

## Research Article

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# Contrasting views on co-management of indigenous natural and cultural heritage – Case of Laponia World Heritage site, Sweden

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the evaluation of the management of the Laponia World Heritage site (Laponia WHS) in northern Sweden. After inscription on the World Heritage list in 1996, difficulties emerged in establishing a common understanding about the involvement of various stakeholders into the site's management model, the key point of contention being the influence of the representatives from indigenous Sami people and how that should be organised. In 2011, the management organisation led by Laponiatjuottjudus (the Sami name for the Laponia WHS management organisation) was established and implemented. This organisation gave Sami representatives a majority in the Laponia steering board and the position as chairperson in the board. This marked a remarkable shift in the Swedish national management system of land in not only handing over a state decision-making power to the local level but also to representatives of the indigenous population. The evaluation of the management model presented by Laponiatjuottjudus resulted in a number of responses from several stakeholders participating in a consultation process. These responses, from stakeholders with conflicting positions in relation to the issue described above, are the subject of this study. The analysis of these data collected reveals the existence of four major approaches or narratives to the Laponia WHS, with narratives connected to nature, the indigenous population and local governance, the economic effects of the existing system, and lastly the local community narrative. The study concludes that present management of Laponia WHS, the Laponiatjuottjudus, is a unique attempt to widen the management and planning process that partly interferes with the existing national planning model. At the same time, the analysis reveals that the Sami demands for influence over land management in the north still faces major challenges connected to its colonial legacy.

**Introduction**

The focus of this article relates to the management of a common national resource with international implications in terms of environmental protection, a world heritage site, and an indigenous population. These issues create an ambiguous situation with multiple layers of interests. Conceptualisations of governance from scholars such as Agraval (2003), Keskitalo (2010), Maynts (2003) and partly implemented by the Aarhus Convention emphasise the inclusion of more interests and stakeholders in the management and planning processes of a given area. The management of an area with partly contradictive or conflicting interests is influenced by power relations and broader national frameworks. This kind of governance approach ensures that long-term interests, local interests, and hidden stakeholders amongst others are given a more prominent place in the governance and planning processes (Pettersson, Stjernström & Keskitalo, 2017). How these processes of governance function in more critical situations – when the governance structure is under pressure – is an essential issue for study. If, for example, a common resource becomes an economic interest with wider market implications, local governance structures may be put under pressure from national legislation and market demands. This situation sets the more theoretical framing for this case study of the Laponia heritage area in the northern Sweden.

The Laponia World Heritage site (Laponia WHS) was established in 1996 after a long process of considerations and negotiations. The heritage site is a mix of natural and culture components, with Laponia being regarded as a core area for historical and contemporary Sami heritage and culture. As a result, Laponia WHS also established a Sami dominated management board (in Sami language: Laponiatjuottjudus). The present system's management and organisation was evaluated in 2016 and the resulting report was sent out in a review process. This case study is based on the analysis of the information received from reviews to this evaluation report.

This study explores unresolved issues pertaining to the Laponiatjuottjudus management of the Laponia WHS and tensions between the stakeholders at different planning levels

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(international, national, regional, and local) as revealed by the review responses to the 2016 evaluation. Several research questions guided this study:

- What are the main issues/relationships in the Laponiatjuottjudus and how are these expressed in referral responses by actors involved in the evaluation process?
- How can the handover of power/administration from the central level to the local level be understood from a theoretical point of view?
- How does the Laponiatjuottjudus deal with relations between the Sami villages structures on one hand, and the representatives from the Swedish municipality structure on the other?

### Theoretical considerations

There are two important theoretical considerations in the matter of the local management of the Lapponia WHS. The first concerns the idea of, or relation between, governance and governing. The second relates to the concept of governance the commons in accordance to Ostrom (1999). These two general concepts are filtered through an understanding of historical management legacies and post-colonialism (Puffert, 2002). Theoretical post-colonialism stems from critical theory and embraces the study of the ongoing effects of colonialism. In particular, it considers the remaining power structures of the colonised (Flint & Taylor, 2007). The exploitation and management of remote territories hosting marginalised groups in the periphery generates an opposition to development based on exploitation and management from the economic and political core (Flint & Taylor, 2007). In the Swedish case, the protection of nature often takes place in areas far from major population centres but is defined and controlled from the core. As a complicating factor, the largest area which the Swedish state has set aside as a natural preserve also hosts an indigenous population, to which the state gives little or no influence over the management of these lands (Mörkenstam, 2005; Reimerson, 2016). As such, the present body handling the management of Lapponia, Laponiatjuottjudus, is an exception in the Swedish governance of protected land and indigenous population policies.

The broader notion of governance as a development or replacement of more strictly formal governing structures and institutions plays an important role in modern society; from a democratic system with elected representatives to a political system involving more actors, planning levels, and influential networks (Blomgren & Bergman, 2005). The growth of global interdependencies via an expanding system of world trade, international organisations, and so on results in a challenge to democratic systems. The influence of various stakeholders, organised in networks in and between different geographical levels, over time becomes more influential at the expense of the representative political system. The governance approach has also resulted in changing legal frameworks for managing natural resource and planning systems (Pettersson *et al.*, 2017). Traditional representative democracy is built on established geographical and social constructs such as the states, counties, municipalities, and their respective citizens, all forming part of the basic political system in Sweden. However, civil society contains a great number of associations, interest groups, consumer groups, unions, employer associations, and environmental groups amongst others. These act within and influence the system of representative democracy. For example, in the Swedish planning process, as in most developed countries, there are two formal interests recognised in planning legislation:

property rights and the public interest (Pettersson *et al.*, 2017; Stjernström, Pettersson, & Karlsson, 2018; Thellbro, Bjärstig, & Eckerberg, 2018).

The balancing act between private interests and the public interest is central in the public planning process. The private owner represents his/her land or property, and the elected representative represents the people, or at least the political majority. The elected representative also controls the publicly owned resources, such as state land and mineral rights. Other interests have traditionally worked within the political and the formal planning processes in order to gain influence. Through the implementation of new agreements or treaties on the EU level, such as Maastricht in 1992 or Lisbon in 2009, another layer of formal power was laid out and networks and interest groups became more influential (Blomgren & Bergman, 2005). In the field of planning, international declarations such as the Aarhus Convention and the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) have also had a major impact. The Aarhus Convention gives environmental interest groups the right to participate as a recognised party in the formal planning process, as they can appeal environmental land-use decisions (Pettersson *et al.*, 2017). In Sweden, this has resulted in a modified Environmental Code (Miljöbalk SFS, 1998), allowing environmental groups to appeal land-use decisions and nature resource exploitation under certain conditions (Pettersson *et al.*, 2017).

