

# Large Carnivore Management in a Multi-Level Institutional Setting: Problems and Prospects

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## Abstract

The goal of the large carnivore policies in Finland, Norway and Sweden (Fennoscandia) is to establish sustainable management of the four large (mammal) carnivores; bear (*ursus arctos*), wolf (*canis lupus*), lynx (*lynx lynx*) wolverine (*gulo gulo*) but also the golden eagle (*aquila chrysaetos*). Since this is clearly in conflict with for example the extensive free-ranging sheep farming in Norway and reindeer herding in all three countries the goal is also to reduce conflicts with societal interest and especially to reduce the number of livestock and semi domestic reindeer killed by large carnivores.

In an attempt to solve the conflicts and legitimise the large carnivore policies, the Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish parliaments have adopted strategies to involve the public in decision making and in management actions. The overarching responsibility of the large carnivore policy is still the responsibility of national environmental authorities but management committees ranging from elected politicians (Norway) via a mix of authorities and interest organisations (Sweden & Finland) have been established in regions with carnivore populations in order to adapt the management to regional conditions.

Although these strategies has been promoted as being a more democratic and effective way of addressing the carnivore issue there are a number of concerns about the establishment of these regional committees. This study will portray the approach of large carnivore management in Finland, Norway and Sweden through the perceptions of members of Regional large Carnivore Committees in the three countries on issues of representation, accountability, appropriate scale and possibilities to efficiently coordinate the policy – horizontally and vertically – in a multi-level institutional setting and provide an assessment of its problems and prospects to deliver a sustainable outcome.

**Keywords:** *Large carnivores, co-management, representation, accountability, sustainability*

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## Introduction<sup>3</sup>

The ecological goal of policies related to the large carnivores in Finland, Norway and Sweden is to establish sustainable management of four large (mammal) species: bear (*Ursus arctos*), wolf (*Canis lupus*), lynx (*Lynx lynx*) and wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) but also the golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Since this may be in conflict with social and economic goals for rural areas (e.g. free-ranging sheep farming and reindeer herding), solutions are required that efficiently reconcile these goals and to legitimise the contested large carnivore policy.

Through the ratification of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and its primary framework for action, the Ecosystem Approach Principles (UNEP/CBD/COP/5/23, 2000; UNEP/CBD/COP/II/8, 1995) the three countries have agreed to increase public participation in nature conservation. Principle 2 states that “[m]anagement should be decentralized to the lowest appropriate level”. The principle is based on the assumption that public participation is a prerequisite for sustainable development. This change in nature conservation policy follows the general trend in public management which goes under the heading of “from government to governance”, and is often manifested through decentralisation or the establishment of various co-management arrangements (Zachrisson, forthcoming).

Finland, Norway and Sweden have in line with the Convention on Biodiversity made changes to their large carnivore policies to include relevant actors and levels. The three countries have, however, ended up with quite different strategies, ranging from empowering formal regional forums consisting of politicians (Norway), to formal consultative (Sweden) or informal consultative (Finland) regional forums consisting of a mix of governmental and non-governmental actors. The Large Carnivore committees in Norway are the most powerful. Sweden are however currently discussing the possibilities to strengthen the role of the consultative committees and turning them into decisive management bodies (SOU 2007:89). In Finland the Large carnivore committees has just been recognised as important consultative bodies, but may also in the future take on a more formal role and thus follow the same development as the committees in Sweden. The fact that the three countries are quite similar in terms of their biophysical and societal characteristics, but vary with respect to chosen strategy, offer an interesting case for comparison of the chosen strategies and to what extent the strategies may contribute to the legitimisation of the large carnivore policies.

This study will, through the lens of political legitimacy, portray the approach of large carnivore management in Finland, Norway and Sweden and provide an assessment of its problems and prospects to deliver a sustainable outcome. The study represents a bottom-up view, originating with the stakeholders themselves, and of the degree to which members of the Regional Large Carnivore Committees, RLCCs assess the management strategies as legitimate in relation to other concerns, notably economic and political ones.

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## Theoretical framework

The concept of legitimacy is based on the assumption that actors who govern, and whose decisions are authoritative are required to legitimize itself. The concept is often used to analyse why some political systems are sustained, and why others are not (Weber, 1978, Beetham & Lord, 1998). Beetham and Lord (1998: 9) however stress that: *“When analysing legitimacy, it is important to remember that it is not an all-or-nothing affair, but a matter of degree”*. The question is thus how we can measure the degree of legitimacy in different political systems to find out which would be the best strategy to- if needed - increase legitimacy for each individual political system.

