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Communication Problems When Participants Disagree (or Avoid Disagreeing) in Dialogues in Swedish Natural Resource Management—Challenges to Agonism in Practice

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In this article, we analyze how participants perform disagreement in meetings organized with the explicit purpose of managing through dialogue conflicts concerning natural resources in Sweden. How is a conversation initiated about something that participants disagree about? How do they clarify to each other that, about what, and why they disagree? How do they show that they understand it is like that and what do they do when this is clear to them? Answers to these questions are important because, if dialogue is to contribute to the constructive development of conflict situations, dialogue should be regarded as a forum where disagreement is expressed and developed, rather than as a forum and tool for consensus. We conducted a sequential analysis of how disagreement is performed and accomplished in normative dialogues in which participants talk about how to reduce the negative impact of wildlife populations—such as predators and grazing birds—on human activities such as domestic reindeer husbandry and crop farming. The analysis shows that disagreement is articulated in ways that do not seem to make ontological, epistemological and axiological differences among positions clear for participants. We identified six procedures through which disagreements are (not) accomplished in these conversations. This shows that routines and procedures in normative dialogue are characterized by consensus-preferences not helpful for agonistic dialogue. In order to avoid situations where dialogue leads to discursive closures, standards and procedures that facilitate articulation of disagreement need to be developed.

Keywords: agonistic pluralism, radical democracy, dialogue, environmental conflict, disagreement, natural resource management

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a social phenomenon that sets the scene for policy and administrative processes in environmental and natural resource management and sustainability adaptationseems that actors in natural resource of society (Blackburn and Bruce, 1995; Daniels and Walker, 2001; Gray, 2003; Sidaway, 2005). A frequently discussed question is how the political, administrative, and communication systems involved in these processes should relate to the occurrence of conflicts (Peterson and Franks, 2006) and the constructive and destructive social processes associated with conflicts (Johnson et al., 2006; Hallgren, 2016; Raitio, 2016; Kriesberg and Dayton, 2017).

Often, the word "dialogue" is used by both analysts and practitioners of environmental and natural resource management to describe the normativity of social processes aimed at facilitating constructivity in environmental conflict (Carpenter and Kennedy, 1988; Forester and Theckethil, 2009; Muro and Jeffrey, 2012; Mårald et al., 2015). Views on the nature of the normativity that characterizes dialogue are divided, as are those on what communicative practices and procedures are associated with that normativity.

In this article we analyze how participants in meetings organized with the explicit purpose of dealing with conflict and paradoxical goals regarding natural resources in Sweden through dialogue, perform disagreement together. We call these situations "normative dialogue" to indicate that the involved actors explicitly express the expectation that communication in dialogue is of a particular quality, with a discourse ethics different from what is characteristic of other political and administrative contexts. Although it is often unclear what kind of normativity characterizes dialogue (Carbaugh et al., 2011; Ganesh and Holmes, 2011; Ganesh and Zoller, 2012), it seems that actors in natural resource management take it for granted that dialogue implies special conditions for communication and creates something good, which is better than other forms of collaboration. However, we are not interested in the discourse ethics of natural resource management actors, but in their discourse practice: How does the communicative practice in these normative dialogues accomplish disagreement? How is a conversation initiated about something that the participants disagree about, and how do they clarify to each other THAT they disagree, and about WHAT and WHY? How do they show each other that they understand that is so and what do they do when this is clear to them?

The answers to these questions are important because it has been noted that, if dialogue is to contribute to the constructive development of conflict situations, dialogue should be regarded as a forum where disagreement is expressed and developed, rather than being assumed as forum and tool for reaching consensus (Ganesh and Zoller, 2012; Davidson, 2016). This agonistic view of the relationship between conflict and dialogue is based on the view that conflict is constitutive for, and constantly present in, society (Mouffe, 2005; Aggestam et al., 2015; Maddison and Diprose, 2017). An agonistic, democratic governance characterizes, in (Mouffe (1996), p. 8) words, "its envisaging the diversity of conceptions of the good, not as something negative that should be suppressed but as something to be valued and celebrated."

The constructive aspect of conflict is that tensions between interests create pluralism and creativity (Johnson et al., 2006) while, at the same time, revealing the presence of power relations and hegemony (Laclau, 2014) in society. Acknowledgment of conflict thus forces society to reconstruct institutions and structures, procedures, language, and knowledge and to engage with the diversity of perspectives. The destructive aspect of conflict is that community actors who worry about being dominated by a competitive perspective, in their attempts to maintain or regain their agency, limit each other's agency, and in extreme cases, existence. Therefore, conflict may also reduce the diversity of perspectives (Hallgren, 2003; Ångman et al., 2011). Conflict is a form of social interaction through which these constructive and destructive processes are created. Already, sociologist Simmel (1964) found that conflict, *Kampf*, is associative to the same extent that it is dissociative, because actors who fight each other's attempts to dominate are connected in a relationship. Mouffe (2013) has argued that political identity is created in the tension between "us" and "them" in conflict, and claims that although antagonism can take many forms, it is illusory to believe that antagonism between "us" and "them" can ever be eradicated. This is why it is important to allow conflict an agonistic form of expression, in which actors challenge each other's ideas but not their legitimacy to represent these ideas in the debate. When conflict takes shape as agonism "others are not seen as enemies to be destroyed but as adversaries whose ideas might be fought, even fiercely but whose right to defend those ideas is not to be questioned" (Mouffe, 2013, p. 7). So, the performance of disagreement is obviously important, since, as Mouffe put it, "a democratic society requires a debate about possible alternatives and it must provide political forms of collective identification around clearly differentiated democratic positions" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 30–31).