The works of Ostrom (1990, 2015) on commons and North (1992) on institutional economy are fundamental for the understanding of local management. In many ways, the Swedish forest commons meet the criteria of a well-defined and working common (Stjernström *et al.*, 2017). Agrawal (2002) states that successful commons are normally defined as institutions that last over time, manage the resource in a responsible and sustainable way, and produce an outcome for the shareholders. Ostrom (1990) described the management of a successful common pool resource as being characterised by several principles. Basically, these principles are based on clear and geographically defined areas, with a set of management rules and a democratic organisation. Additionally, mechanisms for conflict resolution and sanctions for shareholders violating the rules are required. Other scholars have added to or modified this set of principles (Agrawal, 2002; Holmgren, 2009; Ostrom, 1990, 2009). It is also suggested that common pool regimes work best in areas with other commonalities between individuals (traditions, history, norms, etc.) (Agrawal, 2002; Holmgren, 2009).

Such systems work well, as long as the individuals in the system trust both the system and each other. Rule enforcement is crucial in all systems, which relates to one of the critical issues in Ostrom's theory governing the commons (Ostrom, 1999, 2015). A system for managing a resource defined as a forest common not only depends on how the forest common is organised and managed; as a system, in the next turn the forest common depends on other related systems, such as the overall legal system, the forest monitoring system, and the individual's acceptance of rules and regulations. As soon as any members of a common start to violate the system, there is a risk that other violators will emerge. This highlights the importance of rule enforcement and the insight that no system cannot be isolated from any related systems, or the individual's acceptance of laws and regulations.

Part of Ostrom's previous work has later been developed into an approach involving a social-ecological systems framework, focusing on common pool resources and collective self-governance. However, this concept has been criticised for not considering other kinds of governance, alternative organisations, inter- and intrastate

arrangements, international conventions, etc. Berkes (2008) emphasises the role of knowledge at different geographical levels in co-managing a local resource or geographical area. Organising cooperation between different authorities via bridging organisations enables social learning and better management. These bridging organisations can be understood as aiming at reducing the transaction costs and the roots of conflict in the management of natural resources. The idea of multilevel governance emphasises the role of horizontal organisation rather than traditional top-down approaches (Berkes, 2008; Giest & Howlett, 2013).

State regulations and international conventions are no guarantee for the sustainable management of a natural resource or an ecosystem (Lam, 1998; Ostrom, 1990). Ostrom has also criticised privatisation as a means of avoiding the tragedy of the commons; however, there are doubts as to what Ostrom meant by this. Araral (2013) suggests that her criticism does not refer to property rights as they are, but rather to the widespread ideas during the 1990s that the privatisation of commons would be a strategy for dealing with the tragedy of the commons.

According to the examples given above, the governance of commons or public goods has resulted in an extended body of literature on governance and multilayer governance and planning. One of the issues concerning the understanding and practice of governance is whether this approach can resolve old land-use conflicts or colonial relations in land-use and governance. The Swedish tradition of municipal self-governance and full responsibility for planning and land-use decisions implies a two-layer system, with a legislative state and a performing municipality (local level). Citizen groups are always connected to a municipality. The emergence of the Laponiatjuottjudus in 2006 was, to some extent, a game-changer, introducing a new level of governance and planning and allowing an indigenous population with rights recognised in international agreements and law (but not in Sweden) to have more influence within the Swedish two-layer system.

In the European polar regions, the theoretical approaches related to common pool resources and governance have been applied, particularly in relation to the Swedish Forest Commons (Carlsson, 2003; Holmgren, 2009). In Keskitalo (2019), a broader research program related to the European Arctic was presented where governance and common pool resources in the north or in Arctic Regions were examined. Moreover, Arctic Regions are also in focus in terms of climate change for two reasons: firstly, climate change is more apparent in Arctic Regions as the environment is sensitive, and secondly the rise of temperatures is occurring faster in the Arctic (Keskitalo, 2019).

#### Laponia World Heritage site – A background

Laponia WHS is an area situated in the mountain range in the northernmost province of Sweden – Norrbotten. Often referred as Europe's last wilderness, with a total area of 9,400 km<sup>2</sup> (about 2% of the total area of Sweden), it is located far from major population centres with few inhabitants and includes several protected nature areas. Laponia consists of four national parks (Stora Sjöfallet, Padjelanta, Sarek, and Muddus) and two nature reserves (Sjaunja and Stubba). The entire area is administratively contained within the three municipalities – Gällivare in the north, Jokkmokk in the middle, and Arjeplog in the south. UNESCO regards the area's national parks, nature reserves, and some additional areas, as having universal values for humanity. It comprises a combination of natural and cultural values, the latter connected to the living heritage of the indigenous Sami people, who have resided in Sweden since long before the establishment of the Swedish state.

Laponia became a World Heritage site on the UNESCO's Heritage list in 1996, as the result of joint efforts by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Swedish National Heritage Board. In its decision, the UNESCO committee emphasised the unique interplay between the indigenous people Sami and their nomadic traditions of reindeer herding that, based on seasonal migration, utilise Laponia's nature in a unique way (UNESCO, 2017). Thus, the main criteria for the World Heritage Status of Laponia Area is an interplay between the traditional land use and livelihood of its existing Sami population, as well as the natural geological foundations of the area (UNESCO, 2017). The necessity of establishing a management plan accepted by all indigenous and non-indigenous stakeholders was also pointed out by UNESCO. Previous studies highlighted that the process of governance and autonomy combining this unique set of stakeholders through the management of Laponia was unprecedented for Sweden (Green, 2009). Understanding the historical background of Laponia is vital to understanding the contemporary challenges. As in many other cases in the Circumpolar North, the indigenous population in Northern Scandinavia has been oppressed and discriminated, denied their rights to their own land and culture, and victimised by the Swedish nationalisation programs for years (for further reading see Arell, 1979; Lundmark, 1998). In contrast to past treatment, Sami reindeer herding rights are now protected within the Swedish legal framework. However, the process of establishing the Laponia WHS has (to some extent) reflected old colonial structures and led to difficulties reaching an understanding of the Sami culture, history, and land-use (see also similar concerns connected to the potentials of tourism development of this area in Smed Olsen (2016).

The current governing system of Laponia WHS, the Laponiatjuottjudus, represents a shift of the traditional two-layer planning system in the Swedish planning system, allowing for greater influence by local/regional actors in general and an indigenous population in particular (Stjernström et al., 2017). It was also one of the conditions from UNESCO when the organisation granted World Heritage Status to Laponia. As mentioned, the traditional two-layer planning system applied in Sweden is signified by a strong state or central legislation, and local and municipal levels with extensive independency, responsibilities, and rights. The regional level and regional planning have, in modern times, never had a prominent position in the Swedish system (Stjernström et al., 2017). The governing system for the Laponia WHS is, in Sweden, a unique case of a joint management scheme for several reasons. Firstly, within the two-layer Swedish system, the municipal level has the planning monopoly for all land-use, with some exceptions. Secondly, there is no legally binding regional planning process, and thirdly, neither are there any legal regional planning documents nor tools (Stjernström et al., 2017, 2018). Municipal councils are in charge of most social and spatial planning. In the case of Laponia, the need to implement a new kind of administrative system that would combine three municipalities and several state authorities challenged the idea of the Swedish planning system.