It is a well-known fact that the large carnivore issue in the three Nordic countries is disputed and even considered as illegitimate in some rural areas with dense large carnivore populations (Ericsson & Sandström, 2006). As mentioned above the three countries have however chosen different governance strategies to handle these disputes. Decentralisation, the strategy chosen in Norway, where central government formally cedes some power to actors or institutions at lower political or administrative levels, is often defined in terms of governance. In Norway decentralisation can be seen as an attempt of promoting democracy and empowerment, which in turn are assumed to increase the acceptability or the legitimacy of policy (Guldvik and Arnesen, 2001; Stortingsmelding nr. 15. 2003/2004). Sweden and Finland, has chosen a co-managerial approach, to improve the legitimacy of large carnivore management. This, again, is assumed to result in a higher degree of rule compliance (SOU 2007:89). Co-management, in which there is a diversity of actors, linked to each other through different types of relationships, is consistent with the principles of good governance (Berkes, 2007).

The concepts of decentralisation and co-management are similar to the extent that they refer to solutions of collective problems and originate in the dissatisfaction of the central state as an effective political steering centre of society. As such an application of the concepts is assumed to lead to increased legitimacy. While decentralisation is considered to be a democratic form of governance based on concepts like participation, accountability and transparency the importance of democratic credentials tend to be undervalued or at least understudied within the co-management approach (Zachrisson, forthcoming). It is thus necessary to identify what kind of features of legitimacy that is applicable to both concepts thereby adding to the literature of in particular co-management.

### Dimensions of legitimacy

Dimensions	Criteria's	Antithesis
Legality	Rule of law (authorisation)	Illegitimacy
Normative justifiability	a) Inclusive, fairness and representation b) Transparency and accountability c) Deliberation d) Performance criteria	Legitimacy deficit
Legitimation	Consent (authorisation)	Delegitimation

Adapted from Beetham and Lord 1998

According to Beetham (1991) we can analyse the legitimation of power in terms of three dimensions. Power can be said to be legitimate when i) it conforms to

established rules (legality), ii) the rules can be justified by reference to the beliefs shared by the involved actors at multiple levels (normative justifiability), iii) there is evidence of consent to the system (legitimation).

Legality can be defined as the basic requirements for a legitimate system. The normative basis of legitimacy consist of two more or less interdependent dimensions; input or procedural legitimacy (a-c) i.e. claims that a democratic system achieves its legitimacy by the ways decisions are made and not only by the results of these procedures and output or instrumental legitimacy (d) i.e. a society's capacity to achieve the citizen's goals and solve their problems efficiently. (Schimmelfenig, 1996; Scharpf, 1998; Menon and Weatherill, 2007).

The focus in this study is on procedural legitimacy. We however assume that procedural legitimacy is an important prerequisite for the instrumental dimension. This could for example be manifested through the reduction of conflicts between different societal goals. This may in turn lead to the authorisation of a political system. In large carnivore management this could for example be a higher degree of rule compliance or shifting attitudes.

#### Legality

Ideally, legislative authorization is based on set of rules applying to a distinct segment of society and adapted to fit particular policy objectives. As such the rules will both, empower and limit the exercise of power. This is however seldom the case and delegation of powers and discretion in implementation is widely accepted parts of regulatory law (Cohn, 2001)

The importance of international environmental norms, as determining for the domestic and even local level, has increased with internationalisation (Tarrow, 1999). Since international standards and agreements usually focus on for example the function of ecosystems and conservational needs rather than on local communities and socio-economic concerns they are often contested. This situation, which has been described as *incongruence between scales*” also adheres to multi level governance situations where the political and management process is separated between two different levels, the international level where the environmental standards are set and the local level where the standards are to be refined and implemented, with few existing connections between the levels (Raakjaer Nielsen et. al 2002). The obvious risk with this situation, where the local level only serves as an implementing body, with limited possibilities to influence the environmental policies, is that the legitimacy of the management system will be undermined which in turn will affect the possibilities to achieve sustainable development. To avoid such problems “enhanced *horizontal* and *vertical* mechanism of governance” that can meet the challenges of incongruent scales are needed (Callway, 2005). It is also necessary that the local level has enough discretionary power to be able to adapt international norms to a local context.

We may thus assume that governance processes based upon norms that have been widely accepted by a society are more legitimate than governance processes whose rules are developed without regard for such norms and principles or where the norms and principles are contested.