For agonistic pluralism to be performed in normative dialogue, it is necessary to have communicative procedures through which disagreement can be articulated and investigated. However, studies in conversation analysis have revealed that assessment statements in conversations are organized in ways that give sequential preference to agreeing answer (Pomerantz, 1984), that is, agreeing demands less communicative effort than disagreeing. Subsequently, disagreeing answers to assessments have been found to include weaker claims than agreeing answers, and have often been delayed, and preceded by control questions or even include agreeing turns before the disagreeing turn, for example, the common turn construction "Yes, but…." Pomerantz (1984, p. 64) argues that "agreement turns and sequences are structured so as to maximize the occurrences of stated agreements, and disagreement turns and sequences so as to minimize the occurrences of stated disagreements." When a participant in a conversation "hears a co-participant's assessment being completed and his or her own disagreement is relevant and due, he or she may produce delays, such as no talk, request for clarification, partial repeats, and other repair initiators and

turn prefaces" (Pomerantz, 1984, p. 72). Additionally, in more formal conversations where expressing disagreement to some extent is the purpose of the conversation, such as in assessment panels in art exhibitions, conversation analysis has demonstrated that conversational procedures for avoiding disagreement, such as topic jumping, are used (Osvaldsson, 2004; McKinlay and McVittie, 2006).

So, what concrete interactive forms for performing agonism or disagreement are available in the orderly processes that we call normative dialogue? And has normative dialogue become so impregnated by norms preferring consensus that articulation of disagreement is systematically avoided through the interactive practices and procedures performed and maintained in normative dialogue?

METHODS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

To highlight the communicative forms under which agonism can take place in the normative dialogues that have become so common in the administration of environmental and natural resource management, we have identified situations where actors meet and participate in what they themselves call dialogue. We have observed, recorded, and transcribed these conversations, and analyzed how sequences of disagreement are interactively performed. Our data have been extracted from a total of ∼30 h of recorded meeting time, captured from 9 dialogue meetings, each of a duration of between 2 and 5 h. Of these meetings, 6 concern the problem of predator killing of reindeers, and 3 concern the problem of crop raiding by big grazing birds like cranes, swan, and geese. The hosts of the meeting, which in all cases were nature conservation authorities, were contacted by researchers with request for permission to attend, observe, and record the meetings. During the meetings, the researchers briefly introduced themselves and presented a brief and general account of the research. During the formal part of the meeting, the researchers remained in the background and administrated recording devices and took notes. During breaks and after the meetings, researchers participated in conversations. All participants have given their oral informed consent to recording and for the records to be used for research purpose. The Swedish law (FS, 2003:460) and the Swedish research council do not demand approval from external ethical committee in cases of participant observation.

In reading the transcript we have searched for sequences that have been characterized by disagreement and, through sequential analysis, have identified different ways in which disagreement is initiated and addressed in the conversation. We have used a definition of disagreement that mainly refers to disagreements after the third turn. This refers to situations where an interlocutor makes a claim or proposal that is contradicted in a statement performed by another interlocutor, and the first speaker maintains or defend the original claim (McKinlay and McVittie, 2006). However, we have not limited ourselves to disagreements after the third turn, but have also analyzed sequences with subtler markers for disagreement.

"The theoretical point of departure of this analysis is social constructionism and interactionism (Linell, 2009), and this analysis sees social situations and structures as being accomplished and performed intersubjectively through social interaction" (Goffman, 1983; Heritage and Clayman, 2010). Disagreement is not just a frame for conversations, nor a consequence of conversations, but disagreement is made through interaction; hence, it matters how disagreement is carried out. An important concept for understanding how disagreements are handled in conversations is constitutive expectancies (Watson, 2009), the intersubjective expectations interlocutors share about the content and form of conversations (Garfinkel, 1963). Garfinkel demonstrated in a series of classic experiments that, when a conversation participant violates intersubjective expectations, it will lead to doubts about intersubjectivity and doubts that communication is at all possible. This will subsequently result in a communication breakdown, followed by the reconstruction of new, more suspicious constitutive expectations (Watson, 2009). In order to avoid a conversation ending in a breach of constitutive expectations, the daily repertoire has tools for detecting as well as repairing misunderstandings that could lead to violations of constitutive expectations (Schegloff, 1992).

Although we have a social constructivist focus and see sequential organization of conversations as an important piece of the puzzle for understanding the prerequisites for agonistic dialogue in natural resource conflicts, we have chosen not to conduct a regular conversation analysis according to the transcription convention developed by Jefferson (2004). Our transcripts have been made in Swedish and indicate the words we can hear pronounced, but not the phonetics or details in the interaction. The reason we have not done so is that we judged that we did not need that level of detail and dissolution in our analysis. The translation of quotes from Swedish to English has been done after the analysis.

THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF WILDLIFE DISAGREEMENTS AND NORMATIVE DIALOGUE

The purpose of this study is to discuss the communicative conditions for agonistic dialogue in the field of natural resource management by analyzing how disagreements are interactively achieved in meetings organized with the explicit aim of dealing with conflicts and paradoxical goals through dialogue. We have no explicit ambition to explain the causes, the development and the consequences of these conflict situations, but only to show how disagreements are made in the current conversations. However, these conversations take place in situations of quite high contextual density. Schegloff (1997) suggests that the context *of* talk-in-interaction is defined *through,* and *in* talk-in-interaction when the participants in these conversations relate to the context. With a social constructivist perspective, context is situated and emergent. Schegloff stresses that the analysts need to understand the participants' endogenous orientations toward their context through paying attention to references to

the context created in talk-in-interaction, and how this context is made meaningful in the interaction. This is important, otherwise the analyst risk imposing their interpretation of a context on the situation and its participants. We agree with Schegloff's argument for taking locally and interactively produced perspectives on context seriously. However, we also think that in the kind of complex context that we are analyzing, the conversation participants refer to layers and layers of meaning and it becomes very difficult for an outsider to understand the references to context made in the turns, and how they relate to references in other turns, without a preunderstanding of the interactional history. Therefore, we think that the analysts also need to take into consideration other sources to context than the local talk-in-interaction. Therefore, we will provide some of our understanding of the context of these situations, and discuss some institutional and contextual factors that we believe are important for the understanding of what transpires during these conversations. This is not about intruding on participants' endogenous orientation toward context; it is about providing enough intersubjectivity to make the participants' references to context visible for the analyst and the reader of the analysis.

The concrete conversations we have studied deal with two different natural resource dilemmas: problems for reindeer herders due to reindeer being killed by predators such as wolves, wolverines, lynx, bears, and eagles, which are protected by the European Habitats Directive[1]; and problems for farmers due to crop damage caused by grazing birds (cranes, barnacle geese, swans), protected by the European Birds Directive[2]. We will, for the sake of simplicity, label these cases "reindeer-predator" and "agriculture-cranes." This way of describing what the participants in the observed conversations are talking about is, of course, a misleading simplification and generalization, and it could be described in quite different ways. It is not predators, reindeer and birds, and their respective needs, that are at the center of the conversation, but people and their expectations, worries, and relationships. Nevertheless, we will devote some space to describing reindeer husbandry, predators, grazing birds, and farms, the relationships among them, and the policies that regulate their prerequisites.

Reindeer husbandry has been conducted by Sami communities in Sweden since the sixteenth century (Lantto, 2012). Sami refers to an indigenous population living in what is now considered Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Russian national territory. The Sami society, including reindeer husbandry, has been affected by changes in politics in the colonizing countries; Sami language, religion, and apparel have been banned or stigmatized (Lindmark and Sundström, 2016) with different intensities in different time periods until the contemporary period, and Sami livelihoods and economy have been influenced in various ways by political decisions that the Sami lacked influence over (Lantto, 2012; Larsen et al., 2017). Reindeer husbandry is a focal point of the Sami culture and one of the factors that has always affected reindeer husbandry is the presence of predators (Forbes et al., 2006). To put it simply, wolves, wolverines, lynxes, bears, and eagles kill reindeer. The Sami's relationship with these predators is also something that has changed over time, and as a result of decisions by various Swedish parliaments. The Sami communities were obliged by Swedish authorities to hunt in order to decimate the Swedish predator population until the beginning of twentieth century, when it was decided that predators should be protected to avoid extinction. As a consequence of previous management strategies, predator populations in the latter half of the twentieth century were very small and had little impact on reindeer husbandry. However, since the 1980s these populations have recovered and currently around 40,000 domesticated reindeer are killed by predators per year, and some Sami communities are experiencing a substantial decline in herd size (Åhman et al., 2014). Today, Sami organizations consider predators killing reindeer to be a major threat to the economic and social sustainability of reindeer husbandry, and they argue politically that predator population management policies should be changed based on the needs of reindeer husbandry[3]. According to observations and calculations, about 30–45 percent of the reindeer (winter herd) are killed by predators. A Sami community experiencing a predator problem can apply for protection culling; and culling has to be approved by the nature conservation authority. Wolves, lynx, and wolverines are protected by the European Union Habitats Directive. The Swedish parliament has decided that each Sami community should withstand losses of up to 10 percent of its herds, but has not provided any tools for managing the situation. The meetings that have been observed for this study aim at developing a "tolerance level plan" through dialogue between the conservation authority (county administrative board) and local Sami communities. The plan document should describe the respective conditions of reindeer husbandry and the impact of predators on the community, and propose measures to reduce losses until they reach <10 percent. Meetings take place at the initiative of the nature conservation authority and are led by a public officer. Each Sami community participates in four meetings and each meeting has a theme, but the meeting structure is informal and they last between two and 5 hours. In the observed meetings, each Sami community was represented by two to five representatives. There was no explicit, formalized meta-communicative talk about managing disagreement, and no pre-decided procedures for taking turns, expressing diverging opinions, or any other explicated communicative techniques or a formalized code of conduct. However, there was implicit meta-communicative talk which reveals mutual assumptions that these meetings are supposed to be different from previous meetings and productive. The civil officer explicitly says that the Sami community knows better the situation of reindeer herding, and that they should represent their own perspective. The civil officer also repeatedly emphasizes that "the plan" is important, and that more the effort and creativity invested in "the plan," more likely it is that the goals of reducing predation, without risking long term survival of the predator population, will be achieved.