Furthermore, the establishment of Laponia WHS complicated the relation between the local and national levels of planning. The national level is represented by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (Naturvårdsverket) and the Ministry of Energy and Environment (Energioch Miljödepartementet) responsible for environmental protection of national parks and nature reserves. In most cases, parks and nature reserves are administrated by the respective County Administrative Boards (Länsstyrelsen). The latter also acts as a regional governmental administration representing

national interests on the municipal level of planning. According to the Plan and Building Act (Swedish Planning – and Building Act, 2010: 900), national interests must be considered in the mandatory municipal comprehensive plans.

Since the nomination on the World Heritage list, there have been ongoing attempts to create a functioning management system for Laponia which includes a range of key stakeholders. In 2006, nine Sami villages in Laponia (Baste čearru, Unna tjerusj, Sirges, Jåhkågaska tjiellde, Tuorpon, Luokta-Mávas, Udtja, Slakka, and Gällivare), two municipalities (Gällivare and Jokkmokk), Norrbotten County Administrative Board and Swedish Environmental Agency signed an agreement meant to serve as a base for developing a functioning administrative system for the site. This work, led by the Norrbotten County Administrative Board (Green, 2009; PwC, 2017), resulted in Laponiatjuottjudus. The Swedish Government approved of this solution and in 2011 issued a specific governmental regulation known as the Laponia Regulation (SFS, 2011). The reason it took several years to establish a functioning management scheme for Laponia Area WHS stems from the state–local relationship for governance and planning in Sweden (Stjernström *et al.*, 2018) and the positions of the Norrbotten County Administrative Board and the Sami villages during the process. More specifically, the Sami representatives would only agree to attend a meeting on the management of the site if the issue of a Sami majority representation on the future board of Laponia Area WHS was discussed first (according to Green, 2009). By contrast, the County Administrative Board's highest priority was connected to the establishment of a visitor's centre and the placement and content of the information displayed therein. During a meeting with the Governor of Norrbotten in 2005, a proposal was sent to the Swedish Government to establish a new management approach, including a board for the management of the site with a Sami majority representation (Green, 2009). Later the same year, the government issued instructions to establish an organisational structure according to the County Administration's proposal (Green, 2009).

Another issue complicating the management process of the Laponia WHS related to issues of financing the work of the Laponiatjuottjudus and the financial compensation of the representatives from the involved Sami Villages. The national state structure and the historical path dependency contribute to the understanding of the difficulties entailed by establishing a working management organisation for Laponia Area WHS (Green, 2009; Eckerberg, Bjärstig & Zachrisson, 2015; Reimerson, 2016; Sande, 2010). In other countries such as the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, local indigenous populations are normally involved in the management of cultural and natural heritage sites. This has not been common in Sweden, where the state protects and manages cultural and natural heritage. Over the years it became somewhat of an embarrassment for the Swedish Government that it was not able to establish a functioning management for Laponia with local and indigenous population representation (Green, 2009). In order to meet the UNESCO criteria for Laponia to be a WHS, the Government had to take this step of financing the management work.

The Laponiatjuottjudus began regular operations in 2011 and took over the management task of Laponia WHS from the County Administrative Board of Norrbotten in 2013. Today, it consists of the same actors that signed the initial agreement in 2006. The organisation has its office in Jokkmokk and has both administrative and executive powers. Its consultative council and its board have a Sami majority and a Sami Chair, which is in line with the UNESCO's recommendations for the management of the site.

The first three-year cycle of operation of Laponiatjuottjudus became subject to its first evaluation or audit in 2018 and, while waiting for a new government decision, the committees mandate was extended until 31 December 2018. The Laponia WHS homepage stated on that time the leadership of Laponiatjuottjudus is likely to become permanent. However, a dramatic change occurred in late 2017 when the executive board of Laponia WHS (annual meeting) decided to establish a rotating chairmanship for Laponia managing board. As such, Sami villages hold a chairmanship position on the board for two years, which then passes the local municipalities (Gällivare and Jokkmokk hold the position for one year). The impact of this decision, in relation to initial agreements, is revisited at the end of this article.

## Method

The material analysed in this study primarily consists of content from the review/consultation process carried out by the consultancy firm PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) in early 2017, as a review of the management model of Laponiatjuottjudus. The evaluation of the management model was ordered by the Laponiatjuottjudus, the managing organisation for Laponia WHS. The Swedish Ministry of the Environment delivered the PwC report to key stakeholders to solicit a response. These stakeholders included several organisations, state agencies, municipalities, NGO's, and others. We analysed the content of 31 written responses (review reports) discussing the results of the evaluation of the Laponiatjuottjudus, with statements collected from national, regional, and local agencies and administrations, municipalities, organisations, public and private businesses, and NGOs. In this study, we analysed the responses regarding how respective stakeholders relate to the present organisation and potential conflicts regarding the management of Laponia. A total number of 31 statements to the report were collected by the Swedish government office, Ministry of the Environment. These statements were downloaded from the Swedish Government official webpage and analysed by the research team. The original evaluation report was produced by PwC's regional unit in Luleå, the capital of the northernmost Swedish county.

The analysis focused on specific issues relating to the management of Laponia; local governance, organisation, participation, accessibility, and local/regional development. During the initial analysis, data were divided according to their critique or acceptance of the present management organisation of the site and the stakeholders' respective arguments. The thematic areas were established, and information was analysed accordingly within the themes comprising local governance, central state influences, planning perspectives, and administrative legacies from the past. Local governance is regarded as the overall concept relating to the theoretical foundations influenced by studies by Carlsson (2003), Keskitalo (2004), Keskitalo & Kulyasova (2009), and Ostrom (1999, 2015). From a planning perspective, the concept of governance and multilevel governance is rather unclear and cuts through traditional and established planning management systems (Bjärstig *et al.*, 2018; Stjernström *et al.*, 2017, 2018).

In addition, three key informant interviews were conducted including representatives from Jokkmokk municipality and persons in leading positions in the Laponiatjuottjudus. The focus of these interviews was related to a statement issued by Jokkmokk municipality (relating to the rotating chair position in the Laponiatjuottjudus board), reflections from informants on the roles played by other local and regional actors, and details

concerning the local management practices. These semi-structured interviews were conducted by telephone and notes were taken during the 40–60 min interviews. Interview notes were summarised in a text document. Use of less formal semi-structured interviews allowed for informants have more freedom in expressing their individual opinions and additional aspects not immediately apparent to our research team. This process was essential in revealing informal structures and circumstances which otherwise may have gone uncaptured.

