Environmental Conservation and Local Interests in Finnish Lapland

Nuccio Mazzullo

Abstract: *In this paper I consider the historical development that marked the beginning of Finnish environmental policies in the mid-nineteenth century that resulted in the foundation of the first national parks in the north of Finland and in some important laws, passed by the Finnish government, aimed at rationalising felling strategies. After the Second World War, compelling financial needs and increased modernisation led to a further intensification of forest felling and to the appearance of the first forms of resistance to government forestry policies and to the formation of an environmental conservation movement. With the Finnish membership to the European Union in 1995, and with the consequent impact of European environmental policies on the Finnish ones, the environmental conservation debate reached a new level that is epitomised by the controversy currently surrounding the European environmental protection project 'Natura 2000'. With particular reference to Finnish Lapland, the enforcement of already existing environmental protection measures by the European Ministry of Environment rekindled a controversy that highlighted the diversity of impact that these measures had on the variegated ethno-social landscape of the Municipality of Inari. Sámi and Finnish people, along with environmental and government agencies, environmentalists and economists, could in theory share a similar aim: namely, the sustainable growth that would guarantee the continuity of the bio-cultural diversity of this region. I have argued that the position people take in relation to environmental protection cannot simply be predicted or deduced on the basis of any single variable, be it ethnic affiliation, social status, livelihood, or whatever. For this reason, following the claims made by those who are at the*

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receiving end of policies, it is suggested that the implementation of successful environmental policies can be achieved only through democratic practices that allow the full participation in decision-making processes of representatives of all parties involved.

Keywords: environment, Sámi People, Finnish Lapland, identity, nature conservation, national parks, indigenous rights

INTRODUCTION

THIS ARTICLE looks at the ways in which national and European administrations and international environmental agencies articulate concepts such as ethnicity, identity and tradition as legitimising factors in the choice of strategies to protect the environment, and compare these usages with local idioms among residents in Finnish Lapland. I shall show that the multiplicity of responses to such strategies indicates that the interests of local people are heterogeneous and cut across social and ethnic boundaries. In fact, unless we reify these interests and selectively associate them with bounded, homogeneous ethno-social groups, as it still appears to happen in political rhetoric, it is not possible to assume, a priori, that policies of environmental protection will be welcomed. In fact, they are likely to clash with local people's interests and ideas of how things should be done. During my fieldwork in Finnish Lapland (1995–1997), differences in the approach to environmental conservation were highlighted in connection with the ratification of a European directive which aimed to create areas of environmental protection: the so-called Natura 2000 project. I shall argue that the situation in Finnish Lapland is symptomatic of the need to 're-place' environmental issues within a political debate that goes beyond the dualistic opposition between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' strategies. I suggest, rather, that decisions on environmental issues should be generated within an interactive debate in which all participants may contribute to establish a viable framework for the coexistence of humanity and Nature.

For Sámi people, the response to the implementation of the Natura 2000 project highlights the importance of their reclaiming their rights to pursue traditional livelihoods. At the same time the complexity of the situation sees the Sámi people caught in a struggle between internal ethnic, social and political divisions as to the pros and cons of the policies of the Finnish Forestry Authority, which seeks to exploit the forest, and the European and international agencies which seek to protect it.

Geographical Settings

Sámiland—*Sápmi*—is a geographical area that stretches across the northernmost part of Europe from the Atlantic Ocean to the Arctic Ocean (Figure 1). It comprises four different nation states: Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Figure 1

Finnish Lapland. In the inset the hatched area represents the Sámi area – Sápmi

The area is sparsely populated by a common ethnic group that cuts across the four national boundaries, the Sámi people, and by the respective national groups. The Sámi are further divided into nine major linguistic groups. In Finnish Sámiland, the Sámi number about 6000 persons and are divided into three main linguistic groups, the Northern Sámi, the Inari Sámi, and the Koltta Sámi. Traditionally the main Sámi livelihood was hunting and gathering and from the sixteenth-century onward it gradually changed to reindeer herding, wheras the Finnish livelihood was mainly based on agriculture and forestry. During the last century throughout Sámiland[1] these traditional boundaries have become less clearcut, particularly in Finland where reindeer herding is also practised by Finns.

The climate is very harsh characterised by long arctic winters and by a growing season reduced to about three months a year. There are two different vegetation zones, the taiga and the tundra, clearly distinguished by the pine timber line (see Figure 1). The taiga is made up of coniferous forest that neatly disappears at this line. Here the tundra starts, first with lowland vegetation, mainly scrub and dwarf birch trees, until it becomes barren land. In this vegetation zone the growth rate is very slow, and the period of turnover of trees is about 60 to 80 years.