### Normative justifiability

The following sections, concentrate on the procedural aspects of the decision-making process which are in focus in this study. These procedural aspects or input legitimacy include the inclusiveness, representation and transparency of decision-making, accountability criteria's and deliberative virtues of the decision-making process.

#### *Inclusive, Fair and Representative Participation*

According to almost all variants of democratic theory, legitimacy of a decision-making process is dependent on the inclusion and participation of a broad range of actors or stakeholders. The purpose of decentralisation or co-management is to create opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to decision-making, and to broaden the range of people who have access to such opportunities. Participation and representation is thus a key cornerstone of co-management as well as decentralisation. Participation could be either direct or through legitimate intermediate institutions or representatives (Berkes, 2007). The concept of participation also embraces the notion of inclusiveness, to establish congruence between the principal and the agent and guarantee that all stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process (Berkes et al. 1991, Pinkerton 1989). It is thus reasonable to assume that actors are more likely to recognise and implement the decisions made, if the decision-making process is perceived as inclusive, fair and representative.

#### *Transparency*

In addition to inclusiveness, fairness and representation, transparency and accountability is considered important mechanisms of legitimacy. As mentioned above the literature on common pool resources (Ostrom 2005) and co-management (Pinkerton, 1989) tend to emphasize the existence of monitoring, control mechanisms and sanction capacities as key component of successful governance, while in particular transparency and accountability mechanisms is overlooked.

We however argue that transparency is an important aspect in all forms of governance, also co-management. Decision-making that is open and transparent, highlight the sincerity of decision-making and motivation of the actors to find acceptable and binding decisions. This is however dependent on an efficient multi-directional information flow i.e. from the governing bodies to the actors and vice versa. It is however also necessary that the represented stakeholders are able to provide their respective organisation or interest group with information about decisions made. This is in turn closely linked to the concept of representation. Transparency in decision-making and policy implementation tend to reduce uncertainty and may prevent conflicts to escalate. It is also essential that the information and expertise or knowledge provided by the stakeholders involved is treated equally. We may thus assume that actors are more likely to recognise and implement the decisions made, if the decision-making process is perceived as open and transparent.

#### *Accountability*

Accountability is a key requirement of governance to secure effectiveness and legitimacy. As mentioned above the concept is often overlooked in the literature on

co-management (Zachrisson, 2008). The concept of decentralisation includes a wider definition of accountability than the co-management literature. To be able to legitimise governance it is essential that all the involved actors, i.e. governmental institutions, as well as interest organisations or enterprises are accountable to the public and to their organisations. A co-management arrangement is in general accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Lack of accountability will over time undermine the capacity to manage a common pool resource and the willingness of the actors to comply with the established rules. It is thus necessary to establish criteria's related to the effectiveness of policy formulation and implementation to measure the performance of governance. According to Meadowcroft (2006, see also Keohane 2004) there are at least four forms of accountability that operate in cross-sectoral partnerships; 1) individual participants are accountable to their own organisation, 2) participating organisations are accountable to a wider constituency or sphere of similar interests, 3) collective accountability to the partnership, 4) accountability to the public opinion and the representative political process. These universal criteria's may also be used to assess the accountability of decentralised representative assemblies.

### *Deliberation*

If accountability is an understudied issue in co-management literature, deliberative processes is not related to the concept of decentralisation. The literature on co-management and common pool resources emphasises the need of an arena where conflicts among actors or actors and officials can be resolved efficiently (Ostrom, 2005). These kind of consensus-driven arenas where actors can exchange arguments are assumed to be more likely to reach a legitimate outcome than arenas where procedural rules are not based on mechanisms of deliberation. Based in part on the assumptions made in the theory of deliberative democracy, the participants in deliberative processes have the possibility to exchange and redefine their interest and recognize the outcomes of this process as "reasonable". The outcome of these deliberative processes, where individual opinions become shared, it is assumed that actors will comply with and implement the rules which they have accepted. Deliberative processes could also assists decentralised management bodies in the resolution of contested public policies such as natural resource allocation and management use through social learning (Eckersley, 2003).