[1]The formal name is Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

[2]Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds.

[3]Sapmi 2018, July 27 Retrieved from http://www.sapmi.se/rovdjur-och-renar/

Cranes, geese, and swans are large birds that feed on fields in the agricultural landscape, especially in connection with wetlands. In Sweden, these birds were quite rare 40 years ago and the birds are protected by both national and international legislation, including the European Birds Directive. In recent decades, these species have had a strong population growth, and the birds now appear in very large numbers at staging sites during the spring and autumn migrations (Nilsson et al., 2018). Staging sites are often located in low-altitude agricultural areas adjacent to wetlands. Often these wetlands are remnants of lakes that were drained during agricultural rationalization in the nineteenth century, and then restored as wetlands through nature conservation measures during the 1990s.

Farmers cultivating farms in areas close to such wetlands with high bird densities experience problems of crop damage, both during the birds' spring and fall migration and from birds that nest in the area during summer. The regional Nature Conservation Authority acknowledges these problems and offers financial compensation for crop damage and employs staff to administer "scarecrows" and distraction feeding to divert the birds from commercial crops. Since the birds are included in the Birds Directive, hunting with the purpose of reducing the population is not allowed. In interviews which the authors conducted with public officers working on these questions for a long time, it emerged that some farmers believe that the wetland restorations carried out by the nature conservation authority for nature protection purposes are to blame for the rapid increase in bird populations and consequent crop damages. The three meetings we observed were organized by the nature conservation authority, in which farmers were invited to discuss, evaluate, and decide on measures to reduce crop damage. Between 10 and 20 farmers attended each meeting. The public officer chaired the meetings, and one or two representatives of the authority attended the meetings. A bird researcher also attended the meetings and presented research results. In the beginning of the meeting, the public officer chairing the meeting presented the agenda, which consisted of presentations by the public officer and the bird researcher, followed by a small group discussion among the farmers to make decisions on adopting measures for the next year to reduce crop raiding. The presentations were about birds' feeding behavior, population dynamics, migration behavior, and the administration and measures taken by the authorities to reduce crop raiding. The presenters said explicitly that questions were welcome during the speech (and many questions were asked). Except the instruction that questions could be asked, and later during the meeting the instructions to talk about future strategies in small groups, no other explicit, formalized meta-communicative talk took place. There was no discussion on managing disagreement.

In the meetings we observed, participants talked about epistemological and axiological questions related to the themes of predators preying on reindeer and crop damage by birds, and about their mutual relationships, power relations and meta-communication. In either case, an authority responsible for management of protected wildlife encountered a group of stakeholders who experience problems due to the presence of the wildlife. In both cases, the conversation was preceded by mass media and public discussions about the problems, and it appears to be common knowledge in society that these management issues result from incompatible goals and that different actors in society disagree about how society should prioritize these goals; to create better conditions for reindeer husbandry and agriculture, or to protect wildlife. There seems to be disagreement about epistemology (what you know about the situation, how do you know it and if knowledge can be trusted) and axiology (how it should be, what interest should be given priority and who is responsible for problems and change). In order to handle these concrete situations, the involved actors have met and discussed the present situation and future plans. In both cases, the observed meetings were initiated by the authorities, and the explicit purpose of the conversation was to identify and/or evaluate practical solutions for reducing problems for stakeholders, without bending the rules or violating measures for the protection of wildlife.

SIX WAYS TO (NOT) PERFORM DISAGREEMENT

In our material, we found sequences in which what we call third-turn disagreement was performed, as well as sequences with other less clear markers for disagreement. In some cases, it appeared to us as external viewers, with knowledge of the overall contextual conditions, as if a conversation partner tried to initiate an incompatibility, which, for different reasons, was not interactively constituted as a third-turn disagreement. However, in either third-turn disagreements or in the less explicit initiations of disagreement, the disagreement was not maintained after the fourth, fifth, or Nth turn. In fact, we could not find any examples of situations where more fundamental differences in epistemological, ontological, ethical, axiological, or meta-communicative positions were expressed or where the actors addressed the power relationships that hid the disagreement. Instead, we identified in our material six different types of procedures for not maintaining disagreement, which were collaboratively applied by participants.

