authenticity is related to the individual who goes on a tour. The performative character of authenticity relates to post-

modern perspectives that direct intention to features being created in a process, assuming there is no constant reality.

The literature review on authenticity that is contained in this chapter is geared to lay a ground for an analysis on value creation in the touristic offer. In the analysis I focus on the provider perspective of authenticity. For the purpose of my research I divided the literature on authenticity into three main approaches: object related, experience related, and host related authenticity. All three approaches deal with the question of value creation in the touristic offer. The object related approach addresses qualities that are inherent in the toured object or phenomenon, which create value for the tourist while visiting. The experience related approach asks what experiences the visitor gains in relation to a tour, which create value for her or him. The host related approach deals with host performances that create an experience of value for the tourist. With this chapter I build the foundations for the chapter that follows, in which I will join the notions of object related, experience related, and host related authenticity for value creation in valuation propositions.

# Object related authenticity

Object related authenticity pays attention to qualities of the toured object or phenomenon. Particularly in the early literature on authenticity scholars discuss the significance of originality of the object or phenomenon visited. Boorstin (1961) critiques non-authentic experiences as he claims that the visitor is being tricked by false offers. His view on authenticity rises from an essentialist perspective of the real, original, and authentic in a toured object. MacCannell is another early scholar discussing authenticity in the object related dimension. MacCannell (1973) argues for a front-stage and back-stage dichotomy[2]. MacCannell, however, elaborates that in tourism, as it is practiced, tourists are eager to discover back-stages. As a response to this desire, he argues, tourism providers start creating artificial back-stages for tourists. MacCannell (1973) presents a scale of six different stages ranging between the extremes of front- and back-stage. This is where the notion "staged authenticity" derives from, which has prompted debates on the value of authenticity in the touristic experience. Boorstin and MacCannell both assume an essentialist value in authenticity of an object or phenomenon, even though drawing different conclusions from the observation of

---

[2] MacCannell's (1973) argument is based on Goffman ([1959]1990) who argues that people are acting on two stages, one that is visible for the general public and one that is kept private.

originality and artificiality. While Boorstin concludes in a polemic against the trends of offering non-authentic experiences, MacCannell reasons that tourists are searching for authenticity in the back-stages of a staged tourist performance.

The division of object related authenticity into original versus artificial has triggered a comprehensive discussion in tourism studies. Scholars have questioned the existence of object related authenticity in terms of intrinsic values, and also the possibility to deal with an essentialist notion of authenticity empirically. The position that there is nothing essentially authentic is also the position that I adopt in this dissertation. I still argue that the notion of object related authenticity in the constructivist sense is useful from an analytical point of view. Reisinger and Steiner (2006) have provided a profound critique of the object related approach to authenticity. In the next section I present a discussion of object related authenticity starting with Reisinger and Steiner.

## Criticism of object related authenticity

Reisinger and Steiner (2006) have, as mentioned above, questioned the relevance of object related authenticity. The authors identify shortcomings in the conceptualization of object related authenticity in the essentialist sense. In Reisinger and Steiner's argument, it is not meaningful to investigate object related authenticity as a value for attracting visitors. Belhassen and Caton (2006) meet Reisinger and Steiner (2006) with counter arguments. First, they resist the opinion that tourism studies are a discipline (Belhassen & Caton, 2006). Instead, they explore that tourism studies are a "multidisciplinary social research discourse" (Belhassen & Caton, 2006: 854). Accordingly, it would be inappropriate to request a coherent concept of authenticity. Belhassen and Caton are indeed positive about the different meanings attached to the concept of authenticity, as they regard the diversity as an opportunity for discussions. In the end, the authors propose that as long as tourists care about something such as object authenticity it is relevant to tourism research. Lau (2010) adds to the defence of object related authenticity. He departs from the claim that object related authenticity may apply to tourist objects that may be of material and immaterial character. According to Lau essentialist object related authenticity becomes an inherent quality of the material or immaterial elements. The issue that the authors address circles around the question if authenticity can be viewed as a fixed value inherent in specific touristic offers. Where some do not accept the idea of an inherent value of authenticity in theory, others underline the empirical evidence of the value of the object.

Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) offers one recent example on visitors actively searching for the value of object related authenticity in a study on volunteer tourism in Thailand. The author explains why international volunteers spend their holidays working abroad. He identifies the main reason to be volunteers' desire to experience the Thai culture. In other words, travellers do voluntary work in order to experience the target culture in an object authentic way. From this finding Kontogeorgopoulos concludes that the notion of object related authenticity is central to volunteer tourists. The study by Kontogeorgopoulos, thus, confirms Belhassen and Caton's (2006) argument that the notion of object related authenticity is not outdated from the perspective of the visitors. In this dissertation I adopt the position that the notion of object related authenticity is a part in understanding the value created in a touristic offer. I will now introduce positions on object related authenticity that adopt a constructivist perspective.

## Constructed authenticity

Among the scholars who address object related authenticity there are authors who build on a constructivist ontology. Among these scholars we find Cohen (1988), Bruner (1994), and Olsen (2002). Cohen (1988) proposes that the authenticity of an object or phenomenon is socially constructed. Accordingly, the social connotation of authenticity, and thereby the touristic offer's value, is not given, but "negotiable" (Cohen, 1988: 374). Cohen (1988: 379) draws attention to the observation that understandings of authenticity are changing through time: they are "emerging". From the statement that authenticity is negotiated and emergent he suggests that the process of evolution of constructed authenticity should be the focus of investigation in tourism research.

The argument of Bruner is built on an ethnographic study in New Salem. In Bruner's (1994: 401) words: "My aim is to understand the different meanings of authenticity as employed in social practice rather than to accept at face value the usually unexamined dichotomy between what is and what is not authentic". Similar to Cohen's (1988) understanding of authenticity as emerging, Bruner (1994) rejects the idea that one practice or object would be more authentic than another. In the example of New Salem, Bruner observed visitors' and actors' enjoyment to shift frameworks between references to past centuries and present times. The alternation and jumps in themselves seem to be part of the tourist experience. Bruner illustrates this speculation at the example of him meeting a woman in 17th-century clothing. The woman is talking about her loneliness in the new country. The actress is performing the past, still, Bruner observes: "Then she looked me straight in the eye and winked, and I could not tell if it was a 1620s

wink or a 1990s wink" (1994: 410). What Bruner describes and what leads further to his conclusions is the impossibility of determining to what extent something is authentic in an objective way. In Bruner's view it is more important how interpretations of authenticity evolve in a context, and the distinction between the original and the copy becomes irrelevant. Bruner does not explain the value that arises from authenticity being related to an essentially authentic village. Instead the value arises from the results of being negotiated as authentic representation. I share this view on object related authenticity with Bruner, which underlines the importance of object related authenticity while not assuming anything essentially authentic.

Olsen (2002) addresses object related authenticity including intangible objects. Here, Olsen argues for the importance of the context. In Olsen's reading the intangible objects are mainly conceptualized in terms of the visitor experience and part of the tourist experience. But Olsen reasons that the experience of the intangible is taking place in a material and social context. That is why he finds that the object related authenticity maintains relevance even though the touristic offer might remain intangible. In Olsen's view it is not sufficient to explain the experience of authenticity by investigating the visitor experience alone. While Cohen (1988) and Bruner (1994) highlight object related authenticity to the toured object, Olsen (2002) emphasises that object related authenticity may apply to the material context in which an intangible touristic offer is embedded. In other words, the constructed authenticity value of an intangible tourist offer is related to its material context. This is the point of departure towards object related authenticity of this dissertation. The significance of the touristic experience in relation to authenticity is explained in the next sections.


# Experience related authenticity

Some scholars argue that object related authenticity has not decreased in relevance as a source of value, whereas other voices propose that this is exactly the case. In the experience related approach to authenticity the experience of the visitor is claimed as being the reason for visitors coming to a place. Ning Wang (1999: 358-361) is one of those who promote the idea that the value of authenticity is best understood by the notion of "existential authenticity". In Wang's view the origin and quality of the toured object in an essentialist sense is not what matters. Instead, what matters is the touristic experience. It is the visitor in question who by means of his sensations and interpretations has an experience of an authentic self and thereby experiences the value of authenticity. Wang distinguishes between

two general types of existential authenticity - "intra-personal authenticity" and "inter-personal authenticity". "Intra-personal authenticity" is related to a single person's "bodily feelings" or "self-making" (Wang, 1999: 361-363). The "inter-personal authenticity" is achieved through "family ties" and "touristic communities" (Wang, 1999: 364). The major difference between the two types is that intra-personal authenticity is achieved in an internal engagement and monologue of one single person, while inter-personal authenticity is accomplished through an external engagement and dialogue with others. Wang provides ground for understanding value creation through the feature of authenticity as dependent on the visitor rather than on the toured object. Wearing et al. (2016: 162) referred to the phenomenon of existential authenticity as "the tourist epiphany". In the following sections I introduce some of the research that applies to an experience related approach to authenticity. The next two sections deal firstly with travelling to non-fictional places, and secondly with travelling to fictional places.

## Travelling to non-fictional places

Stephenson Shaffer (2004) offers an example of existential authenticity surfacing in a touristic experience of non-fictional places. In a study on the performance of backpacking she argues that backpackers create and perform their individual rites of passage to adulthood. The author leads the argument by means of her own embodied experience as a backpacker. Stephenson Shaffer (2004: 156) underlines the performed nature of authenticity by highlighting the backpacker's endeavour "between the 'ideal' expectation and the 'real' experience of backpacking to create a personal, possibly postmodern, and arguably authentic, 'rite of passage'". In the article, authenticity being conceptualized as performance, Stephenson Shaffer accounts for her internal experiences. In intra-personal authenticity, relating to herself, she is choosing her tracks, backpacking in Europe. In inter-personal authenticity, relating to others, she is being taught by other backpackers to execute the performance of backpacking correctly. The experience shaped internally and in interaction with others eventually creates the accomplishment of an authentic rite of passage. Accordingly, the value of authentic backpacking is created by means of her experience as an individual and as part of a collective.

In another study on existential authenticity, Yu Wang (2007) adds to Ning Wang's (1999) understanding of existential authenticity by relating to the location. Yu Wang (2007) addresses that Ning Wang's contribution on existential authenticity leaves undiscussed how the search of the self for authentic experiences is related to the environment. In the fieldwork Wang encounters the disparity between the hosts' version of authenticity and that of the tourists. Wang (2007:

797) comments that tourists seek the "'perfect otherness' that comfortably and precisely suits their desires and measures of comfort". In other words, the search for authenticity and the experience of authenticity is situated in a convincing object related authenticity, which should not be authentic in a way that impacts the standard of living. According to Wang (2007), value creation in experience related authenticity might be understood as the customization and individualization of the physical site. Similarly, Paulauskaite et al. (2017) highlight experience related authenticity at the example of Air BnB customers. Air BnB customers choose to book their accommodation in the private home of locals at their travel destination. Paulauskaite et al. do not discuss to what extent the accommodation adapts to the wishes of the visitors. However, according to the authors, travellers stress the value of experience related authenticity of the Air BnB.

Belhassen, Caton and Stewart (2008) also discuss the connection between the site and the visitor experience. As a response to approaches that strongly connect existential authenticity of self-searching, Belhassen et al. (2008: 672) reintroduce the question of place and develop the notion of theoplacity. They claim that these three aspects of "place", "belief", and "action" are necessary in order to understand "self", which is one of the pillars to understanding authenticity (Belhassen et al., 2008: 669). With importance of the place demonstrated in an empirical study on Christian pilgrims, the authors conclude that the object related authenticity of the place is relevant for the existential experience of the traveller. The framework of theoplacity is suggested as an integrative conceptual tool that combines the elements of place, belief, action, and self. These elements are interconnected and interdependent. Together they produce a complex notion of authenticity that embraces object related and experience related components.

In summary, in contributions on experience based authenticity that connect to existing places, Stephenson Shaffer (2004) has underlined travelling as a mission of self-searching in otherness while Wang (2007) claims that otherness is desired, provided it is not restricting comfort. Further, Belhassen et al. (2008) find aspects of place relevant in the mission of self-searching as highlighted. All these contributors agree that experience related authenticity is a base for shaping value for those who travel. I adopt the view that experiences can promote the value of authenticity in a touristic offer. In this dissertation I investigate experience related authenticity both in relation to hosts acting as potential visitors and visitors themselves. While this section has dealt with experience related authenticity connected to what might be called non-fictional places, the next section presents literature that engages this approach in relation to fictional places.

### Travelling to fictional places

The experience related approach to authenticity also surfaces in research that investigates fictional sites. Kim and Jamal (2007) examine in what sense the Texas Renaissance festival offers authentic experiences. The authors find that the setting of the festival is entirely staged. Nevertheless, visitors seem to enjoy the festival because they can experience personal freedom in the setting. The example of the festival illustrates that a fictional setting may provide for an experience of an authentic self. In other words, following Kim and Jamal, a staged setting is fit to convey the value of experience related authenticity. Similarly, at the example of the Robin Hood festival, Everett and Parakoottathil (2018) report that festival participants experience harmony and togetherness in the staged setting. In a case study using the Lord of the Rings, Buchmann, Moore, and Fisher (2010) lead the argument that tourist experiences are evoked in a combination of the physical site, the people at the site and the individual sensual experience (Buchmann el al., 2010). The authors' analysis is based on the notion of existential authenticity combined with postmodern perspectives. The authors conclude that even though "Middle-earth" is far from authentic in the objectivist sense, visitors still refer to an authentic experience. Buchmann et al. (2010) show that this is due to the group dynamics in which authentification takes place in the interaction of the visitors. Similarly, Kim and Jamal's (2007) conclusions on the Texas Renaissance festival, the research of Buchmann et al. (2010) stresses that the setting for an authentic experience may be completely staged yet experienced as authentic due to the setting. In this work I illuminate the fictional setting in the context of a staged event at a museum. While these sections have introduced the experience related approach to authenticity, the next section is dedicated to the host related approach to authenticity.

# Host related authenticity

While the object related and experience related approaches to authenticity mainly deal with the visitor experience, the host related approach pays attention to the host performance. Steiner and Reisinger (2006: 310) mention the notion of "host authenticity" and consider implications of tourism on host communities' experience of "existential authenticity". The authors argue that "[h]omogenization and standardization leave little room for individuality and mandate conformity, so it is unlikely that mass tourism is going to be conducive to authenticity among hosts" (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006: 310). On the other

hand, the authors reason that "pseudo-events for tourists can, in fact, be expressions of host authenticity in deciding how to present themselves to others" (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006: 310). An interesting aspect, thus, is how the notion of experience related authenticity could be applied to host communities, in order to illuminate processes of staging and commodification. This means that a value in authenticity may extend experience related authenticity of the visitor and is facilitated by the experience of the host in their performance as hosts. In this study I will investigate host performances at the example of guided tours. In the following sections I present host related authenticity in connection with the topics of performed places and commodification.


## Performed places

As mentioned previously, in the early writings on authenticity, MacCannell (1973) argues that tourists have started to see through staged performances on front-stages. MacCannell (1973) argues that visitors more and more search for authenticity in back-stage experiences originally not meant for tourists. He notes that hosts may establish a front-stage and a back-stage in order to satisfy the visitors' interest in experiencing back-stages. Regarding authenticity in relation to staged performances, Payne Daniel (1996) examines dance performances from different parts of the world. By acknowledging the embodied character of the dance performance, Payne Daniel (1996: 794) concludes that "both performers and tourists are often able to experience authenticity bodily and thereby, simultaneously express authenticity and creativity". In the example, the author illustrates that a staged performance can successfully prompt existential authenticity for both visitors and hosts. The value of authenticity conveyed is based on the hosts performing a dance and inviting visitors to participate.

The connection between place and authenticity in a study on Scottish whisky tourism is investigated by Spracklen (2011). The author concludes that visitors relate authenticity of the experience of Scottish whisky to the place. The place is characterised by "heather, highland kilts, clan tartans, bagpipes, haggis and mountains. There is no other Scotland, no place that offers more authenticity, which we can experience" (Spracklen, 2011: 113). Spracklen describes the endeavour of the enterprise's management critically: On one hand, the distillery is staffed by locals and branded towards purity; on the other hand, the business is run by global principals of capitalism. Also investigating whisky tourism, Overend (2012) contributes with insights on performed authenticity in guided tours at Scottish whisky distilleries. The author describes places as changing related to the performed tours at the site. The two studies on Scottish whisky tourism both

describe this segment as staged. The value of authenticity is explained as being prompted through the staged and performed setting. According to Spracklen (2011) and Overend (2012), visitors find the value of authenticity in these performances.

Daugstad and Kirchengast (2013) use the notion of authenticity and in particular the related notion of pseudo-backstage in a study on farm tourism. The empirical focus rests on mountain summer farms, one in Norway and one in Austria. It is investigated how farmers deal with the task of being both farmers and tourism providers. The authors observe that the participants had their main focus on the farm business, while farm tourism was regarded as a complement. Pseudo-backstages were provided as certain parts of the farm were used to make the visitors feel treated as positive exceptions. The hosts, however, controlled the entrance to these exceptional spaces. In this example, according to Daugstad and Kirchengast (2013), the host related performance of authenticity of specialness creates value for the visitor in the touristic offer.

These studies on host performances by Payne Daniel (1996), Spracklen (2011), Overend (2012) and Daugstad and Kirchengast (2013) explain that staging in the sense of artificial backstages may create the value of authenticity. The research contributions indicate that visitors enjoy these staged performances. In other words, the value of authenticity may be promoted by a staged performance of a particular place. I will return to the issue of host performances in the analysis of guided tours in Silenceville.

## Commodification

In the context of staged authenticity, researchers have discussed the question of commodification, considering the impact of commodification on the host community. Cohen (1988) defines commodification as a "process by which things (and activities) come to be evaluated primarily in terms of their exchange value, in a context of trade thereby becoming goods (and services); developed exchange systems in which the exchange value of things (and activities) is stated in terms of prices from a market" (Cohen, 1988: 380). According to Cohen, commodification is the outcome of cultural features being offered in a market place. Cohen then asks for the consequences of commodification in relation to other values besides economic value, while admitting that the consequences not necessarily need to be negative. In the literature on authenticity and commodification, which I will present now, arguments for the benefits and consequences of commodification can also be found.

Waitt (2000) provides a study on tourists' perceptions of a heritage site in Australia, The Rocks. The author's approach to the analysis and conclusion reveals that he values The Rocks as a commodified site. He argues that the history of the site has been adapted to become a tourist site. His study demonstrates that the tourists surveyed perceived The Rocks as authentic. In his conclusions, Waitt critically remarks that the official way of presenting The Rocks is problematic, because alternative approaches to the past are excluded. Waitt concludes that negotiation of authenticity including the visitors is not given opportunity. In the example provided by Waitt it is stated that a host community is not homogenous. A commodified value of authenticity might compromise another representation of authenticity.

At the example of Lindsborg, a US town with Swedish cultural background that entered the tourism industry, Schnell (2003) poses the question of commodification and authenticity. Schnell cautions that while commercialization is not seen to jeopardize culture, community changes as a consequence of commercialization, thus compromising the host authenticity of community members. In other words, while Waitt (2000) presents a critical tone towards commodification in relation to authenticity, Schnell (2003) is less concerned.

Departing from the claim that commodification may even lead to positive impacts for a local community, Cole (2007) wonders under what circumstances commodification may lead to positive or negative outcomes. The research is carried out in two villages in Indonesia, where she conducts an ethnographic field study based on interviews and participant observations. The author finds that tourism increased the pride of providers in local communities but specifies that it also depends on "how the notion is articulated and by whom" (Cole, 2007: 956). In the case study carried out by Cole, commodification is presented as a way of adding value in host related authenticity.

Waitt (2000), Schnell (2003) and Cole (2007) offer different perspectives on the possible gain or loss of value prompted by processes of commodification and host related authenticity. On one hand, some representations of authenticity can dominate at the cost of alternative representations. On the other hand, generation of representations of authenticity, performed by hosts, may also promote pride of hosts, which is value connected to host authenticity. Summarising literature on host related authenticity; in the host perspective, authenticity is often regarded as a performed matter of value creation. A visitor can experience authenticity of a site by the provider being authentic. This experienced authenticity can become a value feature to the touristic offer.

# Summary of chapter 2

In this chapter I presented three approaches to authenticity: object related authenticity, experience related authenticity, and host related authenticity. Object related authenticity refers to the value of authenticity in a toured object of tangible or intangible character. There are scholars who refer object related authenticity to an inherent quality of the toured object (e.g. Lau, 2010; Kontogeorgopoulos, 2017). Other scholars describe object related authenticity as socially constructed and emergent (e.g. Cohen, 1988; Bruner, 1994; Olsen, 2002). Experience related authenticity allocates the value of authenticity in the experience that a visitor can have in relation to the toured object (Wang, 1999). Here value arises with the existential experience of the self, either in relation to oneself or in relation to other people. Research in the experience related approach illustrates that both non-fictional (e.g. Stephenson Shaffer, 2004; Wang, 2007; Paulauskaite et al., 2017) and fictional places (e.g. Kim & Jamal, 2007; Buchman et al., 2010; Everett & Parakoottathil, 2018) are fit to promote experience related authenticity. In host related authenticity, attention is paid to the hosts shaping the value of authenticity (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Performance and commodification are two prominent features in this approach. In research under this stream it may be investigated how host performances create a value of authenticity (e.g. MacCannell, 1973; Payne Daniel, 1996; Daugstad & Kirchengast, 2013) and how staged performances and commodification of cultural traits may impact the host community (e.g. Waitt, 2000; Schnell, 2003; Cole, 2007). The three approaches to authenticity are all relevant to this dissertation. In the following chapter I will explain how the three streams with their different notions of authenticity can be combined into one coherent framework for the analysis.

*Chapter 3*

# Value creation by valuation propositions on authenticity

In the literature review on authenticity I have introduced three approaches to authenticity in tourism studies: the object related, experience related, and host related approach to authenticity. In the previous chapter I have presented some of the concerns that scholars in tourism studies have raised in relation to authenticity. One of these essential questions, posed in the literature, is if the toured object is objectively authentic and as such a source of value, or if, instead, the experience of the toured object would be the source of value for the visitor. Contributions that argue strictly for either the first or the second alternative also suggest that these different views on authenticity are incompatible; this because either of the lines of argumentation would build on different ontological assumptions. In this dissertation I propose that all the presented ways of understanding authenticity - the object related, experience related, and host related approach - can contribute to understanding value creation in the touristic offer. In order to explain how the different notions of authenticity can contribute to value creation I now introduce the concept of valuation proposition. Valuation proposition is a concept coined by the pragmatist thinker John Dewey. In this chapter I will start with briefly repeating why I introduce the concept of valuation proposition. Secondly, I will contextualise the concepts of value, value creation, and valuation proposition. Thirdly, I will elaborate notions that are attached to the concept of valuation proposition, and which enrich the analysis on value creation in rural tourism development. These explanations lay the theoretical foundations for the analysis of this work.

# Merging the many facets of authenticity

In tourism studies literature on authenticity presents discussions on the usefulness of different notions of authenticity for understanding the value of a touristic offer. There are studies that indicate that the toured object with its originality is important for value creation (e.g. Lau, 2010; Belhassen et al, 2008). There are studies that suggest that the experience of a toured object is important regardless of the originality of the site (e.g. Wang, 1999; Kim & Jamal, 2007). There are also studies that show that the host performance is crucial to shaping an authentic touristic offer (e.g. Overend, 2012; Daugstad Kirchengast, 2013). Other voices claim that one particular way of understanding authenticity would be superior to another (e.g. Wang, 1999; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). Instead of searching for one best way to position authenticity, I suggest that the different notions of authenticity express possible values that a touristic offer does have or might have for a visitor. That means that the object related authenticity, which claims that the touristic offer is toured for being the original and only one of its kind, is one way to express a value of the touristic offer. Similarly, value for the visitor arising from the experience of partaking in the touristic offer is another way to express value. The view that authenticity is a performed value, invoked by hosts, is yet another way of shaping the value of a touristic offer. In other words, in this dissertation I view the variety in authenticity as a variety of expressing value in the touristic offer. Ways of expressing a potential value is in this dissertation conceptualised as valuation propositions. In the following sections I will contextualise and elaborate on value, value creation, and valuation propositions in relation to notions of authenticity.

# Value creation in tourism studies

I have explained that I will analyse value creation in the touristic offer based on notions of authenticity. I want to view these notions of authenticity as equal expressions of value, which I conceptualise as valuation propositions - all of them. In short, valuation propositions can be explained as the projection of possible values into a tangible or intangible object (Dewey, 1939). When speaking about value creation the concept of value occurs as one central building block. I have already offered a short definition of my understanding of value creation in rural tourism development in the introductory chapter. I explained value creation as carried by people who collaborate for tourism development in rural areas. Value

creation in rural tourism development is described similarly by Verbole (2000), Verbole and Cottrell (2002), McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) and Sims (2009). Verbole (2000) and Verbole and Cottrell (2002) highlight in particular that rural tourism development projects may involve potential stakeholders unequally, which may lead to inequalities in the value created when the rural development project takes place. McAreavey and McDonagh (2011) pinpoint that different parties push for different interests and Sims (2009) stresses how the doings that are organised around local food production facilitate value creation in rural tourism development. These scholars' views are in line with my view on value creation, which means that value is arising in a context where people do something together for a purpose.

Here it can be mentioned that the issue of value creation is widely discussed in tourism studies. A prominent stream of literature has referred to value creation in terms of value co-creation (e.g. Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Vargo & Lush, 2004, 2008). In particular, value co-creation has been discussed as service-dominant logic, which would contrast with goods-dominant logic (e.g. Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). In the mindset of service-dominant logic, value creation is referred to ten managerial principles. These principles focus on giving the customer an active part in shaping the value of the service offer. One study that applies the framework of service-dominant logic is provided by Altinay et al. (2016). The authors study social value creation in social entrepreneurship at the example of a beach lodge in Africa. The contribution by Altinay et al. (2016) illustrates the social dimension of value creation in service-dominant logic. Yet, as Frenzel (2017) states, the literature in value co-creation and service-dominant logic focuses on the managerial perspective in the dynamics between a tourist organization and its customers. This leads Frenzel to the conclusion that the active part of the tourist to value creation is stressed, while the agency of the visitor is not investigated in a sociological approach.

In tourism studies value creation, yet, has been investigated less managerially and more sociologically. Andersson Cederholm and Hultman (2010) have conducted a study on the value of intimacy in lifestyle entrepreneurship engaging Simmel's concepts of distance[3]. The concept of distance is applied in order to analyse the tensions between intimacy and distance that create value. Andersson Cederholm and Hultman (2010: 17) call this the "commercial home" of Bed & Breakfast enterprises. The authors understand the dynamics between intimacy and distance as creating experience related value for customers, which leads further

---

[3] In short the concept of distance explains that value of an object is connected to the distance that a stakeholder has towards the object in focus (see Simmel, 1978).

to the economic value for the business owner. Ren et al. (2015) explain that tourism studies engage in the social dimension of value in tourism. With regards to tourism studies the authors note practice-oriented research to valuation in tourism studies. The authors underline the potential to overcome the division between managerial and sociological approaches by looking into concrete valuation practices.

In summary tourism studies have been dedicated to issues of value creation from various perspectives. Value creation has been conceptualised as value co-creation in the relationship between customer and provider (e.g. Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008; Altinay et al., 2016). Also, value creation has been studied in more sociological terms (e.g. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Ren, 2015). As I stated initially, my research is adopting an ethnographic approach, which implies a more sociologically oriented understanding of value creation in tourism studies. The notion of value creation that is adopted in this dissertation is further explained in the next section.


# Value creation by doing

In this section I will introduce the concept of value as it is applied in this dissertation. Attempts to understand value and value creation are not a new endeavour and include prominent scholars such as Karl Marx. Marx divided use-value, exchange value, and surplus-value in order to explain how labour enhanced the value of a good beyond the value of its material (Freedman, 1961). In Marx' contributions the arguments on value were aimed at questioning an abusive labour system. Interestingly, already in Marx' understanding, value was explained to arise from people's activities. In a more recent contribution, Smith (1990) casts light on the social construction of value in a study on auctions. He describes in detail how the conductors and participants in auctions behave and negotiate in order to determine prices.

The notion of value as connected to a doing is also contemplated by John Dewey. Dewey published a book with the title "Theory of Valuation" in the International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science, University of Chicago Press in 1939. On a little more than 60 pages Dewey shares his theorising on the origins of value. Dewey considers the implications of value being either a noun or a verb. When it comes to value as a noun, Dewey discusses, the question is whether the value is the object itself or a quality of the object. Dewey (1939: 5) further considers the term valuation and explains: "[T]he word valuation will be used, both verbally and as a noun, as the most neutral in its theoretical implications,

leaving it to further discussion to determine its connection with *prizing, appraising, enjoying*, etc." (Dewey, 1939: 6). In short, Dewey emphasizes valuation as a doing in which value is assigned.

