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Transcending the **nature/culture dichotomy**: Cultivated and cultured **world class nature**

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Abstract | To make human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as encouraged by SDG#11, and in the sub-goal of 11.4 to "strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage", this paper argues that more nuanced understandings are needed of how people relate to nature, including world class nature. The paper furthermore investigates and discusses interpretations and understandings of nature that is not "wild", untouched, untamed or freed from human intervention and settlement. It advances conceptualizations that benefit efforts to protect and safeguard cultural and natural heritage by providing more nuanced understandings of what nature, respectively culture "is", using the Danish part of the Wadden Sea (a National Park, parts of which are also a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site) as a relevant case. Based on data collected from 48 research participants by means of various mobile and qualitative methods, variations of interpretations and appreciations of nature voiced by the research participants point to refined understanding of the subtle nuances of nature and culture as a first critical step towards strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Keywords | SDG#11, urban/rural, nature/culture, sustainable human settlement

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1. Introduction

Effects of tourism in large cities have been extensively discussed and the negative effects have e recently been coined and studied as over-tourism. Tourism has also boosted a renewed phase of urban tourism in small and mid-sized cities, as stated in the conference call for papers. Increasing urban tourism and over-tourism relate to the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)#11, which advocates making cities and human settlements resilient and sustainable. Negative effects of tourism are not limited to urban areas and contexts and the much-debated over-tourism in cities such as Barcelona, Venice and Madrid. Tourism in rural areas and nature tourism have also been subject to extensive research on (un)sustainable tourism development and negative effects of tourism are widely studied within the context of rural tourism (e.g. Kastenholz, Eusebio & Carneiro, 2018; Figueroa & Rotarou. 2018; Machado et. al., 2018; Pulido-Fernández et. al., 2017; Smith, Robbins & Dickinson, 2017). Nonetheless, research on sustainable tourism development generally focuses on either rural or urban tourism (e.g. Liburd & Edwards, 2018); hereby reinforcing rural/urban as well as nature/culture dichotomies. The rural/urban dichotomy is grounded in ideas of nature (characterizing rural areas) and culture (characterizing urban areas) as inherently opposite: nature is "wild", untouched, untamed and freed from human intervention and settlements, whereas culture and human settlement are defined as development that free, or at least shelter, humans from the unspoilt, wild, untamed and potentially "dangerous" nature.

Williams (1983, p. 219) proposed that nature "is perhaps the most complex word in the language" and yet, there is a strong tendency to simply reduce the complexities of what nature "is" to it being that which is freed from human interventions as well as "untouched" and "untamed"; hereby reducing a highly complex concept to one of two possible outcomes on a simple nature/culture dichotomy. In this paper, the key argument is that the nature/culture dichotomy is highly problematic when discussing tourism in contemporary contexts as many (potentially most) rural areas in the world are not untouched by cultural influences and human activity. Indeed, most areas across the globe are shaped by centuries and even millennia of farming, forestry, fishery, other cultivation, reclamation of land, settlement, etc. Uggla (2010, p. 80) discusses these issues and boldly states:

> "The notions of nature and the natural, as distinct from culture and society and untouched by humans, can be questioned since we cannot find any site on earth that fits that description".

This paper investigates and discusses interpretations and understandings of nature that is not *only* "wild", untouched, untamed and freed from human intervention and settlement. The contribution is a more nuanced understanding of what nature, respectively culture "is", using the Danish part of the Wadden Sea (a National Park, parts of which are also a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site) as the case. The fundamental claim made in this paper is that there is a need for more refined understandings of nature beyond simply differing from human-kind and human creations in order to protect and safeguard both cultural and natural heritage.