In general, Sámi cultural identity, based on the principles of autonomy and change, has always been characterised by an uneasy relationship with the Fin-

nish government. To clarify this aspect we could refer, for example, to the Sámi social unit called *siida*. Until the end of nineteenth century, the *siida* used to be described as constituted mainly by a bilateral kin group, their reindeer, *eallu*, and the un-fenced territory where they herded them (see Pehrson 1957; Paine 1972, 1994). The passing of a law in 1898 for the creation of the reindeer herding associations with fixed territorial boundaries, compulsory membership and whose members were not necessarily kin nor Sámi, made most of the *siida* traditional aspects obsolete leading to a decline in the relations between Sámi and the Finnish State. Hence, with the enforcement of the Natura 2000 project, the situation in Finnish Lapland became even more complex after Finland joined the European Union in 1995. Local residents are particularly concerned that in its determination to create areas of environmental protection, the Union will seek to impose plans that have already been decided behind close doors in Brussels. To local residents, the European protection programme, *Natura 2000*, represented the tip of an iceberg of further restrictions disguised under the label of 'EU directives'.

What is Natura 2000?

The *Natura 2000* project was the European response to the document signed during the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. A European programme of environmental protection had already been ratified by the European Commission with the 'bird directive' of 1979 (79/409/ETY). In Europe there are about two hundred bird species that need particular protection, sixty of which live in Finland. The goal of the 'bird-directive' was to harmonise the various protected areas in Europe in order to create natural oases along the migration routes used by these birds.

Natura 2000 followed in 1992 (92/43/ETY). Its aim is to create within the borders of EU member states a network of protected areas, a so-called 'green belt', in order to preserve biodiversity at large, and particularly to safeguard endangered species. The implementation of the programme is delegated to the Ministries of Environment of the European member states (Ympäristöministeriö 1999). In Finland, the actual management of the resources is delegated to the Forestry Authority (Department of Forest and Park Services, in Finnish *Metsähallitus*).

Outline of the History of Finnish Forestry and the Development of National Parks

Historically, Finland's economy has relied mainly on the forest resources of wood and tar (pine resin), and on fields cleared from the forest for growing crops. However the development of road and other transport and communications networks in the second half of the nineteenth century opened up new possibilities for the construction of sawmills in the Arctic north. With the ex-

pansion of the timber industry to such remote parts of the country, there followed a process of economic growth, which according to Massa, 'initiated the development of Finnish industrial capitalism and the national economy as a whole' (Massa 1988: 30).

However the indiscriminate exploitation of these resources caused a concern to members of the Senate that led, in 1859, to the setting up of the National Board of Forestry and to the approval of the first forest law in 1886. According to Lehtinen, this was a turning point in the Finnish forestry economy, since it represented the beginning of policies aimed at the rational use of forest resources on a national scale. In fact, the law was passed in order to prevent further abuses, but it also 'included an idea of integrating the so-called common forest lands under the state's possession' (Lehtinen 1991: 79).

Indeed through this law the forest lands, that until then had been regarded by the Sámi people as common property, and officially recognised as such by the Swedish Crown, became *terra nullius*. With the passing of the law the whole of Lapland and, more precisely, all the common territories controlled by the Sámi villages (*siida*), became state forest. Henceforth 'the main motivation for the state forestry was to control and protect national property' (Lehtinen 1991: 79). Given the high proportion of land that is state-owned, it is not surprising that the effects of this takeover can still be seen today in the size of national parks. Indeed, of the 8839 km² of Finnish national protected areas, about 85% is located in Lapland.

During the interwar period, in parallel with the national economic growth, there developed an increasing tension between the environmentally aggressive objectives of the forest industry and the romantic image of Finnish national identity, rooted in the ideal of pristine forest and celebrated in Lönnrot's collection of tales from the Karelian backwoods, *The Kalevala*, in the work of painters such as Gallen-Kallela and Halonen, and in the compositions of Sibelius such as his famous *Finlandia*. Besides these idealistic concerns, there were also serious concerns about the economic sustainability of forestry. These led to the development of the idea of state environmental protection. In 1938, the Pallas-Ounastunturi[2] and the Pyhätunturi national parks were founded, along with two nature reserves, Malla and Pisavaara, all of them in Lapland.

After the Second World War, efforts to further develop the northern forestry economy were intensified. This intensive logging campaign reached its peak during the 50s and early 60s with the implementation of new logging methods. As Lehtinen remarks (1991: 81), during this period

> '*…industrial scale open felling substituted for the practice of forest thinning as well as the seedling tree and shelter wood methods—initially and most effectively in Lapland.*' (Leikola 1983)

This felling method, backed by the government, consisted of clear-cutting any given plot followed by deep ploughing. The impact of such methods on the forest, along with the rapid increase in mechanisation, was devastating and further strengthened public concern about the over-exploitation of forest resources.