## Results

The analysis of the data revealed several themes regarding planning/administrative/legal issues. These results are analysed and summarised according to six themes: legitimacy of the evaluation, the consensus model, tourism interests, authority, hunting and Sami interests, and stakeholders' interests outside Lapponia. Our analysis further reveals signs of the ongoing conflict between the Swedish state and corporate actors on one hand, and Sami rights and interests on the other. They also refer to the conflict over the Reindeer Act of 1928, in which the State distinguished between active and non-active Sami reindeer herders. Since 1928, this division has been reinforced and manifested through the Act's implementation (Lantto, 2012).

### *The legitimacy of the evaluation*

The Lapponiatjuottjudus board gave the evaluation task to the consultancy firm PwC and provided them firm with the directions on what issues should be evaluated. As the direct result of this, some of the responding stakeholders reacted negatively and questioned the review process arguing that this evaluation should not be used as the basis for the future of the Lapponiatjuottjudus. More specifically, two NGOs, BirdLife Sweden (Sveriges ornitologiska förening) and the Swedish Carnivore Association (Svenska rovdjursföreningen), were highly critical of this process and argued that the entire evaluation lacked legitimacy. They requested an independent evaluation, one not ordered and framed by the Lapponiatjuottjudus board. Additionally, the Swedish Agency for Public Administration (Statskontoret) was also critical, highlighting the necessity of an independent evaluation of Lapponiatjuottjudus and arguing that the PwC report failed to meet the criteria to serve as a valid basis for a new governmental decision (Statskontoret (The Swedish Agency for Public Management), 2018). The same agency further noted that the scope of evaluation was narrowly focused on the management organisation's functioning and did not consider its goals and ambitions. One of the important players when it comes to the development of nature-based activities in the national parks constituting the Lapponia WHS, The Swedish Tourist Association (Svenska turistföreningen, STF), had stated that the current (Lapponiatjuottjudus) management body of Lapponia is nationally and internationally unrecognised. The status of being a UNESCO World Heritage site according to the Swedish Tourist Association implies maintaining a more active management organisation in strategic development, working to attract national and international visitors.

### *The consensus model*

When the Lapponiatjuottjudus was established, its work was based on utilising Sami traditions connected to the allegory of three pillars, each respectively representing the value given to nature, reindeer herding, and Sami culture and protecting and

preserving the traces and remnants of earlier inhabitants (Tjuottjudusplána – Förvaltningsplan, 2011). These pillars are closely tied to the management approach and are connected to the values that formed the basis of Lapponia's nomination to the UNESCO's World Heritage List. Another important inspiration was drawn from the Sami culture, namely, the concept of rádedibme, or Council. This term signifies a consultation process whereby different opinions are heard and considered before a general decision is made. The Lapponiatjuottjudus adopted this approach as part of a consensus model that has characterised the way the board and the administration of Lapponia functions. Several actors mention this consensus model in their referral responses as important for bringing the work forward. For example, several Sami Villages, Ájtte museum, Mijá Ednam (the Sami village's cooperation organisation in Lapponia), the Swedish Sami association (Svenska Samernas Riksförbund, SSR), the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket), and the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten highlighted the positive aspects of the consensus model.

However, PwC's evaluation report and other examples from the review responses claimed that there are in-built difficulties with the model. Firstly, they argued that the consensus approach potentially slows down the decision-making and results in unclear organisational targets, potentially leading to economic losses. Secondly, the consensus model conflicts with models of decision-making based on representation and majority decision – which are widely accepted forms of governing. Additionally, some actors argued that the Lapponiatjuottjudus use of governance-by-consensus potentially risks delaying necessary actions in areas such as tourism and nature protection. The NGOs BirdLife Sweden and the Swedish Carnivore Association, both dealing with the issues of nature protection, were highly critical of the consensus model, arguing that the concerns for protection nature should always prevail or that “nature must come first” and suggesting that protection should be not negotiable. The Swedish Tourist Association also questioned the consensus model, mostly because they believe this approach slows down the process of planning and administration of Lapponia WHS as a tourist destination.

In fact, the consensus model is somewhat unique within democratic models based on the representative democracy. Typically, straightforward majority decisions are replaced by a consensus decision-making. The Sami villages Báste cearru and Unna tjerusj wrote in their jointly written response that “. . . we are positive to the use of traditional reindeer herding knowledge in a modern administration context with several parties. That is a strength for Lapponiatjuottjudus and its values” (Báste cearru & Unna tjerusj, referral response 2018). They also state that this model of governance contributes to the establishment of stability and long-term perspectives in decision-making and planning. “When unanimity has been reached between several parties it is not more possible to overrule the counterpart. Instead, you have to try to reach a mutual understanding until you have reached an agreement that everyone can accept” (Báste cearru & Unna tjerusj Sami villages, review response 2018). Mijá ednam (the Sami village's cooperation organisation in Lapponia) expressed similar sentiments.

One of the issues brought up by the Mijá ednam and Sámid Riikkasearvi (Swedish Confederation of Swedish Sami) was the financial conditions for the work in Mijá ednam and in the Lapponiatjuottjudus. Given that Lapponiatjuottjudus must continue their work, it was considered important to allocate monetary compensation for the work of its members (Sámid Riikkasearvi referral response). The Sámediggi (The Sami Parliament) argued that the

maintenance of the Lapponia WHS is somewhat lacking, and additional resources are needed to match its current WH status. The County Administration Board of Norrbotten, as the representative for the Swedish government, also strongly declared its support for the current model and Lapponiatjuottjudus. “We can hardly see any other organisational form that to the same extent would be able to secure a municipal, local and Sami influence, national relevance and international support” (The County Administrative Board of Norrbotten, review response).

### *Tourism interests*

Several of the responding agencies and organisations defined problems pertaining to tourism development of the Lapponia WHS. Destination Jokkmokk (local destination management organisation), the Swedish Tourist Association, and other tourism organisations argued that tourism sector interests are not being represented on the Lapponiatjuottjudus board. Additionally, the County Administrative Board of Norrbotten and the Environmental Protection Agency have both highlighted the role of tourism development and the necessity to strengthen this role. Some actors argued that the Lapponiatjuottjudus has lacked a clear vision for Lapponia’s development as a tourism destination, as well as how the interests of and relationship between tourism organisations and businesses should or could be developed while still protecting nature and reindeer herding. The political majority of the Jokkmokk municipality used this as their main argument against a continuation of the Lapponiatjuottjudus governance approach for Lapponia. Other actors, such as Destination Jokkmokk, Swedish Eco-Tourism Association, and Swedish Tourist Association, expressed their dissatisfaction with the current state of tourism development at the site, but still supported the idea of the Lapponiatjuottjudus and the consensus approach. Another understanding of slow pace of tourism development in Lapponia could be related to the fact that the entire Lapponia WHS consists of national parks and nature reserves, and the legislation protecting these areas aggravates decisions to promote further tourism development and investments in new infrastructure. Deeper discussions on additional reasons preventing Sami society’s broader participation in tourism activities can be found in Müller and Kuoljok Huuva (2009) and Müller and Pettersson (2001).