### Legitimation and consent

The negative attitudes to large carnivore policy in particular in rural areas with dense large carnivore populations (Ericsson & Sandström 2006) and the lack of rule compliance (Pyka et. al. 2007) in spite of increased enforcement activities has drawn attention to the importance of legitimacy in large carnivore management. In this study procedural fairness is assumed to be one important factor to maintain legitimacy in this case expressed in consent to the policy and increased rule compliance. We now turn to the application of the framework to the management of large carnivores at regional levels in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

### **Notes on methodology and selection of cases**

The research methodology consists of comparative case studies of three Regional Large Carnivore Committees, RLCCs in Finland, Norway and Sweden respectively. The work is based on semi-structured interviews (conducted 2004, 2007 & 2008) with members of the RLCCs and officials responsible for large carnivore management, and literature and document analysis (Ragin, 1987).

The chosen cases are very similar in certain aspects. They are relatively small unitary well-fare states with a long tradition of representative democracy. In addition they are rather similar in biophysical and societal provisions. They however differ in institutional terms. If we look at the overall management structure can we speak of an east-Nordic (Finland-Sweden) and a west-Nordic (Denmark-Norway-Iceland) model, based on the fact that these countries once had a common administration. The east-Nordic management model is characterised by independent government agency with collective decision-making in the government. In the West Nordic model most decisions made by the executive power are taken by a minister in his or her capacity as head of ministry (Petersson, 2000). This difference is also reflected in the relations between state, regions and civil society. In Finland and Sweden regions are seen as an integral part of the united nation. Regional policy helps to make the nation states more homogeneous. In Norway, however, regional policy is a part of the industrial policy, which aims to develop each region's businesses. However, if we look at the elected agencies' position on regional and local level we can find a different dividing line between the Scandinavian model (Norway and Sweden), and the Finnish model. The Scandinavian model is based on the existence of two parallel municipal levels: a local and a regional level (in fylkeskommuner Norway and Sweden in the county councils / regions). The basic principle of the Scandinavian model is that the levels are independent of each other, while in the Finnish model the regional level is based on the municipalities (Sandberg and Ståhlberg 2000).

But even within the Scandinavian model there are differences. In Norway, local participation is still an ideal, which is why Norway, unlike Sweden, still has a decentralized municipality structure (Hansen et al 2000). In Norway, the municipalities have also traditionally been regarded as a defender of local autonomy and freedom from government control, a view which is still a distinctive feature of the relationship between municipalities and the Norwegian state (see Kjellberg 1991). There are also some differences in how participation is organized locally and nationally. In Sweden and Finland the focus is on users or stakeholders why in Norway there has been a stronger focus on citizen's participation in political decision-making bodies (Vabo 1998). This is particularly the case in biodiversity management (Sandström et al. 2008)

### **The large carnivore issue in Fennoscandia**

Until the middle of the 19th century, there were large populations of the four large mammalian carnivores – brown bear, wolverine, wolf, and lynx – throughout much of Fennoscandia. All four species were, however, persistently hunted, and bounties were paid in order to encourage hunting (Pohja-Mykrä, Vuorisalo & Mykrä, 2005; Berntsen, 1994; SOU 1999:146). As a result, by the 1960s, bears and wolves were almost exterminated in Scandinavia and profoundly reduced in Finland.

Conservation measures were introduced in the 1960s and 1970s and legislation concerning conservation of large carnivores was developed. These measures, together with the increase in prey populations (e.g. moose), have as table 1 shows encouraged the growth of large carnivore populations and they have successively spread back into many habitats from which they were exterminated. The goal is however to further increase the number of large carnivores (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2005; SOU 1999:146).

Table 1. The present number of large carnivores in Fennoscandia

	Bear	Lynx	Wolf	Wolverine
Finland	800-850	1200-1250	250-260	140-150
Sweden	2550	1300	130	360
Norway	71	439	19-23	363

Sources: FGFRI, 2008; SEPA, 2007; Direktoratet for Naturforvaltning 2008

The increase in large carnivore populations has led to higher levels of associated damage. In Sweden approximately 20 000–30 000 semi domestic reindeer are killed annually, along with an increasing number of livestock. (Swedish Wildlife Damage Centre, 2007; Pressmeddelande Jordbruksdepartementet 071025). This new situation with respect to the presence of animals and the damage they cause has triggered public discussion and concern about the well-being and rights of local citizens, and an increasing criticism of the governing system (Ericsson and Sandström, 2006, Sjölander-Lindqvist, 2008). As a result, new preventive measures, new types of compensation systems and different forms of governance approaches, including the promotion of stakeholder participation, have been implemented.