The UNESCO World Heritage nature site referred to in this paper is part of the Danish Wadden Sea National Park (henceforth referred to as WSNP). Part of the WSNP is UNESCO World Heritage and the national park is described as "*Denmark's unquestionably most important nature reserve*" (http://eng.nationalparkvadehavet.dk). The Wadden Sea National Park was inaugurated in 2010 and is the largest national park in Denmark covering a total of 1,459 square kilometres of which approximately 300 square kilometres is

land. The Wadden Sea stretches 500 kilometres along three countries, from Blaavandshuk in Denmark, along the coast of Germany to Den Helder in the Netherlands. The Wadden Sea is a unique salt marsh and tidal area, characterized by ever-changing nature due to tidal waters and waves transforming the landscape of tidal flats, sand banks, barrier islands, tidal channels, sand dunes, marshland areas and salt meadows by the hour, the day, the month and the season (https://eng.nationalparkvadehavet.dk/about-the-wadden-sea/).

The enormous amounts of worms, snails, mussels, crustaceans etc. inhabiting the dynamic tidal flats, make the area a unique resting area for millions of migratory birds, an important breeding ground for birds and a growing site for fish and marine mammals (especially seals). Most of the Wadden Sea is protected by Natura 2000, the Ramsar Convention (1987), and the three Wadden Sea countries (Denmark, Germany and Holland) have jointly committed to protection of the Wadden Sea since 1978. Natura 2000 is the largest coordinated network of protected areas in the world, covering more than 18% of the European Union's land area and almost 9,5% of its marine territory. According to the European Commission, it offers a haven for Europe's most valuable and threatened species and habitats (https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura 2000). Parts of the Danish WSNP are protected by Natura 2000, and some parts were designated UNESCO World Heritage in 2014 for its outstanding geomorphological and ecological nature values. The Wadden Sea is the largest unbroken system of intertidal sand and mud flats in the world, with natural processes and dynamics undisturbed throughout most of the area.

Still, the WSNP is not a strict nature reserve that excludes human activities and settlements. The Wadden Sea area has a rich cultural heritage of land reclamation, built heritage, including seawalls and dykes, trade, language, arts and crafts. Land in the WSNP is predominantly private property used for various types of human settlement e.g. farm land, villages, cities, tourism and industrial production. The reason why the WSNP is a particularly interesting case when discussing problems inherent in the nature/culture dichotomy is that while it is an extremely important nature reserve and parts of it are designated world class nature, it is *not* only nature that is "wild", untouched, untamed or freed from human intervention and settlement. On the contrary, to some extent it is human settlement and interventions such as dikes, locks, drainage channels, rechannelling of streams etc. that have "cultured" the nature in this area and have fundamentally changed, or "cultured" the landscape into what it is today.

In the next section, the theories and concepts that guided and framed the study interpretations and understandings of world class nature that is not *only* "wild", untouched, untamed and freed from human intervention and settlement. Hereafter, the methods applied are presented before the paper presents key results, conclusions and limitations.

2. Theoretical Framework

There are many different definitions of rural tourism, but many of them define rural tourism as tourism consumption of rural experiences, cultures, landscapes, and artefacts that occur on farms or in rural communities (Woods, 2011). As such, most definitions of rural tourism include both nature and cultural appeal; including experiences with cultured nature and landscapes (Hjalager, Kwiatkowski & Østervig Larsen (2018). However, this paper does not focus on rural tourism generally, but seeks to deepen understandings of nature tourism by investigating interpretations and understandings of world-class nature that is not *only* "wild", untouched, untamed and freed from

human intervention and settlement. Consequently, instead of digging into the vast literature on rural tourism, this theoretical framework focuses on what nature and culture is, and is not.