One of the most influential stakeholders in the tourism sector, The Swedish Tourist Association (Svenska Turistföreningen, STF), went even further and demanded a new evaluation. As an argument, the Swedish Tourist Association argued that the three symbolic pillars of management of Lapponia should be complemented with a fourth one. The additional element is necessary in order to strengthen the appreciation and development of Lapponia’s values for tourism and destination development that would complement the utilisation of the original values respecting nature, reindeer herding, and Sami culture.

### *Authority*

Several actors mentioned that the Lapponiatjuottjudus needs to establish more authority and decision-making power. The Lapponiatjuottjudus has so far been responsible for coordination, planning, and maintenance of the WHS, but in fact has still very limited authority in practice, if at all. The understanding of these responses is that Lapponiatjuottjudus should have some legal authority regarding land use and the governance of the resources related to Lapponia. This is also one of the key matters in the understanding of the governance process at play. These actors’ key argument was that Lapponiatjuottjudus should have legal

authority regarding land use and related issues. For example, in the state regulation concerning the establishment of Lapponia and the Lapponiatjuottjudus, the Swedish government stipulated that the Lapponiatjuottjudus could take over the predator population control tasks from the County Administrative Board (SFS, 2011: 840). Additionally, when state officials enter Lapponia, such as the police or national park rangers, they should report to the Lapponiatjuottjudus. This is, however, voluntarily and nothing that the Lapponiatjuottjudus administration demands (official Lapponiatjuottjudus administration). This reporting suggestion was misunderstood by some of the more negative reviewing organisations, suggesting that state officials (such as the police) has to report their entrance to Lapponiatjuottjudus. This is not the case. Two important stakeholders who discussed matters of authority were also the County Administrative Board of Norrbotten and the Swedish national hunters association (Jägarnas Riksförbund). Both were clearly positive to the Lapponiatjuottjudus in general. The hunters’ association also gave a positive evaluation of the local administration of the predator inventory, in sharp contrast to some of the other wildlife associations. They argued that local responsibility for the predator inventory would increase the local/regional legitimacy of the Lapponiatjuottjudus.

The Norrbotten County Administrative Board clearly supported the authority of the Lapponiatjuottjudus. However, the County Administrative Board does not want the Lapponiatjuottjudus becoming yet another public authority due to the risk of overlapping jurisdictions, responsibilities, and potential conflicts with other already existing public agencies. The Swedish Nature Protection Agency expressed a similar opinion, together with the NGO the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation. The latter claimed that it was important to have an organisation, which can integrate both environmental and cultural values. Several other actors argued in their referral responses that the present role of Lapponiatjuottjudus should be developed further, but not be given any legal authority. There were, however, some actors who were highly negative to the status of the Lapponiatjuottjudus in their referral responses. For example, organisations like BirdLife Sweden and the Swedish Carnivore Association were among those. These organisations place natural values before over other issues connected to the management of the Lapponia. These organisations represent specific nature focused interests that conflict partly with the reasons why Lapponia was given World Heritage Status as a mixed site. Thus, these comments signal that they do not understand the full grounds and the Outstanding Universal Values (OVU) that Lapponia’s World Heritage Status rests on.

In general, most responses were positive regarding the Lapponiatjuottjudus and its present tasks, with most actors suggesting that it plays an important role in representing the Sami communities in the area. This is something that most of the responses clearly understand and support. However, a political majority in the Jokkmokk municipality argued that the organisational structure behind Lapponia has not contributed to any positive economic development or job creation locally. They suggested a state authority take over the management of Lapponia and include it in the administration of all Swedish national parks within a new organisation based in Jokkmokk. From their referral response, it seems clear that the political majority in Jokkmokk disapprove of the governance setup suggested for Lapponia by UNESCO. The political opposition in Jokkmokk municipality, however, did opposed the majority’s proposal. As a result, the opposition parties wrote their own responses to the evaluation report, in which they declared their support towards Lapponiatjuottjudus becoming a

permanent organization (the political opposition in Jokkmokk municipality, review response).

### Hunting

Hunting was perhaps the issue that evoked the strongest opinions, emanating from opposing opinions regarding where to draw the boundary between property rights and customary rights. The Swedish state does not recognise property rights to the Sami villages on the land they use. The state owns most of the land in the county of Norrbotten and part of the forest area is privately owned. Hunting rights issues have emerged in several contexts. The Swedish Hunting Association (Svenska Jägareförbundet) expressed this by pointing to the existence of different legal rights regarding hunting. The first concerned state-owned land where only members of the Sami villages in Lapponia can hunt. The second is state-owned land where both Sami and non-Sami can hunt. The third is private land, where members of the Sami villages and the property owner can hunt. The hunting rights also illustrate a demarcation line between active reindeer herders and members of a Sami village on the one hand, and Sami without membership in a Sami village on the other. Another important demarcation line is the division between property rights and customary rights. The Sami villages have the latter type of right, including hunting and fishing rights.

Hunting in the sparsely populated areas of northern Sweden is for many individuals part of a lifestyle and for many deeply rooted in culture and history, not only among the Sami population but also among the forest landowners and descendants to the settlers. The division between Sami villages' members and other Sami, where the latter group are excluded from the exclusive hunting rights given to the members in a Sami village, is one complicating factor. The authority over the hunting rights is the other factor. Some of the hunting organisations might see a Swedish state as a guarantee for neutrality regarding hunt rights. To hand over more power to organisations representing the customary rights might be interpreted as a threat by some of the hunting organisations.

These circumstances reveal a rather complex issue. Organisations representing hunting interests in general do not want the Lapponiatjuottjudus to have more authority. Hunting plays an important role in many local communities. When the right to hunt varies between not only those who own land and those who do not but also between members of Sami villages with customary rights and other local inhabitants, this complicates planning, administration, and relations between individuals in the local community.