During this period, and particularly in 1956, a large number of areas throughout the country were transformed into either national parks or nature reserves. However, 96.4% of the 4387 km^2 were in Lapland and the rest in the South of the country (see Table 1, Figure 2).

Table 1

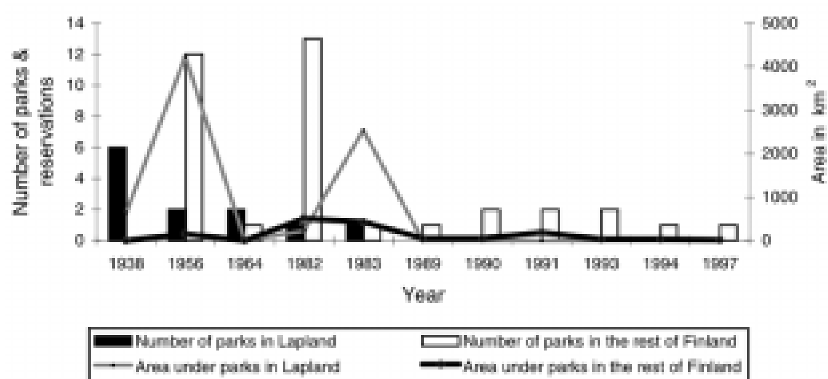
Distribution of parks and nature reserves

Year	Number of parks founded in Lapland	Number of parks founded in the Rest of Finland	Total surface area of founded parks in Lapland, km²	Total surface area of founded parks in the Rest of Finland, km²
1938	6	0	633	0
1956	2	12	4235	152,2
1964	2	1	0	1
1982	1	13	223	505
1983	1	1	2538	422
1989	0	1	0	52
1990	0	2	0	48
1991	0	2	0	183
1993	0	2	0	34
1994	0	1	0	31
1997	0	1	0	12
Total	12	36	7629	1440,2

Source: Metsähallitus Reports 1995–2001.

Figure 2

Distribution of National Parks and Nature Reserves from 1938 to 1997



Source: Hautala and Rautiainen 1995; Lappalainen 2001.

Under the increasing influence of conservationist thinking throughout the 1970s, the methods and policies of the Forestry Department came to be heavily criticised by the general public, and plans for new protected areas were drafted. In the 1980s, clear-cutting was finally abandoned. Today seed trees are left, and only very shallow ploughing is done.

In the years 1982–83, the previously drafted plans for protected areas were implemented following the typical trend: 75% of the 3688 km^2 were again situated in Lapland (see Figure 2), with most areas situated north of the tree-line, i.e. in the tundra (Lehtinen 1991: 83, Pasi Nivasalo and Metsähallitus 1996).

Local Response and Resistance

Despite the fact that Finnish Lapland had already been subject to some kind of environmental protection plan for the past five decades, with Finland's accession to the European Union, the prospect of having to enforce a common European environmental policy became real (Ympäristöministeriö 1999: 7). Suddenly the environmental debate in Lapland resurfaced. However, given that in many ways Finland—along with other Nordic countries—is way ahead in terms of protection policies, and therefore that the application of European policies would have amounted to a mere enforcement of existing arrangements, the question is: why was the potential inclusion of existing protected areas within the European protection plan *Natura 2000* considered so problematic? What were the implications of the European environmental conservation project and, above all, who was going to be influenced or affected by it?

From the northern perspective, as my Sámi informants remarked, it was only from the 1960s onwards that local people, in the Municipality of Inari, became aware of the existence of a threat to the environment. This led to an increasing resistance to government plans for over-exploiting the natural resources of the northern region of Lapland. In particular, one informant mentioned with derision the attempt to introduce monocultural forestry, particularly pines, in areas near the village of Pokka. Large areas of forest were sprayed with a substance that made birch trees die. The project was a disaster, because where there were no birch trees the resin released by the pine tree led to an acidification of the land and the consequent desertification of the area. Local people had always seen the alternation of birch and pine as a natural balancing that ensured that both species survived, and could not understand how 'those forest professionals' from the Department of Forest and Park Services had come up with such artificial methods.[3] Local people started to challenge the 'educated' approach of forest professionals and demanded a more influential place for themselves in the decision-making process (Lehtinen 1991: 81, 83).