In the context of rural tourism development, value is created where collaborators cooperate. Yet, at the same time we can ask if any kind of doing would be a tool for creating value. One could claim that some doings would actually prevent value creation or reduce a value that has been created. This question will be treated in the following sections. First, I will explain the concept of the valuation proposition in relation to this question. This concept of valuation proposition is connected to Dewey's understanding that valuation must be carried towards a specific end.


# Valuation propositions as projections of value

I have explained that value and value creation are connected to people doing something. However, I have also raised the question if any doing would create value or if there might be doings that would not. In order to position this work in relation to that question I will now introduce the concept of valuation proposition. Dewey characterises valuation propositions as "matters-of-fact" (1939: 19). These "matters-of-fact" are not fixed facts that would imply any constant value. Instead, these "matters-of-fact" are propositions on facts. In an experimental manner a person could make a proposition about a potential value of a tangible or intangible object. In other words, a valuation proposition is an attempt to project a value into something by someone. The similar concept of value propositions has been applied in service management literature. A value proposition is made to a customer in the selling process that adopts a perspective of value co-creation (see Corvellec and Hultman, 2014).

Dewey then adds a necessary condition to valuation proposition making, namely the condition of an end in mind. He explains that "propositions that are genuine valuations apply to things as *ends*" (Dewey, 1939: 23-24). In Dewey's pragmatic understanding of valuation, valuation propositions are made in trial and error with an end in mind. From the experimental character of projecting value follows that valuation propositions do not inhibit a claim of true and eternal value. The only claim made in a valuation proposition is that a tangible or intangible object has a potential towards a purpose. Accordingly, not any doing can be expected to bring value to the given end. In relation to notions of authenticity, a valuation proposition may be made in relation to qualities of the object itself, to the experience a visitor will have, or to the performance offered by

the host. The end in mind in all three approaches is to enhance the overall value of the touristic offer. I will go deeper on value creation towards an end in the next section.

# Valuation propositions on hidden possibilities

With his pragmatic understanding of valuation, Dewey claims that valuation takes place towards an end. That also means that a predefined value of an object as such does not exist in Dewey's view, even though predefined values can be ascribed to a valuation proposition towards an end. Dewey connects the matter of the end to an intellectual function that promotes the "end-in-view" (1939: 34). What Dewey terms as an inquiry and projection resembles the notion of "hidden possibilities". Graeber (2001: 39-40) explains Strathern's notion of the hidden possibilities as follows:

> Her famous concept, in fact, is the "partible" or "multiple" person. People have all sorts of potential identities, which most of the time exist only as a set of hidden possibilities. What happens in any given social situation is that another person fixes on one of these and thus "makes it visible" (Graeber, 2001: 39-40).

This citation illustrates the idea that personalities have many facets. Changing with the observer and circumstances, someone can be viewed having certain traits and qualities; hidden possibilities are made "visible". Hence, hidden possibilities can be applied even to non-human elements. In the context of rural tourism there are so-called "local resources" (Ilbery & Saxena, 2009: 2249) that are supposed to be used as a means to the end of development. A valuation of these local resources can be addressed in valuation propositions to the end of developing a touristic offer. In relation to notions of authenticity, these local resources are then addressed in valuation propositions. In this dissertation I go in line with the view that valuation propositions are made towards an end. These valuation propositions may address elements of the area that were previously not in particular focus, but as hidden possibilities. I claim that these elements can be addressed in valuation propositions that resemble notions of authenticity. That means, notions of authenticity can be related to valuation propositions towards the end of creating the touristic offer. In the next section I explain that valuation propositions can be generated by help of valuing devices.

# Valuation propositions and valuing devices

The previous section has introduced Dewey's understanding that valuation takes place towards an end. In these valuations towards an end, new qualities can be projected into an object as hidden possibilities. With this projection of qualities comes the question how to assign value where there are several ways to go. Karpik (2010) in particular has posed that question in a book titled "Valuing the Unique". In this book he explains that some goods on the market are unique. Because of their uniqueness, he claims, it is not possible to determine a price based on the principles of supply and demand, as would usually be expected in a market economy. In Kapik's argument customers would engage, what he calls, "judgement devices" (2010: 46). Karpik claims that these devices take the role of mediators in valuation, as a means to organise or condensate knowledge. In tourism studies the similar notion of "valuing devices" has been employed (Baka, 2015: 149). Baka (2015) mentions the tool Trip Advisor as one such valuing device. In this dissertation I regard "judgement device" and "valuing device" as synonyms for tools that facilitate the valuation towards the construction of a touristic offer. I adopt the term "valuing device" throughout the dissertation.

When making valuation propositions several valuing devices can come into play. Devices that are introduced by Karpik (2010: 46), among others, are "rankings", "confluences" and "cicerones". Rankings "are hierarchical arrangements of singularities according to one or several criteria (Karpik, 2010: 46). Hence, a ranking valuation is carried out in comparisons between singularities. Confluences are explained to "designate the numerous techniques used to channel buyers" (Karpik, 2010: 46). Channelling buyers can take place in the geographical sense and in selling practices in a given setting. Examples of confluences in the context of rural tourism are online-booking platforms, tourist information centers, and maps. Karpik's (2010: 46) term cicerone "comprises the critics and guides that offer specific evaluations of singularities". In the context of rural tourism this applies to printed guidebooks and reviews. These products fill the function to introduce a potential consumer to the favourable and unfavourable aspects of a destination, beforehand and during a stay. Valuation is carried out by means of the device. The device acts as a filter for the person willing to engage in the trip, as a means to increase the possibility for a successful stay. In the analysis I will get back to these valuing devices in order to explain how valuation propositions are made and promoted. In the next section I will get back to the question that not all doings need to create value for everyone.

# Valuation propositions depend on positions

Dewey (1939: 9) states that the end in view, that is a necessary condition for valuation, is derived from a position, which in turn is connected to interests:

> [I]nterests occur in definite existential contexts and not at large in a void, and since these contexts are situations within the life-activity of a person or group, interests are so linked with one another that the valuation capacity of any one is a function of the set to which it belongs.

The citation illuminates that not isolated single units, but several units together carry out valuation. Each of these units will bring in its valuation propositions while they are interconnected. In terms of authenticity this means that stakeholders with different points of view will bring up valuation propositions on authenticity.

Heuts and Mol (2013) have introduced the notion of "registers of valuing". Researching tomato production, the authors identify "registers of valuing", each of which may be described as a cognitive category in the valuation. These registers are layers of valuation with one layer possibly connected to the view, one to the haptic impressions, among others. As these registers involve active considerations on how to grow and handle tomatoes, these registers can be viewed as an expression of the intellectual processes alluded to by Dewey. Further, Heuts and Mol (2013) highlight, "[a]s different registers of valuing clash, they rob *each other* of any potential self-evidence (Heuts & Mol, 2013: 129). From this follows that registers of valuing may be mutually exclusive. Indeed Helgesson and Muniesa (2013: 7) answer the question "And do things have several values?" by stating: "Yes, what things are worth can be manifold and change - and these values can be conflicting or not, overlapping or not, combine with each other, contradict each other".

Going back to Dewey it can be assumed that different valuation propositions can be made attached to the same thing. This conclusion highlights that not all doings will possibly bring value for anyone or the end in view. The argument that valuation propositions are derived from a position implies that valuation propositions will be connected to different ends and different interests. In the analysis I will treat examples where rural tourism development is not compatible with other activities in the study area. The examples from the analysis question that rural tourism development would be a self-evident way to go for stimulating the economic activities and quality of life in rural areas.

# Summary of chapter 3

The goal of this chapter was to explain how I want to combine different notions of authenticity - object related, experience related, and host related authenticity - into one analytical framework. The initial problem of combining different notions of authenticity are differences in ontological points of view. In order to solve this problem, I have introduced the concept of valuation propositions. The term valuation propositions was coined by the pragmatic thinker John Dewey. Valuation propositions are projections of potential values into a tangible or intangible object (Dewey, 1939). I have claimed that all notions of authenticity can be understood as valuation propositions.

In this chapter I have refined the presentation of the valuation proposition by introducing the notion of hidden possibilities. Hidden possibilities is a term that expresses the projection of new facets (Graeber, 2001). In this analysis valuation propositions on uniqueness contain references to hidden possibilities. Also, valuing devices can propel the generation of valuation propositions (see Karpik, 2010; Baka, 2015). Further, I explained that valuation propositions are connected to a position. This implies that valuation propositions may originate from different ends in mind. These different ends in mind relate to several registers of valuing. Registers of valuing have been explained as layers of valuing (Heuts & Mol, 2013). In other words, there may be valuation propositions that connect to rural tourism and valuation propositions that connect to other interests. Valuation propositions may be partly incompatible.

In the context of this research project I interpret how participants of a rural tourism development project express themselves on the uniqueness of the project area. In this interpretation I read my informants' reflections and doings as valuation propositions towards the construction of the touristic offer. In the next chapter I introduce the fieldwork of this research project, in which I have generated material that would illuminate how valuation propositions are made.

*Chapter 4*

# Studying value creation in a LEADER-project

In this chapter I present the fieldwork that took place in a project for rural tourism development as well as the analytical procedures after the fieldwork. This chapter contains four parts. The fieldwork that took place prior to the application of the analytical tools covers the first three parts. The first part explains the case study research design that was applied in order to delimit the scope of units to investigate. One LEADER-project was selected to focus on uniqueness for rural tourism development. The second part introduces the ethnographically oriented research strategy that was applied in order to capture valuation propositions on uniqueness. In the ethnographically oriented fieldwork, material was generated in interviews, participant observations, and collection of digital and printed material. The third part of this chapter deals with research ethics, namely informed consent and confidentiality. The fourth part describes the analytical procedures resulting in the analytical themes. That means that the final part of this chapter covers how the analytical tools were applied on the material after the completed fieldwork.

## A qualitative case study design

The aim of this study is to analyse value creation in a rural tourism development project. In order to analyse value creation I investigate how participants of a rural tourism development project define and understand uniqueness of that particular rural area as a lever to developing a touristic offer. The main focus for this analysis was the provider perspective, thus, not the perspective of the visitor. For capturing these processes, a unit of investigation needed to be delimitated. Gerring defines a case as a "spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point of time or over some period of time" (2007: 19). According to Gerring, one possible way of delimiting a unit of examination is to conduct a geographically oriented

delimitation. Geographical areas, however, are not necessarily congruent with specific rural tourism development actions. As I wanted to examine valuation propositions on uniqueness in a rural tourism development project, I rather needed to delimit a unit that could provide access to these valuation propositions. That is why projects for rural tourism development, situated in a geographic area, were considered as the most appropriate unit of analysis. Choosing the case study research design thus lead further to choosing a project for rural tourism development as unit for inquiry.

When choosing the case study research design the researcher can choose between single case study and multiple case study (Yin, 2009). Anderson et al. (2014) consider that single case studies are less time intensive than multiple case studies. An advantage of multiple case studies, however, is the possibility of "replication in data collection across sites" (Anderson et al., 2014: 89). The authors highlight that the multiple case study can offer a deeper analysis of the phenomenon under study. I considered the multiple case study research design because of the opportunity to view valuation propositions on uniqueness in greater variety and detail. However, I realised that several idiosyncratic case studies would be difficult to embrace in an ethnographically oriented approach to the field. That is why one case was chosen.

When setting up the research design for this study, I considered the options of choosing LEADER-financed project for rural tourism development or otherwise organised and financed project for rural tourism development. LEADER-projects are well documented and thus accessible for research. The alternative choice of studying non-LEADER initiatives for rural tourism development would have allowed studying valuation propositions on uniqueness without the support of an external guiding framework. In the end I chose one LEADER-project as target for this study because LEADER-projects are a widespread form of incentive towards value creation in rural areas with significance in the socio-political context.

Among all LEADER-projects in Sweden 2007-2013, one LEADER-project was chosen. Gerring (2007) underlines that "[i]n order for a focused case study to provide insight into a broader phenomenon, it must be representative of a broader set of cases. It is in this context that one may speak of a *typical-case* approach to case selection" (Gerring, 2007: 91). As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Swedish Board of Agriculture has published a brochure, in which all 63 Swedish LEADER-areas 2007-2013 are presented. Each of the areas is presented on two pages with description and some pictures. The presentations of the 63 LEADER-areas contain several examples of descriptions claiming that the area had unique features that could be used for rural tourism development. When I screened the range of LEADER-area descriptions, I found that the will to build

rural tourism development on uniqueness was a protruding issue highlighted in these descriptions. That is why I decided to select one project that followed the goal to develop rural tourism based on uniqueness as a typical case: the Silenceville project. The project name was anonymised for reasons explained later on in this chapter.

In the case study research design the researcher can choose between qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Gerring, 2007; Walters, 2015). Qualitative research techniques are characterized by strong researcher interaction with the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 2003; Sorsa et al., 2015). Facilitated by the researcher engagement in the field site, qualitative studies can reveal key dimensions of a phenomenon not yet largely explored. Also, engaging in happenings in a given setting, qualitative research provides for capturing processes (Silverman, 2013). Regarding this dissertation, I consciously chose the ethnographic approach which implies a qualitative fieldwork. As previous research on value creation in rural tourism development applies ethnographic approaches to a limited extent, choosing this approach also implies adding to the field of rural tourism development research from a methodological point of view. In consequence, choosing the qualitative case study design I could generate material in close interaction with the processes in the field site. In the next section I explain how the qualitative case study research design was activated in the ethnographically oriented research strategy.

## The ethnographically oriented fieldwork strategy

When it comes to qualitative case studies, Baxter and Jack (2008: 544) state that these studies may engage a collection of different sources of material. In my study I chose the research techniques of qualitative interviews, participant observations, and the collection of printed and digital material, including photographs. I aimed at capturing valuation propositions on uniqueness towards the development of a touristic offer. Ethnographic research techniques give prominence to generating material at the field site as it presents itself (Sjöberg, 2011). That means, leaning on ethnographic research techniques offers the researcher the opportunity to adapt the fieldwork to those who participate in the research project as the fieldwork evolves. For the fieldwork I focused on capturing valuation propositions on uniqueness that were made in relation to the development of a touristic offer. I do not claim that there would be anything essentially unique. Instead I focus on how the contributors to the Silenceville project relate to the term unique and

explain the significance and meaning of uniqueness in relation to constructing the touristic offer.

In this section I present the fieldwork carried out in the case of the Silenceville project. First, I explain why I found the Silenceville project suitable for investigating the set research aim. Secondly, it is elaborated how I made first contact with the project manager of the Silenceville project. Thirdly, I illuminate the decision to explore the construction of ten biking trails as a concrete touristic offer of the Silenceville project. Subsequently, I highlight how material was generated in interviews, participant observations, and collection of printed and digital material.

## Silenceville and uniqueness

The Silenceville LEADER-project corresponded to my research aim as it claimed to engage the area's unique cultural values for rural tourism development. The Silenceville project focus on uniqueness is emphasized in the quote from the Silenceville final report: "We also identified the unique cultural values here, a combination of a tradition-based continuity and curious open-mindedness for anything unfamiliar" (Silenceville, 2013). From the Silenceville project plan as well as from other parts of the final report it was concluded that the Silenceville project also aimed at rural tourism development. In other words, the Silenceville project claimed having worked upon uniqueness in connection with the project's goal for rural tourism development. Because of its ambition to combine the unique values and the attempted development of a touristic offer, I found the Silenceville project suitable as a case for this research.

To make my choice even clearer I now offer some more details of the Silenceville project. The project period stretched from autumn 2011 to autumn 2013 and was funded with about 1 million SEK (Jordbruksverket, 2016a). The formal LEADER-project owner was Coompanion, an association to assist cooperatives. Geographically the project was confined within the borders of one single municipality in southern Sweden. The project area is mainly characterised by a landscape of small-scale agriculture with livestock, considered as one of the most remote parts of the region. To raise local identity and pride a number of activities were launched by the project, including frequent social events such as a story-telling café, a crochet café, summer evening meetings, and the 17th century day. Several local clubs got involved in the Silenceville project, such as the cultural heritage club and the bog club.

The project plan and final report of the Silenceville project claimed that the unique cultural values were worked upon by the Silenceville project as a ground

for rural tourism development. Expressed differently, as the Silenceville project documents highlighted uniqueness as means towards developing a touristic offer, I could approach the Silenceville project with research techniques that could capture the projects' work in this regard. The Silenceville project thus promised to offer grounds for my analytic ambition to analyse valuation propositions on uniqueness in the construction of a touristic offer. After choosing the Silenceville project I entered the field based on an ethnographically oriented research strategy. I will elaborate the details of this strategy in the next section.

## Entering the field

Sjöberg (2011) underlines that ethnographic studies do not take place detached from theoretical frameworks; yet, researchers that are oriented towards ethnographic approaches would give priority to the encounters in the field. That means that the researcher is free to adapt the research strategy continuously as the fieldwork evolves. In my study I used an ethnographically oriented research strategy as an opportunity to start the fieldwork with a participant observation in an event organised by the Silenceville project in the summer of 2013. I reached the venue by a combined train and bike ride, as I had no car available. Having arrived at the site I informed the Silenceville project manager, Maria (all names are anonymised as further explained in the section "Confidentiality"), about my interest to conduct a research project on rural tourism development based on the Silenceville project. Maria offered a kind and friendly welcome at this first event, followed by an invitation to stay at her Bed & Breakfast free of charge for a night. I accepted this offer and an opportunity for further talks and a first interview appeared.

The interview conducted with Maria during this stay was based on knowledge obtained from the blog on the Silenceville webpage. This blog reported all activities that took place during the project right from its beginning. The questions targeted how the project started and developed. At the end of the interview I asked Maria a question about the project's final report. In the final report it is claimed that the Silenceville project has accomplished to identify the area's unique cultural values, and I asked Maria to elaborate on how they had identified these values. The interview lasted for 70 minutes, was recorded with due permission, and transcribed.

The interview revealed that Maria had been born and grown up in the Silenceville area. Maria and her brother inherited the family's old schoolhouse when their parents passed away. The heritage prompted Maria to leave her home in an urban area and to move back to the countryside - not at least in order to

open a Bed & Breakfast. This decision was the cradle to start a LEADER-project for rural tourism development. Maria argued that by promoting the area her and other individual businesses as well as the community as a whole could benefit from the positive development. A LEADER-project was expected to be a good opportunity to combine Maria's personal interests of maintaining the house and making a living with the interests of the community to develop rural tourism.

Maria told me that the Silenceville project had started with an informal meeting, to which she had invited local inhabitants, stakeholders from two local tourism networks in the Silenceville area, the head of the regional LEADER association, and an officer at the regional development organisation. This meeting took place in June 2011. At the meeting the group had informal talks about the opportunities to develop rural tourism in the Silenceville area. In September 2011, the informal group met again and decided to apply for LEADER-funding. Subsequently, Maria and one of the local business owners started to meet on a regular basis and to draft a project plan. Other participants occasionally joined in the preparation of the project plan. The project plan was finalised in the autumn of 2011 and submitted to the regional LEADER office together with a funding application. The Silenceville project was approved and funding was granted in the autumn of 2011.

In the interview Maria highlighted that the project did not have a clear outline right from the beginning. She explained that in order for her and the informal project group to arrive at the project profile, a process of talking to the inhabitants in the area and compiling information had been necessary. Eventually the project had formed with the help of people in the area - people who had shared their insights and offered their support. During the process, progress had always been focused on the profile of the Silenceville project in the view of its cultural values.

Right after this first interview with Maria I continued the fieldwork by exploring the Silenceville area during a three-day bike trip. The major objective was to gain an overall impression of the entire project area. I used a printed Google-map in order to find my way to businesses in the Silenceville area. During the bike trip I used stops to conduct colloquial talks with business owners. These talks revealed that not all stakeholders in the area had knowledge of the Silenceville project or a positive attitude towards this undertaking. From these observations I concluded that the Silenceville project was not a homogenous endeavour of the community. I considered that the study could transform into a local governance study - analysing different perspectives on the Silenceville project - if I chose a wide view on the project in my fieldwork. I concluded that the research aim was best satisfied if I delimited my investigations to one concrete touristic offer achieved by the Silenceville project. The final choice of touristic offers achieved

by the Silenceville project were ten biking trails with maps and descriptions published in the summer of 2013. In the next section I provide details on my choice to investigate the construction of the ten biking trails.

## Investigating the biking project

In the first interview with the project manager Maria, she told me about the biking project of the Silenceville project. Maria informed me that she herself together with other contributors had constructed ten biking trails with maps that just had been published. In my interpretation these ten biking trails were a concrete representation of the Silenceville project making valuation propositions on uniqueness towards the construction of a touristic offer. The ten printable biking trails maps with descriptions were accessible online. They included the location and description of cultural sites in the area that were positioned in connection to the ten trails.

The decision to conduct field research with focus on the ten biking trails prompted a second interview with Maria. In this second interview I concentrated on details of the process that led to the realisation of these trails. Single questions were prepared in advance and picked up during the interview. This approach followed Sjöberg (2011) who emphasises that interviews in ethnographic fieldwork are designed to let participants express themselves. She regards the effective focus on the participant as more important than following a specific outline for the interview. The conversational form used for this interview with Maria allowed concentrating on Maria's perspective, which provided details on the construction process of the biking trails. The interview lasted for 60 minutes, was recorded with due permission, and transcribed.

In the second interview with the project manager Maria I learned that Maria was not the initiator of the idea to construct biking trails in the Silenceville area. The biking project group had been the initiative of the local resident Bengt. While Maria had a project plan in her hands and was setting an agenda, she had no schedule ready for how the development of the trails should take place. Neither was it clear from the beginning who would contribute to the trails and how. She underlined several times that the individual contributions from the participants had been most important for the development of the biking trails. Since it had been a collaborative project people should participate in his or her own way. The collaboration rose, in the end, out of necessity. As she had been away for several decades from the community where she had grown up she was in need of assistance to identify possible values in the Silenceville area. Thus, the degree of

engagement in developing the biking trails was based on the degree to which local people were engaged with the area.

After the second interview with Maria I decided to further investigate the threads that knit the ten biking trails together. First, I engaged in own explorations of each biking trail. By cycling each of the ten trails myself I gained an impression of the ten trails. These insights contributed to improve preparations and implementation of later interviews. Secondly, I decided to lead an interview with all the contributors to the ten biking trails. Maria helped to identify those contributors to the construction of the ten trails who had made a major contribution. The details about the interviews with the contributors to the ten biking trails are provided in the next section.

## Interviewing the contributors

Apart from the two interviews with Maria, eight interviews with contributors to the ten biking trails were conducted during July to September 2013. I chose these particular eight interviewees, because the project manager Maria had highlighted the contributions of these individuals as core contributions to the realisation of the trails. Apart from the interviewees chosen, other people had participated in the Silenceville project and had an impact on aspects of the biking trails. For instance, Måns at the museum called Superpower had lent the museum's name to one of the trails. The museum itself was also included in the trail. However, as Maria did not refer to Måns as one of the bearing contributors to the realisation of the biking project, Måns was not considered as an interviewee in the first place. When I stopped by at his museum to have an informal talk he showed me around in the museum. As I understood from the conversation that he had not been proactive in the process of constructing the ten biking trails, I refrained from asking for an interview. Another potential interviewee, who was not contacted, was Frans. Maria and several other interviewees mentioned the importance of Frans. However, at the time of my fieldwork Frans was over ninety years old and not in a condition to participate. I am aware of the fact that the exclusion of potential interviewees might be a bias. I strongly relied on the project leader as a gatekeeper. If I had not relied on Maria's recommendations I might have collected interview material from people who were not actually familiar with the project. By relying on Maria, I had followed a clear and transparent guideline for the selection of interviewees. The resulting collection of interviewees is here briefly presented:

<u>Lise</u> is a second home owner in the area, with great interest in discovering details in the landscape by adventurous excursions, studying maps, and talking to

her neighbours. Her professional background in the area of forestry and ecology imprints an understanding of the landscape.

Ulrika was born in one of the villages of the Silenceville area. She is a landowner and a farmer. She has had an interest in her home village and the surrounding landscape ever since her childhood. Contacts with senior inhabitants of the Silenceville area have supported her interest and knowledge growth. Ulrika and a friend of hers organised a guided bus tour around the area when they were still attending high school.

Milli moved from northern Sweden to southern Sweden some years ago and has a background as a tourism practitioner. Being new to the Silenceville area and interested in taking part in the tourism development of the area, she attended Silenceville events and contributed to Maria's inventory excursions.

Erik is active in agriculture and is Milli's neighbour. Originally, an interview with Erik was not attempted. When Erik appears at Milli's home during the interview, he is included in the conversation. Erik has not been active in the Silenceville project and is not familiar with biking in the Silenceville area. However, he offers additional perspectives on the characteristics of the Silenceville area during the interview.

Bengt has been living in the Silenceville area his whole life and has been working in agriculture. Bengt is the originator of the biking project idea. From his life experience he concludes that the Silenceville area is easily accessible by bike and that people going biking would also like to spend some money drinking coffee in the area.

Linnea was born in the Silenceville area and has great interest in issues of nature, culture, and history. Together with her sister she usually explores the area on foot and reads a lot. Her interest in her home village has prompted her participation in a study circle on villages. Linnea participated in the Silenceville summer evening events and helped organising one of those.

Sven was born and raised in a village in the Silenceville area. Sven has great interest in discovering the landscape and has a professional background in a forestry society. His interest in the landscape resulted in an initiative for saving a bog. A local bog-club was founded, arranging events connected to the bog. Due to his engagement for the bog Maria got in touch and asked for support identifying sites for the biking maps.

Emma is a tourist officer at the sub-regional destination marketing organisation. Her interest in participating in the biking trail project results from her professional work tasks. She explains that she does not like working issues twice, which is why she got involved in the Silenceville project. Emma contributes

to the biking trails project with insights on tourists' observed preferences. Emma emphasised the need to include coffee houses on the biking trails.

Carina is an antiquarian at the regional museum. Her professional interest in the cultural landscape of the Silenceville area established contact with landowners in the area. From her professional perspective, landscape elements were identified on the landowners' estates. Carina compiled a report on a particular site in the area. This report was acknowledged by Maria and prompted networking between Carina and the Silenceville project.

Summarising the characterization of participants, three major reasons for their contributions to the biking trail construction process are identified: First, a lifelong experience with the community; secondly, motivation to learn more about the area; and thirdly, the professional background.

The interviews lasted for 40 to 100 minutes, were recorded with permission and transcribed. Only one of the respondents, Bengt, did not want to be audiotaped. Nonetheless, he was eager to contribute to the research. He provided a paper file with copies of the stories written down by the local storyteller Frans. This was a helpful document, as several other respondents referred to Frans' stories. One of the respondents envisaged did not reply to my requests for an interview. His main contribution had been to help Maria to talk to some of the landowners.

The interviews were semi-structured, but again, letting the interviews flow as a conversation. Semi-structured interviews are usually considered an effective tool for generating rich descriptions on an issue (Brewer, 2000). Each interview was opened letting respective respondent speak about their connection to and engagement in the Silenceville project. For instance, Linnea referred to her roots in the village and her interest in nature, culture, and history. In contrast, Emma, the tourist officer, spoke about her professional involvement in the Silenceville project as member of the LEADER-project reference group. Despite the personalised opening of the interviews, the topic for each of the interviews remained the same.

After I had gathered the first impressions on the respondents' connection to the Silenceville project, I focused the interview on respondents' involvement in identifying the unique cultural values along the trails. I usually explored the topic by posing questions to capture what had led to the concrete route of each biking trail. The respective questions included: "How did you find the places?", "Why those places?", "Why those roads and not the other roads?" By asking these questions in a conversational manner it was attempted to generate insights into the origin of valuation propositions from the perspective of the interviewee. By collecting explanations of why certain sites were noted - what happened before

identification and during identification - the turning points in the valuation process were attempted to be captured. Linnea, for example, explains that she needed to take Maria and Milli on a trip to showing interesting sites.

Further, uniqueness was directly addressed. Maria had written the final report of the Silenceville project. I asked the interviewees about uniqueness reading from the final report. I referred to the achieved identification of unique cultural values and respondents were asked what they think when listening to this statement. Answers revealed that a majority of the interviewees was not familiar with the project plan. However, they did contribute with their personal interpretation of the unique cultural values in Silenceville area. The investigations on uniqueness offered a larger picture of the valuation propositions made about the unique cultural values. The collection of interviews is displayed in table 1.