### *Sami interests and stakeholders' interests outside Lapponia*

The issues discussed in the evaluation report regarding Lapponia and Lapponiatjuottjudus do not only concern issues pertaining to the core area connected to the WHS but also to the lands surrounding it. Two lines of discussion became apparent in the review responses. The first of which was framed by organisations and agencies that expressed concerns about the role and authority of the Lapponiatjuottjudus and the position of the organisation regarding potential impacts on the world heritage core area from land uses outside of it. The Jokkmokk Forest Common commented on this, by saying "The proposed mine in Kallak and the forestry outside the borders of Lapponia are not a concern of the Lapponiatjuottjudus" (referral response from Jokkmokk Forest Common). The Swedish Forest Agency (Skogsstyrelsen) expressed their concern over what it perceived as a lack of control over forest resource in Lapponia (Muddus). Furthermore, the National

Property Board of Sweden (Statens Fastighetsverk, an agency representing the State as the landowner) wants to play an active part in the Lapponiatjuottjudus since they manage state-owned land. These different agencies' responsibilities, like the Swedish Forest Agency (Skogsstyrelsen) and the National Property Board (Statens Fastighetsverk), are somewhat overlapping and contribute to the confusion regarding the role of different stakeholders in connection to Lapponia.

Some of the wider issues that raised by key stakeholders are somewhat more difficult to understand if they are not placed in a wider context. For example, some actors claimed that the Lapponiatjuottjudus should not attempt to extend its jurisdiction to areas outside of the Lapponia WHS core area, and that therefore the issue of the proposed mine in Kallak should not be on the administration's agenda. Such statements reflect old structures and fears from non-Sami actors regarding increasing Sami influence over issues such as resource governance and land-use. From the perspective of the Lapponiatjuottjudus, the prospect of a mine in Kallak/Gallok had everything to do with Lapponia. The mine and its associated infrastructure would be situated in the middle of the narrow strip of land that make up the land for movement and grazing of the reindeers of the Sami village Jåhkågasska tjiellides – one of the nine Sami villages in Lapponia. From the perspective of the Sami village, this mining project constitutes a threat to their reindeer herding activities. Since the reindeer husbandry of Jåhkågasska tjiellides are components of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) on which the World Heritage Status of Lapponia is based, the Lapponiatjuottjudus has considered threats against their reindeer husbandry as a threat to the integrity of the world heritage site.

Another line of discussion in the referral responses relates to Sami interests and can be best summarised as a concern interests outside the Lapponia Area. This is expressed by not only several of the Sami organisations but also by the regional association of the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation: "Sami interests must be considered outside Lapponia as well" (Referral response, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation). This might be interpreted as some of the review responses noting a risk that Lapponia could become an excuse for not considering Sami interests outside Lapponia, since they are respected within Lapponia's borders. These statements express the risk of a reservation-style approach, whereby Sami interests are respected within Lapponia and to a lesser extent beyond it. On the other hand, it is clear that Lapponiatjuottjudus has a mandate related to the Lapponia. Other authorities have responsibilities for reindeer interests and nature resource management outside of Lapponia (such as the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, the Sami Parliament, etc.)

### Discussion

The development of the Lapponia WHS in northern Sweden and the governing organisation, the Lapponiatjuottjudus, is interesting from two different perspectives. Firstly, this is a unique case of Sami indigenous participation in the governance of a vast land area of high national interest, through the nine Sami villages in the Lapponiatjuottjudus. Secondly, the introduction of a new governance structure within an established government and planning system is proving to be a challenge, resulting in conflicting approaches and overlapping structures of legitimacy, which are ultimately grounded in different perceptions on the decision-making connected to the future of the Swedish Arctic. That being said, it is important to state that Lapponia WHS and the Lapponiatjuottjudus represent a

traditional Sami governance system based on consensus and consultation. Before the Swedish colonisation of northern Sweden, the Sami applied their traditional governance of land based on knowledge and practices collected over centuries and carried through many generations. This case raises several issues related to the importance of national territory and the influence of the state agencies locally. New governance often implies the introduction of new actors to the government system. Legal practices must adjust to agreements, such as the Aarhus Convention supporting a transparent system, in which more actors are formalised in the planning process (Pettersson *et al.*, 2017). Pettersson *et al.* (2017) argue that the process of including new stakeholders in the formal planning system might have an impact on the representative democratic process, since it becomes more difficult to sustain a transparent system.

During our analysis of the 2016 PwC evaluation data, an additional observation was made while reviewing responses from various actors. Specifically, that some of the stakeholders never used the Sami word for the Lapponia administration, the Lapponiatjuottjudus, in their referrals. This is true particularly of non-governmental organisations related to wildlife and environmental preservation, but also some more official stakeholders. However, it is impossible to state whether this was done by mistake or on purpose. It seems paradoxical that state organisations, with their strong involvement in indigenous and individual rights in other parts of the world, have failed to influence a higher level of acceptance of indigenous rights to self-governance in the case of the Lapponia WHS.

Another observation was noted in regard to the disparate approaches to the management of Lapponia coming from the Swedish public authorities and UNESCO itself, stemming from colonial structures inherited from the past. The Sami populations recognised customary land-use rights partly traverse the established Swedish planning system, which would be increasingly challenged if the Swedish state would recognise ILO 169 (The International Labour organisation's convention of the rights of indigenous populations). In a way, the Lapponiatjuottjudus can be seen as a resolution of this tension in an area limited to Lapponia WHS. The main actor in this was UNESCO, acting in accordance with its principles for local involvement in the management of world heritage sites – in particular, when attributes of the OUV of the world heritage site rest on the local indigenous populations' activities. Through the demands by UNESCO, the Sami indigenous people were able to take a step forward and extend and formalise their influence over the future of a significant area of land. This relative power of the Sami in Lapponia, as a consequence of UNESCO's position on the matter, has been subject to tensions as expressed by the County Administrative Board in Norrbotten: "The Lapponiatjuottjudus might be able to deal with this issue, but the challenge in this matter is to use the international support for indigenous populations in such a way that the local, non-Sami population does not feel excluded."

Several stakeholders criticised the model of decision-making practiced by the Lapponiatjuottjudus board, rooted in Sami tradition, in which all decisions must be made by consensus. The stakeholders argued that the model resulted in long preparation times before decisions could be made. According to a Sami board member, long preparation times could often be explained by a lack of knowledge of some stakeholders on a specific topic. It is interesting to note that this Sami board member argued that tourism entrepreneurs lacked knowledge about the Sami people, reindeer herding, the environment, and the Lapponia WHS in general,

and that this was something the Lapponiatjuottjudus had to improve.

Another topic related to the governance approach, one raised by several stakeholders, was the issue of exactly whose interests are represented in the Lapponiatjuottjudus. One core Swedish state actor is the National Property Board (Statens Fastighetsverk), which represents the State as an owner of land in the mountain range. Under Swedish law, the land in Lapponia is owned by the Swedish State and managed by the regional County Administrative Board. The representatives of the Swedish State in the board of the Lapponiatjuottjudus come from the County Administration Board. The National Property Board of Sweden also expressed a desire to be represented on the Lapponiatjuottjudus.