Nature as a noun refers to the phenomena of the physical world, including plants, animals, landscapes and other features of the Earth, as opposed to humans and human creations. It is derived from the Latin word natura, meaning essential qualities, innate dispositions and birth. When people talk about the *nature of things*, they usually refer to essential qualities and innate dispositions of these things. Nature as a noun furthermore accentuates life that is wild, *wildlife*, and develops on its own accord, persisting human intervention. When humans feel close, or connected, to nature, this relates to biophilia; i.e. the innate human need to affiliate and connect with other life or wildlife, such as plants, animals, landscapes etc. But conceptualisations of nature are more complex than this. They are socially constructed, historically and geographical situated, and subject to change over time and across contexts. Therefore, advanced understandings of nature that transcend Western, dualist notions of nature/culture are needed. Consequently, the objective of this paper is to advance understandings and conceptualizations of nature that better present and align with the nature that most people live in and with; nature that is not the stereotypical, untamed wilderness, but nature that has been cultivated and "cultured" for decades, centuries or millennia and is thus neither untamed, nor untouched by human kind. To make cities and other human settlements more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, as encouraged by SDG#11, and in the sub-goal of 11.4 to "strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage", this paper argues that more nuanced understandings are needed of how people relate to nature, including world class nature.

Demeritt, (2002, p. 778) argued that *"since the cultural references against which nature is defined change over time and space, so too must ideas of what nature is"*. Demeritt points to nature as a social construction that is open for interpretation and relies on the cultural references and discourses that prevail at a certain time. In the same vein, Braun and Wainwright (2001, p. 41) claim *"what counts as nature is never a closed question"* and they point to needs to recognize *"the fundamental openness, or undecidability, of what counts as nature in environmental conflicts and the urgent need for critical analysis of how the stabilization or normalization of any particular understanding of nature is achieved"'* (p. 42). Fundamentally seeing what "counts" as nature and what nature "is" as being characterized by openness and undecidability, this paper explores stabilization and normalization of what designated world class nature "is". Adopting conceptualizations of nature that are open and undecidable, the paper explores understandings and enactments of nature in-between the extremes of it as "wild", untouched, untamed and freed from human intervention and settlement; respectively cultured, touched, formed, cultivated, tamed and framed by human interventions.

Williams (1983) distinguishes between three intertwining meanings of nature; i.e. nature as the essential quality or character of something; as the universal force which directs the world and/or human beings; and as the external, material world itself. It is nature in the third meaning introduced by Williams (1983), that is particularly relevant for this paper. According to conceptualizations of nature as the external, material world, stereotypes of so-called 'primitive people' often portray them as living *inside* (wild) nature and being subject to that nature, whereas the binary stereotype of 'modern people' casts them as having escaped wild nature by developing societies that dominate and regulate external natural environments, hereby allowing them to live *outside* nature (Williams, 1983). However, in the national park nature addressed in this paper, research participants engage with nature in ways that transcend the simple

dichotomy of living inside, respectively outside of nature.

3. Methods

The results presented in this paper originate from the multidisciplinary two-years long *InnoAgeing* research project carried out at the University of Southern Denmark. InnoAgeing aims to promote active and sustainable ageing with nature in order to keep older (55+) adults and nature in good health. The main objectives are (a) to explore health enhancing and self-empowering effects of active leisure and tourism in nature, including but not limited to physiologic and cognitive measurable outcomes; (b) to co-design with active seniors to engender new communities of practice between residents, visitors (second home owners) and tourists; and (c) to develop new competencies and business models based on deep understandings of the demands of older adults and the sustainable use and preservation of existing cultural and natural resources in the UNESCO World Heritage Wadden Sea. InnoAgeing draws on tourism experts in the fields of sustainable development, innovation, consumer behaviour, learning and collaboration, as well as experts in clinical biomechanics in the fields of ageing, health and life-style changes, including physical activity, sports and nutrition.

Omitting objective physical test results for the purpose of this paper, which aims to present nuanced understandings of what nature "is", fieldwork in the WSNP was guided by relativistic ontologies and subjective epistemologies to capture variations of nature interpretations. Different types of interventions, 'go-alongs' and hybrids of mobile participant observation and interviews were applied to better understand how people engaging with the WSNP define and bodily relate to this "cultured nature". Ingold (2004, p. 330) criticises the 'sitting society' , "for it is surely through our feet, in contact with the ground (albeit mediated by footwear), that we are most fundamentally and continually 'in touch' with our surroundings". Therefore, fieldwork was carried out by means of mobile methods and techniques where researchers not only *talk*, but also *walk* with research participants (e.g. Anderson, 2004; Carpiano, 2009; Evans & Jones, 2011; Reed, 2002).