**Table 1**
Collection of interviews

| Number | Respondent | Connection | Length |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interview 1 2013-07-05 | Maria | Project manager of the Silenceville project, born in the Silenceville area, however has lived in an urban area a long time before moving back. | 70 minutes |
| Interview 2 2013-07-11 | Maria | | 60 minutes |
| Interview 3 2013-07-23 | Lise | Second home owner in the Silenceville area, interested in discovering nature, culture and history of the area | 55 minutes |
| Interview 4 2013-07-23 | Ulrika | Born in the Silenceville area, landowner, and interested in the nature, culture and history of the area | 40 minutes |
| Interview 5 2013-07-24 | Milli | Moved to the Silenceville area from northern Sweden recently with work-life experience in tourism | 100 minutes |
| | Erik | Born in the Silenceville area and active in agriculture | |
| Interview 6 2013-07-25 | Bengt | Born in the Silenceville area and initiator of the biking trail development | 40 minutes, written notes |
| Interview 7 2013-08-27 | Linnea | Born in the Silenceville area and interested in nature, culture, history | 60 minutes |
| Interview 8 2013-08-27 | Sven | Born in the Silenceville area and interested in the landscape | 40 minutes |
| Interview 9 2013-08-28 | Emma | Tourism officer at the sub-regional destination marketing organization | 45 minutes |
| Interview 10 2013-09-02 | Carina | Antiquarian at the regional history museum | 80 minutes |

## Being a participant

I will now introduce the fieldwork carried out as participant observations. Participant observations are one major tool of ethnographic fieldwork (Hume & Mulcock, 2004). In participant observations the researcher can be more or less involved in the phenomenon that he or she investigates (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2010). The participant observations that I carried out can be categorised into two types, which may be called "prospecting participant observation" and "directed participant observation". This methodological approach follows Reinharz (2011: 5), who addresses a "situational self" and "research self" in ethnographic fieldwork.

The situational self is defined as a researcher role, which is personal and formed by the field (Reinharz, 2011). The prospecting participation may be described as being in the "situational self", meaning not entirely focused on gathering material, but eager to encounter the field. Prospecting participant observation was to participate in events in order to gain more knowledge about the project. The start of the field research and biking in Silenceville fall into this first type. Prospecting participating enhanced my personal knowledge about the area and facilitated the focused field research. I used the interaction with the stakeholders as a way to reflect on previous and upcoming interviews. Participating in the field was also a means to get in touch with potential interviewees in a relaxed way and to incorporate an attitude of genuine interest in the project. Insights from participating in the "situational self" were not systematically recorded, but benefitted the fieldwork progress. For example, as I had tried all the biking trails I could refer to personal experience in interview situations. Altogether, the prospecting participant observations were a tool to unfold my fieldwork process.

The directed participant observations served to generate material for the analysis. In Reinharz' (2011: 5) terms work was done from the perspective of the "research self", where one is mainly focused on gathering material. In total, I conducted five participant observations that were written up as observation material and included in the analysis of this study. The observations were based on one summer evening meeting, one press meeting, and three biking events. The directed participant observations were used to illuminate stages in the valuation process that took place after the ten biking trails maps had already been published. That means, the directed participant observations generated core material for the analysis that led forward to identifying how uniqueness was valued as resource towards the construction of a touristic offer. The content of the five directed participant observations is now briefly sketched.

(1) The summer evening meeting 2013 was a nature walk guided by Linnea and her sister. The group visited the forest and grassland around Linnea's home village. The sisters had prepared a hand drawn map with stops. At each of the

stops they would tell an anecdote about the site, stories which were based on the tales that had been passed on by older generations, including storyteller Frans. Notes and photographs were taken at the summer evening meeting. Because Linnea had previously helped Maria to design one of the biking trails, an interview with Linnea was conducted some weeks after the summer event. During this interview the construction of the biking trails was investigated and the preparations for the summer evening meeting discussed.

(2) In July 2013, the Silenceville project had a press meeting with a journalist from a regional newspaper. The meeting was scheduled along one of the trails. For the press meeting Maria had invited collaborators from the biking project group. Before the journalist arrived, Maria rehearsed with the participants in order for each one to know what to tell about themselves. With the journalist present, the group had refreshments and were sitting on benches above a pair of historic earth cellars. During the meeting, the journalist posed questions and involved the participants in a conversation. After finishing the conversation, the journalist launched a photo shooting. Participants climbed on bikes and biked some hundred meters on the trail, staging a picture for the newspaper. The meeting lasted for about one hour. Notes were taken at this meeting and photographs, which she had taken during the meeting, were obtained from Maria.

(3-5) In the summers of 2014 and 2015 I participated in three of the trail opening events organised by the Silenceville project. Each of the biking tours introduced one of the trails with stops at the points of interest. In the end of the trips the biking group had a coffee and opportunity to talk. The participants were mainly inhabitants of the Silenceville area. The tours lasted for approximately three hours each. Further to participating in the three tours mentioned, photos and notes were taken during the tours. At one of the trail opening events a letter from Lise was read aloud. The letter in original was retrieved from Maria and added to the collection of material. In table 2 a summary of the participant observations is provided.

**Table 2**

Collection of directed participant observations

| Number | Event | Contents | Length |
|---|---|---|---|
| Observation 1 2013-07-10 | Summer evening event | Linnea and her sister offer a guided tour around their home village in the Silenceville area | Start at 18.30 and approximately two hours ahead |
| Observation 2 2013-07-25 | Press meeting | Press interview with the project manager and contributors to the biking trails by a journalist from a regional newspaper | Start at 10.00 and approximately one hour ahead |
| Observation 3 2014-07-16 | Trail opening event of the trail *Flax hut* | Guided biking tour on the trail *Flax hut* | Start at 18.30 and approximately two hours ahead |
| Observation 4 2015-07-11 | Trail opening event of the trail *The Cannibal* | Guided biking tour on the trail *The Cannibal* | Start at 14.00 and approximately three hours ahead |
| Observation 5 2015-08-20 | Trail opening event of the trail *Lise's favourite* | Guided biking tour on the trail *Lise's favourite* | Start at 18.30 and approximately three hours ahead |

## Collecting printed and digital material

So far, I have introduced the fieldwork in the Silenceville project based on interviews and participant observations. In this section I introduce the collection of printed and digital material as a third source of material. All printed and digital material selected for the analysis was connected to the biking project. The printed and digital material was used as a complement to the interview and participant observation material. A short presentation of the printed and digital material collected follows.

The Silenceville LEADER-project was based on a project plan published 2011 and concluded with a final report published 2013. Those two documents framed the biking project and were thus included as documents. From the project plan and final report, the general objective of the Silenceville project, connecting the project to unique cultural values, was extracted. The ten biking trails were displayed in a map with points of interest and one corresponding sheet with descriptions of the points of interest. Those maps and descriptions were available from the Silenceville webpage in pdf-format from the summer of 2013 and onwards. The maps with descriptions were regarded as illustrations of the final offer generated in the valuation process. Newspaper articles were written about the Silenceville project biking trails 2013, 2014, and 2015. The online versions

of three newspaper articles were included as material. The newspaper articles described the offer generated in the biking project with interview quotes from participants in the project.

I included one tourism brochure article in the collection of material. In the article, I am presented as an ambassador for the Silenceville biking trails. Maria had designed and edited the interview. However, for the interview, we did not meet in person. Stepping up for an interview was a simple way for me to create accord with the Silenceville project. The brochure article was edited by the project manager Maria and published in a regional tourism brochure in 2014. My willingness to appear with an interview in the brochure can be questioned as it may affect the professional distance I should keep as a researcher towards the focus of interest in my study; and it can be questioned if my research is biased towards the interests of the Silenceville project. Yet, there is another side to this argument. When I decided to engage in the interview I regarded myself as becoming involved in a process of the project that was already ongoing. Me being asked and exposed in the interview was only another building block in what the Silenceville project was creating, regardless of my presence. That is why I did not see any serious bias concerning my trustworthiness in being interviewed. Rather the opposite - I regarded the interview as another example of how to build value into the touristic offer.

The Silenceville project was documented by a blog on the Silenceville webpage. As the Silenceville project as a whole encompassed several initiatives beyond the biking project, such as the crochet café and 17th century event, only one of the blog posts related to the biking project was included in the material. The blog posts used were dated September 2014. I also retrieved an advertisement announcing trail opening events, which was also a source of printed and digital material. The advertisement was published in 2015 by the project manager Maria and had been put up in the local bakery area and the local tourist office. The advertisement invited the public to participate in the scheduled trail opening events.

Finally, I took photographs at the trail opening events that I attended at participant observations in 2014 and 2015. The participants had signed informed consent, agreeing to my presence at the events. I used the camera in order to capture moments that I found significant in the process of the guided tours. Wollinger (2000) describes the camera being a generative research tool, even though the camera might distract research participants. In my case, however, I considered photographing as a conventional activity of a guided tour and thus assumed that the procedures of the guided tour were not altered due to my taking

pictures. Table 3 displays the collection of printed and digital material used in the analysis of this dissertation.

**Table 3**
Collection of printed and digital material

| Type of material | Published |
|---|---|
| Silenceville project plan | 2011 |
| Silenceville final report | 2013 |
| Ten biking trail maps | 2013 |
| Regional newspaper, article 1 | 2013-07-30 |
| Regional newspaper, article 2 | 2014-05-18 |
| Regional newspaper, article 3 | 2015-07-11 |
| Article regional tourism brochure | 2014 |
| Blogpost on trail opening event Frans | 2014-09-08 |
| Advertisement for trail opening events | 2015 |
| Photographs from observations 3-5 | 2014-2015 |

# Ethical research conduct

In the following sections I give an account of the fieldwork concerning research ethics. Discussing the topic of research ethics Israel and Hay (2006) emphasise that ethical research guidelines are required in order to prevent research subjects to experience negative impacts from the research. Throughout the entire dissertation work I have considered ethical research conduct, both in the fieldwork and in the subsequent work with the text. In the following I cover two aspects of ethical research conduct. In the next sections I - first - discuss the issue of informed consent and - secondly - the issue of confidentiality.

## Informed consent

The fieldwork at the Silenceville project was accompanied by considerations on ethical research conduct. Ethical research conduct encapsulates participants' informed consent to being part of the research project (Israel & Hay, 2006). In this context "informed" means that the informant is aware of what she or he is agreeing to (Israel & Hay, 2006); while "consent" implies the agreement itself. The informed consent also needs to be granted of free will (Israel & Hay, 2006). My fieldwork included participant observations, interviews, and the collection of printed and digital material. The participant observations were divided into

prospecting participant observations based on the situational self and directed participant observations based on the research self, following the objective to generate material connected to the research question.

In the prospecting participant observations, the people in the field were not in all instances informed about a researcher being present. For example, my first contact with the Silenceville project was during a project event. The participants of the event were not aware of me having a research interest in the event. It could be assumed that I carried out "covert participant observation". Covert participant observation means that the researcher does not openly identify him- or herself as a researcher for the researched subjects (Calvey, 2008). Calvey (2008) has addressed the problem of informed consent in covert participant observations. The author states that informed consent in participant observations is problematic in general. He calls this problem the "consent to what problem" (Calvey, 2008: 907).

When encountering the "consent to what problem", the purpose of research ethics with the requirement of informed consent needs consideration. The purpose of informed consent is causing no harm to the integrity and safety of research subjects (Israel, 2015). A question is if covert participant observation, as in the case of event participation, could have caused problems for the participants not informed. I used the impressions from the events in order to organize the fieldwork and to get in touch with potential informants. Any notes on the behaviour or opinions of individuals were in general not taken and used. Where I used information from prospecting participant observations I made sure to present the information in a fashion disconnected from individuals.

Where directed participant observations based on the research-self were carried out, I informed the participants of the event that I would take notes and pictures for the purpose of research. I asked for the participants' written permission, letting people sign informed consent on a list. The participants willingly signed the list. Signed informed consent was also applied in the case of the interviews. On a formal sheet that was signed by the informants I asked for permission to record and use the interviews. All informants signed except for Bengt. When Bengt declined to being recorded, I accepted his decline without any further investigation and took written notes instead.

Relevant in this context is the reflection by Calvey (2008), that letting participants sign informed consent might be an act of forcing absolution from the participants. In other words, the informed consent to using material is no supplement for respectful and considerate research behaviour and material application. In the fieldwork for the dissertation, interviews and goal oriented participant observations were conducted under informed consent. Yet, it was

continuously considered how to represent material in the written dissertation text in a way that does not present private information that could be expected that informants would not want to be displayed. For instance, reflections of interviewees could be rephrased in indirect quotes not to intrude integrity where information shared was considered too private to be included in a dissertation on rural tourism development. As an extra measure, faces were erased from the pictures printed in this dissertation.

The collection of printed and digital material was generated using publicly accessible material. Main sources of printed and digital material are project plans, final reports, homepages, biking maps and newspaper articles. As the printed and digital material is public material, using the material in the research was considered as not setting informants' integrity at risk. Nevertheless, also when using printed and digital material I considered carefully how to represent voices that speak in the material, for instance newspaper articles, in the text of this dissertation. I will explain how project names, people's names, and place names were presented in the text in the next section on confidentiality.


## Confidentiality

In this section I raise the issue of confidentiality as a part of ethical research conduct. Apart from considerations on informed consent to an ethical research approach in the Silenceville project, the issue of confidentiality was also covered. In social science research the research subjects may be offered confidentiality (Israel, 2015). The reasons for offering confidentiality are usually connected to making sure research subjects are not suffering negative consequences from sharing information with the researcher (Israel, 2015). In the current research officially financed LEADER-projects were addressed. The topic for the interviews and participant observations dealt with explanations for the construction of rural tourism offers. These offers were publicly available, not at least through the Internet. Also, the projects were well documented in the funding apparatus. That is why I considered the information shared in the course of the fieldwork generally not being sensitive. Nevertheless, the people involved in the project contributed from personal perspectives and were also inspired by private experiences. For that reason, confidentiality was strived for in the representations of the material in this dissertation.

First of all, confidentiality included the anonymisation of the LEADER-project's title. It can be questioned whether it is possible to achieve full anonymity by exchanging a project title for a fictive one, when at the same time idiosyncratic

project descriptions are provided throughout the analysis. Certainly, however, anonymisation makes it more difficult to trace the origin of the material.

For the same reason of anonymity, the interviewees' original names were exchanged for nicknames. Additionally, where single interviewees could be identified by means of particular traits, such as exotic animals, the animal type was not spelled out as to increase anonymity. As some functions, such as the position of a project manager, are non-exchangeable, full anonymity may not be possible for all interviewees. Altogether, I avoided including privately exhibiting pieces of information either by rephrasing or leaving out details in the written text.

The anonymisation of geographic places was strived for by changing place names in the written text. However, some of the original material in pictures and texts indicates the location of geographic places. Once again, while anonymity may not have been achieved fully, I made efforts to the highest extent possible to maintain anonymity of the LEADER-project and research participants. In the following part of this chapter I will explain the analytical procedures carried out after the fieldwork.

# Analysing the material

With the material that I had generated at the Silenceville project, I conducted a qualitative data analysis. Qualitative data analysis includes establishing themes from the data (Dey, 1993). In the qualitative data analysis carried out for the dissertation, the theming regarded aspects of how uniqueness was valued towards the creation of a touristic offer.

The preliminary themes were representations of concrete stages in the doings of the Silenceville biking project. As a process of inventory had taken place prior to the printed maps, this phase was labelled as a first analytical theme, namely "inventory". As the Silenceville project used different kinds of media in order to present the complete offer of ten biking trails "mediatisation" was pointed out as a second analytical theme. A third analytical theme of "mobilisation" was generated from the Silenceville project's endeavour to mobilise touristic activities based on the completed offer. Inhabitants of the area mainly participated in the mobilisation. That is why the analytical theme of mobilisation was related to the mobilisation of the community. The preliminary themes mirrored practical aspects of the valuation process closely related to the Silenceville project conduct.

In the next step of the analysis I investigated the material on its valuation propositions. In the preliminary topic of "inventory" I sorted valuation

propositions on uniqueness into three categories. These three categories mirrored valuation propositions as intrinsic value, reverse value, and complementary value. I analysed the categories further and presented the findings in chapter 5 of this dissertation. Further, I analysed who had made valuation propositions and categorised the results into different positions of proposition making. The analysis of the positions resulted in chapter 6. I also found that the step between "inventory" and "mediatisation" was not straightforward. I converted the process of selection between these two steps into a chapter on selecting valuation propositions, which is chapter 7. The preliminary theme of "mediatisation" I turned into a chapter on the promotion of valuation propositions that makes chapter 8. The topic of "mobilisation" I abstracted as the confirmation of valuation propositions by performance in chapter 9. Each of the analytical themes for the material was elaborated with examples and analysed on the background of authenticity.

   With the material at hand I interpret how participants of the rural tourism development project Silenceville describe the uniqueness of the project area. In this interpretation I read my informants' reflections and doings as valuation propositions towards the construction of the touristic offer. I draw on notions of authenticity as an analytical tool for viewing and elaborating on valuation propositions. In the analysis I have chosen to express my interpretation in formulations that refer to informants making valuation propositions. In these instances, I am speaking about my interpretation of what the informants have expressed in relation to uniqueness and the touristic offer. The following chapters 5 to 9 account for the analysis.


# Summary of chapter 4

In this chapter I have presented the fieldwork and analytical procedures of this dissertation. The chapter consisted of four parts. First, the case study research design was explained as a research design geared for delimiting units of inquiry. The research aimed at following processes valuing uniqueness in rural tourism development and eventually leading forward to a touristic offer. The case study research design was presented as enabling the researcher to focus on distinct units of inquiry. In the context of this research project three LEADER-projects were chosen as cases. Secondly, this chapter introduced the ethnographically inspired research strategy. This research strategy was characterized as oriented towards letting fieldwork evolve in contact with the field. In order to capture processes the flexibility of the ethnographically oriented approach was found appropriate. By

engaging in the field in prospecting participant observations and consecutive systematic generation of material processes of valuing uniqueness could be captured. Thirdly, ethical research conduct was accounted for in the aspects of informed consent and confidentiality. Informed consent implies that the researcher informs the research participants about their participation in the research. Further, the participants need to agree to participation of free will. In the fieldwork carried out in the LEADER-project participants connected to interviews and participant observations were informed and did grant their agreement to participate in a research project. For reasons of confidentiality names of persons, projects, and places were anonymised to the largest degree possible. Fourthly, this chapter presented the analytical procedures that lead forward to the analytical themes.

*Chapter 5*

# Valuation propositions on uniqueness

In this chapter, which is the first of five analysis chapters, I will start to explain how uniqueness is employed as a driver for value creation in the rural tourism development project of Silenceville. This chapter deals with valuation propositions that contributors make in relation to uniqueness in the Silenceville area. I have divided the valuation propositions into intrinsic values, reverse values, and complementary values. The group of valuation propositions of intrinsic values is related to the place and features that could not be easily reproduced in other places. Reverse values arise from expected downsides that are reinterpreted as being interesting for rural tourism. Complementary values build on complementing intrinsic and reverse values. This chapter treats each of the three groups of valuation propositions in turn, starting with the intrisinc values and continuing with reverse values and complementary values.

## Intrinsic values

In the interviews with the contributors to the biking trails, I posed the question why the particular roads and points of interest were included in the maps, and how the respondents related to the term of uniqueness in relation to developing a touristic offer in the Silenceville area. In the responses from several interviewees uniqueness was subtly connected to the notion of being exactly in the Silenceville area and nowhere else. Maria, for example, expresses the connection to the place when she reflects on how she and her collaborators selected between different potential sites of interest. She says that they asked the question: "What is the value, right here?" (Maria, 2013-07-05). Other reflections on uniqueness highlighted the component of being right in this place implicitly. The notion of being right here was expressed as the respondents described what they experienced as unique. Among those features were the fauna, silence, people, and the combination of the whole.

## Fauna

Several respondents relate to uniqueness as what is right here by addressing the fauna as unique. Linnea, a life-long resident, explains that she enjoys the fauna of the Silenceville area: "Yes, here is a lot, sometimes we are outside for a walk, the cranes have their nest there, so there are cranes over there, thinking about all these here, when you wake up in the morning and the cranes stand there and trumpet" (Linnea, 2013-08-27). Also Lise mentions other animals of the area: "I mean, we see moose, deer, cranes here, storks are here, thanks God it is a very exciting stop right here in the area, a lot of raptors, red kite, buzzard" (Lise, 2013-07-23). In the prospecting participant observations, following the ten biking maps in the Silenceville area, I could experience the rich fauna myself and recognise the statements made by Linnea and Lise. Several times during my fieldtrips I saw pheasants running over the roads and storks walking on pasture next to the roads.

As Linnea and Lise stated, the fauna with its birdlife is inherent in the landscape of the Silenceville area. The fauna being pointed out as inherent in the landscape can be related to object related authenticity. Lau (2010: 487) highlights that object related authenticity arises where a tourist object is not "man-made", but "'wild' nature". In the case of Silenceville, the residents do not own the birds and the birds' presence can only be achieved by taking care of the land that makes it possible for the fauna to exist. This also implies that the object related authenticity of the birds is connected to the habitat in which these are found and in which the visitor will experience them. Olsen (2002: 164) underlines: "The difference between object-related and existential authenticity is that the former is an attribute, or projected attribute, of concrete artefacts". Applying Olsen's idea of the projected attribute to Silenceville, the elements are embedded in the landscape and in the end, it is Linnea and Lise who address these elements and thereby introduce them to the context of the Silenceville project. In other words, participants to the project transfer elements that might be regarded as not man-made into the context of the project.

## Silence

In my first interview with Maria she mentioned the silence as something to be conserved. Milli pointed out that the silence is special for the area; and that even her daughter was surprised to find it so silent when she came for a visit. Ulrika also mentioned the silence in the interview:

It's one of the few silent areas left, you do not have so many silent areas any more, or noise-free, as the regional administration calls it. Thus, the silent values, they are turning more and more unique, fewer and fewer areas are silent (Ulrika, 2013-07-23).

Silence is the result of the absence of elements that produce sound, for example traffic. In the aspect of silence, it is said that silence is rare in comparison to other areas. However, at the same time there are sounds that are described positively, such as the trumpeting of the cranes. Also, there is a curious detail on silence and noise on the transcript. When I lead the interview with Milli and Erik, Milli started to speak about the silence and that it is so silent in Silenceville. A second later her chicken started cackling vividly and made it impossible to hear the voices on the record. These kinds of noises, however, seem to be understood as part of the concept of silence in the Silenceville area. The examples of the trumpeting cranes and cackling chicken illustrate that the contributors do not relate to silence in the absolute sense. It is a silence, which is characterized by the absence of sounds, but which may be flavoured with what we could call natural sounds.

The issue of silence that emerged in relation to the municipality's plans to raise wind power stations underpins this observation. This plan to build windpower stations was met with protests from the Silenceville inhabitants. Maria, Ulrika, Linnea and other interviewees stress that the development of wind power stations would endanger the silence. In other words, a touristic offer built on silence will need to go hand in hand with abandonment of activities that interfere with the potential for using these features. Interestingly, silence is repeated by many of the respondents and the silence may be equally characterized as "'wild' nature" in Lau's (2010: 489) terms. Yet, the silence is not a tangible object that could be authentic by the quality of its physical form. The reflections about the value of silence in Silenceville extend the discussions on object related authenticity. While Lau (2010) refers object related authenticity to a touristic object that would be natural, the intangible quality of silence in Silenceville is included in this naturalness. As the maintenance aspect comes into the discussion this object related authenticity can be described as constructed authenticity in line with Bruner (1994). In other words, the case of Silenceville highlights that particiants to the project value uniqueness from object related authenticity of intangible objects.

## People

In the interviews Milli in particular reflected about local people as possibly being unique in the context of developing a touristic offer.

> Indeed, we think from vegetation to humanity. The value of human beings. Human beings as carriers. All the stories that are left behind, from times not so long passed. But there are living people who still can tell. [About] the Cottager Hilda for instance (Milli, 2013-07-24).

Here, uniqueness of people is not expressed in an essentialising we-them dichotomy. The Cottager Hilda passed away a long time ago. However, Milli still considers her being a local profile with significance today. According to Milli, the Cottager Hilda and the stories about her can add value to the touristic offer of the Silenceville project. Milli later referred to Titus, the owner of the Cannibal museum in the Silenceville area. She mentioned that the museum itself could be regarded unique, but that it is not primarily mirroring the Silenceville area: "Now [the museum] is unique in its own right, yet, it is not particularly locally and historically rooted" (Milli, 2013-07-24). Milli's reflections show that stories of and by local people are expected to add weight to the touristic offer. These particular local profiles could not be found anywhere else, which is what characterises intrinsic values. Milli's conclusion resembles Bruner's (1994) analysis of a theme park, in which authenticity is referred to as, among other things, the life of people from past times. Even though the people have passed away a long time ago, the staging of the past lives is dressed in authenticity. In Bruner's (1994) analysis actors bring people to life. In the case of Silenceville there are guided tours, run by a local entrepreneur, that build on the life of the Cottager Hilda, which is pointed out by Milli. In conclusion, a person that has lived and who was unique at her time is maintained as a unique intrinsic value that is place bound as you can visit the area where she lived, and which is idiosyncratic.

## All of it

So far, I have provided three examples characterising valuation propositions of intrinsic values. These three examples were fauna, silence, and local profiles. These three examples have been chosen in order to illustrate that contributors to the ten biking trails use the notion of the 'right here' in order to make valuation propositions valuing uniqueness; and how they value uniqueness connected to object related authenticity. The interviews with contributors, however, also indicated that the interviewees did not explain uniqueness from single tangible

and intangible objects only, such as the fauna or the silence. Instead, the value of uniqueness is explained as the combination of all the objects together. Linnea, for example, mentions uniqueness "[i]t is not about exactly one thing. It is about the whole, the whole nature experience" (2013-08-27). Carina, the antiquarian at the regional history museum, also underlines that the whole of the features together constitute uniqueness.

The respondents point out different features that are unique to them in the Silenceville area. The respondents relate these to the geographical location and partly to undisturbed nature and original cultural features. This origin of value relates to Lau's (2010) understanding of the object related authenticity as referring to something 'natural'. In other words, the example of Silenceville indicates that object related authenticity is inherent in constructing a touristic offer. That also means that the case of Silenceville indicates that object related authenticity is relevant in value creation processes in rural tourism development from the perspective of those who create the touristic offer. The findings just presented, thus, do not align with the claim that object related authenticity would be outdated for explaining the value of a touristic offer (e.g. Wang, 1999; Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). The following section explains the second category of valuation proposition of the reverse values.

# Reverse values

In this section I explain valuation propositions on reverse values. In the interviews with the contributors to the ten biking maps some interviewees related to uniqueness in the Silenceville area by pointing towards what Silenceville is not. The issue of what something is not connects to Graeber (2011: 39-40) who highlights Strathern's notion of "hidden possibilities". In the context of valuation, hidden possibilities can be explained as projecting new potential into the phenomenon in focus. In consequence, expected downsides of the area may be reversed into the opposite, an opportunity. This reversal creates what I interpret as valuation propositions on reverse values. In the following I illustrate how Lise and Milli - independent from each other - state that the Silenceville area is not a big tourist attraction, but a destination in which the tourists can create their own experiences. As it is not considered a big tourist attraction, however, it can be highlighted as its opposite that, in turn, could be related to as unique. In the following sections I will analyse reverse values based on the voices of Lise and Milli.

## Your own action

Lise underlines the potential for creating one´s own experiences in the Silenceville area. Lise pays particular attention to the details of the landscape and the personal experiences that a visitor can make. She explains: "That is why I believe one of the things you should promote is the landscape here, the experiences it offers, certainly here is no action, you need to create action by yourself, be active and explore" (Lise, 2013-07-11). Lise expresses that the Silenceville area does not offer action, something that could be assumed a basic asset of a touristic offer. Lise emphasises that the Silenceville area instead of action offers an attractive landscape in which a tourist can create his or her own action. The possible downside of a no action area or, expressed differently, a boring area is by Lise reversed into an area full of opportunities for the tourist. Lise, thus, comes up with a valuation proposition on the value of the Silenceville area offering an opportunity for self-created excitement.

Lise relates to the Silenceville area in accordance with what Graeber (2011) picks up as hidden possibilities. What could be described as possibly boring is by Lise described to be something full of potential. The potential that Lise envisages is not primarily connected to a specific object, such as a specific bird or the feature of silence. It is related to the opportunity for the visitor to experience something that is not pre-defined. Lise's valuation of doing one's own action could be connected to experience related authenticity. Wang (1999) states that the value of authenticity rises from experiencing the authentic self in a touristic setting. The possibility of filling that gap according to one's own imagination is given; visitors have the opportunity to create their own experiences in the Silenceville area.

## Time to look

The idea that Silenceville holds the potential value for the visitor to experience something beyond the ordinary is recurring in my interview with Milli. Milli mentioned: "Thinking about these sites. Perhaps you would not recognise them as sites at first, I mean it is no Turning Torso, you, I mean you find something in it, if only you take some time" (Milli, 2013-07-24). Milli reflected over the points of interest on the maps and stated that a visitor might not consider these sites as being attractive in the first place. She says these sites are not "Turning Torso". Turning Torso is a known architectural landmark in Malmö. Milli thus creates a contrast between a known landmark that a visitor would recognise directly and the points of interest on the biking maps, which you would not recognise directly. But if a visitor is patient and explores the points of interest, the visitor will discover an experience in them.