The large carnivore policy in Fennoscandia is thus characterised by a multitude of conflicts and cleavages, ideological as well as utilitarian, urban as well as rural. Another similarity between the three countries is the multi-level institutional setting characterising the policy. They are all committed to the same international conventions, (the Bern Convention and the Biodiversity Convention). Since Finland and Sweden are members of the European Union, they are also committed to follow the Habitat Directive, which includes rules concerning the preservation of large carnivores. Since the three countries are parliamentary democracies, rules and decisions originate from the parliament. The government, in particular the environmental and/or agricultural ministries, play an executive role. In Norway and Sweden national authorities also have, a very important executive rule-making role in the management of large carnivores. Thus, there are many similarities in the overarching policy-making and management structures. It is, however, when we consider the regional level and, in particular, the implementation of the large carnivore policies, that differences between the three countries emerge.

### **Regional management of large carnivores in Finland, Norway and Sweden**

In Finland, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry has organised the establishment of game management plans as tools for implementing the Bern Convention (1979) with respect to large carnivores (Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 2005, 2007a, 2007b) They also represent official guidelines for Finland's large carnivore policies. At the regional level, RLCCs has been established. The first RLCC was established in North-Karelia (Finland's easternmost province) in 1999. The initiative for establishing the RLCC came from people working in non-governmental and



governmental bodies. This was an attempt to informally increase cooperation, at the regional scale, between parities with conflicting interests. Encouraged by the North-Karelian experience, RLCCs were soon established in 5 other regions. Although officially supported in the management plans, the RLCCs do not have any power allocated to them by the state administration. Their role is consultative with respect to the decision makers at national and regional levels (Sandström et al, forthcoming).

In Norway, eight Regional Large Carnivore Committees were established in 2004 with the purpose of reducing conflicts between different interested parties and to establish geographically differentiated management, giving priority to agriculture in some districts, reindeer herding in others and large carnivores in others. (Stortingsmelding nr. 15. 2003/2004). The RLCCs consist of leading regional politicians who are formally appointed by the Ministry of Environment. They are thus indirectly selected and not directly elected. The main task of the Norwegian RLCCs is to implement national goals via the adoption of a regional management plan, reduce conflicts and minimise harm. The regional plan is expected to play an important role as an instrument to determine what kind of management activities should be given priority. The plan, however, has to be sent to the responsible environmental authorities, which may intervene and make changes if they consider the RLCC has not followed national guidelines (Sandström et al. forthcoming).

In Sweden a National Large Carnivore Council, NLCC, linked to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, SEPA, and made up of members from various organisations, was set up in 2002. Similarly, Regional Large Carnivore Committees, RLCCs, were set up in 17 of the 21 regions. The committees normally comprise 10–20 representatives and have, in line with the governmental directives, a broad representation of interests. According to the large carnivore policy, the RLCCs should be seen as an important tool to develop a more open and transparent large carnivore policy and to assist the SEPA and the County Administrative Board, CAB, the state authority at the regional levels, with contacts from the different interest groups and local people (SEPA, 2007). Both the NLCC and the RLCCs are advisory consultative bodies. The formal power to manage large carnivores is mainly divided between SEPA and the CAB and to some extent the Sami parliament. (Sandström et al. forthcoming).

Unlike Norway, where indirectly elected politicians are members of the RLCCs, the Finnish and Swedish RLCCs thus consist of regional governmental and non-governmental actors. The type of actors involved in the management of large carnivores reflects the ways that the RLCCs are able to exercise power and thus control large carnivore policy at a regional level. The Norwegian RLCCs have the power, although within a nationally fixed framework, to make decisions about different preventive measures and controlled hunting and to implement these decisions. The Swedish and the Finnish RLCCs only have a consultative role, although the former has a formal and the latter an informal role based on voluntary commitments by the governmental and non-governmental actors. The question is thus to what extent the involved actors consider the different management strategies to be legitimate. We will start by looking at the member's opinion on the procedural legitimacy.

### *Inclusive, Fair and Representative Participation*

According to the directives from the Swedish government, all actors that have a stake in the large carnivore issue should be invited to participate, which means that the composition of the different RLCCs may vary depending on which interests are present in different regions. The committees normally comprise of 10–20 representatives and thus have a very broad representation of interests. As table 2 shows there are, in accordance with the governmental directives, a number of stakeholders representing many diverging interests in the RLCC of Västerbotten.