1 The disagreement is initiated and articulated as disagreement after third turn but reconstructed in the Nth turn into consensus or creative problem-solving after argumentation, persuasion, compulsion, or manipulation.
2 The disagreement is initiated as disagreement after third turn but interrupted and postponed after the second, third, or Nth turn.
3 Participants deploy jokes as indicators but not performers of disagreement.
4 Questions are used as proxies for initiation of disagreement but not treated as disagreement after the first turn.
5 Equivocal initiation of disagreement leads to doubts about intersubjectivity.
6 Disagreement appears as a meta-discursive object but is not performed.

We will develop how these types of not-performed, not-maintained, and un-completed disagreements work, with the help of examples from our material.

The Disagreement Is Initiated and Articulated as Disagreement After Third-Turn but Reconstructed in the Nth Turn Into Consensus or Creative Problem-Solving After Argumentation, Persuasion, Compulsion, or Manipulation

These sequences typically occur when any of the interlocutors involved in a third-turn disagreement give up their claim after the third turn of the disagreement: An interlocutor makes a claim or proposal, which is questioned or denied by another interlocutor. The first interlocutor denies the rejection and retains the claim, but in a following turn, one of the interlocutors changes his or her claim and accepts the proposal of the other or suggests alternative positions.

In one sequence, a Sami community's need for protective culling of lynxes was discussed. The public official asked how many lynxes the Sami community believed should be killed. The Sami community representative answered that they did not think they should mention a number and the public officer exclaimed in the third turn, "But we have to." After some hesitation, a representative of the Sami community proposed a number and they continued to talk about the relevance of that number.

In another sequence, a public officer proposed that, in order to estimate how many bears are present and potentially killing reindeer calves in an area topographically inaccessible to humans, they could kill a moose and place its carcass in the area, monitored by a remote camera, to film the presence of bears. The representatives of the Sami community responded that it is impossible to shoot a moose during the off-season even with a permit, since the moose-hunting locals (other than the Sami) would be upset and protest against off-season hunting; "The moose is sacred," they said. After some discussion, the public officer suggested that bears can be attracted to the camera with corn instead of a moose carcass. They also developed the idea that the corn might not just be good for attracting bears to the camera for counting, but also draw the bears away from the reindeer calving area. A disagreement after third turn was thus transposed into creative problem-solving.

Disagreement Is Initiated but Canceled and Postponed After the Second, Third, or Nth Turn

A typical sequence of a postponed disagreement is initiated by one party expressing a desire for something that the other party should perform. The other party indicates in turn two that there is a problem with the wish, and then announces that the matter will be dealt with on another occasion.

In one meeting, the representative of a Sami community said, "But then, we have to get our own protection culling for wolverines." Until then, three neighboring Sami communities had shared a culling permit and experienced stress because of the competition over who would be the first to track and shoot more wolverines on their own territory, and leave no space for the other two communities to kill the wolverines active in their territory. The public officer replied that he was surprised that the Sami communities had not shown more engagement in actually performing the culling in the previous years, and then said, "We'll take a look at it." The disagreement was thus canceled after the second turn and postponed to an indefinite future, and the difference in viewpoint on culling was not further expressed or investigated.

Participants Deploy Jokes as Indicators but Not Performers of Disagreement

Another way that disagreement was indicated but not completed in the dialogues studied was through jokes and irony. In one sequence, participants talked about what methods could be used for protection culling of the secluded wolverine. The representatives of the public authority and the Sami agreed that it is exceptionally difficult to hunt wolverines, especially due to the topology of the landscape inhabited by this particular Sami community. Different methods were discussed but none were found appropriate. One of the Sami community representatives said, "In the 1930s, they had something which was fairly effective," and someone else filled in "Strychnine." "Exactly," responded the first representative. Everyone laughed, and the public officer said that the use of poison during the 1930s was the reason they were now facing difficulties with legal means for culling. He implied that the effectiveness of previous attempts to eradicate predators was the reason why the measures for the protection of these animals were now so strong, curtailing the opportunities of the Sami community for protecting their reindeer. The discussion continued, and a half hour later they returned to the same idea, when another of the community representatives said, "We cannot use poison, can we?" The participants laughed again and continued the conversation. It seemed as if the participants were fully aware that the proposals for poison and strychnine were not serious. However, they were indicating the absurdity they perceived in trying to figure out how to make the wolverines kill less reindeer, when tools for achieving that purpose were missing. Through suggesting poison and demonstrating full awareness of the lack of legitimacy and appropriateness of the proposition, they suggested that all other culling methods are considered ineffective. However, when this meaning was expressed through a joke, any disagreement about it was not available for joint investigation.

Questions Are Used as Proxies for Initiation of Disagreement, but Not Treated as Disagreement After the First Turn

Sometimes, in our material, actors asked questions that seemed to be pretexts or agents for initiations of disagreement. However, as a result of their ambiguous design, the interlocutor did not respond to them as to an initiation of disagreement, but did so as to the open question that they may also have appeared as. Consequently, the articulation of disagreement became delayed or missing. The ambiguous initiations of disagreement may have

been questions about facts, the significance of a technical term or a question of how the other player addressed a particular situation or an expected outcome. It seemed that the initiator of the question assumed that the answer to the question would lead to a binary or confrontational formulation of disagreement. However, on several occasions, these initiations were made without leading to disagreement after third turn, since the question was responded to as a request for information or explanation.