In a different part of the interview Milli explained that the Silenceville area can offer a "deep tourism experience" (Milli, 2013-07-24). She exemplified the deep tourism experience at the example of meeting geese. Milli herself had met a flock of geese while biking recently and explained: "What an experience in tourism, if you do not know what a goose is. You see a whole flock, kind of, in its natural habitat and you can start a dialogue, I mean, you are having a deep tourism experience" (Milli, 2013-07-24). Taking Milli's both quotes together we see the reverse value that is generated in Milli's valuation of the possibly unique in Silenceville. The Silenceville area does not offer the big tourist attractions, such as the Turning Torso, but with some time the visitor can experience something extraordinary in the small places and also gain a deep tourism experience.

What Milli describes from her meeting with the geese, and what she refers to as important for the visitor, might be understood as an inner dialogue. Kim and Jamal (2007) speak of existential authenticity in fictional settings such as festivals, which would allow for such inner dialogue and lead to the expression of otherwise suppressed parts of the self. The values pointed out by Milli, and also Lise for that matter, are related to these experiences of inner dialogue where visitors themselves have the opportunity to be active parts in shaping the experience; and where they are not ruled by their own or other's expectations. As the reverse values of uniqueness do not represent mainstream tourism by means of experience related authenticity, the visitor can make their own trips that align to their own curiosity and needs for self-discovery.

# Complementary values

With the end of developing a touristic offer in mind, the valuation propositions made by contributors to the ten biking trails did extend the intrinsic values and reverse values. In order to make the intrinsic values and reverse values accessible to visitors, valuation propositions on complementary values were made. The interviews with the contributors to the biking trails displayed valuation propositions about uniqueness, which were not directly related to the area. Two complementary values that would enhance the intrinsic and reverse values were the geographical situation of the Silenceville area as well as service facilities such as coffee houses. In the prospecting participant observations, I could identify a third example of complementary values. These complementary values were picnic tables and benches raised at the flax-subsistence site, a point of interest along two of the trails. These three complementary values are further explained in the following.

## Proximity to cities

There is a value in the contrast between remoteness and accessibility. In my first interview with Maria, she explained that the proximity to the big cities is an advantage for the rural tourism development of the Silenceville area: "proximity to the Öresund region, that it is simple to reach such an unknown area, such an old area, so close to a pulsating metropolitan area" (Maria, 2013-07-05). Maria expresses that the Silenceville area is not well known. But despite the not well-known and remote geographical situation of the Silenceville area, Maria underlines that the area is easily accessible from bigger cities in the Öresund region. Other parts of the interview material with Maria and other interviewees also indicate that the area is regarded as remote. Erik (2013-07-24) stresses the contrast between remoteness and proximity:

> I believe it's rather unusual for the back-country, because, here are quite some people, so you see a small forest somewhere, and suddenly appear four houses that you did not know existed. I think that's quite unusual in the middle of a pine forest. But it's also thanks to the proximity to [the city] Lund.

Erik also highlights the dynamics between the remoteness of the Silenceville area and the cities in reach.

Intrinsic values of the Silenceville area are connected to features such as the fauna and the silence, valuation propositions that are incompatible with attributes, such as pulsating and metropolitan. In that sense uniqueness valued in the Silenceville area builds on the bigger cities being at some distance. But Maria also highlights that the Silenceville area benefits from not being too distant from these agglomerations. As the bigger cities are not too far away, visitors can easily come from cites to the Silenceville area and enjoy the opposite of urban life: the silence and other features identified. The cities are thus not regarded as unique inside of the Silenceville area. But the big cities are regarded to enhance uniqueness in contrast to the bigger cities. The surrounding cities, situated at some distance, with their contrast to the Silenceville area, can thus be seen as a complementary value in the touristic offer of the Silenceville project. The complementary value of the tension between remoteness and accessibility can be compared with the value of customized authenticity that Yu Wang (2007) describes. The value of authenticity is connected in the original that is presented in a convenient way. In short, the complementary values in the Silenceville project are valued in order to make these intrinsic and reverse values stronger.

## Coffee houses

The value of uniqueness is also expected to relate to the visitors' needs to keep their basic needs of eating and drinking satisfied. In the second interview with Maria she said that Emma, the tourist officer, had made Maria aware on the importance of adding coffee houses to the ten biking trail maps. Emma's reason for offering this advice was rooted in her own work experience. In her work with tourists, Emma has observed that nature tourists appreciate a cup of coffee at a coffee house, at least as long as they do not bring their own outdoor kitchen. In Emma's experience, in order for a touristic offer to be complete, service facilities should be included. Maria, in turn, mentions that the coffee houses in the Silenceville area are not necessarily unique, at least not unique in the sense that they could not be anywhere else. But Maria appreciates Emma's advice of adding coffee stops and other service facilities to the maps. In my interpretation, while the coffee houses are not valued as intrinsic values, they are valued as complementary value that can make the intrinsic and reverse values stronger. Further, the case of Silenceville illustrates in the aspect of complementary values that authenticity is not a static asset. Cohen (1988) characterised authenticity as emergent. While the creators of the touristic offer in Silenceville may relate to intrinsic values as a core in the offer, the complementary values exemplify that authenticity in the case of Silenceville actually is emergent in the dialogue between Emma and Maria. The touristic offer is designed to display what pleases the visitor and generates benefits for stakeholders.

## Picnic benches

Also, physical installations can enhance the value as complementary values. In my prospecting fieldwork in the Silenceville area and while approaching interviewees by bike - no car and no public transport were available - I stopped at the flax-subsistence heritage site several times. In former times flax was processed into fabric here. From Maria's explanations I knew that the antiquarian Carina had written a report about the site and that the owners had contacted Maria in order to show her the report. I was aware that the owners of the site had renovated the old flax-hut and renewed the pond. In addition, Maria had mentioned that picnic tables and benches had been raised. The flax subsistence site had been added as a point of interest to two of the biking trail maps and with the picnic benches the site had been turned into a site for recreation.

   During my stops at the flax subsistence site I could sit on the benches, take notes on my fieldwork, watch dragonflies at the strand of the pond, and see the

clouds mirroring on the water. While I do not regard the picnic tables and benches in themselves as intrinsic value to the touristic offer, I view the benches at the subsistence site as yet another example of a complementary value. The tables and benches alone do not represent any non-reproducible feature; however, they permit better access to experiencing the proposed intrinsic values. The picnic tables and benches are a mediator of the valuation proposition on the flax subsistence site. The picnic arrangement encourages visitors to sit down and have a picnic, to rest and experience. That is why the benches may be strengthening the intrinsic values of the site: it is worth seeing and enjoying. The picnic tables and benches also help make hidden possibilities visible; it serves as assistant to a valuation proposition for this site. The placing of the bench valuation is projecting quality - worth staying and enjoying.

Examples of complementary values found in the analysis and presented in this section were geographical proximity to urban area, availability of service facilities, and placing picnic tables and benches next to sites that should be strengthened. The issue of complementary values touches the issue of Graeber's (2011) hidden possibilities. In the case of Silenceville, the hosts view parts of the convenience in being able to access urban life quickly from Silenceville, if wanted, as well as being able to take a coffee or sit down at a heritage site. These complementary values seem important to the final touristic offer, the ten biking trails, as these complementary values arise in relation to the intrinsic and reverse values and make these stronger.

# Summary of chapter 5

The analytical research question of this dissertation is how value creation in a rural tourism development project can be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions. This chapter has presented three groups of valuation propositions: intrinsic values, reverse values, and complementary values.

The intrinsic values are regarded as embedded into the landscape or social memory. For example, during the interviews several of the respondents mentioned the rich fauna as well as the silence, which I label as intrinsic values. The intrinsic values could only be enhanced and maintained in the social and economic structure of the Silenceville area. The interviewees regarded the intrinsic values addressed as the core to the end of constructing the ten biking trails.

The reverse values are valuation propositions that are based on reversing what the interviewees initially regarded as a valuation proposition to the end of constructing a touristic offer. At several occasions interviewees referred to what

the Silenceville area could not offer, in order to emphasise what could be offered instead. The respondent Lise, for example, mentioned that the Silenceville area does not offer any organised entertainment, but that visitors can come and create their own adventure. Analysing reverse values, I applied the analytic notion of hidden possibilities. Reverse values are created when traits previously regarded as having no value are now charged with value.

The complementary values are valuation propositions that could be anywhere, and not necessarily in the Silenceville area. Emma, the tourist officer, for example, stressed that tourists enjoy taking a coffee while doing a biking trip in nature. That is why, in her opinion, the coffee houses should be included in the touristic offer. The coffee houses are thus complementary values that would enhance the value of the intrinsic and reverse values. Accordingly, the complementary values are mentioned as values that make the touristic offer of intrinsic and reverse values stronger.

The main findings from this chapter in relation to authenticity concern the relevance of object related authenticity in the constructivist sense. The findings from this chapter promote the position that providers believe that particular items in the area are interesting in the aspect of object related authenticity. Accordingly, my findings go in line with the positions of Belhassen and Caton (2006) that object authenticity matters in the context of tourism. Further I conclude, providers believe that their visitors will find interest in these features. The interviewees in my research project, who were participators in the rural tourism development project, pointed out features such as the fauna that can be categorised as intrinsic and reverse values situated directly in the area. Further, experience related authenticity could be viewed as a mediator for object related authenticity. The participants' memories from the sites they have experienced are a source to the valuation propositions made. In summary, valuation propositions towards the construction of the touristic offer relate to object related and experience related authenticity in the findings of this chapter.

The main finding from this chapter on value creation in rural tourism development is that the project engaged people in order to generate valuation propositions. That might seem obvious, however, as Petrou et al. (2007) underline, participation cannot be taken for granted. The contributions of those participating indicate that the local resource was not ready for use for the purpose of development, but needed to be generated. The next chapter will deepen this finding as positions of proposition making are presented.

*Chapter 6*

# Positions of valuation proposition making

In this chapter I expand on the valuation propositions that were already introduced in the former chapter. I will elaborate from which perspectives valuation propositions were made when valuing uniqueness in Silenceville. The perspectives that I touch upon are connected to a valuing device, namely a formal strengths and weaknesses analysis of the Silenceville area, to personalised positions, to circulated positions, and professionalised positions. From the analysis of positions, I illustrate the dynamics between the perspectives that contribute to the value creation that is based on the feature of uniqueness. For example, the propositions made from personalised positions of inhabitants to the area would mirror the sites that you can visit. The propositions made from professionalised positions, though, would highlight the need to point out coffee houses that a visitor would need. Both contributions together propelled the construction of the touristic offer, which displayed sites as well as coffee houses. I will now start the analysis of positions of proposition making by introducing the strengths and weaknesses analysis included in the Silenceville project. Secondly, I will introduce the personalised positions, thirdly, the circulated positions, and fourthly, the professionalised positions.

## SWOT-analysis for proposition making

In the first interview with the Silenceville project manager Maria, I asked her how the project group went about in order to identify the unique values of Silenceville. Maria answered that the identification of unique values in Silenceville started when the - at that point in time informal - project group was setting up the project plan. For the Silenceville project plan the project group conducted a SWOT-analysis. The project plan, with a SWOT analysis, was a compulsory part of the

formal application for LEADER-funding. A SWOT analysis engages considerations on S̲trengths, W̲eaknesses, O̲pportunities, and T̲hreats - that is SWOT - about the unit of analysis[4]. Maria explained how the project group started to think about uniqueness in the Silenceville area:

> No, I guess it was the SWOT-analysis. I mean comparing the areas in southern Sweden, right? In fact, this is super exiting. You start thinking, kind of, what Bjärehalvön, what do they have? And what can we offer in relation to them? And Österlen? What do they have? And what do we have in relation to them? Ven, and so on. You see, that is what made us circle in, more and more: What do we have? (Maria, 2013-07-05).

In the quote Maria expresses that the SWOT-analysis triggered the project group's ideas about which unique values the Silenceville area might have to offer. Dewey (1939) underlines that valuation propositions are mere propositions about possible values to an end. Maria and the other members of the project group were triggered by the SWOT-tool and started coming up with possible unique values. As the SWOT-tool sets ideas in motion rather than generates ready conclusions the ideas generated in the SWOT-analysis can be viewed just as propositions on possible values to the end of rural tourism development. Obviously, the informal project group generated the SWOT-analysis and project plan before the LEADER-funding was granted.

When the LEADER-funding was granted, a formal project group from the Silenceville project continued to work under the umbrella of the project plan set up. That means the project group's ideas about the unique that were integrated into the project plan were a guideline for the subsequent activities of the Silenceville project. Maria stated during the first interview how the work in the Silenceville project continued when funding was granted. When a formal project group had been established, Bengt came up with the idea to create trails. Originating from Bengt's ideas, the Silenceville project could present ten biking trails with descriptions printed on maps when the funding period of Silenceville project was completed in summer 2013.

These examples illustrate that the unique values identified were generated from manifold possibilities. These possibilities needed to be made visible and available for the purpose of rural tourism development. In the example of the SWOT analysis the issue of constructed authenticity, as mentioned by Cohen (1988) and Bruner (1994), is touched. In a dialogue the main potentials and challenges of the

---

[4] For details and criticism on the SWOT-analysis as a tool for strategic analysis see for instance Pickton and Wright (1998).

area in respect to rural tourism development were highlighted. The SWOT analysis became a starting point for the subsequent construction of the touristic offer.

## Rankings for value creation

The members of the Silenceville project group carrying out a SWOT-analysis and setting up the project plan might also be described as the valuing device ranking. According to Karpik (2010), customers can use rankings in order to value singular entities for purchase. Rankings, in Karpik's (2010) understanding, make singularities comparable. Here, rankings are not regarded as a way to address essentially unique units that could be ranked in an absolute sense of the term. But the comparison that members of the Silenceville project group conduct has an underlying character of a ranking.

The considerations of the project group result, first, in a list inserted in the project plan. The list displays four parts that are related to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In the part on strengths the project group identified "geographical placement", "nature", "silence", "culture" and "public transport" (Silenceville, 2011). In the part on weaknesses they mention "young as a destination" and "small enterprises" (Silenceville, 2011). The part on opportunities is filled in with "experiences are valued by the customer" and "they have a need for recreation" (Silenceville, 2011). The last part on threats is described as "construction of wind power stations can destroy the silence", "farmers lay down their businesses", and "an increase in engine traffic resulting from increasing tourism can disturb and decrease the area's nature values" (Silenceville, 2011). The results from the SWOT-analysis were anchored in the list contained in the project plan.

Maria's quote on the SWOT-analysis conducted contains indications that the project group was dealing with comparisons in the construction of the touristic offer. Maria highlighted in the interview: "You start thinking, kind of, what Bjärehalvön, what do they have? And what do we have in relation to them?" (Maria, 2013-07-05). In my interpretation, valuation propositions made by Maria and the other project group members thus target elements in the Silenceville area in relation to elements in other places. That means there is not a fixed set of values that only needs to be discovered and applied for rural tourism development, but a multiplicity of opportunities from which valuation propositions valuing uniqueness are made towards the end in mind.

The Silenceville project plan contains other examples that illustrate that the Silenceville project group valued uniqueness in comparison. The Silenceville

project plan contains a list of attributes that other rural destinations in southern Sweden are regarded to possess. The project plan identifies these destinations as competitors. The destination Österlen, for instance, is described as follows: "The sea, beach, fishing stations and a tradition of tourism" are highlighted as well as "used to collaboration and promotion. A distinct summer season" (Silenceville, 2011). The informal project group uses these kinds of characteristics of other destinations for generating valuation propositions on uniqueness in the Silenceville area. In comparison with for example Österlen, members of the Silenceville project group position the opportunities for the Silenceville area as a destination.

# Personalised proposition making

In the previous section I have highlighted the generation of valuation propositions in the aspect of the SWOT-analysis. In this section I go on to explain the position of personalised proposition making, from which uniqueness is valued. In the interviews with contributors to the ten biking trails I found interviewees with a personal connection to the Silenceville area. Among the contributors who were inhabitants, there were some who had lived in the area for a long time, some who had moved to the area recently, and one who was a second-home owner and only lived in the Silenceville area periodically. Dewey (1939) mentions that valuation is carried out from a certain perspective. In the interviews with contributors to the biking project in Silenceville I could find indications of Dewey's argument. The contributors to the ten biking trails make individual valuation propositions based on their own experiential background. In order to explain the significance of different points of view - the personalised proposition making - I apply examples from interviews with two contributors, Ulrika and Lise, in the following section. Ulrika has lived in the Silenceville area her entire life, while Lise is a second-home owner in the area and spends time in the area whenever possible.

### Childhood memories

Personalised valuation of uniqueness surfaces where people connect with their personal experiences. In the interview with Ulrika the trail map of *Steel hat* was in focus. Ulrika's farm and her parents' farms are situated along the trail. Some of the points of interest on the *Steel hat* map are placed on the land owned by the family. During the interview I asked Ulrika how she got in touch with the

Silenceville project. Ulrika answered that she had made contact with Maria at a meeting against the construction of wind power stations in the area. Ulrika explained that she had always had an interest in her home village and the surrounding landscape. That is why she was eager to learn more about the village and the area, wrote a school essay about her home village, and also organized a guided bus tour around the villages when she went to high school. Still today she has an interest in the surroundings and would like to combine farming with some tourism activity later on.

One of the points of interest on the *Steel hat* trail map is a twin earth-cellar. This point of interest is part of the family's properties. In the interview I asked her why the twin earth-cellar is included in the map, and how they happened to 'open the eyes' for the cellars. Ulrika answered that it was rather obvious; because the twin earth-cellars are the first thing you see when you come to the farm. She said: "They are actually the first sight when you approach my parents' home" (Ulrika, 2013-07-23). It is Ulrika's own experience from coming to the farm and seeing these cellars at first sight that is the foundation of her explanation. She can also relate childhood memories to these cellars:

> As a child I went by slide between the earth cellars and the bump there when you've got snow. Well, it has been an old dance-site. It has been, I know it was a place for gathering in former times, now for Walpurgis and midsummer, we go up there on the little hilltop and barbeque and it was a good playground when I was small (Ulrika, 2013-07-23).

The citation illustrates that Ulrika connects personal memories to the site, memories that date back many years. When Maria and Ulrika get in touch, Ulrika shares her view with Maria. The example from the twin earth-cellars illustrates Ulrika's experience from her home farm and home area. When getting in touch with Maria she relates to uniqueness originating from this evolved relationship. Ulrika's view on the twin earth-cellars, rooted in her life, is passed on to the project manager Maria. The experience described by Ulrika is a matter of existential authenticity. Existential authenticity is described by Wang (1999) as the value of authenticity that arises from the experience. In Ulrika's description the experience of the area around the earth-cellars and the dance-site prompts the value of authenticity and uniqueness, which Ulrika conveys to the project and where the visitor can partake of this value.

## Discoveries of the newcomer

In the interview with Lise the trail map of *Lise's favourite* was discussed. It is Lise herself who is the founder of this particular trail map. When I asked Lise how the trail was composed she explained that she had followed the Silenceville project on Facebook. One day the project manager Maria had posted a question on the Facebook wall. Maria had asked if there was anyone who had a favourite route around the Silenceville area. In the interview Lise said: "Well, Maria posted a question about biking trails, if there was anyone who had a favourite. And I said right away: Yes, I have!" (Lise, 2013-07-23). Lise explained that she transferred her favourite route further to Maria by means of a map and descriptions. When I asked Lise how this trail had been composed, Lise answered that she can spend hours studying maps. She also mentioned that she likes to talk to the neighbours who have lived in the area for a long time and who can tell about details in the landscape.

That means that the route that Lise had generated for her own enjoyment, Lise also expected to contribute to other people's enjoyment. With this intention Lise passed her view on to Maria. Similar to Ulrika, Lise experiences something in the Silenceville area that she finds to be of unique value. As in the example of Ulrika, this resembles the value of existential authenticity that is portrayed by Wang (1999). The value experienced by Lise is conveyed to Maria, who collects possible unique values addressed for developing the touristic offer.

## Interest

The descriptions of Ulrika och Lise have the aspect of interest in common. Both respondents, Ulrika, who has lived in the area for a long time, and Lise, who is a second home owner, relate their contributions to their respective interests. The fact that respondents who contributed to the construction of biking trails in Silenceville area also were interested in contributing may appear self-evident. It can be argued that the fieldwork strategy in itself only covered interviewees that, obviously, would express an interest in the Silenceville project and in contributing to the construction of biking trails. However, the observation that people who are interested did contribute is more than that. From the interviews with Ulrika and Lise, as well as other respondents who expressed interest, concludes that a project, such as the Silenceville project, is depending on potential contributors' interest in order to push for the purpose of the project. Expressed differently, conducting a project such as the Silenceville project may be challenging if there are not people who are interested to contribute towards the envisioned end. Since valuation

propositions also arise in personalized proposition making driven by personal experiences, such as those of Ulrika and Lise, value creation in rural tourism development needs to pay attention to the personal engagement of possible contributors. Petrou et al. (2007) point out that it is not always easy to win stakeholders' interest in a project for rural tourism development. In other words, winning people's interest cannot be taken for granted; and in the case of Ulrika and Lise, it seems to have turned out successful.

# Circulated proposition making

In the previous section on personalised proposition making I have explained that single contributors added valuation propositions in the construction of the touristic offer. More precisely, the interviews with the contributors Ulrika and Lise were in that section used in order to show how the personal experiences of respective person fed into valuing uniqueness towards the end of the construction of the biking trails in the Silenceville project. In this section I will continue by explaining that these individual valuation propositions can be circulated. Dewey (1939: 19) states that the entangledness of peoples' lives constitutes that "the valuation-capacity of any [person or group] is a function of the set to which it belongs". Dewey's position sounds slightly mathematic as he uses the terms "function" and "set". The exclamation made by Dewey can, however, be understood as people influencing each other in how they make sense of a situation. In the fieldwork at the Silenceville project I found that several contributors to the biking maps offered illustrations of the circulated aspect of valuation. I will develop this aspect around the person of Frans, a retired gentleman, who started to circulate homemade writings and drawings based on the Silenceville area.

## Tales about Frans

During my fieldwork Maria mentioned Frans already in the first interview. Maria explained that it was crucial in the construction of the biking trails to speak to the older generation including Frans. In my second interview with Maria she mentioned how the biking project started. She told me that Bengt, who had the initial idea for the trails, proposed that Maria and he should go on a tour with Frans around Frans' previous home. Maria and Bengt went on this trip with Frans in winter and also in the following summer. Maria remembered from the summer tour: "Frans and Bengt and I we were on this summer tour as well. And Bengt

and I we would go off the car and take a look and finally we took a coffee at the flax hut, in [Frans' village] and then Frans started to talk about this beautiful Linnea and that we should visit her" (Maria, 2013-07-11). This was how Maria, Bengt, and Frans stopped by at Linnea's place as well.

Linnea, in turn, told about Frans - unprompted - when I interviewed her about her contributions to the development of the biking trails. Linnea mentioned that Frans and she had been neighbours when she was a child. Then Linnea said that Frans had written stories and poems about the people and landscape around this particular village. However, Linnea admitted that she only recently got to know about Frans' notations. In my interview with Bengt, Bengt mentioned the notes on paper as well. Bengt even allowed that I borrowed his paper copies of Frans' notes. I borrowed the notes and took a paper copy for myself. Ulrika also mentioned older gentlemen that had helped her with material for her studies of the Silenceville area, gentlemen among whom Frans can be assumed.

With the example of the notes by Frans, in particular the ones on Charly the Crafter, their circulation between people in the Silenceville area and their inclusion in a summer evening event, as well as in the touristic offer of the biking maps, I want to highlight that valuation propositions can be present and circulated. The circulated proposition making relates to Bruner (1994), who illustrates that authenticity is not a fixed state in an object. As Olsen (2002: 163) summarises, it is rather "a cultural value constantly created and reinvented in social processes". In the example of Charly the Crafter, the note existed long before the issue of rural tourism development reached the Silenceville area. However, it has been reused in the context of rural tourism development when the Silenceville project started, in the sense of creation and reinvention. I call the way of introducing valuation propositions, such as the one on Charly the Crafter, circulated proposition making, as these propositions are no longer situated with one person, but in the memory of several persons in the Silenceville area, who share the notion of it.


## Tales by Frans

The writings and art of Frans picture aspects of the life and landscape around Frans' home village. Figure 5 shows one of Frans' descriptions of a site: Charly the Crafter's place. Frans produced this note a long time ago. In Frans' experience, the story of Charly the Crafter was obviously interesting enough to be noted. In one of the directed participant observations the story of Charly the Crafter returned and was passed on to participants at the event. The event was a summer evening meeting around the home village of Frans and Linnea. The event

consisted of a guided tour, led by Linnea and her sister, as well as a final coffee stop. Linnea and her sister had drawn a map of the guided walk (see figure 6). This map was their own mental map of the walk that they organised. One of the stops during the walk was at Charly the Crafters place. The guided tour stopped at that place and Linnea and her sister told the story of Charly the Crafter. That means, the note once written down by Frans was passed on to Linnea, and now passed on to the participants of the event. Finally, Maria introduced the story of Charly the Crafter to the biking trail map titled *Frans* (see figure 7). This circulated proposition making can also be regarded as a contribution to create a register of valuing. Heuts and Mol (2013) describe a register of valuing as one layer in a complex, manifacetted valuation. The note, which was written down of personal interest, has later been circulated for the purpose of rural tourism development. As rural tourism development more and more becomes a shared goal in the Silenceville area, valuation propositions, such as the one on Charly the Crafter, eventually turn into a shared means towards that end. Eventually Charly the Crafter enters the register, or layer, of rural tourism development.

**Figure 5**
Frans' note on Charly the Crafter
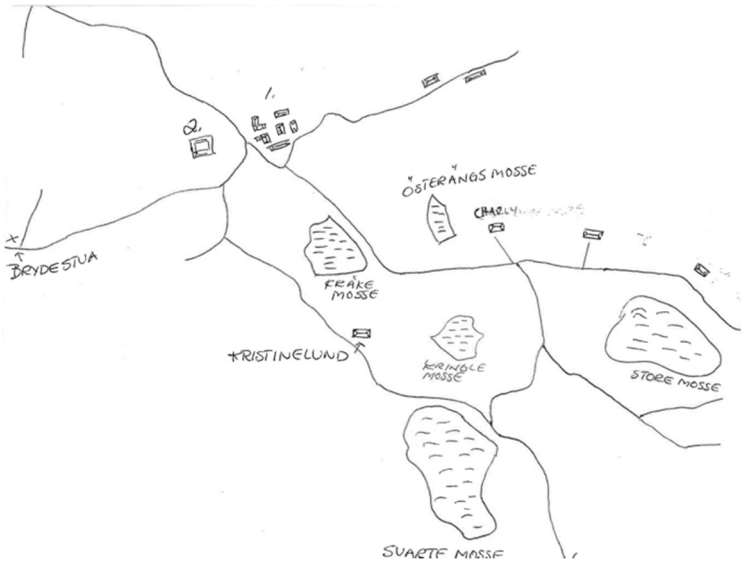
**Figure 6**
The map drawn by Linnea and her sister
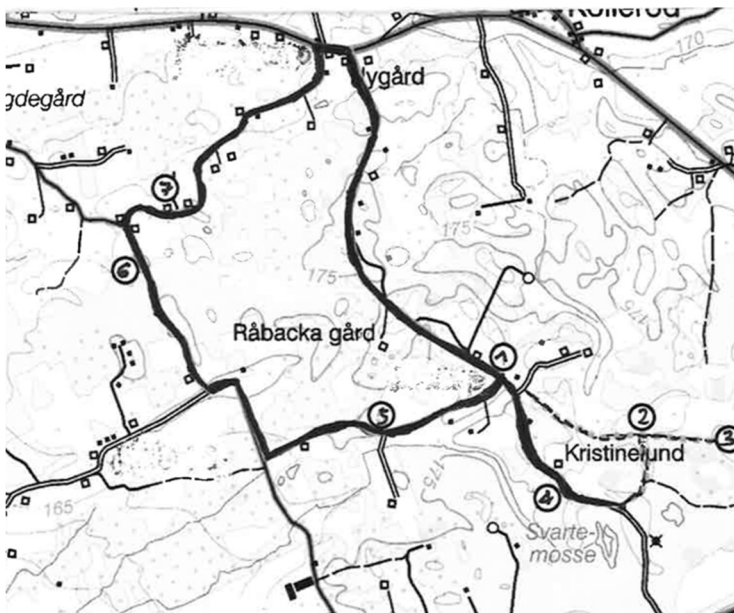


**Figure 7**
The biking trail map of the trail *Frans*

# Professionalised proposition making

Contributors living in the Silenceville area carried the individual and circulated proposition making. This section targets valuation propositions valuing uniqueness from professionalised positions. Professionalised positions mean that the valuation propositions are made as part of contributors' work tasks, namely the work tasks of the tourism officer Emma and the antiquarian Carina.

## What the tourists want

In my second interview with the project manager Maria, Maria explained how the group worked in order to create the biking maps. In this interview Maria said that Emma, the tourist officer, had pointed out that the maps should contain coffee houses. Emma contributed with that piece of advice in one of the formal reference group meetings of Silenceville project. In my interview with Emma she explained why she proposed to include coffee houses.