Table 2. Representation in the RLCC of Västerbotten, Sweden

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Number</b>
Hunters	2
Farmers Union	1
The County administrative board	2
The police	1
The Swedish Society for Nature conservation	1
The Swedish Large Carnivore Association	1
The Swedish Sami Union (indigenous people's repr.)	2
Sheep farmers in Västerbotten	1
Ornithologist in Västerbotten	1
Environmental prosecutor.	1
Total	13

All of the interviewed members of the RLCC in Västerbotten claim that all interests that have a stake are represented in the RLCC and thus that the representation is good. There has been discussion to include other interests like for example tourist organisations or forest companies, but none of these actors or anyone else has shown any interest in participating. Most of the interviewed members of the RLCC are thus satisfied with the representation of the interests so far. This is also confirmed in a national survey among the members of all the Swedish RLCCs, where 60 % of the members consider the representation to be fair.

In Nordland in Norway, the RLCC consist of four indirectly selected politicians who represent the Nordland County and one representative of the Sami parliament.

Table 3 Representation in the RLCC of Nordland, Norway

<b>Representatives</b>	<b>Representing</b>
Politician Centre party	Nordland County
Politician Left party	Nordland County
Politician Right party	Nordland County
Politician Social liberal party	Nordland County
Politician representing the indigenous people	Sami Parliament

The composition may change due to electoral results every four years. The group has a rather large secretariat with 4 officials from the County Governor which is the chief representative of King and Government in the county, and works for the implementation of Storting (Parliament) and central government decisions. Officials from the reindeer herding sector are also included in the secretariat. Officials from other authorities, like for example the Norwegian Food safety authority, may also be

invited if necessary. The members of the Nordland RLCCs are quite satisfied with the composition of the committee. It has become an arena where the different authorities, representing different sectors in society, may coordinate their activities and plans. The committee has also consulted different NGO:s in particular livestock NGO:s on different matters. While discussing the matter with these NGO:s they are however less satisfied with the representation and would like to have a more direct and regular access to the decision-making arena.

### *Transparency*

According to the Swedish large carnivore policy, the RLCCs should be seen as an important tool to develop a more open and transparent large carnivore policy and to assist the responsible authorities with contacts from the different interest groups, local citizens and a wider public (SEPA, 2007). Many of the respondents in Västerbotten are however rather unsure what this actually means, how they can perform this task and thus what kind of role the RLCCs ought to play. The institutional rules regarding the activities of the RLCCs are thus perceived as quite unclear and thus not transparent enough by the members of the RLCCs. Although most of the respondents are rather pleased with the internal flow of information among the members of the RLCC, all of the members are dissatisfied with the external information flow i.e. to the NGO:s represented in the RLCC and to the wider public. The lack of information provided for external use is considered as a major weakness in the work of the RLCC in Västerbotten.

Compared to the Swedish RLCCs the committees in Norway have a more instrumental role, reducing conflicts and minimise harm, by determining what kind of management activities should be given priority. The decision-making process is open and transparent and as mentioned above different kind of actors invited to the meetings of the RLCCs. All the documents, protocols and press releases of the RLCCs are published on a website. The members of the RLCC in Nordland consider the decision-making process to be transparent and open. Several of the members, but in particular the president of the RLCC, also participate in meetings with different NGOs on invitation. The members of the RLCC in Nordland would however also like to improve the external information i.e. to the wider public. The existence of the RLCC among ordinary citizens is rather unknown.

### *Accountability*

The members of the RLCC in Västerbotten also have a rather vague perception of the concept of accountability. Due to the advisory role of the RLCC there is no established criteria's related to the effectiveness of policy formulation and implementation. The RLCC deliberates and offers advice to the regional authority in charge. In most cases the authority follows the advice from the RLCC. This suggests that the RLCC may wield more influence than its advisory status imply.

Accountability thus becomes an issue of concern in this case. Due to the corporatist character of the RLCCs the committee there is no formal mechanism of upward accountability, i.e. to the CAB. Besides internal accountability of the RLCC, all the members of the RLCCs are accountable to their own interest organisation or authority. The downward accountability process is thus, to a large extent, dependent on the internal effectiveness of the represented organisations. Since the members of the RLCC are rather dissatisfied with how the information is exchanged between the RLCC and the organisations represented in the committee, the effectiveness varies

to a large extent. It means that the Swedish RLCCs mainly are upwardly accountable, and that the downward accountability is depending on the effectiveness of each represented organisation. The corporative character of the Swedish RLCC means that the link to the wider public also is rather limited.

