

***The Moose and the Motor:
Climate Scepticism and Landscape in Rural Northern Sweden***

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During the RCC Fellowship I will complete two papers from my PhD research concerning climate scepticism and landscape in the rural North of Sweden, one for a journal and one for an edited volume to be published in 2022–23.

Climate change is arguably the biggest challenge of our time, and anthropology can contribute to understandings of climate change as experienced on the ground through its unique methods and ethnographic fieldwork. However, research must also go beyond an examination of the vulnerabilities, adaptations, and resistance of communities (Sanders and Hall 2015) and examine the reception of climate change discourses including climate denial and scepticism.

Understanding that climate change exists as a discourse as well as a physical phenomenon, my research examines climate scepticism in Arjeplog, rural Northern Sweden, through ethnographic fieldwork (2017-18) and experimental visual methods. I argue that climate scepticism in Arjeplog is rooted in historical tensions with the State and urban South, differing understandings of climate, and local environmentalism. Engaging photography to amplify ethnographic methods, I examine tensions between traditional sustainable living, such as the moose hunt, and environmentalist discourse emanating from the South, contextualised within the history of the Northern resource landscape. The State has used the North for resources and renewable energies that disrupt the local landscape, and my participants view national environmentalism as continued interference. Climate change discourses emanate from the urban population, whom they see as ‘other’ with little understanding of the rural North or the reliance on petrol motors for kinship, mobility, and traditional practice, while climate change is understood as a global natural cycle. Experimental photographic techniques and co-creation with participants formed both an engaging methodology during fieldwork and inventive and multi-modal publications, utilising imagery to encourage readers to empathise with local relationships to landscape and the local scale on which environmentalism was centred in this community. I ultimately argue that anthropologists and environmental humanities scholars can go beyond an activist framework and examine enplaced climate scepticism, complicating the limiting tropes of ‘climate denial’ to fully grasp the global phenomenon of climate change.

During the fellowship I will complete two papers from this research project concerning local environmentalism and sustainability in Arjeplog. I will work on one article for an upcoming special issue of the journal *Kulturella Perspektiv* concerning the ways in which the hunt and subsequent freezing practices of the meat are framed as sustainable consumption compared to the urban South and are used in the rejection of climate discourses seen to be coming from Stockholm. In addition, I will write a chapter for an edited volume due for publication in 2023, concerning the intersection of visual media and local environmentalism in Arjeplog. I argue that the local aesthetic of a pristine environment reinforces a local variety of environmentalism prioritising stewardship of an immediate and visible local nature rather than emissions on the global scale, and thus contributing to a climate scepticism that rejects individual responsibility for the global commons.