> Then we have those who want it quite comfortable and go biking for a Sunday trip, kind of, and I believe this category is biggest in this area (…) the biggest proportion are those who request comfort and who would like to pass by a cosy coffee house, take a cup of coffee, or take along a picnic-basket, preferably ready-made (Emma, 2013-08-28).

Emma highlights that nature-tourists, who do not bring their full outdoor equipment, usually like to have a cup of coffee in the context of enjoying nature. That is why Emma stresses that nature should be accessible in combination with service offerings and, in particular, coffee houses. Emma does not refer to landscape elements, such as earth-cellars or some particular trail. But Emma includes the idea that a tourist offer in rural tourism development should embrace service facilities and, in particular, coffee. The coffee houses addressed by Emma are another example of adaptation of a touristic offer to visitor needs, similar to the customised authenticity discussed by Wang (2007). Even though the main attractions of the area are supposed to be the sites of unique intrinsic value, the convenience of the visitor is viewed as being of major importance, according to tourist officer Emma.

## Cultural heritage sites

The professional insights of the antiquarian Carina also contributed to valuing uniqueness in Silenceville. In my second interview with Maria she mentioned Carina who works at the regional history museum. Maria connected Carina to the description of how she got interested in one of the sites in the Silenceville area - a flax-subsistence heritage site. The site consists of a flax-hut (*linbastu*) and a pond. In earlier times, flax was soaked in the water prior to being processed in the flax-hut. Carina had produced a report on the site. When the landowners of the site received the report, they contacted Maria in order to discuss the report. That is how the flax-subsistence heritage site was noticed in the context of the envisioned touristic offer. Later on, the site was renovated: the hut received a new roof and picnic tables with benches were added. Today the site is part of two biking trails with two picnic tables and benches.

Some time after Maria and Carina had made first contact, Carina got in touch with Maria again in order to ask if Maria had knowledge of any earth-cellars in the Silenceville area. Maria posted a Silenceville newsletter asking about earth-cellars and some of the subscribers got back with a positive response. One of the respondents to Maria's newsletter was Ulrika, whose farm owns the twin earth-cellars mentioned in the section on personalised proposition making.

These examples of Emma and Carina highlight that professionalised proposition making has contributed to valuing uniqueness in the Silenceville project. Neither Emma nor Carina live in the Silenceville area; at least this was not mentioned in their interviews or as part of their contribution to the biking project. Emma uses her experience as a tourist officer in order to advise Maria on the importance of coffee houses in the touristic offer. Emma offers her advice as part of the formal reference group of the Silenceville project. Carina writes a report on the flax-subsistence site as part of her work as an antiquarian at the history museum. The report was not intended as support for the development of a touristic offer. However, the report ended up making a contribution to the trails when the owners of the site got hold of the report and shared it with Maria.

The professionalised proposition making can be seen as similar to personalised proposition making. The professionalised proposition making, however, relates to Olsen's (2002: 162) statement: "Authenticity becomes a feature that is attributed and ascribed to some objects and conditions (…) that also produce the motivation for its consumption". While personalised proposition making is explained to originate more from the experience of a private person, the professionalised proposition making can be explained to originate more from professional experience, which may, but not necessarily must, provide a more consumption-based angle on the value of uniqueness.

Yet, it can be argued that it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between personal and professional experiences. Both positions can be united in Dewey's (1939) assumption that valuation propositions are made from a position rooted in some kind of interest. As the example of Carina's report - inspiring the landowners and in prolongation Maria - indicates, also professionalised valuation propositions can lead further to circulated proposition making. The report on the flax-subsistence site could even be regarded as cicerone. The cicerone is in Karpik's (2010) understanding a guide describing features of a singularity, enabling customers to decide what parts of the singularity are of interest. The report was not initially written as a guide to a touristic site, but the report highlights traits of this site that represent a valuation of it. By means of the descriptions in the report, the landowners and Maria gain access to another person's valuation propositions on the site.

The entangledness of the professionalised proposition making by Carina, the landowners of the flax-subsistence site, and the project manager Maria, as well as later on Maria, Carina, and owners of earth-cellars, for example Ulrika, can be described as a network. Ilbery and Saxena (2009: 2251) speak about a "kite network" which is "complex and sustained by exchanges of a varied nature between participants". The contact between Maria as the hub and Carina as well as contributors to the Silenceville project is one example of a kite network. On one hand the contribution by Carina that is spread by word-of-mouth, on the other hand the information that is spread based on Carina's engagement as a professional.

In summary, the examples of Emma and Carina highlight how professionalised positions contribute to valuing uniqueness. The external view in professionalised proposition making offers valuation propositions, partly by means of valuing devices, to the project manager Maria. These valuation propositions, entering from positions other than the residents', give members of the biking project group, including Maria, insight into what the Silenceville area has to offer in view of developing the touristic offer. Without the contributions of Emma and Carina, the biking trails might not have included coffee houses and the flax-subsistence site. The examples of professionalised proposition making have illustrated that uniqueness needs to be actively valued by people in order to rise as value to the end of rural tourism development. The contributions by the professionalised positions of Emma and Carina altered Maria's view on how the touristic offer should be composed, as well as casting light on specific sites for valuation proposition making.

# Summary of chapter 6

The analytical research question of this dissertation is how value creation in a rural tourism development project can be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions. This chapter has presented four positions from which valuation propositions are made: the SWOT-analysis, personalised proposition making, circulated proposition making, and professionalised proposition making.

The first position was a SWOT analysis that was embedded in the Silenceville project plan. I acknowledged the SWOT-analysis as a first position of valuation proposition making because the project manager of the Silenceville project, Maria, mentioned the SWOT-analysis in an interview as an initial step for identifying unique values in Silenceville.

The second position of proposition making that I extracted from the analysis was individual positions. In the interviews with contributors to the biking maps the interviewees relate to their personal history and motivation for addressing particular elements in the Silenceville area as unique. The contributors shared the individual ideas about uniqueness in the area with the project manager Maria. In this way the personalised propositions could contribute as valuation proposition on uniqueness and become part of the touristic offer, the biking maps.

The third position of proposition making I found in circulated proposition making. Some of the valuation propositions made had been circulated in the community for many years. For example, during the interviews many of the contributors to the biking maps told me about Frans, a retired gentleman, who had drawn pictures and also written poems and stories. The illustrations and writings generated by Frans were in the minds of many of the contributors to the biking maps. Arising from a kind of collective memory Maria could integrate these collective valuation propositions into the biking maps.

I found a fourth position of proposition making in profession-based positions. There were two contributors to the biking maps who had a connection to Silenceville project by means of their professional work. The first person, Emma, a tourist officer, pointed out to the project manager Maria that tourists would appreciate indications of coffee houses on the biking trail maps. The other person who contributed with professionalised valuation propositions was an antiquarian at the regional history museum. The antiquarian had written a report on a particular site in the Silenceville area. This triggered the sites' owners and Maria's interest for the place. In the next chapter I will present how valuation propositions were selected and transferred into the fixed touristic offer.

The main findings of this chapter in relation to authenticity are that the personal experiences of participants in the project determine how valuation

propositions are made. The contributors who live in the area refer to their experiences of particular sites as opportunities for the future visitor as well. That means that experience related authenticity was fundamental for the valuation propositions that construct the touristic offer. My conclusion on the relevance of participants' experiences strengthens the statement by Steiner and Reisinger (2006) that host authenticity is a building block to the visitors' experience of authenticity of a toured site. This chapter also highlighted the dynamics between individual, collective and professionalised propositions making. The professionalised proposition making was informed by customised authenticity. Customized authenticity is characterised by striving for object related authenticity while not compromising comfort during the tour (Wang, 2007). In Silenceville this implied, with the visitor in mind valuation propositions were brought up that were expected to serve the visitors' needs apart from experiencing the place as such.

The main findings of this chapter in relation to rural tourism development are the dynamics between collaborators, which can be described as a kite network. A kite network consists of stakeholders that can be described as endogenous and exogenous, insiders and outsiders (Ilbery & Saxena, 2009). In the Silenceville project these dynamics introduced valuation propositions to the touristic offer that were not focused on object related authenticity, but on convenience of the customer, such as adding the coffee houses to the touristic offer. In this chapter, once again, the engagement of participants was presented in the analysis. It can be stressed, once again, that the engagement of people was foundational to the construction of the touristic offer.

*Chapter 7*
# Selecting valuation propositions for the imagined visitor

So far, I have explained how valuation propositions on uniqueness were generated. In this third analysis chapter I will illustrate how the collection of valuation propositions was reduced into a touristic offer by means of selection. The project manager of Silenceville, together with the contributors, imagined a potential visitor to the area. The touristic offer was designed to fit the imagined needs of this visitor. In the following sections I will elaborate on how the visitor was imagined, that is which attributes that were assigned. Further, I will show how the contributors to the Silenceville project engaged in the selection process as visitors to the area. Next, I will elaborate on how the selection of valuation propositions was carried out in relation to other interests in the Silenceville area. Finally, I will explain how the valuation propositions were fixed into the final touristic offer.

## Imagining the visitor

In this section I elaborate on how the project manager Maria and contributors to the biking trails apply the imagined visitor as a guideline for selecting valuation propositions. In my interviews with the Silenceville project manager Maria and contributors to the ten biking trails I asked how the biking project group worked in order to select among points of interest for the ten biking trail maps. None of the interviewees expressed that they had used a clear guideline for selecting among options. The interviewees were, however, speaking about a visitor or group of visitors not yet present. Contributors constructing the touristic offer speaking about visitors not yet present can be viewed in the light of Dewey's (1939: 44) statements that "[g]eneralized ideas of ends and values undoubtedly exist". The objective of attracting visitors to the Silenceville area can be viewed to find an

expression in the abstract notion of the visitors. The Silenceville project plan more formally presents the imagined visitor. The project plan addresses target groups that could be imagined to be spending a stay in the Silenceville area. Maria mentioned one of the target groups - urban families - in the first interview. Other interviewees provide other examples on the visitor imagined. I now present the imagined visitor based on the project plan and give voice to the contributors Maria, Bengt, and Lise.

## Project plan

The Silenceville project plan, published in 2011, presents an inventory of target groups, including "young couples in need of change", "urban families in need of activity", and "couples in need of new impressions" (Silenceville, 2011). The project manager Maria and members of the project group promote the Silenceville project aim of attracting visitors by imagining these specific groups. The end does thus not remain on the general level of attracting visitors, but becomes specifically targeted to a group of visitors in particular. In my first interview with Maria she mentioned the target group "families living in cities".

> First in the project group and at the different meetings, we had ideas about what you offer urban families, how they could get close to farming, but it was not firmly approved, I mean it was only fantasy, but then we noticed Happy Farm, they have really turned their farm into a business … and there were others as well … there are people who have great business ideas and who work into this direction, I mean you can take this further in your imagination (Maria, 2013-07-05).

Maria consciously states that for the time being this target group is imagined, a fantasy. However, the fantasy triggers the process of finding opportunities. Inspired by existing farm businesses, the imagination is turned into a real option. This conclusion is supported by Maria's explanation that the example of the existing farm business – already working with visitors – was a stepping-stone to developing ideas in the context of the Silenceville project. The picture of the target group mirrors how the Silenceville project group values uniqueness. Bruner (1994: 404) concludes that the heritage theme park New Salem in the 1990s is an "idealized community that leaves out the conflict, tension, and dirt of the 1830s". Similarly, the imagined visitor in the Silenceville project is an idealisation of a potential target group in an idealised rural setting.

## Small roads and coffee houses

In my interview with Bengt, he offers another example of the imagined visitor. I asked Bengt (2013-07-25) where his initial idea to construct biking trails in the Silenceville area originated. Bengt explained that he thought visitors could go biking on the small roads in Silenceville area and wanted to take a coffee in the village. He distinguishes between and compares different possibilities for directing the development of the Silenceville project, based on his consideration that you can do a lot of things in the area. But in the interview, he concluded that the visitors would appreciate the small roads for biking and relaxing with a coffee. He added that the small roads should be preferred to the bigger roads. In Bengt's argument, the visitor is imagined as being interested in the recovery and quietness that small roads cater for.

Lise picks up another illustration of the imagined visitor. She reasons about the trail *Lise's favourite* that she has offered support in constructing. When speaking about this trail in the interview she contrasted the exciting elements of the tour with the disadvantage of lacking coffee houses. According to Lise's explanation, the biking trail offers enjoyment, however without offering a coffee stop. In the end, Lise concluded that the trail is still attractive for the visitor. In her judgement the stops along the trail and the road are attractive for the imagined visitor because of the, according to her, unique landscape. Even though the imagined visitor maybe is expected to want to drink coffee, the imagined visitor is also expected to be attracted by the landscape. That is why the trail *Lise's favourite* is expected to satisfy the imagined visitor.

The examples of Lise and Bengt illustrate a dialogue that the two contributors lead with the imagined visitor. The expectations of the visitor are anticipated and in relation to this visitor uniqueness is valued. In relation to authenticity this could be called an expression of customised authenticity, which is authenticity that is adapted to the needs of the visitors (see Wang, 2007). In the case of the Silenceville project, the selection of roads and sites is oriented towards the baseline requirements attributed to the imagined visitor. Or seen the other way around; the image of the visitor itself is turned into a tool for selection. Both small and big roads offer opportunities for creating biking trails. Yet, superimposing the prototype of the visitor imagined facilitates the selection that small roads are preferable.

**Many options**

The selection between various valuation propositions further includes the guideline of appropriateness (*lagom*). This paradigm is underlined by Maria's explanation referring to many more places that could have been included in the biking trails:

> It has helped to identify as many of the places as possible, even if there are incredibly many more places that you could turn into something, but then it was also about designing the biking trails appropriately long, appropriately varying, to offer a feeling of this part of Silenceville, I mean, what is the value right here. (Maria, 2013-07-05)

As there are other places that might have been equally acceptable as points of interest, selection is needed to meet the project's end. Appropriateness is taken as a guideline for the selection made to the variety of options and possibilities considered. As many options were possible the constructedness of the value of uniqueness becomes visible (see Olsen, 2000). The examples of Maria imagining the visitor as member of the target groups anchored in the Silenceville project plan, Bengt imagining the visitor in need of relaxation and in favour of the small roads, and Lise imagining the visitor to be enjoying the landscape, illustrate that the imagined visitor is engaged in order to make judgements about valuation propositions valuing uniqueness. The imagined visitor enables finding trajectories to the end. The fact that Maria and contributors to the biking project make judgements on the basis of the visitor imagined implies that the rural tourism offer is constructed on the basis of a visionary and intangible generalised end. In the next section I will highlight how the project manager Maria and collaborators to the biking project engage sensible knowledge in order to make a selection.


# Engaging as the visitor

In the previous section I illustrated how Maria and collaborators to the ten biking trails imagine the visitor in order to facilitate the selection of valuation propositions. In this section I highlight how this selection is made by engaging sensible knowledge - knowledge evoked by the senses (Strati, 2007) - and how sensible knowledge is applied to select the visitor imagined. The role that senses play in the selection process is emphasised by various interviewees who mention that the trails selected looked and felt all right. Sensible impressions were generated through activities, such as biking and walking. In this section I highlight

Maria and contributors experiencing in the place of the imagined visitor. I engage the example of the inventory that Maria conducts together with Frans, Bengt, Linnea, and Milli.

## View and feeling

In my interviews with Maria she highlighted the importance of the sensible impression of a view. This is particularly illustrated by Maria's description of the inventory tour conducted with Bengt and Frans. Bengt and Frans had planned to take her on a trip to look at Frans' former home. Since the party could not see anything – there was too much snow – they had to return in the following summer for a second trip. That second trip conducted during summer time allowed Bengt and Maria to step out of the car and look at and discover the various sites. Maria described that she had read about sites that were described in a brochure on the area prior to the field trip with Bengt and Frans. However, during the trip she was taken by surprise to find new sites in that landscape.

> There is a book, a booklet, describing the sites, and last spring we were outside with [Frans] … and you could find more. Before I had only read about all these places, … but sometimes you could simply walk an overgrown path in the forest and find, kind of, some stones. It had been a cottage. (Maria, 2013-07-11).

In another interview section, Maria pointed out that sensible experience is needed in order to judge if the road is suitable for tourism:

> Because, I did not know how the roads felt; I mean walking and everything. You almost need to have a physical experience in order to understand if the underground is suitable, right? Is it windy? Is it repetitive? Or is there anything else in it in case it turns repetitive? I mean is there anything else of interest anyway? (Maria, 2013-07-11).

Maria mentioned that the physical experience and its sensible impressions laid the foundation for deciding what to include in the touristic offer. As Wang (1999: 362) claims, "tourism involves a bodily experience of personal authenticity". She reflected on the possibility that biking in windy conditions may be more physically exhausting and that a repetitive landscape may lead to visual exhaustion. Milli also acknowledged that it is necessary to move outdoors in order to arrive at proper judgements. She reflected on the time that they spent outside with biking, looking, and asking questions: "What does it look like? Is it possible to go by bike? How long does it take?" Asking these questions is by Milli described

as essential for their selection. In addition, Milli referred to a process of trial and error, where an internal dialogue and negotiation in the course of the selection takes place. She stated that engaging in the landscape by physical experience, options for roads came up while the final selection emerged eventually. The physical engagement resembles the dance practices that Payne Daniels (1996) highlight as a source of creativity and an authentic experience. It is by active participation and interaction that Linnea, Maria and Milli together shape the value of uniqueness.

## Being outside together

In the interviews with Maria she explained that during the trip Bengt, Frans and Maria paid a spontaneous visit to Linnea. Because Bengt, Frans and herself stopped by at Linnea's place, Maria became acquainted with Linnea. In the second interview with Maria she told me that this visit at Linnea's place had laid the foundation for Linnea taking Maria and Milli on a biking trip in order to show the area. When I spoke to Linnea in a later interview I asked her why she took Maria and Milli on a tour. Linnea recalled:

> I guess I offered to take them on a biking trip, because it was easier than trying to explain that you should go there by bike, I mean, it is impossible. In addition, I liked to do it. That is how it happened. And we stopped by and looked at a lot of different things, flax-huts. And then you tell about the area. And Milli took a lot of pictures. (Linnea, 2013-08-27).

Linnea underlines that going on a trip together was necessary in order to give a proper introduction to the area. She stresses that you cannot explain what you may feel when biking, you actually need to go by bike to learn what you feel. While Linnea is already initiated in the values of the landscape, in order to provide accurate impressions about the surroundings, Linnea makes Maria and Milli see, feel, hear, and listen while using the pedals of the bike, thereby providing them with their own initiation. By letting Maria and Milli participate with their whole body, exposing themselves to sensible impressions, Linnea presents the landscape and possible points of interest to Maria and Milli. In an abstract sense, Maria and Milli gather valuation propositions by means of the experience and become able to make judgements on them according to their experiences. Linnea added that she told Maria and Milli about the sites while being in the landscape. That means that the sensible impressions are enhanced by sharing stories.

## Evolving selection

Milli explained that her notion of the roads differed from Maria's notion. Milli stated that she enjoys the gravel roads, while Maria prefers tarmac roads, particularly in some places.

> I love the gravel roads, because they feel super cosy and nice. In the beginning [Maria and I] had not communicated that much about it. I mainly offered gravel roads as proposals … But after a while we agreed … right here the area can offer tarmac roads. On those it's possible to go biking easily and cleanly, and with almost no traffic. That's what we agreed upon. Nevertheless, we placed some trails on gravel roads. (Milli, 2013-07-24).

This example demonstrates that valuation propositions may not necessarily be compatible, requiring further arguments before making the final decision. In this example, Maria and Milli convene to adjust their arguments in view of the specific purpose. Tarmac roads are introduced to replace gravel roads in this particular trail, the *Ecotrail*. However, gravel roads are adopted for other trails where Maria and Milli considered the gravel roads as being particularly appropriate for the imagined visitor.

Still, Milli remained hesitant in respect to her role in judging which points of interest were included in the maps. While she considered her participation in the inventory, she was unsure to what extent her involvement had led to choosing among valuation propositions. Milli reflected: "No, we have been biking together, stated what could be included [in the trails]. So, well, I guess it depends on how you express it. That is what happened. We went biking together" (Milli, 2013-07-24). Maria, in turn, explained that it was mainly herself who arrived at the final selection of roads and points of interest. Similarly, Sven (2013-08-27) highlighted that Maria had given him and a friend - who had passed away before my fieldwork started - as a task to think about possible places, but that it was Maria who accomplished the final work. But Maria, in turn, stated that the work was completely dependent on the contributions made by people who wanted to contribute. Going biking together and experiencing was one of the aspects that pushed the development of the touristic offer. The fact that Milli couldn't recall exactly how the selection of places of interest went about illustrates that emerging authenticity may be obscured in a lengthy process that not necessarily needs to follow a strict authoritative agenda. In the next section I will address that some of the valuation propositions were excluded from the touristic offer, as these were imagined having impacts that would compromise other interests in the Silenceville area.

# Limiting the visitor

In the Silenceville project, the imagined visitor is also expected to have impacts on the Silenceville area. In order to deal with unwanted impacts, limitations are set in the development of the touristic offer. Such limitations become visible through stakeholders' resistance to include certain valuation propositions in the biking maps. In the interviews I found several examples of boundaries being discussed between Maria and stakeholders. In this section I use the examples of Ulrika's parents' cattle, the stork and game pasture, landowners and hiking trails, tourism competing with tourism, and finally Lise's favourite trail and the angry dog.

## Cattle

In my second interview with Maria, I asked her who had contributed to the trails. When it comes to the trail *Steel hat* Maria explained that Ulrika had helped her. In my interview with Ulrika later on, Ulrika explained that Maria had asked to include a point of interest to the *Steel hat* map, a point that is situated on a patch that is used for grazing of Ulrika's parents' cattle. Because of the cattle Ulrika, the landowner, had concerns about visitors walking to the site Steel hat by themselves. Referring to her parents' cattle, she explained:

> And then, the problem is, my parents have cattle. Cattle are not a problem as such, but we prefer people not to walk out there on their own. I mean close to the animals. That does not feel okay. That is why, when Maria asked, I said I could be added as a contact person, then I could take [the visitors] out there. Of course, we need to wait and see how much work it will turn out to be. (Ulrika, 2013-07-23).

Ulrika agrees in principle to Maria's idea of Steel hat as a site of interest for the imagined visitor. However, Ulrika identifies a conflict between visitors walking to the point of interest alone and the grazing cattle. The conflict can be understood as arising from two registers of valuing. Heuts and Mol (2013) highlight that registers of valuing may be conflicting. Here one register of valuing is represented by Maria who pushes for expanding the trail *Steel hat* to a particular point of interest. Another register of valuing is represented by Ulrika who is doubtful towards including this point of interest because of the animals. In the conversation between Maria and Ulrika a compromise is reached, which can combine interests from both registers. Maria and Ulrika agree that the point of interest is included as a detour from the main trail. The road to the point of interest is indicated with

a dotted line. The description attached to the point of interest tells the reader that this point of interest should not be visited without getting in touch with Ulrika. Ulrika's mobile phone number is included in the text. In the example of the trail *Steel hat* the interests of both registers of valuing could be combined as touristic access was limited. In this case the registers of valuing were not mutually exclusive. Maria and Ulrika could find a solution in an intersection between the two registers.

## Storks and game

In the second interview with Maria she mentioned other examples where she could find a compromise to combine the registers of valuing of developing the touristic offer and other interests. The first example concerned a stork nest that was situated on a private ground. Maria said that she received a phone call from the person in charge of the storks. When Maria explained to the person that the visitors would only pass by and not enter the private property the person was satisfied. Maria recalls: "Most important was the argument that visitors would not be coming to her home and looking at the storks from close by. But passing by on the road was not a problem. So, this was solved. But of course, it is super important" (Maria, 2013-07-11). The second example concerned the owners of a game pasture. Maria wanted to include the site in order to let people watch the animals. The owners of the game pasture were not concerned about the game pasture being included as point of interest. However, according to Maria, they said that they might have to raise a fee if the visitors created additional workload. In both examples an intersection between the registers of valuing is identified and a compromise allowing for either use is achieved.

## Landowner veto

The interviews with Maria, Ulrika, and Linnea also show examples where valuation propositions were dismissed. Linnea, who owns exotic animals, offers one example. In my interview with Linnea, she explained that Maria had asked if she could include the animals as a point of interest. Linnea, however, was doubtful about people coming close to her home only to watch the animals and turn again. That is why the animals were not included as a point of interest. Similarly, there were landowners who were not in support of installing trails on their land. Initially, the Silenceville project aimed at constructing hiking trails as well as biking trails. However, the hiking trails never came into existence, because of the difficulties to get the landowners' consent. In my second interview with Maria she

expressed that some of the landowners disapproved of the idea of hiking trails and said: "At that point we let go of the idea" (Maria, 2013-07-11). Also, a possible road for one of the biking trails was excluded for similar reasons. Ulrika further details: "Originally, Maria wanted to draw it around the bog, but it was difficult because of the many landowners involved" (Ulrika, 2013-07-23). The competing registers of valuing connected to rural tourism in Silenceville and the landowner's perspective resulted in a disconnection between both. Concluding from Ulrika's remark, it can be assumed that the landowner register of valuing is of general character: Landowners are viewed as not easily convinced to put their land at use for the purpose of tourism. As no resolution between the differing registers of valuing is achieved, the valuation propositions connected to some parts of the area were abandoned.

## Tourists impacting

In the first interview with Maria, she also mentioned that an increase of tourism in the area could compromise uniqueness. Maria explained that an increase in the number of tourists might imply a risk to the intrinsic value. The intrinsic values, however, are the core of the attraction of the Silenceville area.

> I mean an area that is to that degree unknown, with so little traffic, and this also implies a risk. How can we deal with increasing tourism if the unique values rest on the absence of motor traffic? Not having so much commerce? How, then, can we create attraction for tourism? How can we deal with that? I mean – it's a challenge. (Maria, 2013-07-05).

Maria draws attention to a paradox that arises once tourism develops in the context of Silenceville. Maria reflects that increased positive response that is increased tourism may conflict with the end in itself. The more tourists that will enter the area, the higher the risk that they may impose on the environment, and thus deplete what has been valued for the touristic offer. Two registers of valuing in rural tourism are established: One towards the end of becoming a sought-after tourist destination, the second dealing with the consequences after having been turned into such a destination. The creation of awareness and the understanding of possible risks and threats allow setting boundaries and thus defining valuation propositions compliant with 'sustainable use'.

The dialogue regarding a selection of valuation propositions that are a feasible compromise between different interests connects into the discussions about staged authenticity. MacCannell (1973) initially raised the question on the attractiveness of front-stages and back-stages, claiming that hosts provided artificial back-stages

in order to secure privacy while offering flair of exclusiveness to visitors. Daugstad Kirchengast (2013) exemplify MacCannell's argument at the case of farm tourism enterprises that actively created back-stages, but removed the most private elements from these back-stages. In the case of Silenceville, the visitor is directed to enter some parts of the area while other parts are left out in the selection of valuation propositions. The reasons for leaving out possibly valuable sites are among others privacy, sensitivity of certain types of land use and security of the visitor.

### The angry dog

In my interview with Lise, she explained that one road needed to be excluded because of an angry dog. Because of the angry dog being on a property next to the road, the road is impossible to use. Lise explained:

> It is actually possible to shortcut. Here in the middle is a road. Unfortunately, the guy on the farm, here next to the road, owns an aggressive dog. It's crazy and as long as it is there no one wants to go there. Not even those who live in the area. That is why I would not recommend it to tourists. But it's a shame, because it's a really very beautiful area. (Lise, 2013-07-23)

This quote reveals the disqualification of a valuation proposition – here an outstandingly beautiful road. While the road is assumed to be beautiful, the imagined visitor in mind is assumed not to be satisfied with the angry dog. The example of Maria speaking to the landowners illustrates that the imagined visitor is used as a guideline to select valuation propositions - as in the example offered by Lise about the angry dog.

In this section I used Heuts and Mol's (2013) notion of registers of valuing in order to analyse how valuation propositions are judged. From the interview material I could extract examples that illustrate that the registers of valuing that the Silenceville project is establishing by constructing the touristic offer of ten biking trails requires dialogue with stakeholders in the Silenceville area, who follow other interests than developing a touristic offer. Landowners had concerns about for example cattle, storks, game pasture, or hikers passing cross their land.

As a result, the touristic offer of Silenceville highlights the area in one particular story, which might be told differently. Overend (2012: 51) explains this at the example of a guided tour: "It is, however, a particular sort of story because not only does it take place within the simultaneity, it also explicitly refers to the other stories that are present at the site". The selection of points of interest made, thus, might be described also to speak for those points not described. In the case of

Ulrika's parents' cattle, the dotted line leading to the site on the map, and the request to get in touch, establish a close connection between the visitor, the touristic activity, and other ongoing economic activity at the site. This close connection offers some insight into the process of negotiating value creation and the compromise found. In the next section I go on to explain how valuation propositions are finally integrated into the touristic offer.