Despite the fact that the RLCC in Nordland are elected politicians they also have rather vague perceptions of accountability. This is due to the reason that they are indirectly selected and not directly elected to the committee. They are first and foremost representing the County of Nordland or the Sami Parliament and thereafter their party organisation. When discussing their authorization they all had a rather fuzzy view of what they actually represented and who they were accountable to. Formally they are however accountable to the Ministry of Environment and only informally accountable at the regional and local level, as a result of the members being indirectly elected. All of the members however claim that they as politicians are accountable to the wider public opinion and their respective party organisation.

### *Deliberation*

The RLCC in Västerbotten meets four times a year. At almost every meeting there has been invited guest, experts of some kind, or researchers. Every member of the group has also been designated to fulfil a specified task to every meeting. The meetings has thus to a large degree been concentrated around a particular issue and the members have had to be well prepared for every meeting to be able to present their respective organisations view on the issue. This collaborative learning approach where the actors have been able to exchange views on specified tasks may explain why the RLCC in Västerbotten efficiently have managed to agree upon a number of issues and produce management plans for the large carnivores in Västerbotten. The RLCC in Västerbotten has actually been a role model for other RLCCs. Decisions have been made in consensus and there have never been any major conflicts despite the fact that the different members in the group have rather diverging opinions about the large carnivore policy. The deliberative democratic method used has deepened the understanding of collective problems among the respondents, the construction of shared visions and to some extent adjustment of preferences. It has thus worked as a form of conflict resolution mechanism. All of the members of the RLCC are however not satisfied with the method which they find unclear and would instead prefer a traditional way of making decisions based on majority voting.

Deliberative methods have also been used in the RLCC in Nordland. Although majority voting is allowed the group has strived for consensus. The errands, which concern in particular measurements to reduce conflicts is not, according to the members of the RLCC, the type of errands which causes conflicts among political parties, and none of the members consider the large carnivore policy to be an issue that is or should be put on the political agenda, at least not on a regional level. Due to the lack of previous experience from large carnivore management the RLCC has also been heavily dependent on the advice from the experts in the secretariat. Experts, NGOs and different authorities have also been invited to meetings to discuss and share information.

### **Concluding remarks** (very tentative – to be developed)

The establishment of RLCCs in Finland, Norway and Sweden are relatively new phenomenon. They have only existed for five or six years, why it is, after such a short time difficult to assess whether they are successful or not to for example resolve conflicts between different societal objectives on a more general level. An alternative way to examine whether the committees are able to contribute to the legitimization of the large carnivore policy is to ask those who actually are members of groups and examine to what extent the members of the Regional Large Carnivore Committees, RLCCs assess the management strategies as legitimate in relation to other concerns, notably economic and political ones.

The study is based on the assumption that a democratic system achieves it's legitimacy by the way decisions are made and not only by the results of these procedures. Aspects like an inclusive, fair and representative process as well as transparency and accountability have shown to be useful indicators to measure procedural or input legitimacy (Beetham and Lord 1998)

Despite similar biophysical and societal attributes, Norway and Sweden have chosen two quite different governance systems. Norway has chosen to channel the large carnivore management via the representative system, while Sweden has chosen a corporatist model. The dissimilarity might to a large extent be explained by institutional differences, but also evaluations of previous trial periods of both corporatist and representative committees in Norway (Guldvik and Arnesen, 2001).

Looking at the empirical findings for the Swedish case to start with, the members of the RLCC in Västerbotten has rather unanimous perceptions about participation and representation. According to the members of the RLCC all actors that have a stake in the large carnivores are involved in the management. Also the members of the RLCC in Nordland express satisfaction about the representativeness of the committee. They however mainly point at the RLCC as an arena for deliberation and coordination among different State sectors, rather than as representative forum of the County of Nordland.

Regarding transparency the members of the RLCC in Nordland are rather content, although almost all the members agree that there are improvements that can be made in particular regarding information about plans and decisions made to a wider public. In Västerbotten most of the members of the RLCC are deeply concerned about the lack of transparency in the work of the RLCC. Efforts have been made to improve both the internal and external information flows, but this has proven to be a difficult task.