One of the issues highlighted by the local municipalities (Jokkmokk and Gällivare) was their ambition towards development of the tourism sector. This seems to be an unresolved cause of tension between the Lapponiatjuottjudus, local municipalities, and tourism entrepreneurs. Jokkmokk municipality preferences that a national (state) agency to take over the Lapponia administration, partly because the municipality expressed a dissatisfaction with the level of tourism development. The Swedish Tourist Association (STF) suggests a new and broader evaluation, arguing that the touristic values should be better considered. The same association also argues that since they are taking on a big responsibility in Lapponia, not least historically by opening up the area with hiking routes, lodges, and passenger ferry across the lake Akkajaure, they would like to see a model where more tourism experiences are considered. Another complicating circumstance is the land-use restrictions that are in place in order to protect land in the national parks. In the Swedish planning system, typical land-use planning is determined at the municipal level; however, land-use planning in national parks is regulated in through national legislation and restricts municipalities' degree of freedom in terms of land-use and economic development. The municipalities involved still have the full authority over the planning process, but the Lapponiatjuottjudus acts as referral organisation in these planning processes. In addition, the Sami villages must report to the Lapponiatjuottjudus if they set up buildings needed for the reindeer-herding activities.

At the same time, several wildlife and environmental organisations are critical of Lapponiatjuottjudus' strong emphasis on protecting Sami culture and reindeer herding in Lapponia. These organisations have argued that the reindeer-herding activities are partly in conflict with their interests in preserving wildlife, particularly the four big predators; bear, wolf, wolverine, and lynx. And in the same manner they argue that the modernisation of the reindeer industry, the use of modern technology, and the right to use protected areas for reindeer herding are matters of concern. Notably, it is these actors, which do not mention the interests of the Sami people, who most clearly express such standpoints in their review responses. Their positions are interesting, since they seem to imply a belief that somehow the widely discredited old policy of keeping or even forcing the Sami's to remain in their traditional life-style, "Lapp ska vara Lapp" policy of the past would still be valid, or at least a notion that Sami people should not use modern technology if they wish their traditional lifestyle to be one of the core-values of the World Heritage Lapponia.

The viewpoint expressed by municipal elite of Jokkmokk municipality shows disparate picture – on one hand, wishing to replace the Lapponiatjuottjudus with control by the County Administration Board or a new state-led organisation, but on the other hand, the political opposition in Jokkmokk declaring their full support for

the Laponiatjuottjudus continued management of the site. One interpretation is that Jokkmokk valued an opportunity to attract more workplaces connected to the state authorities to Jokkmokk by not supporting the existing Laponiatjuottjudus administration. Another more obvious reason is the disappointment with the pace of development of the tourism sector locally. Finally, a more speculative issue concerns the case of the prospected mine in Gällök (Kallak) 40 km west of Jokkmokk's municipal centre. For the political majority in the Jokkmokk municipality board, this new mine is a promise of new jobs and positive economic spin-offs. This position is somewhat surprising, as the municipality representative is part of the Laponiatjuottjudus board. As one of the interviewed for this study Sami board members expressed it, "[t]he representative from Jokkmokk municipality has never expressed anything like this on the board, and the statement also came as a surprise to the municipal representatives."

Since UNESCO's prompt dismissal of the first attempt to inscribe Lapponia on the World Heritage list – in which the Sami reindeer-herding activities were described as an environmental impact on the area instead of an attribute of OUV – few, other than the above mentioned environmental organisations, have discussed it as such. Research on the effects of indigenous activities such as reindeer grazing do not offer evidence of overgrazing or soil damage in general (Bernes, Bråthen, Forbes, Speed, & Moen, 2015). Generally, this research indicate impacts that are delimited to a few places where reindeer herding has been taking place for a very long time, which only serves to underline the fact that Lapponia and the rest of the Scandinavian mountain range never was a pristine environment, but a cultural landscape, shaped by forces of nature and activities by people as the descriptions of Lapponia WHS emphasise.

The issues of protecting natural environments created a conflict in regard to the rights of Sami populations of the Lapponia Area WHS, particularly around restrictions to their hunting and fishing rights. Some of these restrictions are now under consideration, however, and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency recently implemented minor changes in the hunting rights (Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, 2017). Such exclusive rights for the Sami indigenous people in Lapponia are sometimes a source of conflict, expressed in some of the stakeholder's responses. Another problematic issue is the presence of large predators on lands where the Sami villages conduct reindeer herding. Predators kill and eat reindeer, which aggravates the reindeer herding community in general. Representatives of wildlife and environment organisations expressed concerns related to this situation implying that Sami would have less interest in protecting predators in Lapponia WHS. Moreover, these organisations reacted negatively to the idea of handing over the predator inventory task to the Laponiatjuottjudus. This attitude also expresses a clear case of a negative suspicion towards representatives from Sami villages that is rooted in misconceptions and unfounded concerns.

On a national level, a governance approach could be criticised for overlooking or disregarding the representative democracy (Pettersson et al., 2017). Governance as a concept also implies a transformation from a strict government-based system to a network-based governance system. The latter includes more involved actors and offers more influence from these actors. In the Swedish case, this regards the political system in general and the planning system (in particular). The transformation from government to governance is not without complications. One example is the planning system and how that relates to the governance of Lapponia. The Swedish two-layer system gives the local authority a great deal of the

government power. In the planning system, this means that the Swedish municipalities are given the rights and obligations to map and plan (land-use plan) for the whole area of the municipality. Most land-use decisions locally are taken in the municipality board except areas or sectors with a national interest (in these cases, the county administration board must approve the local decisions). Establishing a horizontal organisation, like Laponiatjuottjudus, increases the risk for unclear governing and planning structures.

In the literature, it is somewhat disputed if governance in public management is something new or if it is just an approach that involves more actors in the public management process (Pettersson et al., 2017). Pettersson et al. (2017) also suggests that governance might involve a legitimacy problem, in the sense that more actors are given formal rights within the legal planning system. The standpoints argued by the different stakeholders in the referral process were rather categorical and can be understood as rather incompatible with each other.

1. The nature narrative: Nature as a motive, and as a moral and legal guideline to which all other interests must be subordinated.
2. The indigenous population and local governance narrative: The discussion of the indigenous population and their rights in relation to the Swedish state and non-indigenous actors. This is a narrative involving actors on the international (UNESCO), national, and local levels.
3. The economic narrative: Other interests and their claim that Laponiatjuottjudus lacks capacity to develop the tourism industry in Lapponia.
4. The local community narrative: Jokkmokk municipality boards economic agenda versus the common opinion among other official stakeholders in the referral process. The local political narrative has sometimes a rather short perspective and is sometimes more focused on the labour market and job opportunities.