Fieldwork was designed around three main activities. The first activity consisted of 14 sessions with 19 residents, each lasting 4-8 hours, including a go-along and a sedentary interview session. The second activity entailed ten half-day, nature-based activities, interviews, and co-design workshops with ten older male residents. The third research activity involved go-alongs with 11 second-home owners and 8 tourists who either responded to an open call or were identified through snowballing techniques. The 19 residents were recruited via a poster inviting +55 research participants, who occasionally, sometimes, or often go for walks in the WSNP. When contacted, interviewees were asked 'to bring the researcher along' for a walk. In advance, they were told that the purpose of the interview was to get a better understanding of how they engage with the WSNP nature. All interviewees actively used these cues to take on the role as tour guides. The participants spending the most time walking in the WSNP (and oftentimes running or bicycling, sometimes horseback riding, fishing, hunting, gathering herbs, berries, mushrooms etc.) were generally most comfortable taking the lead during the go-alongs. Research participants spending lesser, but still ample time in and with nature exhibited less confidence in acting as tour guides. Nevertheless, research participants took the researcher for walks lasting one to two hours, followed by sedentary interviews lasting one to three hours (and in more cases also car drives to and from the landscapes they wanted to share with the researcher). The second-home owners and tourists who participated in go-alongs were approached through a second-home rental agency

and snowballing techniques. Go-alongs lasted from one to four hours and subsequent sedentary interviews between one and a half to three hours. Participants' familiarity with the WSNP varied; some had started to visit the area recently - others had come to the WSNP for decades. Generally, participants construed their roles as guides in creative ways taking the researcher along through their favourite landscapes. Tourists were more indecisive and uncertain in navigating the WSNP and sometimes go-alongs unfolded in unplanned ways. The different participant-led go-alongs stimulated articulation of a rich variety of immediate feelings, thoughts and concerns when visibly navigating, seeing and learning about their landscapes together. When possible, but not always due to challenging outdoor conditions of hard wind and cold temperatures, the go-alongs with residents, second-home owners and tourists were recorded and immediately after supplemented with observational notes. All sedentary interviews were recorded and transcribed in-verbatim and supplemented with field notes and pictures. In the subsequent section a series of extracts from the InnoAgeing fieldwork, particularly from the go-alongs with residents, are used to present and exemplify main results pertaining to how culture, cultural heritage and land reclamation all feed into research participants' understandings of, and engagements with, world class nature.

4. Results

Initially, the researchers expected that results would differ across the different types of research participants included in the study (i.e. residents, second-home owners and tourists). However, as qualitative analysis made the researchers dig deeper and deeper into the empirical materials through iterative and hermeneutical spirals of interpretation, it became less and less relevant if research participants were residents, tourists or second-home owners. Instead, what emerged as a key result was the research participants' complex, intertwined understandings and appreciations of nature and culture; understandings where there is no dichotomous segregation of nature and culture, and where the mere existence of culture and signs of human settlement enrich and feed into understandings and appreciations of nature. Below these complex and intertwined understandings and appreciations are presented in more detail.

Several of the research participants living in the WSNP pointed to the WSNP as something else than just nature. As an example, one research participants commented on the researcher's use of the word nature and argued: *"This is culture. It is, because it's man-made. The dike has been built by man, but most people who come here see it as nature"*. As another example, during a conversation with a couple living in the southern part of WSNP, their response to the researcher's asking them how they define the area they live in was as follows:

> Research participant 1: *"But it's culture because it is man-made, all of it"*.
> Research participant 2: *"Yes, the marsh is man-made and therefore it's culture"*.
> Interviewer: *"But isn't it also nature?"*
> Research participant 2: *"When things become old enough, they can become nature."*
> Research participant 1: *"It's nature dug out with shovels and spades"* [giggles].