# Fixing valuation propositions on uniqueness

In the previous section I have dealt with Maria leading a dialogue with other stakeholders in the Silenceville area and discussing boundaries for the touristic offer. This section highlights how the valuation propositions are finally fixed and presented as ten biking maps. The Silenceville biking project has generated material that aligns to Karpik's (2010) notions of the "confluence". Confluences are valuing devices that are applied to guide potential customers to the offer; the cicerone is characterised as a valuing device that presents selected information about singularities (Karpik, 2010). The ten maps of the biking trails are available online as pdf-version and also as a printed folder. The maps match the valuing devices of confluence and cicerone as the maps include a selection of points of interest to see in the Silenceville area.

### Anchoring in maps

The maps present the touristic offer of the Silenceville project. Each of the ten maps displays a geographical section of the Silenceville area with a marked trail starting and ending at the same stop. The trails are between 7 and 22 km in length and contain between three and eight stops at points of interest. Each of the points of interest is marked with a number and related description. Some of the points of interest are displayed on several maps. The flax-hut in the trail *Lise's favourite* is also included in the trail dedicated to the flax-hut, called *Flax hut*. The Lake as point of interest is included in the maps *Church* and *Superpower*.

The trail *Lise's favourite* as an example includes several points of interest that might be sorted as intrinsic values. The trail stretches over 11 km with four stops included. The first stop is at a flax-hut, the second one at a place connected to a tragic real-life murder-story, the third stop is at the remainders of an earth-cellar, and stop four is in an old beech alley formerly used for livestock feeding. The trail *Lise's favourite* also highlights the reverse values. In the descriptions attached to

the map it says: "Lise's favourite does not include coffee-houses or anything to buy". In the description the visitor is given notice of the fact that no service is provided. The description pre-empts disappointment of the visitor that may arise from the lack of coffee houses. The text, however, also highlights an opportunity that may spring from that lack. As this notice is placed first in the trail description it signals a positive momentum to the visitor. The visitor can interpret that she or he will be alone and in a position to decide where to take a break. This positive momentum is further reinforced by the trail's title "Lise's favourite". The title suggests advantages and may imply that these are possibly linked to the absence of coffee houses. In conclusion, as the description of the trail actively mentions the lack of service in a strategic place, a reverse value is made attractive. The biking maps also contain complementary values. The biking map titled *The Cannibal*, for instance, includes a stop at a Cannibal museum run by Titus, and service facilities in the central village, including a coffee house, are mentioned in the description. The biking map on the trail *The Stork* includes a coffee house, the Cannibal museum once more, and a local museum as possible complementary values. In these generalisations Waitt (2000: 858) identifies the potential to cut "off other versions of history". Yet, these examples altogether highlight that the selection needs the active involvement of people, such as Maria, Bengt, and Lise. It is only because of selection taking place that valuation propositions can be taken a step further and be delimited in the dialogue with the imagined visitor.

## Shifting values into one

The amalgam of intrinsic values, reverse values, and complementary values is summarised into one coherent unit, as the maps are equipped with a title. By fixating previous valuation propositions into a map, including intrinsic, reverse, and complementary values, and positioning these values on the same level, a shift takes place. The differentiation between intrinsic values, reverse values and complementary values, that might have been found initially, is dissolved. As this shift takes place, the process of valuation of uniqueness is closed, and no further valuation propositions can enter the touristic offer presented on the maps. The maps are free from considerations of what should be included; that is, cutting off further options of valuation propositions. In other words, the maps are a result of valuation propositions no longer considered as options, but considered as facts.

The shift of fixing and presenting the final touristic offer in the form of a map with points of interest may be interpreted as the point in time where commodification takes place. Connected to commodification, Schnell (2003: 66) highlights that "[t]here is no question that commercialisation unalterably changes

the culture it aims to celebrate, promote and sell, and that these changes can be harmful, benign, or helpful". Schnell (2003) considers the many paths of development that are possible when commodification takes place, concluding that both these processes may have both upsides and downsides. In the case of Silenceville, the material does not allow any conclusions about the possible impacts of commodification in the area. The main part of the fieldwork did not embrace the perspective of visitors that would visit the area based on the maps.

The notion of imagining the visitor as a way forward to anchoring valuation propositions into a touristic offer once more highlights that uniqueness for rural tourism development is not readily available. From a practical perspective, such "closing off" of versions of history may be necessary where a visitor is supposed to enter a site and leave with an experience of its history. That means while the selection is an authoritative act, it is also a creative act of shaping and presenting a value. Connected to the issue of building authenticity, Cole (2007: 956) concludes that commodification has built "identity and pride" into a rural community. In other words, the judgement of particular valuation propositions for the construction of a touristic offer is not necessarily either good or bad just because it is present.

# Summary of chapter 7

The analytical research question of this dissertation is how value creation in a rural tourism development project can be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions. This chapter has presented how valuation propositions are selected and fixed into the touristic offer.

In the analysis I found, first, that the interviewees did not come up with clear explanations on how the selection was made. Rather many of the contributors explained that they had had some ideas on what would be appreciated by the visitor. The answers by the project manager Maria and the contributors to the trails indicated that there had not been strict guidelines on how to select valuation propositions towards the construction of the touristic offer. In my interpretation of the interviews I call the guideline for selections made the imagined visitor. Based on the imagined visitor I explain how the valuation propositions were processed and transformed into the touristic offer. In the analysis presented in the following sections I highlight how the visitor is imagined.

Secondly, I analysed how the project manager Maria and contributors to the ten biking trails used sensible knowledge, which is sensible impressions, in order to make a selection of valuation propositions. Maria and other interviewees

explained that they needed to be outdoors and look at the landscape and experience the landscape. It is by imagining the visitor outdoors or imagining being the visitor outdoors that enabled Maria and the collaborators to select among valuation propositions and construct the touristic offer of the ten biking trails.

Thirdly, I found that the imagined visitor was also imagined having an impact on the Silenceville area. With the impact of the imagined visitor in mind, Maria selected valuation propositions in dialogue with stakeholders of the Silenceville area. These stakeholders are not necessarily active contributors to the ten biking trails. The stakeholders addressed in the interview material are mainly landowners in charge of livestock or wildlife. In particular in my interviews with Maria it shows how the imagined visitor is expected to have an impact and how Maria discusses with landowners to find a solution that fits both the touristic offer and the landowner interests.

Fourthly, I explained that the final selection of valuation propositions is fixed into the ten biking trail maps. In the instance where the selection is visualised with a set collection of points of interest, the touristic offer is fixed into the maps. As long as there are valuation propositions that could become part of the touristic offer, the valuation of uniqueness is not fixed. As soon as the maps are ready and printed there are not options but a set selection available. That is where the touristic offer is readily constructed.

The main finding of this chapter in relation to authenticity is that the selection of valuation propositions mirrors emergent authenticity (see Cohen, 1988; Bruner, 1994). With the imagined visitor in mind a selection is initiated in experiencing valuation propositions. At some points, however, this selection is not made in a clear process, but partly without exactly knowing how the selection occurred. Further emergent authenticity is mirrored in the dialogue that is necessary before including some of the valuation propositions. Some valuation propositions are altered, others dismissed.

The main finding from this chapter in relation to rural tourism development is that valuation propositions towards the end of tourism may contradict other ends, as was earlier claimed by McAreavey and McDonagh (2011). That is why the claims by Ilbery and Saxena (2009) that rural tourism development would be a given option for stimulating economic activity and quality of life in rural areas require a second thought. Concluding from this chapter there is no local resource that can be expected to be ready to use in the purpose of rural tourism development.

*Chapter 8*

# Promoting valuation propositions in the touristic offer

The earlier analysis chapters illuminated how valuation propositions were made and selected. In this chapter I explain how valuation propositions are promoted, now as they are fixed into the touristic offer. Here the analysis builds on printed and digital material, such as a tourism brochure, a blog post, and newspaper articles. I will discuss promotion of valuation propositions upon the question of commodification. Waitt (2000) is critical of commodification efforts that cut alternative versions of the authentic site. Schnell (2003) has mentioned that commodification not necessarily needs to have negative consequences. Cole (2007) concludes that commodification can even have positive effects on a community. In the following I will discuss whether alternative versions of authenticity have been cut in Silenceville and if positive effects can be concluded from the material. The chapter contains two main sections, one that deals with promotion by ambassadorship and one that deals with promotion by activating the visitor. In this chapter I explain how ambassadors of the Silenceville project promote valuation propositions that are fixed in the touristic offer of the ten biking maps. I relate the argument to one tourist brochure entry that displays the ten biking trails, one blog post of the Silenceville project blog, and newspaper articles that were retrieved in the online version.

# Ambassadors for the fixed valuation propositions

## Interview in tourist brochure

In the Silenceville project single persons act as ambassadors for the biking trails. One example of an ambassador is the dissertation author's own participation in the promotion of the trails. The author was asked by the project manager to provide an interview for a regional tourism brochure. The interview was printed in the 2014 issue of the regional tourism brochure (picture 1).



**Picture 1**
Ambassador leaning on the bike

The first sentence of the article claims: "Manuela Kronen from Lund is one of those who have biked all of the ten biking trails in Silenceville" (Regional brochure, 2014). This first sentence provides the information that Silenceville offers ten biking trails and offering an example of one person who has accomplished all trails. The picture of the person, leaning on a bike, suggests reality and correctness of the claim. The article further highlights core information on the trails, like their length and the availability of the maps. In a citation in the brochure article I am given voice: "varied nature and culture landscape; the winding roads with almost no traffic, coniferous and deciduous trees, living agriculture with animals grazing". The interview was edited by the project manager, which means that the project manager was free to choose quotes and to highlight what fits in the profile of Silenceville.

Waitt (2000: 858) cautions at the example of an Australian heritage site: "The main danger of this official, commodified interpretation and representation is that it closes off other versions of history. Tourists are unable to negotiate the meanings of a site's past because buried in the redevelopment process are the vernacular histories of indigenous peoples…" Waitt is speaking about a site with high visitor numbers that also is iconic for the Australian heritage. Hence, the site Waitt is analysing is rather different from the attraction of a rural area in southern Sweden. Nevertheless, the question that Waitt raises is relevant for the rural tourism development process of Silenceville. In the regional tourism brochure an image of Silenceville is promoted. The attributes connected to Silenceville belong to the fixed selection. In the article there is no longer a dialogue on valuation propositions going on. An agreed upon version of the area is presented as the only possibility. In that sense, Waitt's concern that marketing of one version potentially silences alternative versions applies to Silenceville.

## The Silenceville blog

In connection with trail opening events individual ambassadors embedded in the community promoted the touristic offer. The Silenceville blog provides a blog post reporting on one of the trail opening events, the opening connected to the trail *Frans*. It is the trail that was constructed in collaboration with Linnea. In the blog post it is expressed that Linnea and her sister inaugurated the biking trail. The blog post underlines: "In August we were guided by the sisters Linnea and Clara Carlsson who grew up here" (Silenceville blog, 2014-09-08). The quote highlights that the opening of the biking trail is connected to a pair of sisters, adding their names. By stressing that the sisters have grown up in the area, the significance of their competence as guides is underlined. Further, the blog post mentions that the sisters' guided tour is based to a great extent on the local storyteller Frans. That is also the reason why the biking trail is called *Frans*. The following two ambassadors lead opening events: Titus, owner of the museum, inaugurated the trail *The Cannibal*. A local who has authored a book on the history and landscape of the same trail guided the trail opening of the trail *Lise's favourite*. Cole's (2007) conclusion that commodification may enhance the community can be considered in the context. It is sisters Linnea and Clara who act as guides and who contribute with their knowledge. Being listened to and sharing may be part of this pride. As Linnea shared in the interview I conducted with her, she does take pride in telling about her surroundings to those who are interested.

## Newspaper articles

In the printed and digital material ambassadorship is also exercised collectively. The blog post describing the trail opening of *Superpower* (the same blog post describing the opening of the trail *Frans*) displays pictures of the group posing with bikes in front of the local museum. The museum is called Superpower, thus, lending its name to the trail. The group is depicted with participants standing properly in a row. The bikers have their bikes close and are smiling friendly. Accordingly, the picture displays a group of bikers who are enjoying the trip to a local history museum. Such photographs transfer the message that the valuation propositions manifested by the map offer an experience worthwhile. Here, not one single person, but a whole group of people, underlines the conveyed message.

Furthermore, collective ambassadorship surfaces in newspaper articles on the Silenceville biking project. In July 2013, a participant observation was carried out at a press meeting with a regional newspaper. Before the press meeting, the collective of ambassadors met and rehearsed what should be said to the journalist. The press meeting took place at the Steel hat site and refreshments were taken while the journalist conducted the interview. The meeting closed with a photo shooting, in which biking was staged. The resulting newspaper article showed pictures of a small group of people going by bike. The first sentence of the article is formulated as follows: "Winding trails in beautiful cultural landscape waiting for explorers" (Regional newspaper, 2013-07-30). Again, the cultural landscape with its beauty, a valuation propositions anchored in the maps, is offered to the visitor. Voices from the community add to the picture of the beautiful cultural values. Maria is quoted: "We agreed that this area should be explored by bike. It is so silent and calm and little traffic" (Maria; Regional newspaper, 2013-07-30). Ulrika adds: "I hope people will realise the values and beautiful nature in this area" (Ulrika; Regional newspaper, 2013-07-30). The newspaper article presents the community of Silenceville as ambassadors for the ten biking trails. Some of the ambassadors are quoted in the newspaper with quotations highlighting the valuation propositions anchored in the maps.

Later newspaper articles highlight once again that collective ambassadorship promotes the touristic offer fixed in the maps. In a newspaper article from May 2014, Maria is quoted: "We created ten trails passing through a varied and calm landscape" (Regional newspaper, 2014-05-18). Again, an addition by Ulrika is cited: "The area becomes more easily accessible due to this project. And those who have lived here for a long time, as well as those who newly moved here, get the chance to discover the great nature and culture in the close-by area" (Regional newspaper, 2014-05-18). A newspaper article from July 2015 again quotes Maria: "[t]he area provides a lot of small roads and beautiful nature. By offering maps

and descriptions of the trails, we hope to raise awareness of this place" (Maria; Regional newspaper, 2015-07-11); and Lise agrees on the attractiveness of the area: "It was an honour to lend my name to my favourite route. It contains forest, open landscape and I like to go biking and experiencing nature" (Lise; Regional newspaper, 2015-07-11). All these quotations are voices of ambassadors who express their support for the ten biking trails in the Silenceville area. Ilbery and Saxena (2009: 2250-2252) highlight the "kite network". This network describes the collaboration between close relations and more professional stakeholders. The collaboration between the ambassadors with the newspapers is one example of the kite network. In the case of Silenceville, this network helps to connect the Silenceville project with a wider context in order to communicate the touristic offer.

Once again, in Silenceville, single persons are used in order to spread the word-of-mouth. The ambassadors for Silenceville can be interpreted as getting into a role on behalf of the cause for rural tourism development. Slipping into a role may be similar to the observations made by Kim and Jamal (2007: 192) about festival participants: "For some, the perceived change of self through costuming and role-playing has a real effect on the way they see themselves outside the festival". Kim and Jamal, thus, indicate that role taking has an effect on people. In the case of Silenceville, the participation in the construction of the touristic offer of Silenceville may influence the self-understanding of these very participants. The examples of the ambassadors show how uniqueness is valued in promotional activity. In the next section I explain how the visitor is activated by means of the biking maps and trail opening events.


# Addressing the visitor

In this section I explain how the trail maps with descriptions as well as invitations to the trail opening events aim at addressing the visitor. In this part of the analysis I relate to two valuing devices described by Karpik (2010): confluence and cicerone. The confluence is a valuing device geared for directing customers; the maps and advertisement for the trail opening events are examples of confluences. The cicerone is a valuing device that reviews singularities for customers; and descriptions attached to the trail maps offer such reviews that make the landscape accessible to the customer in a reviewed fashion. This section first elaborates on how the visitor is activated by means of the maps; and secondly, how the visitor is addressed by means of the advertisement for the trail opening events and newspaper articles.

## The biking maps

The maps and descriptions as physical tools give access to the experience. Depicting the area in an abstract way in the map with signed trails, the visitor is guided in a vast network of roads to specific, particularly appealing roads. By means of the map the experience is channelled towards the points of interest. Further, the descriptions attached to the points of interest provide guidance in how the sites are to be understood. The knowledge having been passed on to the project manager in valuation propositions is now passed on to the visitor. Even though each visitor will experience the landscape individually, for each site a certain way of understanding is proposed by signing the paths of movement and adding valuation propositions to the sites. Thereby the visitor is addressed to discover the touristic offer.

Maria expressed in the interview that the maps needed to be "super-clear" in order to work for the visitor (Maria, 2013-07-11). The resulting maps show the marked trails in colour with big numbers. Parts of the descriptions linked to the numbers are formulated as to talk to the visitor imperatively, for example on the trail map for *Lise's favourite*: "Take the path indicated by the sign and you will find a building used in the beginning of the 20th century, used to prepare flax". The visitor is personally addressed in the descriptions and encouraged to be active following a pre-set move that is in this case to "take the path indicated by the sign". Hence, the maps are communicative means to reach out to the visitor and to guide the visitor's activity.

Apart from the trails with descriptions of the culture sites, the written text links to service offers. Telephone numbers are added for museums, guided tours, and contact persons. Homepages are also announced with links. The homepage of Silenceville is included in the footer of the maps with more information being accessible on the web page. The printed folder presenting all ten biking trails includes a picture of a waitress serving food. In summary, the maps function as cicerone and confluence as they guide the visitors to the sites of attraction and link further to places of consumption.

The section "Limiting the visitor" highlighted differing registers of valuing. In several examples, differences could be resolved by using an intersection identified between the two registers of valuation. The maps account for these intersections and they are also described and depicted. The solution to the conflict between tourist visits and ecological conservation as detailed for the stork nest is accounted for in the description of this point of interest on the trail *The Stork*: "Please respect that it is a private property, enjoy the view from the road". Visitors are given notice of the stork nest being positioned on a private property; the visitors are encouraged to enjoy the view from the road. In other words, the boundaries set in the dialogue

between the project manager and the responsible person for the storks has been transferred towards the visitor by means of the description.

Similarly, the solution between tourists walking over pasture and land-use of grazing cattle is included in the map. On the map *Steel hat* the path towards the site is marked as a detour from the main trail by using a broken line. The description explains: "The area is grazed by cattle during the summer, that is why we recommend getting in touch with the owner Ulrika [her cell phone number] for a guided tour". Here, the compromise reached is presented as a recommendation. By offering a name and telephone number, with encouragement to ask for a guided walk, the recommendation is emphasised. Also, the safety aspect is accounted for in descriptions. For example, warnings to enter one of the earth-cellars as it may collapse, are included.

The fixed touristic offer might impose power on the visitors, as would mirror Waitt's (2000) perspective. According to Waitt (2000), authenticity might be problematic if the tourists are not encouraged to shape the interpretation of the site. They are, though, provided with a ready-made interpretation. Schnell (2003: 66) offers a moderate perspective on the consequences of fixed interpretations: "There is no question that commercialisation unalterably changes the culture it aims to celebrate, promote, and sell, and that these changes can be harmful, benign, or helpful". Potentially, visitors can enter the area in a new fashion, enjoy and contribute to the economy as they spend their money. At the same time, catering for access indicates that changes are ongoing, with consequences that are not easy to estimate.


## Advertisement of trail opening events

The visitor is addressed by invitations to attend biking trail openings. The announcement of trail opening events is printed on an A4 sheet framed in the graphic profile of Silenceville. The trail opening advertisement for the summer of 2015 includes three opening events. For each of the events a headline is provided, complemented by an inviting text, place and date. The advertisement encourages people's participation. By organising an event with a set date and place, offering a guide, the potential visitor is assured that she or he can experience uniqueness in the Silenceville area. Organised as a guided tour it is made sure that the trip will provide the aspired experience. Consequently, the trail opening events are a confluence to guide visitors' activity to experience what the Silenceville area offers.

In addition, the two newspaper articles mentioned above encourage the active participation of the potential visitor in exploring the unique cultural values of the Silenceville area. The article from July 2013 states: "It is aspired that people in the

close-by area and tourists from outside are offered opportunity to experience the area in a new fashion. Those who want to go on a trip simply need to print the maps on the Silenceville homepage. Every map is complemented by a text-document that tells about interesting sites along the way" (Regional newspaper, 2013-07-30). People from the area close by and tourists are addressed to explore the area in a new fashion. The addition "simply" print the maps available at Silenceville homepage not only encourages to render a visit to Silenceville, but also underlines the easiness of its accessibility.

The newspaper article from May 2014 announces the inauguration of three of the ten biking trails during the summer. The dates of the planned trail opening events are added in the footer. It is underlined that the trail opening events are tailored as a joint activity of and for the community. However, the trails are designed as a tool to expand the tourists' interest and stay beyond the inauguration events as suggested by providing the link to the Silenceville homepage. The article from July 2015 provides similar information, mentioning the trail opening of the trail *The Cannibal*. All newspaper articles point out opportunities for visitors to experience uniqueness individually or as a group. Printing the maps, which are easily available on the Internet, or joining a guided tour adds guiding invitations for the visitor. The activation of the visitor takes the ambassadors' message one step further. While the ambassadors state "we can do it" the message in activating the visitor is extended into "and so can you!"

The issue of activating the visitor is connected to the issue of authenticity in what Kim and Jamal (2007: 192) find: "A sense of unique selfhood is constructed through the public attention perceived by respondents as endorsing the extended self". Kim and Jamal highlight that authenticity of a site, setting or self-understanding is constructed when the attempted authenticity is observed by spectators from the outside. Engaging in marketing activity that aims at directing potential visitors' eyes on Silenceville, thus, can be a means to enhance the touristic offer.


# Summary of chapter 8

The analytical research question of this dissertation is how value creation in a rural tourism development project can be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions. This chapter has presented how valuation propositions that are fixed into the touristic offer are promoted.

The first aspect is ambassadorship of people who have tested the touristic offer by themselves and now offer their testimony of the trails. In this section a brochure

article, a blog post and newspaper articles are employed as material. In this section I have described that valuation propositions are fixed into a touristic offer. Subsequently I have discussed whether fixing a touristic offer has a consequence of excluding further interpretations or not.

The second part of this chapter was dedicated to analysing the promotion of valuation propositions as addressing the visitors. For example, addressing visitors is mirrored in the biking trail maps with descriptions of speaking in imperative voice and offering telephone numbers to service facilities. Visitors are also addressed by advertisement for trail opening events that are open for the public. The discussion raises the question if the imperative voice might be a means to exert power over the potential visitors. The next and final analysis chapter will offer additional perspectives on the question if the new- and re-interpretation of the area has finally come to an end or if new valuation propositions could enter the process of value creation.

The main conclusion of this chapter regarding authenticity is that experience related authenticity in the host perspective seems to benefit the promotion of the touristic offer. By means of ambassadorship valuation propositions are strengthened and spread. This conclusion mirrors Cole's (2007) statement that rural tourism development may enhance the locals' pride. Also, the question of commodification has been raised in this chapter. The analysis does not offer any indications of commodification leading to either positive or negative consequences in the research area.

The main conclusion of this chapter regarding rural tourism development is that the kite network, as described by Ilbery and Saxena (2009), is applied in the promotion of valuation propositions. In the case of Silenceville ambassadors, brochures, newspapers and a blog were part of this kite network. An interface between the touristic offer and potential visitors has been established.

*Chapter 9*

# Confirming valuation propositions in guided tours

In this chapter I analyse guided biking tours and how these guided tours open up for visitors to contribute to the interpretations of authenticity. I frame the guided tour as a way of expressing and generating the value of authenticity. I lead the discussion into existential and host authenticity predominantly relating to Wang (1999) and Stephenson Shaffer (2004). I draw the conclusion that the guided tours are a means to confirm valuation propositions in the touristic offer. This chapter consists of four parts, where the first part concentrates on the guided tour. The second part looks closer on shared touristic experiences, the third on social repercussions, and the fourth on a new advertisement, a reinterpretation, of one site in the area.

## The guided tour

In this section I investigate the guided tours that spring from the touristic offer. Gomez et al. (2003: 101) claim that doing elevates knowing: "[W]hen creating new knowledge we build sense out of a new situation and enhance our potential to act in a new situation". Accordingly, the guided tours executed in the trail opening events express and generate understandings of uniqueness in the Silenceville area. In this section I, first, focus on the guide and the participants more generally. Secondly, I use the example of Titus holding the inauguration ceremony at the Cannibal museum. In the example of Titus, I explain how the guided tour can be interpreted as a confirmation of the values that are embedded into the touristic offer.

## The guide and the guided

During all three of the trail opening events I find that the guide leading the tour is standing up in front of respective points of interest and telling about the site. In the trail opening event of *Flax hut*, for example, the project manager Maria, and in this instance also guide Maria, stands in front of the group at the point of interest. The point of interest is a newly created patch of flax-cultivation, which, by the way, is also an achievement of the Silenceville project. Maria is posing in front of the group and explaining how flax is cultivated and processed from harvesting to cloth. As the picture shows, Maria is alone in the place from where she speaks about the flax-cultivation (see picture 2). She stands in the spot of the guide and enacts the role of the guide. From this position she shares the information connected to the point of interest. The point of interest, being valued and selected as a valuation proposition anchored in the trail map of Flax hut, is embodied by the activity of the guide.

Overend (2012) highlights how guided tours contribute to place construction. He mentions: "As guided tours come into contact with these constantly changing places, it is important that the tour itself is understood as a performative, relational process which contributes to the creation of the places that it visits" (Overend, 2012: 53). Applying Overend's statement on the guided tour in Silenceville, the area of Silenceville can be considered as constantly changing. The performance of the guide offers a temporarily fixed interpretation of the points and area visited.

Also, at the trail opening event of the trail *Lise's favourite* I find the guide standing in front of the group. At one stop, for example, the guide stands on a rock and speaks to the group. In an elevated position, the information about the point of interest is shared with the participants. The guide is pointing and speaking while the others listen. Both guides thus generate an embodied confirmation of the valuation propositions as they stand up with their whole person and their voice to give a testimony of the valuation propositions that is anchored in the map as part of the touristic offer.

**Picture 2**
Maria pointing at the flax cultivation

The participants in their turn embody the role of the visitors who are listening to the guides. Returning to the inauguration of the trail *Flax hut*, the participants listen to the guide's story of the flax cultivation (see picture 3). Some of the participants have been working in agriculture their whole life; close to the visited site of flax-cultivation. Even though some of the farmers are familiar with the area, the phenomenon of a flax-cultivation is new to some of them. The participants listen to the guide and also pose questions to the guide. A question that one of the participants asks is how much fabric this patch of flax is likely to produce. Another question asked is how flax-cultivations need to be weeded. Maria answers the questions to the best of her ability with additional support from the group. In the instance where Maria is guiding and speaking she confirms the valuation propositions orally to the audience. At the event the audience is displaying that the conveyed information is accepted. Some participants even ask questions, such as the question about weed in the flax-cultivation, which can be interpreted as an attempt to deepen the understanding of the valuation propositions.

**Picture 3**
Group gathering in order to listen

The confirmation of the valuation propositions takes place in the interaction between the guide and the participants. While the guide confirms the propositions on paper by giving expression with the entire body and voice, participants receive the confirmation being present with their whole body and listening. The participants have taken their bikes to the site, having used their own physical power to get there. They have parked the bikes and walked the remaining meters to the flax-cultivation. Having approached, they look at the flax, listen to the story told by Maria, perhaps feel the flax-plants in their hands, and engage by asking additional questions. Stephenson Shaffers (2004: 141) perspective that "authenticity is not found in objects or places, but in the body and its interactions and contexts" can be considered. While the tour guides point at objects and places in the Silenceville area, the embodied practice of guiding and being guided make the values manifest to those who participate. Perhaps, authenticity is not confirmed as being true in the original sense, but a story is truly conveyed and received.

## Kava ceremony

At the trail opening event Titus, the owner of the Cannibal museum, is taking care of the inauguration ceremony. The Cannibal museum is a point of interest on the trail map *The Cannibal* that could be characterised as having complementary value. In the inauguration ceremony Titus introduced a drink, called kava that he brought from one of his journeys to cannibal tribes. Picture 4 displays the kava drink that Titus has prepared in a pot in his garden in anticipation of the ceremony. For the inauguration event the kava powder is put in a nylon sock and soaked in the water.



**Picture 4**
Kava drink prepared

Titus explains that the drink is produced from a powdered root of the pepper plant. Men consume the drink - typically - as beer may be consumed in other countries. Titus shows how to drink kava in a ceremonial way. All of the participants are encouraged to join in drinking kava.