The following sequences of talk-in-interaction took place at a meeting with the explicit purpose of evaluating a measure called "distraction field," which had been tested to reduce crop damage in the summer, and to decide whether the action should be repeated in the following year. We will look at a few sequences, all originating from the same episode of about 15 min, where participants asked questions with what seemed like the purpose of bringing the conversation to a point where a disagreement would become visible; however, it did not happen. During the meeting, farmers repeatedly asked questions about how much the crane population had increased, in what seemed to be an attempt to initiate a disagreement about whether cranes should continue to be protected when the population had increased so rapidly, or if hunting or other population-reducing measures should be allowed, and who was responsible for the damage that they considered to be caused by the cranes. However, the public officers chairing the meeting and the crane researcher present there—who had been invited by the nature conservation authority—dealt with these questions as if they were purely epistemological questions and did not initially treat them as an initiation of disagreement. In their answers, they talked about methodological problems in counting birds, impact from daylight, and so on. Other farmers confirmed the epistemological interpretation of the question by asking follow up questions about the counting method, the number of cranes at different geographical locations, how to read the charts and the number of cranes during different years. So far in the discussion, one farmer made an explicit meta-communicative (see Disagreement practice number 6) articulation of a problem, and raised an implicit question about whether there was a disagreement about that problem.

1 Farmer A: But there is something I cannot make sense of, or there are lots of things I cannot make sense of… but should we attract birds here when we do not want them to be here? It seems to be a conflict of interest.
2 Public officer: Yes, there is always a risk of attracting more birds than it has been otherwise.
3 Farmer A: Because four cranes may be fun to look at, but four thousand are not a thousand times more fun.
4 Farmer B: How many cranes were there 5 years ago, when you were counting in the fall?

However, the investigation of a possible disagreement initiated in turns one to three is interrupted when another farmer in turn four—in an attempt, as far as we understand, to strengthen the problem description—redirected the conversation back to questions about the numbers of cranes over the years. The question about the number of cranes 5 years ago is used as a proxy for initiating a disagreement, but the initiation of the disagreement fails. Moreover, the disagreement which was on its way to be initiated in turn one to three is interrupted by the discussion about the number of cranes. In the next sequence, which follows directly after the previous one, the public officer, different farmers, and the crane researcher talk about the number of cranes and counting methods. The farmers continue asking questions, as if the questions would reveal the disagreement, but that is not the result of the interaction.

5 Public officer: Yes, the figures from the fall counting I will show you soon [words omitted]
6 Farmer B: But were the number of cranes this year 25 thousand or 30 thousand or…?
7 Crane researcher: It varies a lot between years and I think we had a peak of 19,000 cranes. About a year ago, it was a little less and this year, a peak again.
8 Farmers: But what was it 5 years ago? Ten years ago?
9 Crane researcher: Yes, it has increased, in general it has increased.
10 Farmer B: Yes, by how much?

A few minutes later in the same meeting, a farmer posed another question that potentially could initiate a disagreement. But again, before any difference or similarity in perspectives is clarified, another question is asked. Additionally, this second question has the potential to initiate a discussion about differences or similarities in perspectives, but as it is placed in the sequence, it rather results in interrupting the already initiated investigation of differences and similarities in perspectives.

1 Farmer X: How does the county administrative board view this, with the number of cranes? If they continue to increase significantly, is there some limit, or do you think the more they get, the better it is?
2 Public officer: We are not happy with the idea that the more cranes there are, the better it will be. But what we want, what we work for, is that there will be as little crop damage done as possible by these birds. That is what we work for. But we cannot control the number of cranes or how they have increased in the way they have done. But there are lots of factors that have caused the increase.
3 Farmer Y: Our water quality must be affected, there must be feces from those cranes that contaminates the water.

Finally, after several more sequences similar to the previous ones, this episode erupts in one farmer expressing frustration due to the entire situation and the difficulties of understanding and controlling the impact of cranes on agriculture. Interestingly, the sequence which results in this expression of frustration is initiated by another farmer, asking yet another question, yet another proxy for disagreement:

1 Farmer Z: Why have they increased so much from the mid-nineties?
2 Crane researcher: So, the main reason from the start was that they were protected in the Birds Directive in the late-seventies.

It is certainly a combination of different things [to do] with restoring wetlands throughout Europe, [etc.]
3 Farmers Y and X: Who should we strangle then? [laughter]
4 Officer B: The EU—politicians
5 Farmer Z: It's a good thing one is old because it is so bloody sluggish. A bit of common sense, and get rid of the bloody damn bureaucracy…

It is as if the participants in the meeting felt that there was a disagreement between farmers and the nature conservation authority somewhere, and that this disagreement should be revealed when farmers asked questions about the number of cranes, the rate of increase of the crane population, the county administrative board's satisfaction and target, if the sanitation problem had been recognized, and why the crane population had increased. It seems that these issues were proxies for articulation of a more fundamental disagreement, by which the farmers felt that the nature conservation authority carried historical responsibility for the increase in the crane population, and should acknowledge its responsibility and ensure that population-limiting measures were taken. However, this disagreement was never pronounced due to the questions being answered as request for more information or explanation, not as initiations of disagreement about responsibility and action. That this disagreement about the division of responsibilities was sensed by the participants becomes visible, not least, in the question about "Who should we strangle then?" and in the frustrated statement about bureaucracy.