The three research participants live in areas that would not have existed, had they not been subjected to centuries of land reclamation. To these research participants, knowledge about past and present land reclamation activities are fundamental to their subjective interpretations and understandings of the area as nature and culture;

or in their words *"nature dug out with shovels and spades"*. They point to decades and centuries of cultivation of the area (in the form of human interventions such as dikes, locks, drainage channels, rechannelling of streams etc.) having led to a situation where human interventions have stabilized and normalized understandings of the area as nature, especially for tourists and others, who do not know the historical development of the area. In relation to Braun and Wainwright's (2001) fundamental openness and indecision of what 'counts' as nature, these research participants voice a predicament where understandings of the area as *nature* are grounded in what meets the eye when gazing at the area, whereas understandings of the area as *culture* are grounded in knowledge of the historical development of the place and on-going efforts of cultivation.

Research participants furthermore distinguished between culture, cultured or cultivated nature, and nature. As an example, one research participant lives on one of the WSNP island and, following up on her continued use of the phrase "being out in nature", the subsequent conversation arose:

> Interviewer: *"I know we have talked a bit about it, but how much does it take before one is "in nature?"*
> Research participant: *"Well, to me it needs to be more than a caravan site or my garden. I mean, in my garden, I am outside, but to get out into nature I need to go somewhere else. I might get some exercise doing the garden, but I'm not out in nature: I'm out in culture, the cultivated nature."*
> Interviewer: *"We talked about it during our walk: That we were in the middle of nature and still, we could see the Esbjerg* [the fifth largest city in Denmark] *and especially the industrial area and factory chimneys – some people might say that if one can see something like that, then it's not really nature?"*
> Research participant: *"But that's exactly what I like: The contradiction in it. And I get a sense of nature because I know the opposite is also there. And being down at the harbour in the evening, looking at the lights from Esbjerg - that can be the most fantastic scenery. Much more fantastic than looking the other way – I mean, that way you can see a beautiful sunset – but to look to Esbjerg can be truly beautiful."*

An integral part of the fieldwork was a small-scale piece of netnography, where tourists were asked to share photos visualizing why they were fascinated with the nature in the area. Figure 1 shows three pictures that represent a type of photos that several tourists and visitors shared with the researchers.

The three pictures present itemized nature in the Wadden Sea area, such as the shallow waters, tidal flats, sand banks and seals. However, they also present signs of culture; a container ship passing by, and industrial signifiers of the city of Esbjerg. These industrial signifiers were also mentioned (and oftentimes directly pointed out to the researcher) during the go-alongs. When asked why these signs of culture and urban settlement were such an important part of the research participants' narratives and story-telling about nature, one researcher participant explained that to her, a key attraction of the area is that *"it has both nature and culture"*. Standing in the middle of a beautiful landscape on one of the Wadden Sea islands, she explained that when turning her back to the industrial city Esbjerg, she could feel fully immersed in nature and by just twisting her head and seeing Esbjerg, she would feel that she was

"part of civilization". She furthermore explained how, when on a walk, she would turn her back to Esbjerg and, knowing that it was there behind her, she would have a much fuller experience of going *into* nature than if Esbjerg in the form of tangible evidence of culture, civilization and human settlement had not been behind her.

Figure 1 | Photos of WSNP nature

According to Williams (1983), 'primitive people' are stereotypically cast as living *inside* nature, whereas 'modern people' are equally stereotypically casted as living *outside* nature. However, both the narratives of residents and photos taken by tourists demonstrate much more complex,

intertwined understandings and engagements with nature and culture; understandings where there is no dichotomous segregation of nature and culture, and where the mere existence of culture and signs of human settlement enrich and feed into understandings and appreciations of world class nature. Consequently, the research participants substitute binary oppositions of living inside, respectively outside nature with bodily engagements and performances where they, both mentally and bodily, sometimes choose to turn their backs to culture and go (out) into nature. In the WSNP cultured nature where nature is, to a large extent, neither unspoiled nor untouched by humans, it is in the vicinity of culture that nature as a complex phenomenon takes on meaning and is appreciated. To these people, living in or visiting nature that is neither completely untouched by human settlement; nor fully untamed, nature takes on more nuanced and refined meanings. To them, nature is not simply that which is completely free of human intervention, but something that is more freed from human intervention than the culture they can see in the distance, or as the research participant quoted above phrased this: *"I get a sense of nature because I know the opposite is also there."*