Titus conveys parts of his journeys to the participants. His journeys, in turn, are the core of the offer made by Titus: His museum exposes items collected during the journeys, which are now complemented with the stories that he associates with the journeys. By organising a kava ceremony one of the stories that

is part of the museum is told. That is, a valuation proposition is conveyed to the participants by an embodied doing. Titus' garden is in Sweden and not in the Pacific. In a way the performance of the kava ceremony expresses customized authenticity (see Wang, 2007). The ceremony is adapted to the circumstances and the social context of the guided tour. Still, in the participant's experience, by drinking kava and participating in the ceremony here, the valuation propositions made is confirmed; it does not only exist on paper, but also in the embodied experience of the individual. By being able to drink kava from the South Pacific in Titus' garden in southern Sweden, all being part of the same biking trail map, the museum is confirmed as being equal to any of the other points of interest. As Buchmann (2010) exemplifies at the case of visiting Middle Earth in New Zealand, the trueness of a story is not what makes the value of authenticity. Authenticity, as embodied experience in relation to a physical place, is established where there is engagement of guide and guided. In the example of the kava ceremony it does not belong to the traditional Swedish customs, however, in the context of Titus museum and the biking trails title, *The Cannibal* is a part of confirming the authenticity in the performance.

## Sharing the touristic experience

In this section I highlight touristic practices that are not directly related to the role of the guide or the participants listening to the guide. Touristic practices are also dealt with here as examples of expressing understanding of the touristic offer and generating understanding of the touristic offer; once again in the fashion expressed by Gomez et al. (2003) as situation based knowledge. The touristic setting of the trail opening events can be interpreted as confirming valuation propositions between participants. In this section I explain this by describing the examples of a letter formulated by Lise, the picnic stops, and the souvenir picture.

### Lise's letter

In a letter to participants of the trail opening event of *Lise's favourite*, Lise confirms valuation propositions in her ambassadorship. As Lise was not able to join the trail opening event, she sent a letter to Maria, encouraging the participants to pay particular attention to some of the parts of the landscape. Maria is reading the letter to the participants. I retrieved the original letter from Maria:

*"I wish I could participate and learn more about my favourite landscape (…) . I have walked and cycled the biking trail countless times since we bought our small farmhouse in the Village 2003. I have got friends who ran the trail exercising for a half-marathon, and a couple in love, related to my family, walked it according to the principle to take to the left in every crossing. The trail contains several hidden sites of cultural history. Keep your eyes open for trimmed trees, property borders and fences tediously created of stone and by manpower, former pastures, of which some today are fir cultivations, ancient beech forest on ridges, and places in which people have dwelled. Here is dark forest and open landscape. All bound together of old dirt roads connecting the old broken-up villages on the ridge. Enjoy the trail, the culture and the silence, they are our common good!" (Lise, 2015-08-19).*

Lise acts as an ambassador to the community, here, by a letter to participants of the trail opening event. In her letter, she confirms the valuation propositions made in the map overall, by pointing out that the route is her favourite landscape. She further states that she has walked and biked the trail many times, implying that she, indeed, knows what she is talking about. She stresses that the trail is interesting and still her favourite after more than ten years and that she would have loved to join. The participants are in a position to be envied for being able to participate in the inauguration that evening. After creating the frame of excitement connected to the valuation propositions made in the map generally, Lise goes into detail. She gives examples of interesting elements to be discovered in the landscape. One of the elements that she mentions is a point of interest on the map, more specifically the beech forest. In addition to this, Lise points to a number of features that the participants should look for, such as the trimmed trees and stone fences. She even mentions hidden elements, thereby increasing the atmosphere of excitement to experience this particular trail *Lise's favourite*.

She acts at the same time as a participant of the trail opening event and as an ambassador who has often experienced the trail. Lise's letter presented the landscape connected to the trail as her favourite. This letter turns into a valuing device for the present participants in the trail opening event. By offering a review, the letter works as a cicerone, presenting selections of information on uniqueness. By wishing the participants to not only enjoy the trip, but also adding her view on the points of interest, Lise's letter demonstrates one aspect of how the atmosphere of community that participated in the trail opening events is shaped. Her indications of the key values of the Silenceville project, - culture and silence – reinforce the common good of the Silenceville community that they share with the participants on this event. The atmosphere determined by sharing key values provides for embeddedness of the values to be experienced on the trip into the social environment. Further, Lise gives examples of friends and relatives who also

enjoy the trail in a tourism experience. Including friends and relatives in her narrative may evoke a feeling of togetherness. This feeling of togetherness is by Wang (1999: 364) termed "inter-personal authenticity". The feeling of togetherness is analysed more in detail in the following section.

## Picnic stops

Each of the trail opening events included a picnic stop, at which valuation propositions are confirmed in the social interaction of the participants. The stop took place outside: on the trail opening of the *Flax hut* at the subsistence site, on the trail opening of *The Cannibal* in the garden of Titus, and on the trail opening of *Lise's favourite* in the forest. During the coffee break, people talked to each other and shared impressions from the trip. Even though I was participating, I did not bring coffee to all trail opening events. At the trail opening event of *The Cannibal*, for instance, I had not packed a picnic. When I sat next to the picnicking participants in Titus' garden, another participant offered coffee and cookies that she had catered for. The example illustrates that coffee breaks being part of the bike trails – or in this case the opening event of these – are part of the social aspect. The breaks opened up for enjoying the sites together and thereby potentially deepening the experience of the values presented.

Apart from the example of Lise's letter, I also observed that participants use the events as opportunities to share experiences with friends and relatives. I talked to a person who used to live in the area. He now returned for the trail opening events of *Lise's favourite* with his son. This person's particular interest is based on his enjoyment to revisit the area where his father earlier entertained a handicraft business. Also, I spoke to a mother and her young son, who were engaged in searching for tadpoles in the pond of the flax-subsistence heritage site (see picture 5). The trip based on valuation propositions by the community expanded into a social event between parent and child. In what way the trip will connect to the valuation propositions is therefore characterised by the social aspect that emerges, and that is experienced.

**Picture 5**
Tadpole found in the pond

I observed that sharing the experience was included in the picnic stops, in the sense of Wang's (1999: 364) "inter-personal authenticity". The sharing of the experience among participants illustrates how valuation confirmation can be achieved in touristic practices. Participants experience the valuation propositions together and emphasis on these propositions is offered not only by the experience of the single person, but also in the experience shared with other persons.

## The souvenir picture

Another example that highlights valuation confirmation by shared experience is the example of the souvenir picture taken at Titus' Cannibal museum at the trail opening event for the trail *The Cannibal.* Titus offers a guided tour of his museum as part of the stop. During the guided tour Titus engages in talks about a shrunk head that he obtained at a cannibal tribe, the shell of a giant turtle, a goat skeleton, and the autograph of a Polynesian president. Picture 6 shows Titus who is speaking about the shrunk head obtained.

**Picture 6**
Shrunk head obtained at cannibal tribe

The items are connected to his journeys and adventures far away from the Silenceville project's area in southern Sweden. Towards the end of the guided tour, Titus wraps headdresses around one of the participants' heads, followed by each of the participants taking their turn in trying on the available paraphernalia, such as a mask, a sombrero, and other exotic garments. Being equipped with exotic gear participants ask to have pictures taken of them individually, as well as together as a group. Titus responds accordingly by stepping into the role of the photographer to take the pictures asked for. Picture 7 is one of the resulting photographs. The picture shows the group of participants, which has gathered for the group photograph. The mother holds her son close by in the first row. Other participants are standing next to and behind the mother and her son. All the participants are wearing their headdresses and smile into the camera. The picture captures the performance of the guided tour in a crucial moment. Also, the picture fixates one aspect of experience related authenticity, namely inter-personal authenticity (see Wang, 1999). The value of the guided tour is confirmed and conserved in one completion of the touristic mission: bringing home a souvenir picture that shows your relations and the travel group.

**Picture 7**
Souvenir picture taken at Titus' Cannibal museum

## Social repercussions

Under the expression social repercussions, I address that participants of the trail opening events tell additional memories or stories that they have been told about the points of interests. Also, participants point out interesting sites along the trails that are not marked as points of interest and, thus, not included as valuation propositions made in the set touristic offer. I view the social repercussions as an expression of the circle of understanding and learning that is stressed by Gomez et al. (2003). In the following I, first, provide examples from the participant observations of the trail opening events where participants add onto valuation propositions anchored in the maps; secondly, I discuss an occasion where the tour guide points out an additional point of interest on one of the inaugurations along the trail.

## Participants making valuation propositions

At each of the three participant observations at the trail opening events, participants pointed at additional features in the landscape and shared their stories about these elements. At the inauguration of the trail *Flax hut* a stop is made at the site termed Villagemurder. A tragic love story had taken place at this site that resulted in the assassination of a husband who was no longer welcome. Maria started talking about the site. People in the audience added details. Some of them had even seen or talked to one or the other of this couple, termed as "evil" by event members. Maria had herself had conversations with relatives of the couple. Bengt mentioned that in former times, one would not speak about the Villagemurder, as it was considered as bad advertisement for the area.

Additional insights were made at the inauguration of the trail *The Cannibal* when we stopped at an old school house. Maria shared the history of the schools in the area with the group. People in the audience offered additional details, some of them intertwined with memories of their own school time spent. Some of the participants recalled having actually attended school in the very same building, which is now a private property. Some weeks later at the same stop, this time part of the trail opening event of *Lise's favourite*, two of the participants started talking about their schoolteachers. One gentleman who went to that school also remembered how he and his friend - who was also present - had secretly smoked in a shed, which was a part of the school building at the time, and accidently put it on fire.

During the inauguration of the trail *Lise's favourite*, the guide had just finished his excurse about a family that was closely connected to the area, when two ladies started a conversation on additional insights. In their discussion, each of the two ladies made a contribution on the exact history of the family in focus. In response, the guide handed around copies of photographs picturing that family (see picture 8). The social repercussions are an expression of knowing in relation to doing. In the additional memories, stories or points of interest the development of the touristic offer is further promoted. Olsen (2002: 172) connects to the ongoing construction of authenticity by participation, stating that "[i]ncreasingly tourists are brought into performances that aim to give a sense of being temporarily incorporated in collectives and activities that are associated with values that the tourists experience as authentic". Confirmation of valuation propositions thus takes place by blurring the boundaries between guide and guided. The participants in the guided tours may come up with their own suggestions and thereby participate in valuing uniqueness. This valuation, however, is only temporary because the touristic offer is already fixed in the maps. In other words, the active participation may add the value of authenticity in the experience related

**Picture 8**
Picture of family

aspect of authenticity and the performed authenticity. The next section examines the new interpretations of sites established in the touristic offer.

## Guide adding valuation proposition

At the trail opening event of *Lise's favourite* the guide also addressed one additional point of interest along the trail. Picture 9 shows the pointing hand of the guide towards a 'hiding place', which is accompanied by the guide's story. The guide explained that the hiding place (*varggryta*) dates back to the 17th century when pro-Danish guerrilla (*Snapphanarna*) was active in this landscape. Some participants at the guided tour were surprised to find these hiding places in the area. While this stop is not included in the map, it is situated along the trail. The story told aligns with the overall framework of Silenceville as it shares local history, embedded in the landscape. Waitt (2000) cautions that fixing interpretations of a site may constrain which interpretations are seen as true. Overend (2012: 50) takes a different point of view: "It is important to remember that sites are not just experienced through guided tours, they are also constructed by them". Taking Overend's claim further we can assume that the interpretation of the site is

**Picture 9**
Guide's pointing hand

constantly changing as the event is presented in a new way. By being in line, the additional valuation proposition confirms the existing propositions. Here, the valuation propositions included are made stronger by additional elements that lead into the same direction.

However, it is assumed that adding points of interest spontaneously must not necessarily lead to confirmation. Points of interest were chosen in a process. While adding to existing validated valuation propositions may increase their strength, expansion of the number of stops and sites might have a rupturing effect on the valuation process and its intended results as well. This reflection, however, has no evidence in the fieldwork material generated at Silenceville.

# A new advertisement

In this section I touch briefly on the issue of integrating the touristic offer of the Silenceville project into the wider context of the Silenceville area. As mentioned before, Heuts and Mol (2013) speak about registers of valuing. In the analysis of the material gathered at the Silenceville project I have identified registers of valuing. In valuation confirmation the fieldwork material contains examples of registers of valuing. I will illustrate this at the example of a point of interest, Villagemurder, and two meetings with business owners in prospecting participant observations.

## Re-interpretation of Villagemurder

Sites with points of interest can contain stories, which represent authenticity and whose value changes as the interpretation of an authentic story changes. In one directed participant observation at the trail opening event of the trail *Flax hut* the tour stopped at the point of interest called Villagemurder. Close to the spot a couple committed a murder in order to get rid of a husband who was no longer welcome. Maria told about a selected historical fact correlated to the place, and community members participating in the trail opening event started remembering and adding their memories. Bengt contributed with the reflection that previously it was bad advertisement for the Silenceville area to speak about the Villagemurder. Bengt's observation stands in contrast to the Silenceville project including the story as a point of interest. The Silenceville LEADER-project uses the Villagemurder story as part of the advertisement. This shift in the interpretation of the place is an expression of a new register of valuing that has been introduced to the area. In the past, the Villagemurder was not a positive event. Murder is not a positive event today either, however, as years have passed, a new way of relating to the event is constructed. Today the event is told as a curious part of the history of Silenceville that is part of making Silenceville interesting. In other words, the register of valuing that relates to rural tourism development in Silenceville has absorbed the negative image of the event. In this absorption, the Villagemurder story has turned from something problematic into something interesting.

In both ways of telling the story, there is one core event that builds the foundation. In this example, once again constructed authenticity in Bruner's (1994) sense surfaces. The story of the Villagemurder is the same, however, the connotation that it is given differs. Like Spracklen (2011) claims that tourists are searching for new interpretations of what is authentic, here hosts are changing the

interpretation of a historic fact. The new interpretation and bringing what happened into the light, might make the community members, who grew up at a time when one would not speak about Villagemurder, feel uncomfortable.

## Business owners changing their minds

During my prospecting participant observations, I met two business owners who were not initially willing to participate in the Silenceville project, but who turned hospitable to the project in the course of the project. On my three-day biking trip in the Silenceville area I made a stop at a shop in the area. The head of the shop stated that he did not want to get engaged in the project or even be interviewed. He explained that he had been involved in other tourism initiatives and had done his part. Also, he commented, at the time when he started his business, no public funding had been available. He had developed his business all by himself. Now, as the business was doing well, he did not want to lend his name for a community project. I returned for a coffee about one week later, as the shop was situated along one of the trails and thus included as a point of interest with description. Showing the printed Silenceville biking trail map to the owner made him aware that his shop was included in the map. He seemed to like what he saw and inquired about the author of the text. He appeared glad that Maria was the author and showed the map to his wife, commenting that the description had been beautifully written.

The second example of a business owner was found when I did the prospecting observations by bike. Maria offered to show a business place that had featured in the news but was not connected to the Silenceville project. While stopping at the business place the owner looked sceptical and did not seem pleased to see Maria and a researcher around. Some days later, still by bike but with Maria not being present, I visited the place again. The same business owner approached and was eager to be interviewed. However, even though I got in touch I was not able to arrange an interview with this particular business owner. Two years later the business owner took active participation in one of the trail opening events, holding an inauguration speech. The example of that business owner illustrates that the attitude towards the Silenceville project had changed. The process of imposing new interpretations as Bruner and Spracklen (2011) highlight are first rejected, but later accepted. Also, it is a question of investing time and being sceptical to doing so. But as time goes by and it becomes apparent to other stakeholders how the project is doing, involvement of new stakeholders seems possible. Here we return to the issues of rural tourism development that were

highlighted in the beginning of this dissertation and which will be discussed in the next and last chapter that contains the conclusions.


# Summary of chapter 9

The analytical research question of this dissertation is how value creation in a rural tourism development project can be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions. This chapter has presented how valuation propositions, which are fixed into the touristic offer, are confirmed as they are toured.

This chapter builds primarily on participants' observations from three trail opening events. In my fieldwork I attended three trail opening events in directed participant observations. These were the trail opening events of *Flax hut* in the summer of 2014 and the openings of *The Cannibal* and *Lise's favourite* in the summer of 2015. During the participant observations I took photographs and field notes on the events. Each of the three trail opening events followed the same pattern. The group gathered at the set place and date, the project manager Maria gave a short welcoming speech, introducing the program for the evening, the group biked to each of the points of interest as indicated in the respective map, and at these points valuation propositions were presented to the group. The presentation was made by a guide who shared knowledge about the essential characteristics of the specific point of interest. At the trail opening events of *Flax hut* and *The Cannibal* Maria assumed the role of the guide, at the trail opening event of *Lise's favourite*, a local inhabitant and author of a book on local history took on the role of the guide. In the analysis of the directed participant observations I focus on the performance of guided tours. The analysis resulted in three parts.

First, the guided tour is focused on how the role of the guide and the role of the participant in a guided tour are performed. In the analysis I highlight elements such as the guide standing up in front of the group and participants asking questions to the guide. I stress how these performances contribute to confirm the valuation propositions of the touristic offer; thus, establishing valuation confirmation of selections already made.

Secondly, I focus on how participants of the trail opening events interact. The trail opening event does not only encompass the guided tour, but also the shared experience between participants. Also, here I focus how this supports valuation confirmation of the touristic offer.

Thirdly, the analysis deals with social repercussions of the touristic offer. During the trail opening events participants would add onto the guide's presentation of the valuation propositions. Participants added from their own memories or from stories that others had told them. Also, participants could add valuation propositions on sites not marked on the maps. I find that the aspect of social repercussion is another expression of valuation propositions being confirmed in the performance of the trail opening events.

Fourthly, I address how the confirmatory practices of the touristic offer trigger a new way of looking at the Silenceville area by inhabitants. For example, a historic fact that was earlier avoided is now included in the touristic offer.

The main conclusions in relation to authenticity are that valuation propositions can be confirmed and altered as they are performed as touristic offers. The different categories of valuation propositions - intrinsic values, reverse values, and complementary values - are performed likewise. The shifting of intrinsic, reverse and complementary values into one touristic offer is achieved in the maps that are the point of departure for the performance. The guided tours in the organised trail opening events are a means to perform and thereby confirm the touristic offer. Existential authenticity, as defined by Wang (1999) appears as one of the tools to strengthening the performance and thereby contributing to a confirmation of the touristic offer.

The main conclusion of this chapter in relation to rural tourism development is that even though the touristic offer is fixed, an on-going development can be an advantage in terms of engaging the visitors and stakeholders in the area. It showed that stakeholders can change their mind and decide to participate in a project for rural tourism development when the project has been going on and produced outcomes. This on-going development can help to eventually include stakeholders in the rural tourism development projects. Similar to Sharpley's (2007) conclusion that a touristic offer needs to develop continuously in order to maintain value I conclude that continuous participation of stakeholders is required.

The five analysis chapters have journeyed through an analysis of different types of valuation propositions on uniqueness, by illustrating different positions of proposition making, the selection of valuation propositions, the marketing of valuation propositions, and finally how valuation propositions are performed. In the next chapter I will summarise and extend the findings from the five analysis chapters in a concluding discussion.

*Chapter 10*
# Conclusions

This dissertation departed from the observation that many rural tourism development initiatives in Sweden point to uniqueness in the quest to attract visitors. From this observation followed the question how uniqueness is employed for value creation in rural tourism development practically. I developed that empirical research question into an analytical research question. The analytical aim of this dissertation was how value creation in a rural tourism development project can be understood through notions of authenticity and valuation propositions. Towards this aim I claimed that the different notions of authenticity - object related, experience related, and host related authenticity - can be regarded as valuation propositions towards the end of value creation in the touristic offer. In this chapter I will present the main conclusions of this dissertation work. While answering the major empirical and analytical questions, the conclusions also relate to the reviewed literature on rural tourism development, to the ethnographic fieldwork strategy and to the LEADER-method as a framework for rural tourism development.

## Uniqueness and notions of authenticity

The analysis of the material generated at Silenceville focused on how notions of authenticity were applied for value creation in the touristic offer. First, I analysed how participants to the Silenceville project related to uniqueness of the project area. I divided my findings into intrinsic values, reverse values, and complementary values. I could relate all three types of values to constructed authenticity in the object related sense. Accordingly, I concluded that object related authenticity is relevant to the value creation that is carried by the participants of the project. The participants point towards tangible and intangible objects in Silenceville, which represent the authentic and contribute to the value created in the touristic offer.

Secondly, I analysed from which positions participants to the project viewed uniqueness of Silenceville. The ideas on uniqueness were inspired from sources such as childhood memories, tales and profession-based mindsets. Both tangible and intangible objects were mentioned and explained by the contributors. From the material I explained the valuing device of the SWOT-analysis, which was part of the project, as one position of proposition making. Apart from that, contributions were brought up from personalised positions. Other expressions of uniqueness were circulated by several people who seemed to be interlinked and who all shared a commonly known story. Still, other ideas resulted from participants' professions. In the analysis I explain the positions of proposition making to be yet another indication that object related authenticity is relevant for value creation in the touristic offer.

Thirdly, I analysed how contributions on possibly unique aspects of Silenceville were selected for the touristic offer. I found that the project manager and her collaborators selected between different and equally valid options with the conception of an imagined visitor in mind. With the guideline of the imagined visitor at hand, the contributors decided what to include into the final offer and what to exclude from it. The selection with the imagined visitor in mind was partly conducted while visiting potential points of interest, as a visitor would do. In other words, in the process of selecting unique points of interest for the touristic offer, the creators of the offer would attempt to step into the visitor perspective. In terms of authenticity the notions of experience related authenticity and host performance surfaced in the aspect of selection.

Further, the selection of considered unique points of interest was carried in dialogue. Dialogue took place between the project manager, who was interested in establishing the touristic offer, stakeholders with agricultural interests in their own land, as well as business owners with other kinds of interests. The dialogues illuminated that the selection of points of interest represents emergent authenticity. After a completed process of selecting points of interest for the touristic offer, the chosen points of interest were fixed into printable biking maps. Hence, as the touristic offer has been created for the visitor, authenticity seems to emerge.

Fourthly, I analysed how the touristic offer was promoted in printable maps, a tourist brochure, newspaper articles, a blog post, and advertisements. I highlighted how the intrinsic, reverse and complementary values were merged into one coherent unit. In the promotional material the distinction between more or less authentic elements is not existent. Also, the dialogue that allows adding alternative interpretations on authenticity has come to an end. In terms of authenticity the aspect of commodification surfaces, as one version of the area is now imposed by

means of the fixed touristic offer. Yet, conclusions on possible effects of commodification are not made from the material.

Fifthly and finally, I highlighted how value is confirmed in the performance of guided tours. The biking trails on the printable biking maps are opened in inauguration ceremonies. The events are public, and anyone could participate. For each of the events there was a guide and participants who were guided. In the dynamics between guide and guided the touristic offer is confirmed. At the events, the intrinsic, reverse, and complementary values are performed equally. In other words, the authenticity for all these elements is stated as equal. Further, the participants to the events generate new experiences for themselves and together with others, which confirm the value created in the touristic offer. The participants may also add new angles to what is presented and thereby confirm and alter the touristic offer. In terms of authenticity, the confirmation of the touristic offer in guided tours surfaces host performance, host authenticity, existential authenticity, and in the end emergent authenticity.


# Notions of authenticity work simultaneously

The analysis of the process of value creation in the touristic offer emphasises that many notions of authenticity can be in play simultaneously. In this dissertation I divided notions of authenticity into object related authenticity, experience related authenticity and host related authenticity. In the literature on authenticity it is discussed to what extent object related authenticity is relevant for understanding the value of a touristic offer. While Reisinger and Steiner (2006) claim that object authenticity is outdated, Belhassen and Carton (2006) defend the notion. Belhassen and Carton (2006) underline that object authenticity is relevant for tourists in practice, which is why the notion should be important also for tourism studies. Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) exemplifies the statement that visitors care about object related authenticity in a study on volunteer tourism in Thailand.

In this dissertation I find that the participants to the rural tourism development project relate the notion of uniqueness to features of the area such as the fauna, silence, or certain historical people. Even though the participants do not announce that these elements would have a fixed value resembling object authenticity, the objects are still in focus. That is why I argue that constructed object related authenticity is foundational to the development of the touristic offer in Silenceville. In consequence, I argue in line with Belhassen and Carton (2006) as well as Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) that object related authenticity is one part in understanding the value of uniqueness in a touristic offer.

Literature on experience related authenticity is mainly examining how visitors experience a site or setting as authentic. Experience related authenticity is related to the individuals' sense of self. Wang (1999) draws a distinction between experience related authenticity that the individual experiences internally and in relation to other group members. Steiner and Reisinger (2006) extend the argument of experience related authenticity to hosts, who might experience themselves as authentic in the exchange with tourists. In this dissertation I find experience related authenticity to be a driver in the development of the touristic offer. In other words, the participants to the Silenceville project refer to their experiences when considering what sites might be of interest for a future visitor. Experiences referred to are childhood memories, knowledge of sites as well as own leisure trips in the area. The project manager and participants to the project even go on goal-oriented inventory trips. In these trips they pretend to be visitors themselves. In other words, experience related authenticity is used by project participants as a tool to construct the touristic offer. The experience related authenticity of the visitor is anticipated in this undertaking. In summary, I conclude that experience related authenticity from the host perspective is an important, and little researched, building block in value creation in tourism.

Research on host related authenticity touches issues such as host performances and commodification. Studies point out a large spectrum of possible consequences that follow commodification of a site. Waitt (2000) is critical of commodification as the author fears simplification of interpretations of a historic site, Schnell (2003) concludes that commodification not necessarily needs to be negative, and Cole (2007) underlines that commodification can strengthen identity and pride. The example of Silenceville does not offer any indications of the long-term consequences of the rural tourism development project. The Silenceville project got connected to people in favour and got disconnected from people with scepticism. Even more important was the aspect of host related authenticity in the role taking of guides and guided at the guided biking tours. Guides would lead a group around sites and the guided would listen, while at times new sites were included in the guided tour by both guides and the guided. This observation underlines that at times the roles of host and visitor may be blurred. This dialogue in itself can be a contribution to value creation in the touristic offer. Altogether, as also stated by Overend (2012), the guided tours were an expression of authenticity being performed.

Summarising the conclusions from the analysis, the many facets of the notion of authenticity surface simultaneously. Together they form the value of the touristic offer that was intended in the rural tourism development project of Silenceville.

# Change of trajectories in the project

In this dissertation I used an ethnographic approach including participant observations, interviews and printed and digital material, including pictures. My findings contrast with research based on the framework of integrated rural tourism. The framework of integrated rural tourism builds on seven categories that are defined as crucial aspects for successful development (see Saxena et al., 2007). Research based on the framework applies these categories and the seven categories are evaluated and refined. In contrast, as a result of the ethnographic approach, I could present a close-up picture of rural tourism development.

As a result of the close-up view it showed that the trajectories of the Silenceville project were adapted to the opportunities that evolved as the project unfolded. One example of adapting the trajectories surfaced in the decision of the project management to omit hiking trails as an option. In order to install hiking trails, landowners of private property need to consent. In Silenceville, however, the Silenceville project could not reach consent with the landowners. That is why biking trails, leading on public roads, were chosen instead. Here the number of resulting biking trails was not set from the beginning, but ended up in ten tours. Explaining value creation in rural tourism development projects by means of seven categories will not capture these changes of trajectories. Yet, paying attention to these changes highlights the challenges that these kinds of projects face. In the case of the hiking trails, the project could not realise an idea, because the necessary involvement of a core stakeholder was not achieved. This kind of problem is hardly addressed in literature that claims rural tourism development initiatives to be an obvious opportunity for improving conditions in rural areas.

While the never realised hiking trails exemplify the dead ends that rural tourism development projects can reach, the Silenceville project also illustrated that people can turn from sceptics to supporters of such a project. When I started to investigate the Silenceville project I understood that one shop owner was not in favour of the project. I tried to arrange an interview with the owner. However, I was not successful in arranging a meeting. Two years later, at one of the guided biking tours, this very owner was in charge of the opening ceremony of that trail. Even though I did not get to know the reasons for the change of attitude, I could observe a change of mind: the sceptic attitude had turned into a hospitable attitude. This is another aspect that could be revealed due to the ethnographic approach to the field. Future research could investigate in depth how a change of attitude in rural tourism development projects is motivated. Such motivations could improve the knowledge on how to support the outcomes of this kind of projects.

# Participation and on-going development

The reasons for a change of attitude towards a project for rural tourism development might also help to solve the problem of participation. Petrou et al. (2007) highlight how difficult it can be to engage stakeholders. In the case of Silenceville it was Maria who coordinated the project and who linked the contributions together. In my interviews with Maria and other contributors to the project I found that the unwillingness to spend one´s time was mentioned as one reason for not participating. When I conducted prospecting participant observations, one shop owner underlined that they started the business without support and were doing well now. The owner was hesitant to investing time and offering the businesses' name to the project. The reaction of the shop owner mirrors the challenges described by Petrou et al. (2007) that stakeholders value their time and need to see clearly how the project will support their interests. My fieldwork further offers insights that business may not be willing to offer their name. Accordingly, business owners might even have concerns that the project would impact the identity of their established business. Participating might cause a feeling of losing ownership over the context in which the business is embedded. In summary, the example of the shop owner highlights that potential participants might refrain from taking part, as the project may not take the businesses' needs into consideration well enough. Turning this argument around, in order to stimulate participation, stakeholders must be presented clear benefits from participation that fit the needs of their particular operation.