Equivocal Initiation of Disagreement Leads to Doubts About Intersubjectivity

In our material, attempts to initiate disagreement sometimes caused confusion for the participants about the terms of the conversation. This, while continuing despite meta-communication repair turns, could result in doubts about the intersubjective conditions of the ongoing conversation. This initiated intensive meta-communication, and sometimes generated frustration and development of antagonism. Perhaps it is surprising, but doubts about intersubjectivity did not, in the observed cases, result in articulation of disagreement. On the contrary, mutual but unclear assurances of consensus often resulted, despite signs of continuing doubts about intersubjectivity. We have further analyzed sequences involving doubts about intersubjectivity in another study (Hallgren and Bergeå, unpublished), and here we will only provide an overview of an episode.

In a meeting about the predator-reindeer problem, the public officer used the word "zones" as an example of measures devised for reduced predation on reindeer. A Sami community representative asked what the official meant when he said zones, and suggested himself, "Do you mean for the predators?" The official answered "Yes." However, the conversation partner then continued, "Or, do you mean from the perspective of reindeer husbandry?" The officer then seemed confused and uncertain, as if he had misunderstood the question and realized he had already answered something that he did not mean in the way he soon understood that it would be interpreted by other participants in the meeting. He tried to repair the error through meta-communication, but was again surprised when the conversation partner did not accept the validity and legitimacy of the answer. The Sami community representatives then asked repeatedly if the public officer agreed with them that the Sami community was not commissioned to be a manager of predators, and the official said that they were in complete agreement. Despite this mutually agreed consensus, participants in the conversation continued to argue with each other, in parallel with assurances that they were in agreement. It seems that they did not know what they agreed and disagreed about, and that attempts to clarify this did not make the disagreement clearer. Our interpretation is that the question about the meaning of the word "zones" was ambiguously formulated, and could be perceived both as a question about the meaning of a concept, as well as an initiation of disagreement about the legitimacy of the nature conservation authority and their way of working with reindeer-predator issues. When the public officer faced the response from the Sami community representative, he started to think that his response to the question had made him appear less legitimate than he wished, and understood that the purpose of the question was to accomplish that. He, therefore, doubted that he had not understood the constitutive expectancies of the conversation: Was it a conversation in which one risked one's legitimacy and needed to safeguard it, or was it one where one could trust in the goodwill of other participants? Paradoxically, this uncertainty complicated a clear articulation of disagreement. The paradox is that the attempt to establish a polarized disagreement led to doubts about intersubjectivity, and thus blunted the communicative tools for clarifying the epistemological, ontological and axiological grounds of disagreement.

Disagreement Appears as a Meta-Discursive Object but Is Not Performed

As we have already commented, we did not find any sequences where conversation participants performed disagreements that were both clear in their content and continued after several turns. On the other hand, participants sometimes talked about their disagreement or conflict as an object to observe and talk about. On a couple of occasions when the researcher who observed and administered the recording of the meeting presented himself as a researcher with an interest in conversation and conflicts, attendees said, "Then you have come to the right place" and thus implicitly indicated that they had disagreements and conflicts to display. They performed meta-communication about the disagreement, but did not perform it. Sometimes, they also made a meta-communicative object of their disagreement in their conversations with each other.

In a meeting between representatives of a Sami community and representatives of the conservation authority, they talked about protective culling of lynxes and how many lynxes there were in the area. The public officer stressed that the application for protective culling had to be well-substantiated and motivated, for example, with regard to the documented number of lynxes in

the area. A representative of the Sami community said that there may be a number that was true for the Sami community, and another number that was true for the authority, and they would not know who was right until afterwards. The Sami representative spoke of an imaginary situation where the Sami community and the authority disagreed about the number of lynxes and, therefore, also about the number that should be decided on for protective culling. However, neither the Sami community, nor the authority made any claim of a population estimate in the ongoing conversation and, therefore, did not report a discrepancy. They spoke about disagreement as an anticipated situation, but did not actually perform disagreement when doing so.

In the same episode, the official responded to a question about whether a number of 12 to 15 lynxes could be proposed for protective culling. The official said that it was appropriate to propose this number if the Sami community had support for it, but that it was not appropriate to propose it, "just because it sounds like a lot." Again, this was also talk about an anticipated situation in which the authorities and Sami community disagreed, but was not performing disagreement.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION—LACK OF PRACTICES AND CONSTITUTIVE EXPECTANCIES TO PERFORM DISAGREEMENT IN NORMATIVE DIALOGUE

We investigated how disagreements are performed in talk-in-interaction in dialogues about wildlife. We wanted to know how, in this context of normative dialogue, conversations are initiated about something that the participants disagree on, and how they show to each other that they understand that they disagree and about what they disagree, and what they do when this is clear to them. We found that in the studied normative dialogues, disagreements were initiated and managed through six different procedures. However, despite disagreement being initiated and indicated, it is rare for participants to show each other what they disagree about, why they do so and that they understand that they do so. The six different ways they used when performing disagreement, instead, resulted in disagreement being transformed into consensus or creative problem solving, or to disagreement being delayed, canceled or postponed. This result, to some extent, mirrors(Pomerantz, 1984) result on agreement preference in turn shapes, and (McKinlay and McVittie, 2006) findings that disagreement in art assessment panels is communicatively coordinated through topic jumping; conversation partners introduce new topics or shift topic when there are differences of opinion.