The research participants' narratives about engagements with nature accentuate bodily movement into, in and with nature; movements that allow for them to form complex understandings and appreciations of nature, cultured nature and culture. Gatrell (2013, p. 104) coined the concept of therapeutic mobilities to accentuate that it is the slow mobility of the walking body that *"permits an engagement with places and environments as encountered on the move"*. Most research participants point to the therapeutic effects of walking in nature and cultured nature. An exemplification of therapeutic mobilities is captured in the story of Ellen and how she decides whether to turn left or right when she goes for a walk. Ellen lives in a small village, in a house on a small road leading to one of the small locks securing the mainland from the Wadden Sea floods and tidal changes. When one arrives at the lock, walks up on the dike crown, facing the north-west, one cannot overlook the distant, industrial city Esbjerg. If looking in the opposite direction, all one sees is the tidal flats, the shoreline, the dike and mainland dunes and greenery that merge with a vast, open sky. During the sedentary interview that proceeded the go-along, the researcher asked Ellen how the sight of the industrial city affected her?

> Ellen: *"I do different walks depending on – how shall I put it – what I'm drawn to. Some days, I turn my back to Esbjerg and doesn't want to see Esbjerg, so I walk the opposite way, which is much more nature and where I'm in the middle of this nothingness and where I'm far from, like, civilized circumstances; You can't see any houses and there are no sounds except from the birds. And there I really think I disappear into, or I go in with, nature. I know that sounds a bit silly, but to get lost in nature somehow. "*
> Interviewer: *"So when you pass the dike crown and make a stop there, you [. . .] decide which way to go without really thinking about it?"*
> Ellen: *"[. . .] As I said during our walk, to walk left into the meadows, as we call it, is such a lovely walk. You walk so far that you hardly see anyone – especially if you are as narrow-sighted as I am and you don't hear anything but birds, no noise from cars or a tractor. There, I get the feeling that I leave the vibrant life behind me [. . .] When I go there, nature is something different and I can get the feeling that I'm the only person in the world at that moment in time [giggle]. [. . .] I haven't been that conscious about it be-*

> *fore, it's only now we talk about it that I truly realize that those two sets of walks give me something different. It's also – how to put it – it also has to do with my mood and how I feel like that particular day: Do I want to be able to see the city or do I want to disappear into nature, so it has to do with my state of mind, but unconsciously, unconsciously, because I haven't thought about it before now. [...] Whether I go the one or the other way depends on my mood and the mood I want to get into".*

Demeritt (2002) argued that ideas of what nature "is" depend on complex and dynamic cultural references against which nature is defined. In a mundane, everyday life framing, Ellen's walks to the left or to the right embody a set of culture references where she activates her understandings of nature, cultured nature and culture to engage in therapeutic mobilities that either allow her to "disappear into nature" or stays in contact with "civilized circumstances". Ellen's story is included because it represents how research participants draw in nuanced enactments of nature and culture to engage with nature and culture.

The main contribution of the fieldwork in the WSNP is that, even in designated world class nature, nature and culture are much more than a simple dichotomy. Instead of understandings and interpretations being a simple matter of defining the WSNP as nature or culture, research participants account for intertwined webs of significance that go far beyond a nature/culture dichotomy. These intertwined webs of significance cover variations of interpretations and appreciations accentuating varying degrees of world class nature, cultivated nature, cultured nature, 'natured' culture and culture. In between the dichotomous nature and culture positionalities, our research participants in the WSNP account for nuanced appreciations that refine conceptualizations of nature. They especially point to the historical and cultural heritage of the area, particularly land reclamation efforts and human settlement, as having cultivated and cultured nature into what it is today. They also voiced what we in lack of better wording label 'natured culture' as cultural and cultivated areas *"dug out with shovels and spades"* that are now *"old enough"* to have become nature.