By the end of 2018, the beginning of 2019, and into the final stage of our research, a debate arose in the Sami villages in the Lapponia WHS, the Laponiatjuottjudus, and the related municipalities. The debate concerned the interpretation of the rules for the chairmanship in the Laponiatjuottjudus board. The issue was one that was first brought up by the Jokkmokk municipality during the annual meeting (Partsrådet) in 2017. The municipality suggested an alternating chairmanship in the Laponiatjuottjudus board, meaning that the Sami representatives should hold the chair position for two years and then the related municipalities should hold the chair for one year. This was ultimately the decision taken at the annual meeting. This decision has a major symbolic meaning, since it contradicts the initial ambitions of the management of Lapponia with a board with Sami majority and a Sami chairperson. It also impacts how the majority society relates to the Sami influence and governance in an area of great importance for reindeer herding and Sami culture.

To the Jokkmokk municipality board, the key issue is local governance. This issue is not thoroughly discussed in the initial works on WHS or by the present Lapponia administration. Based on the initial positions and agreements, the board of the Laponiatjuottjudus should have a Sami majority represented by Mija Ednam (the Sami organisation for all the involved Sami villages in Lapponia). It is also clear that the decisions in the Laponiatjuottjudus should be based on consensus. After the decision for alternating chairmanship in the Laponiatjuottjudus board, the chair of the Mija Ednam

chose to resign. For Jokkmokk municipality, this decision has another implication. The representatives for Jokkmokk refer to the initial work of the administration of Laponia and the idea that the administration should be locally based and anchored. The representatives for Jokkmokk municipality also expressed disappointment with development in the tourism sector. In the background of all this, larger natural resource interests shadow these developments. However, both parties in this case suggest that it would be a step backwards for administration of Laponia to return to the state, represented by the County Administrative Board (Interviews 1 and 2).

If one were to put it in more simple words, the conflict can be understood as a question: Should the administration of Laponia be recognised as a part of a rehabilitation/reconciliation process for historical injustices made by the Swedish Crown, or should the administration of Laponia be understood as an act of cooperation and mutual understanding here and now of a piece of land with vital importance for both the reindeer herding, the Sami culture, and history, as well as other local interests?

In the process surrounding Laponia, there is also a process of learning. The Sami representative for Mija Ednam (Our Land) expresses that this is first and foremost about the Samis role in the public administration as the bearer or owner of Sami cultural values (Interview 1). In the public administration, the Sami interest gets further dignity and importance when they both represent and own the cultural values of the Sami. Representatives from Mija Ednam maintain that the learning process is essential. This process has no beginning, no end, but is an ongoing process of learning where, for example, new member of the board in Laponiatjuottjudus are being socialised into the Sami environment and Sami issues (Interview 1).

## Conclusions

The process of development of management model for Lapponian Area WHS is of great symbolic importance for the Swedish state, particularly in the recognition of handing over the majority and the role of the chairmanship to the indigenous Sami people, in order to administrate a part of the country, as something of universal value to mankind. This is of importance for Sami's identity and their struggle for increased inclusion in management and planning of not only this heritage site but also beyond. Our study has identified four narrative themes found in the responses during the consultation process, decisive for the future of the Laponiatjuottjudus, are not merely simple reflections of different opinions on how Laponia Area WHS should be managed. These narratives serve as expressions of the direct interests of stakeholders in this area. The narratives highlight preferences to see certain future developments rather than others – mining futures, futures ensuring un-altered influence on land-use matters, or futures doing away with colonial legacies and supporting indigenous self-governance.

The discussions about the representation of the Sami interests in the management of Laponia WHS relate to two separate discourses on the governance of how the Sami interests should be represented, by whom and also how the balance between the interest represented by local political elite influence will be taken into account. This can also be understood as the difference or conflict between Sami-led administration and traditional Swedish public administration. There is a risk that the local (non-Sami) administration is representing a development that does not consider or understands the needs of indigenous Sami population of this area.

Whereas if the Sami perspective, knowledge, and heritage is considered, it can result in an interesting breakthrough and much needed change in governance of the traditional Sami land. In the Swedish government structure, the State representatives traditionally manage issues related to property rights, language policies, regional economic development, land-use, etc. In relation to the establishment of Laponia WHS and the Laponiatjuottjudus administration, some of these issues have landed on a local level of power where learning processes, mutual understanding, and respect becomes part of a future, ongoing challenge.

From our perspective, the Laponiatjuottjudus has been an interesting and promising organisation. For the first time in the late modern history of Sweden, the representatives of indigenous Sami population have been able to increase their influence over the management of a core area for their tangible and intangible heritage. Moreover, the organisation's decision-making approach, built on traditional Sami consultation and consensus process, can be interpreted as a step in the right direction in terms of indigenous rights to self-rule. Some of the concerns regarding this particular management model reflect tensions that, in the longer run, will be resolved.

A more problematic issue is that the governance model for Laponia WHS conflicts with the structure of the more typical two-layer Swedish planning model. Will the governing bodies of the Swedish state allow for this challenge to persist and even be replicated elsewhere? Another major challenge is to find ways to improve the legitimacy of the Laponiatjuottjudus among non-indigenous actors in the province of Norrbotten. This is a key for the success of both the Laponiatjuottjudus and the survival of Lapponian Area WHS. Moreover, the discussion regarding the alternating chairmanship of the Laponiatjuottjudus board somewhat obscured the progress in a creation of a new or improved management model for Laponia WHS based on the foundations of governance. Both parties in this discussion have rational arguments, but the official Swedish state still struggles to find a sustainable, reconciliatory approach to its colonial past and ensures a co-existent future. Finally, the attempt of the Laponia WHS management model illustrates a clear willingness and ambition from most public and private stakeholders to find and develop a sustainable management model for indigenous Sami natural and cultural heritage.

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## Appendix

List of referral agencies/stakeholders' organisations:

Åjtte, Swedish Mountain and Sami Museum in Jokkmokk  
 The Sami villages of Báste caurru and Unna tjerusj  
 Destination Jokkmokk  
 The Swedish Eco-Tourism Association  
 Gällivare municipality board  
 Jokkmokk Forest Commons  
 Jokkmokk municipality board  
 Swedish Board of Agriculture  
 Jokkmokk municipality – the political opposition  
 Jägarnas Riksförbund  
 Norrbotten County Administrative Board  
 Mijjá Ednam – the Sami villages in Laponia  
 Swedish Society for Nature Conservation  
 The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency  
 Norrbotten County Council  
 Swedish National Heritage Board  
 Svenska Samernas Riksförbund  
 Swedish Sami Parliament  
 Swedish Forest Agency  
 Sveriges ornitologiska förening – BirdLife Sverige  
 The National Property Board of Sweden  
 The Swedish Agency for Public Administration  
 The Swedish Association for Hunting and Wildlife Management  
 The Swedish Carnivore Association  
 The Swedish Tourist Association  
 Government Offices of Sweden  
 Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth  
 Tor Lundberg Tuorda  
 The Swedish Transport Administration  
 Vattenfall