In turn, the delay in articulation of disagreement sometimes led to the constitutive expectations of the conversation being questioned. It is something of a paradox that pronounced attempts to establish a polarized disagreement resulted in doubts about intersubjectivity, and blunted the communicative tools for clarifying the epistemological and axiological grounds of disagreement. This last eventuality characterized all six procedures that we observed in our material. None of them seemed to make it possible for the participants to clarify the epistemological and axiological grounds of the disagreement through interactions after the third turn in three-turn disagreement.

In our theoretical discussion on constructive conflict and pluralistic agonism, we suggested that conflict becomes constructive when the intersubjective ability to express disagreement increases and actors become subsequently better at investigating the foundations of the disagreement, as well as revealing the power structures that the conflict is dependent on. With the mix of interactive methods that we have noticed being used when managing disagreements and the interactive preference for agreement, the studied dialogues do not contribute to more evolved investigations of disagreement, and subsequently do not develop the conflict in constructive direction. Still, as we notice in 4.1, sometimes disagreements are clearly expressed and confirmed through sequences with three or more turns, resulting in consensus or creative problem solving in the following turns. The sequential generation of consensus and creativity contributes by resolving practical problems being talked about. Each time these sequences generate consensus and creative solutions, this hopeful outcome of a sequence of disagreements is recognized as an alternative to maintaining the disagreement and potentially facing a troublesome communicative sequence with unclear constitutive expectancies. As a consequence, the communicative norm of treating disagreement as a communicative problem, which is preferred to be as short as possible, is reproduced and confirmed. This norm is also apparent in meta-discourse on "win-win negotiation" and "Getting to Yes" (Fisher et al., 1991). We are not suggesting that each sequence in which disagreement is transformed into consensus or creative problem solving should be considered unproductive. Rather the problem occurs when these sequences appear together with other practices that delay or postpone disagreement, and more importantly, when we see no communicative practices initiating, maintaining, and investigating the foundations of conflict. Transformation to consensus and postponed disagreements together inhibit the creation of agonistic pluralism; as (Mouffe (1996), p. 8) phrase it: "envisaging the diversity of conceptions of the good, not as something negative that should be suppressed but as something to be valued and celebrated." When the communicative norms and procedures indicate that disagreement needs to be transformed into consensus, and if not, it will be delayed or postponed, then the diversity of conceptions of good will not be "celebrated."

Our results indicate that the routines and procedures for communication that characterize normative dialogue make it difficult to communicate about disagreements and to make disagreement clear. It also turns out that, in some cases, this discrepancy between actors' wishes to clarify disagreement and the resistance imbedded in communicative routines and procedures toward doing so, generates frustration and confusion. It appears that normativity in dialogue does not support an agonistic approach to conflict and dialogue. In order to avoid

situations where dialogue leads to discursive closures, standards and procedures that facilitate articulation of disagreement need to be developed; otherwise dialogue risks becoming a tool for what Cooke and Kothari (2001) has called "participation as tyranny," that is, when participatory procedures maintain, and hide, the power structures they, on paper, intended to overcome. When dialogue is normed as consensus and communicative procedures to actually articulate disagreements are missing, the power structures that were revealed and challenged when the conflict were articulated, will again be hidden by the dialogue procedure. Perhaps this normativity can be changed by expressing the value of disagreement in the meeting, and by giving space in the meeting design for performing and investigating disagreement.

But it may also be appropriate to include a disclaimer here. In our study of the conditions for agonistic dialogue, we assumed that agonism arises when disagreement is pronounced in such a way that the disagreeing actors themselves understand the difference in ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions. Our results have shown that, due to the communicative routines used by participants in normative dialogue, they rarely succeed in doing so. But when we assume this mutual understanding of difference to be possible, we are perhaps only reproducing a heritage of communicative rationality (Habermas, 2001) and a desire for ordered processes. Perhaps this is a remission for fear of antagonism and chaos. However, although Mouffe has not been very specific about forms for agonistic communication, except when suggesting provocative art (Mouffe, 2007), she has argued for consensus in procedural matters. This ought to include forms to express disagreement and methods for common clarification of the nature of disagreement. In agonistic dialogue others' "ideas might be fought, even fiercely, but [their] right to defend those ideas is not to be questioned" (Mouffe, 2013, p. 7). In the situations we have observed, this "fight" is somehow muffled through strong intersubjective norms for reciprocation, which hide the content of disagreement.

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LH, HB, and LW all contributed to the design of the study and conducted field work. LH wrote the first draft.

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