The lack of transparency in particular in the Swedish case affects the accountability of the RLCC. One of the rationales for decentralisation or the introduction of co-management is to enhance democracy and the utilisation of local agency and knowledge to improve efficacy. However if the decentralised bodies are not downwardly accountable to local people decentralisation will not result in more effective and democratic environmental management (Ribot, 1999). The Norwegian RLCC is accountable to the Ministry of Environment and only informally accountable to the regional level, as a result of the members being indirectly elected. In the corporatist character of the Swedish system there is no formal upward and only

informal downward accountability. Each one of the representatives in the RLCCs is accountable to their own organisation or authority but the accountability process is, to a large extent, dependent on the internal effectiveness of the represented organisations. Studies show that this effectiveness however may vary (Sandström & Lindwall, 2006). On the whole, the members of the RLCC in both Norway and Sweden have rather fuzzy perceptions on accountability and no or very few ideas about how the rather weak mechanisms of accountability could be strengthened.

Despite the broad representation of organisations and authorities in the Swedish case the committee has managed to produce a management plans and make decisions in consensus. It is possible to distinguish between two groups of actors, NGOs representing conservational ideas and a group consisting of the Sami reindeer herders, hunting organisations and the farmers union, representing utilitarian interests. To simplify the dividing line the former is pro large carnivores but reluctant to an empowerment of regional actors and the RLCC. The other group has more or less the opposite ideas. Despite the diverging interests the RLCC has been able to agree on a number of issues and produced a management plan for the region. This paradox might be explained by the mode of governance, deliberative democracy, used in the group. Deliberative democracy has also been used in combination with the building of a common knowledge base founded on both science as well as traditional and local knowledge which has been of added value to the collaborative process. Deliberative models have also been used in Norway; this has shown to be a useful way of coordinating sectoral interests and different actors, although not in the same systematic way as in Sweden.

### Problems and prospects

Whatever the model, corporate or representative, there are a number of problems associated with the institutional design of the regional management. The members point at factors affecting the legality of the management system. There are for example diverging attitudes among the members of the RLCCs about the extent to which the multi-level character of the large carnivore policy in the three countries limits discretionary powers or not. This is linked to the attitudes among the members to the legality of the international and national large carnivore policy. Those, who are in favour of the policy goals set on the international and additionally on the national level don't see any problems with limited discretionary power on a regional level. Those who are more reluctant to the content of the international policies would like to increase the discretionary power of the regional RLCCs to be able to adapt the management to a local and regional context.

Despite these diverging views the members in both Nordland and Västerbotten however agree that there is a need – also within the present policies - to better coordinate the policy and management across levels and sectors. In Nordland the RLCC has become an arena for coordination among different state sectors on a horizontal level. There is however still a need to enhance the vertical coordination to avoid conflicts between different administrative levels. This is also an opinion among the members in the RLCC in Västerbotten.

Another problem that is highlighted by many of the members in the RLCCs in both Norway and Sweden is the fact that it is difficult to establish predictability and

reliability in relation to the present management scale i.e. the region of Västerbotten or region of Nordland. The regions share the same carnivore population. It would, according to many of the members, be more appropriate that the management was based on ecosystem principles than as today, traditional administrative boards established during the 16<sup>th</sup> century or national boards.

Although the regional management's plans produced by the RLCC in Västerbotten and in Nordland have started to play an important role in the management of large carnivores in the both regions, to some extent creating predictability as well as reliability, most of the respondents doubt that the plan will affect illegal hunting or poaching to any larger degree. According to most of the members poachers are not sensitive to changes in laws or regulations. The plans will however be an efficient tool to handle animals with abnormal behaviour, so called problem animals and to decide where animals should be allowed to increase or decrease in numbers.

Although the members of the RLCCs perceive the procedures of the RLCC to be fair and representative, the lack of transparency in particular in the Swedish case and weak mechanisms of accountability make it possible to question whether the outcome will be perceived as legitimate by the citizens of the two regions. Due to the weak mechanisms of accountability they have not been adequately involved in the management process.

At this stage the representative model chosen in Norway appears to have strengthened the role of the central government instead of increasing regional power, since the politicians in the RLCCs are appointed by the government, to implement national or even international policy. As a consequence they primarily owe their allegiance to the government, with only a distant or diffuse sense of accountability to local citizens; this probably reduces the likelihood of being able to manage or solve conflicts between ecological and socio-economic goals.

In Sweden where the RLCCs may wield more influence than their consultative status suggest we may thus deal with a system where the RLCCs have considerable power but no or limited responsibility.

The results of this study indicate that important institutional dimensions are still missing in the institutional design of the RLCCs in both countries. Most obvious is the lack of formal downward accountability mechanisms, but also the lack of mechanism to efficiently coordinating horizontal and vertical scales of management. In practical terms, these insights highlight a number of weaknesses in the decentralisation strategies in current use.

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