The contributors who did participate intensively all stressed their interest in the Silenceville area. Some of the contributors engaged as private persons, others got involved as part of their profession. Where there was an interest, Maria used the driving forces of the participants in order to put together the touristic offer. In this process, however, Maria needed to facilitate between contradictory needs that surfaced. This resembled to Cawley and Gillmor (2010: 157) who expressed that "business owners tended to prioritize economic sustainability whilst the resource controllers were more conscious of a need for environmental sustainability". Cawley and Gillmor mention in particular farmers who felt forced to offer their land for touristic purposes without fair compensation. In the Silenceville project it occurred that the project manager liked to include certain sites to the biking trails that, however, the landowner did not agree upon fully. One example is the site Steel hat that was included with some restrictions to satisfy the needs of the landowner. The examples where the project manager needed to lead a dialogue and to compromise illustrate that rural tourism development projects are carried out in a context of partly contradictory interests.

In the planning and conduct of rural tourism development projects it is important to acknowledge that rural tourism needs to be compatible with other interests. Saxena et al. (2007: 359) explain that "[i]ssues of participation and inclusion remain central to the project of equitable, sustainable and integrated tourism development". In order to engage for participation, a long-term perspective on development might help to overcome some of the challenges. Where rural tourism development projects work long term and are designed for on-going development, the chance for more stakeholders to participate and take influence may be given. As the examples of people changing their attitude have stressed, positions need not to be fixed, but it may take time to find trajectories for rural tourism development that go along with the stakeholders' needs and other interests that are present in the rural area. Unluckily LEADER-projects for rural tourism development rarely embrace time frames of more than two or three years.

# The social benefits of networking

In the perspective of rural tourism development, a question that remains is what values of the project may exist for the time being and what values will remain in the long run. Tolstad (2014) has pointed out that benefits of networking may be economic or social. From my fieldwork at Silenceville I cannot draw any conclusions if the project has generated direct economic value for stakeholders in the Silenceville area. However, I can draw the conclusion that the project has generated social value in terms of gathering people for joint activities and enhancing social connections. In the Silenceville project, the biking trails were part of a larger endeavour. Apart from the biking trail construction, the Silenceville project included summer evening meetings and other events that brought people together.

In the interviews respondents repeatedly explained how the connection between people had grown in the course of the project. That means from the angle of quality of life on rural areas the project has generated bounds and opportunities for those involved. This implies, while the economic benefits of the Silenceville project may not be significant, the social aspect of networking can be interpreted as having created value. Those who have collaborated, valuing uniqueness and constructing the touristic offer, have deepened their relationship with the area and people of the area. The touristic offer has been introduced to people from the Silenceville area and can be used as a way of common understanding. How the

social benefits will develop in the long term is another aspect that could not be covered by this research project.

The analysis also indicated that not all inhabitants or business owners that might have participated were satisfied with the initiative. For the stakeholders who refrained from participating, the social benefits of networking, experienced by others, did not seem worthwhile. As my attempts to get to know more about the absence or disregard in the Silenceville project were not successful, the exact reasons could not be presented in this work. One may speculate that projects such as the Silenceville project can interfere with other initiatives for rural tourism development or that envy or inequalities can arise where a project manager is paid while other contributors co-finance the project by means of their free time. These questions may be addressed in future research.

# Local resources need mobilisation

Some rural tourism development literature makes it seem as if local resources were ready to use. Ilbery and Saxena (2009: 2249) claim that "everyday practices of self-help groups or 'communities of purpose'" can achieve integrated rural tourism because these practices support "to easily mobilize place-based resources for economic renewal, community cohesion, and the development of social capital". In the case of Silenceville, it showed that the project manager Maria needed to engage in a lengthy process with many people involved creating a touristic offer. The case illustrates that the local resource for rural tourism development was not ready to use when the project started, but that valuation with the end in mind formed the touristic offer step by step. This valuation process included making suggestions on uniqueness from many different positions, required selection of points of interest to arrive at the final touristic offer, engaged ambassadors for the promotion on the touristic offer and lead further to performing and confirming the value of the touristic offer in guided trail opening events.

Also, as mentioned earlier, not all participants and stakeholders aim for the same development. That implies that using local resources for value creation in rural tourism development can be expected to be full of conflicts. McAreavey and McDonagh (2011: 178) express that different parties in a community process have "different values and needs". The authors further stress that it may be challenging to integrate all parties' needs. Conflicts and diverging needs occurred in the Silenceville case where the patch with cattle was introduced to the trails and the landowners did not give permission to arrange trails. In the instants of conflict Maria needed to find compromises; and there were also dead-ends reached as in

the case of the hiking trails that were not realised. In other words, the idea of rural tourism development projects being easily and successfully conducted, based on the local resource, is contradicted by the findings from my research.

Uniqueness as a tool to sustainable rural development was introduced in the beginning of this dissertation. In the rural tourism development project of Silenceville, uniqueness was engaged as an umbrella term for local resources practically. The term uniqueness may generate a dynamic way of understanding a rural area's opportunities, both for the inhabitants and those who are visitors. Sharpley (2007: 137) underlines that the attraction of the newly constructed Alnwick Garden might be related to "novelty value". In other words, also Sharpley (2007: 138) suggests that value might need maintenance; something which is realised in the garden that is "literally growing". This contribution highlights that value creation is a process that does not come to completion. In order to maintain the value of a touristic offer constant alteration is needed. Because of the need of constant alteration, the term of uniqueness is useful in tourism marketing material. The term uniqueness promises something exciting while offering the opportunity to discover and rediscover. In other words, organising rural tourism development around uniqueness can open up for the on-going, long term processes of development that are necessary for a broad involvement of stakeholders and interests.

## Participation and the LEADER-method

In community-based rural tourism development the issue of participation is foundational. Verbole and Cottrell (2002) express that it is difficult for some community members to have their voices heard because of their fixed roles in the community. In the case of Silenceville the project members' participation takes place under the umbrella of the LEADER-method. This implies that the participants' ideas about the uniqueness of the area are prompted by the LEADER-method. For the Silenceville project, the SWOT-analysis is one of the building blocks of this frame where the LEADER-method becomes visible. When applying for LEADER-funding a SWOT-analysis needs to be enclosed. Further, the instance, in which the initiative to the biking project was taken, was in a formal project meeting, which was part of the LEADER-method. Also, the suggestion to include coffee-stops in the biking maps was a result of the LEADER-method, as this proposal was made from a professionalised position in a reference group meeting. Also, group meetings that dealt with the uniqueness of Silenceville were established based on the LEADER-method, here in the form of organised

summer meetings. Connected to one of the summer evening meetings, Maria and Linnea developed further ideas for the biking trails. The summer evening meetings were also a part of the co-funding of the project from the projects' side. In summary, this means that the LEADER-method offered funding and structure for creating sites for sharing ideas on the unique cultural values of the Silenceville area.

The examples illustrate that the Silenceville project was formed by the requirements of the LEADER-method. Because the project was funded, a project mangager could coordinate the construction of the touristic offer. However, in the interviews that I carried out as part of the fieldwork, none of the respondents reflected upon the LEADER-method actively. Maria was addressed as the project manager and driving force. According to Saxena and Ilbery (2008) a resource controller has a coordinating function in a rural tourism development context. In the case of Silenceville, the project manager Maria can be interpreted as a resource controller. Maria first needed to engage with stakeholders of the community in order to generate notions of uniqueness; and this engagement was both directed and emerging. The directed engagement showed as Maria had a formal project group and reference group at her hands. Also, the Silenceville project organised events that brought people together, who would later contribute to developing the touristic offer of the Silenceville project further. In all this, Maria needed to kick-off a process that required planning and endurance as well as the openness to invite emerging influences, such as one colloquial meeting leading to the next one.

The examples show that in order to fit into the framework of the LEADER-method, people's engagement was crucial. Maria, as project manager, used people's individual driving forces. That means, the LEADER-structure only offered a platform for collecting possible interpretations of unique points of interest in the Silenceville area. The realisation of the endeavour of rural tourism development was connected to the people who contributed. This implies that the LEADER-framework as such can be a starting point for rural tourism development. However, the filling of that framework is one crucial aspect. Here the role of the project management of shaping permeability of the project and letting people contribute with what they are able and enthusiastic to contribute is of key importance. The project manager needs to find a generative balance between LEADER-framework and engagement.

# The LEADER-method as political environment

Uncovered by this research remains how the framework of the LEADER-method limits or enhances the opportunities of the community. As a consequence of the chosen analytical approach, the analysis may seem insensitive of the project's institutional framework and competing interests, as an analysis of competing registers of valuing (Mol & Heuts, 2013) would have suggested. My intention was not to disregard the political environment of the rural tourism development project. Yet, neither was my ambition to delve into issues of governance. I aimed at giving a close-up account of the processes. In other words, I intentionally kept the close look on what the participants contributed with in the very practical sense. This opened up for the possibility to present the empirical material in the analysis as a process.

It could be argued that the LEADER-method with its forms of application and conduct leads to mainstreaming of rural tourism development. In the analysis of this dissertation I explained how the Silenceville project was carried out with regards to uniqueness practically and with regards to notions of authenticity theoretically. Even though contributions on uniqueness were made from engaged participants in the project, the project as such was realised with financial support in a development framework. This may raise the question what will happen to the touristic offer once the framework that contained it is dissolved. What will become of these tales, tales of uniqueness such as in Silenceville? Only time will tell.

# Literature

Altiney, Levent - Sigala, Marianna - Waligo, Victoria (2016): "Social value creation through tourism enterprises". *Tourism Management*, 54, 404-417.

Amir, Fitri Amir - Ghapar, Ammar Adb - Jamal, Salamiah A. - Ahmad, Khairun Najiah (2015): "Sustainable tourism development: A study on community resilience for rural tourism in Malaysia". *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 168, 116-122.

Anderson, Catherine A. - Leahy, Michael J. - DelValle, Roy - Sherman, Susan - Tansey, Timothy N. (2014): "Methodological application of multiple case study design using modified consensual qualitative research (CQR) analysis to identify best practices and organizational factors in the public rehabilitation program". *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 41, 87–98.

Andersson Cederholm, Erika - Hultman, Johan (2010): "The value of intimacy - Negotiating commercial relationships in lifestyle entrepreneurship". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 10, 1, 16-32.

Augustyn, Marcjanna (1998): "National strategies for rural tourism development and sustainability: The Polish experience". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 6, 3, 191-209.

Baka, Vasiliki (2015): "Understanding valuing devices in tourism through "place-making". *Valuation Studies*, 3, 2, 149-180.

Baxter, Pamela - Jack, Susan (2008): "Qualitative case study methodology: Study design and implementation for novice researchers". *The Qualitative Report*, 13, 4, 544-559.

Beaumont, Narelle - Dredge, Dianne (2010): "Local tourism governance: a comparison of three network approaches". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 18, 1, 7-28.

Belhassen, Yaniv - Caton, Kellee (2006): "Authenticity matters". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33, 3, 853–856.

Belhassen, Yaniv – Caton, Kellee – Stewart, William P. (2008): "The search for authenticity in the pilgrim experience". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35, 3, 668-689.

Boorstin, Daniel (1961): *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America*. New York: Harper and Row.

Bousset, Jean-Paul - Skuras, Dimitris - Tesitel, Jan - Marsat, Jean-Bernard - Petrou, Anastasia - Fiallo-Pantziou, Elba - Kusova, Drahomira - Bartos, Michael (2007): "A decision support system for integrated rural tourism development: Rethinking tourism policies and management strategies". *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 9, 4, 387-404.

Brewer, J. D. (2000): *Ethnography*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Bruner, Edward M. (1994): "Abraham Lincoln as authentic reproduction: A critique of postmodernism". *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 96, 2, 397-415.

Buchmann, Anne – Moore, Kevin – Fischer, David (2010): "Experiencing film tourism. Authenticity and fellowship". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37, 1, 229-248.

Calvey, David (2008): "The art and politics of covert research: Doing 'situated ethics' in the field". *Sociology*, 42, 5, 905-918.

Cawley, Mary - Gillmor, Desmond A. (2010): 'Culture Economy', 'Integrated Tourism' and 'Sustainable Rural Development': Evidence from Western Ireland. In: Robinson, Guy M. (2010): *Sustainable Rural Systems. Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Communities*. Ashgate: Hampshire, 145-159.

Cawley, Mary – Gillmor, Desmond A. (2008): "Integrated rural tourism: concepts and practice". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35, 2, 316-337.

Cawley, Mary – Marsat, Jean-Bernard – Gillmor, Desmond A. (2007): "Promoting integrated rural tourism: Comparative perspectives on institutional networking in France and Ireland". *Tourism Geographies*, 9, 4, 405-420.

Clark, Gordon – Chabrel, Mary (2007): "Measuring integrated rural tourism". *Tourism Geographies*, 9, 4, 371-386.

Cohen, Erik (1988): "Authenticity and commoditization in tourism". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15, 371-386.

Cole, Stroma (2007): "Beyond authenticity and commodification". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34, 4, 943-960.

Corvellec, Hervé - Hultman, Johan (2014): "Managing the politics of value propositions". *Marketing Theory*, 14, 4, 355-375.

Creswell, John W. (2003): *Research design. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage Publications: London, 2nd edition.

Daugstad, Karoline - Kirchengast Christoph (2013): "Authenticity and the pseudo-backstage of authenticity". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 43, 170–191.

DeWalt, Kathleen - DeWalt, Billy (2010). *Participant Observation: A Guide for the Fieldworkers*. Plymouth: Alta Mira Press.

Dewey, John (1939): *Theory of Valuation*. International Encyclopaedia of Unified Science, Vol II, Nr 4. Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.

Dey, Ian (1993): *Qualitative data analysis: A user friendly guide for social scientists*. Routledge: London.

European Commission (2016): *FAQ*, http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/faq_en.htm#37, online 2016-05-11.

Everett, Sally - Parakoottathil, Denny John (2018): "Transformation, meaning-making and identity creation through folklore tourism: the case of the Robin Hood Festival". *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 13, 1, 30-45.

Freedman, Robert (1961): *Marx on Economics*. Bucks: Hazell Watson & Viney Ltd.

Frenzel, Fabian (2017): "Tourist agency as valorization. Making Dharavi into a tourist attraction". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 66, 159-169.

Garrod, Brian - Wornell, Roz - Youell, Ray (2006): "Re-conceptualising rural resources as countryside capital: The case of rural tourism". *Journal of Rural Studies*, 22, 117-128.

George, E. Wanda – Mair, Heather – Reid, Donald G. (2009): *Rural Tourism Development*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.

Gerring, John (2007): *Case Study Research. Principles and Practices*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Ghaderi, Zahed - Henderson, Joan C. (2012): "Sustainable rural tourism in Iran: A perspective from Hawraman village". *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 2-3, 47-54.

Goffman, Erving ([1959]1990): *The presentation of self in everyday life*. London: Penguin.

Gomez, Marie-Léandre – Bouty, Isabelle – Drucker-Godard, Carole (2003): Developing knowing in practice: Behind the scenes of haute-cuisine. In: Nicolini, Davide – Gherardi, Silvia – Yanow, Dvora (2003): *Knowing in Organizations. A Practice-Based Approach*. London: M.E. Sharpe, 100-125.

Graeber, David (2001): *Toward an anthropological theory of value*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hall, C. Michael (2009): "Degrowing Tourism: Décroissance, Sustainable Consumption and Steady-State Tourism". *Anatolia: An International Journal of Tourism & Hospitality Research*, 20, 1, 46-61.

Hall, Derek (1998): "Tourism development and sustainability issues in Central and South-eastern Europe". *Tourism Management*, 19, 5, 423-431.

Hall, Derek (2004): "Rural tourism development in Southeastern Europe: Transition and the search for sustainability". *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 6, 165-176.

Helgesson, Claes-Fredrik - Muniesa, Fabian (2013): " For What It's Worth: An Introduction to Valuation Studies". *Valuation Studies*, 1, 1, 1-10.

Heuts, Frank - Mol, Annemarie (2013): "What is a good tomatoe? A case of valuing in practice". *Valuation Studies*, 1, 2, 125-146.

Hume, Lynne & Mulcock, Jane (2004) (eds): *Anthropologists in the field. Cases in participant observation*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Hwang, Doohyun - Stewart, William P. - Ko, Dong-Wan (2012): "Community behaviour and sustainable rural tourism development". *Journal of Travel Research*, 51, 3, 328-341.

Ilbery, Brian - Saxena, Gunjan - Kneafsey, Moya (2007): "Exploring tourists and gatekeepers' attitudes towards integrated rural tourism in the England-Wales Border Region". *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism, Space, Place, and Environment*, 9, 4, 441-468.

Ilbery, Brian – Saxena, Gunjan (2009): "Evaluating 'best practice' in integrated rural tourism: case examples from the England-Wales border region". *Environment and Planning A*, 41, 2248-2266.

Ilbery, Brian – Saxena, Gunjan (2011): "Integrated rural tourism in the English-Welsh cross-border region: An analysis of strategic administrative and personal challenges". *Regional Studies*, 45, 8, 1139-1155.

Israel, Mark - Hay, Iain (2006): *Research Ethics for Social Scientists*. Sage Publications: London.

Israel, Mark (2015): *Research Ethics and Integrity for Social Scientists. Beyond Regulatory Compliance*. Sage Publications: London, 2nd Edition.

Joppe, Marian - Brooker, Ed - Kimberly, Thomas (2014): "Drivers of innovation in rural tourism: the role of good governance and engaged entrepreneurs". *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 49-63.

Jordbruksverket (2010): *LEADER areas in Sweden 2007-2013*. Published brochure.

Jordbruksverket (2012): *LEADER i Sverige 2007-2011*. Rapport 2012:39.

Karpik, Lucien (2010): *Valuing the Unique. The Economics of Singularities*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Kelemen, Eszter - Megyesi, Boldizsar - Nagy Kalamasz, Ildiko (2008): "Knowledge dynamics and sustainability in rural livelihood strategies: Two case studies from Hungary". *Sociologia Ruralis*, 48, 2, 257-273.

Kim, Hyounggong - Jamal, Tazim (2007): "Touristic quest for existential authenticity". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34, 1, 181-201.

Kjellberg, Hans - Mallard, Alexandre - Arjaliès, Diane-Laure - Aspers, Patrik - Beljean, Stefan - Bidet, Alexandra - Corsin, Alberto - Didier, Emmanuel - Fourcade,

Marion - Geiger, Susi - Hoeyer, Klaus - Lamont, Michèle - MacKenzie, Donald - Maurer, Bill - Mouritsen, Jan - Sjögren, Ebba - Tryggestad, Kjell - Vatin, Francois - Woolgar, Steve (2013): "Valuation studies. Our collective two cents". *Valuation Studies*, 1, 1, 11-30.

Kneafsey, Moya - Ilbery, Brian - Jenkins, Tim (2010): "Exploring the dimensions of culture economies in rural West Wales". *Sociologia Ruralis*, 41, 3, 296-310.

Kontogeorgopoulos, Nick (2017): "Forays into the backstage: volunteer tourism and the pursuit of object authenticity". *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 15, 5, 455-475.

Koster, Rhonda L. P. - Lemelin, Raynald, H. (2009): "Appreciative inquiry and rural tourism: A case study from Canada". *Tourism Geographies*, 11, 2, 256-269.

Lau, Raymond W. K. (2010): "Revisiting authenticity. A social realist approach". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37, 2, 478-498.

MacCannell, Dean (1973): "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings". *American Journal of Sociology*, 79, 3, 589-603.

MacDonald, Roberta - Jolliffe, Lee (2003): "Cultural rural tourism. Evidence from Canada". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30, 2, 307-322.

McAreavey, Ruth – McDonagh, John (2011): "Sustainable Rural Tourism: Lessons for Rural Development". *Sociologia Ruralis*, 51, 2, 175-194.

Moric, Ilja (2013): "Clusters as a factor of rural tourism competitiveness: Montenegro Experiences". *Business Systems Research*, 4, 2, 94-107.

Moscardo, Gianna (2014): "Tourism and community leadership in rural regions: Linking mobility, entrepreneurship, tourism development and community well-being". *Tourism Planning & Development*, 11, 3, 354-370.

Nogueira, Sónia - Pinho, José Carlos (2015): "Stakeholder network integrated analysis: The specific case of rural tourism in the Portuguese Peneda-Geres National Park". *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 17, 325-336.

Oliver, Tove - Jenkins, Tim (2003): "Sustaining rural landscapes: The role of integrated tourism". *Landscape Research*, 28, 3, 293-307.

Olsen, Kjell (2002): "Authenticity as a concept in tourism research: The social organization of the experience of authenticity". *Tourist Studies*, 2, 159-182.

Overend, David (2012): "Performing sites: Illusion and authenticity in the spatial stories of the guided tour". *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 12, 1, 44-54.

Panyik, Emese – Costa, Carlos – Rátz, Tamara (2011): "Implementing integrated rural tourism: An event-based approach". *Tourism Management*, 32, 1352-1363.

Partalidou, Maria - Koutsou, Stavriani (2012): "Locally and socially embedded tourism clusters in rural Greece". *Tourismos: An International Multidisciplinary Journal of Tourism*, 7, 1, 99-116.

Paulauskaite, Dominyka - Powell, Raymond - Coca-Stefaniak, J. Andres - Morrison, Alastair M. (2017): "Living like a local: Authentic tourism experiences and the sharing economy". *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 19, 619-628.

Payne Daniel, Yvonne (1996): "Tourism dance performances. Authenticity and creativity". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23, 4, 780-797.

Petrou, Anastasia – Fiallo Pantziou, Elba – Dimara, Efthalia, Skuras, Dimitris (2007): "Resources and activities complementaries: the role of business networks in the provision of integrated rural tourism". *Tourism Geographies: An International Journal of Tourism Space, Place and Environment*, 9, 4, 421-440.

Pickton, David W. - Wright, Sheila (1998): "What's swot in strategic analysis?". *Strategic Change*, 7, 101-109.

Prince, Solène (2017): "Rural authenticity and agency on a cold-water island". *Shima*, 11, 1, 102-121.

Ravald, Annika - Grönroos, Christian (1996): "The value concept and relationship marketing". *European Journal of Marketing*, 30, 19-30.

Regional brochure (2014): Can be retrieved from the author.

Regional newspaper (2013-07-30): Can be retrieved from the author.

Regional newspaper (2014-05-18): Can be retrieved from the author.

Regional newspaper (2015-08-23): Can be retrieved from the author.

Reid, Donald G. - Mair, Heather - Taylor, James (2000): "Community participation in rural tourism development". *World Leisure*, 2, 20-27.

Reinharz, Shulamit (2011): *Observing the Observer. Understanding our Selves in Field Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reisinger, Yvette - Steiner, Carol J. (2006): "Reconceptualizing object authenticity". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33, 1, 65–86.

Ren, Carina - Krogh Petersen, Morten - Dredge, Dianne (2015): "Guest Editorial: Valuing Tourism". *Valuation Studies*, 3, 2, 85–96.

Saarinen, Jarkko - Lenao, Monkgogi (2014): "Integrating tourism to rural development and planning in the developing world". *Development Southern Africa*, 31, 3, 363-372.

Saxena, Gunjan – Clark, Gordon – Oliver, Tove – Ilbery, Brian (2007): "Conceptualizing integrated rural tourism". *Tourism Geographies*, 9, 4, 347-370.

Saxena, Gunjan – Ilbery, Brian (2008): "Integrated rural tourism. A border case study". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35, 1, 233-254.

Schnell, Steven M. (2003): "The ambiguities of authenticity in Little Sweden, U.S.A.". *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 20, 2, 43-68.

Sharpley, Richard (2002): Rural tourism and the challenge of tourism diversification: the case of Cyprus". *Tourism Management*, 23, 233–244.

Sharpley, Richard (2007): "Flagship Attractions and Sustainable Rural Tourism Development: The Case of the Alnwick Garden, England". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15, 2, 125-143.

Silenceville (2013): *Final report*. Can be retrieved from the author.

Silenceville blog (2014): Link can be retrieved from the author.

Silenceville project plan (2011): Can be retrieved from the author.

Silverman, David (2013): *Doing qualitative research*. Sage Publications: London, 4th edition.

Simmel, Georg (1978): *The Philosophy of Money*. London: Routledge.

Sims, Rebecca (2009): "Food, place and authenticity: Local food and the sustainable tourism experience". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 17, 3, 321-336.

Sjöberg, Katarina (2011): *The Ethnographic Encounter. Fieldwork among the Ainu, the Lubicon Cree and Wall Street Brokers*. Lund: Sekel Bokförlag.

Smith, Charles W. (1990): *Auctions. The Social Construction of Value.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sorsa, Minna - Kiikkala, Irma - Åstedt-Kurki, Päivi (2015): "Bracketing as a skill in conducting unstructured qualitative interviews". *Nurse Researcher*, 22, 4, 8-12.

Spracklen, Karl (2011): "Dreaming of drams: authenticity in Scottish whisky tourism as an expression of unresolved Habermasian rationalities". *Leisure Studies*, 30:1, 99-116.

Steiner, Carol J. – Reisinger, Yvette (2006): "Understanding existential authenticity". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33, 2, 299-318.

Stephenson Shaffer, Tracy (2004): "Performing backpacking: Constructing "authenticity" every step of the way". *Text and Performance Quartery*, 24, 2, 139-160.

Strati, Antonio (2007): "Sensible knowledge and practice-based learning". *Management Learning*, 38, 1, 61-77.

Timm Knudsen, Britta - Waade, Anne Marit (2010) (eds): *Re-Investing Authenticity. Tourism, Place and Emotions*. Bristol: Channel View Publications.

Tinsley, Ross - Lynch, Paul (2001): "Small tourism business networks and destination development". *Hospitality Management*, 20, 367-378.

Tolstad, Helene K. (2014): "Development of rural-tourism experiences through networking: An example from Gudbrandsdalen, Norway". *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift-Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 68, 2, 111-120.

Unwin, Tim (1996): "Tourist development in Estonia images, sustainability, and integrated rural development". *Tourism Management*, 17, 4, 265-276.

Urry, John - Larsson, Jonas (2011): *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. London: Sage Publications.

Vargo, Stephen L. - Lusch, Robert F. (2004): "Evolving to a new dominant logic for marketing". *Journal of Marketing*, 68, 1-17.

Vargo, Stephen L. - Lusch, Robert F. (2008): "Service-dominant logic: contibuing the evolution". *Journal of the Academic Marketing Science*, 36, 1-10.

Vatin, François (2013): "Valuation as Evaluating and Valorizing". *Valuation Studies*, 1, 1, 31-50.

Verbole, Alenka - Cottrell, Stuart (2002): "Rural tourism development: case of a negotiating process in Slovenia". *World Leisure*, 2, 21-244.

Verbole, Alenka (2000): "Actors, discourses and interfaces of rural tourism development and the local community level in Slovenia: Social and political dimensions of the rural tourism development process". *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 8, 6, 479-490.

Visit Uppland (2013): *Uppland – Något av det allra bästa*. Visit Uppland. Online: http://www.destinationuppsala.se/Global/PDFer/PDF-Broschyrer/visituppland_www.pdf.

Waitt, Gordon (2000): "Consuming heritage. Perceived historical authenticity". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27, 4, 835-862.

Walters, Sue (2015): "'Case study' or 'Ethnography'? Defining terms, making choices and defending the worth of a case". *Methodological Developments in Ethnography*, 12, 89-108.

Wang, Ning (1999): "Rethinking authenticity in tourism experience". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26, 2, 349-370.

Wang, Yu (2007): "Customized authenticity begins at home". *Annals of Tourism Research*, 34, 3, 789– 804.

Wearing, L. Stephen - McDonald, Matthew - Ankor, Jo (2016): "Journeys of creation: experiencing the unknown, the Other and authenticity as an epiphany of the self". *Tourism Recreation Research*, 42, 2, 157-167.

Wilson, Suzanne - Fesenmaier, Daniel R. - Fesenmaier, Julie - Van Es, John C. (2001): "Factors for success in rural tourism development". *Journal of Travel Research*, 40, 132-138.

Wollinger, Susanne (2000): *Mannen i ledet. Takt och otakt i värnpliktens skugga.* Bjärnum: Carlssons Bokförlag.

Yin, Robert. K. (2009): *Case study research: Design and methods.* Washington: Sage, 4th edition.

Zou, Tongqian - Huang, Songshan - Ding, Peiyi (2014): "Towards a community-driven development model of rural tourism: the Chinese experience". *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 16, 261-271.

**FACULTY
OF SOCIAL
SCIENCES**

**LUND UNIVERSITY**
Department of Service Management
and Service Studies