The second contribution of the study is that to the research participants, visiting or living with nature is not simply a matter of (primitive) living inside nature or (modern) living outside nature. Instead, it is a matter of actively engaging in (therapeutic) mobilities that allow for them to move in-between the polar positions of nature and culture. These in-between movements and mobilities are crucial because they allow the research participants to "sense nature" in ways they could not, had they not had the opposite (i.e. culture and human settlement) close to them as well.

The third contribution critically addresses SDG#11, notably 11.4 to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. When simply seeing nature as other to humans, including human settlements, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand why humans should protect nature and the Earth beyond concerns of own safety and survival. In the dawn of the Anthropocene, the ambitions of all seventeen SDGs beacon response beyond binary oppositions and conventional solutions. A central concept in sustainability science is that of stewardship, which suggests that those involved benefit from putting the interests of others above their own and pursuing actions that generate their own intrinsic rewards (Neubaum, 2013; Liburd, 2018). Findings in the WSNP indicate that people who care about nature relate to nature in complex manners at the heart of which nature is not other to mankind or human creation.

Making cities and human settlements inclusive,

safe, resilient and sustainable (SDG#11) means trespassing the urban/rural dichotomy by people who care about nature, landscapes and each other. And while world class nature and culture are two distinct UNESCO lists (with a few properties inscribed as both), it is worth noting that the official UNESCO World Heritage emblem represents the interdependence of the world's natural and cultural diversity.

5. Conclusions and Limitations

Fieldwork was carried out in the Wadden Sea National Park nature, much of which has been tamed, cultured and cultivated for centuries and would not have existed had it not been for human settlement and interventions. Furthermore, it is part of world class nature that is geographically and psychologically "close" to more urban settlement and is intertwined with what is often labelled culture. As a result, the particularities and uniqueness of the Danish WSNP have major effects on the results presented in this paper. The context was chosen because it is especially interesting given the studied phenomena, namely to capture more nuanced understandings of what nature, respectively culture "is" in the form of interpretations and understandings of nature that is not only "wild", untouched, untamed or freed from human intervention and settlement, but has also been tamed, cultured and cultivated through centuries while it has maintained particularities of being nature. Given these limitations, findings presented in this paper qualify no more than a contribution to further develop, refine and nuance understandings of nature and culture that transcend simple, Western dichotomies.

The research presented in this paper suggest that human understandings of and engagements with nature in the WSNP transcend simplistic dichotomous nature/culture categorizations. The variation of interpretations and appreciations of nature voiced by the research participants point to the importance of understanding the subtle nuances of nature and culture that may allow for transformative experiences not in, but with nature. Therefore, researchers need to question the tendency to reduce nature to that, which is not culture and embrace evanescent, individual versions of subjective nature; versions that reside in complex webs of cultured and cultivated nature as well as 'naturalized' human settlement and culture. Furthermore, the inclusion of residents, second-home owners and tourists suggest that giving tourists access to world class nature may not be enough. In order to actively engage in therapeutic mobilities that allow visitors to move in-between the polar positions of nature and culture, visitors need to know about the area they visit. Therapeutic in-between movements and mobilities that allow tourists to "sense nature" in ways that transcend simplistic nature/culture categorizations simply become easier when tourists understand why a certain area contains world class nature, cultured nature and culture/human settlement. One way to foster such understandings is to offer guided tours; another is to make sure that tourists have access to information while moving in and through nature. But regardless of how tourists obtain information it seems that therapeutic movements and mobilities increase when people understand the nature and culture they engage with.

The work presented in this paper originates from relativistic ontologies, subjective epistemologies and qualitative methodologies and therefore, results are not statistically representative, nor should one expect them to generalize across cultural and natural contexts. Therefore, the paper should only be seen as a first step in the quest to understand versions of nature that transcend simplistic dichotomous nature/culture categorizations.

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