In the mid-eighties, a government committee was appointed to investigate and set new regulations to ensure the continuity of raw wood supplies and to

balance their variety. It was however unclear, how the committee could safeguard silviculture when, until that time, the management of national forests had been shaped and regulated by international forces of demand and supply.[4] As Lehtinen points out with regard to the *Forest 2000* programme,

> *'…the actual planting of pines even on ground favouring spruce (Lähde 1986) is in striking opposition to the principles of ecological caring and multiple-use documented as Forest 2000 goals.'* (Lehtinen 1991: 84)

He concluded that this programme was insensitive to regional variations. He also noted, in relation to Lapland, that the programme emphasised pulpwood and paper processing at the expense of small and medium-sized mechanical wood-refining enterprises (Lehtinen 1991: 88). One might ask, he suggests, whether

> *'…the northern forests with extremely slow increment rates deserve a more respectable [sic, respectful] way of meeting their societal needs, e.g. by stressing mechanical and handicraft methods in wood refining, or at least a broader spectrum in roundwood instead of processing it as pulpwood.'* (Lehtinen 1991: 89)

During my fieldwork everyone I spoke to, regardless of their ethnic background or livelihood, complained about the use of their precious forest to produce pulpwood. As several informants put it, 'Those *herrat*[5] cut down our forests to make toilet paper'. This view is widespread among residents in the North, particularly among those small private owners who have no alternative but to sell their timber. They are very aware of and feel very resentful towards a widely held view in the South that, to use Massa's words, sees 'the Finnish North as a resource-bearing periphery' (Massa 1988: 33).

The environmental debates of the past two decades must be placed in this context. These debates have focused on the notion of an outermost limit to economic forest-felling, the so-called 'economic forest-line' (Lehtinen 1991: 111), in response to the increase in demand created by the expansion of the pulp market. At the same time, the debates have been affected by a contemporaneous increase in environmental and ethno-political awareness among various interest groups. With this awareness they were able to more effectively oppose the indiscriminate use of land and forest resources.

One of the most remarkable environmental battles to have been fought in the territory of the municipality of Inari, which exemplifies these different positions, was over felling plans for the Kessi Kaira.[6] Despite its name, this area is close to the village of Nellimö and adjacent to the eastern border with Russia. The felling plans were unprecedented and polarised the entire Inari community, splitting it into separate interest groups for a decade. The plans to

fell this forest were justified by the Board of Forestry on the grounds that the area was within the limits of the economic tree-line. The local Skolt Sámi community, particularly in Nellimö village, found itself in a debate involving forestry officials, the Sámi Parliament, environmental activists (who were initially 'southerners brought by bus', until a group was founded led by local residents), and eventually the Finnish Parliament (Lehtinen 1991: 133). However whereas the Sámi Parliament felt that the Forestry Board had no right to propose economic felling on land that was in principle under Sámi control, the statement of the Skolt Sámi of Nellimö

> *'...favored the expansion of timber-line lumbering and considered the wilderness program as completely unnecessary. This viewpoint was in line with the statements of the Forestry Board of Finland, the Central Association of Finnish Forest Industries and the municipality of Inari and Utsjoki.'* (Lehtinen 1991: 139)

The groups that opposed the felling project eventually lost the battle on different grounds. In fact the resolution in the final report of the Wilderness Committee,[7] which was meant to pave the way for a Wilderness Act, tilted towards the side of those who supported the inclusion of the Kessi Kaira within the boundaries of the economic timber-line.

The report states that if Kessi had been left outside the economic timber-line it would have led to the potential loss of twelve jobs (Lehtinen 1991: 136). However what the report did not say was that most of the forest area would be felled with forest machinery, and each machine could do the work of eight lumberjacks. The Sámi Parliament's objection to the felling plan was also based on the damaging impact that felling would have had on the reindeer pastures, whereas the environmental activists were campaigning for the transformation of Kessi Kaira into a protected area on the grounds that it was an ancient forest. However these demands were ignored (Lehtinen 1991: 114–42). In the end, the Kessi Kaira forests were divided into two areas. Normal industrial felling was to be allowed on the larger area, whereas the small one was to become 'a 'natural-like' forest (northern part) to be treated with softened methods of industrial forestry' (Lehtinen 1991: 138).

The same report also mentioned that some parts of another protected area, the Hammastunturi wilderness area, were to be included in the area where industrial forestry was to be allowed. Among the areas covered by the report, only 7000 hectares of economic forests were included in a protection plan, whereas 57,000 hectares were included in those to be felled by softened methods (Lehtinen 1991: 137). Furthermore, following the established pattern, most of those areas that were regarded in the report as wilderness reserves were either already protected or useless from an economic point of view (Lehtinen 1991). The Wilderness Act that followed the report was passed by the Finnish Parliament in 1991.[8]

Turning to the responses to the implementation of the *Natura 2000* project, they cannot be understood in terms of a simple dichotomy between Finnish and Sámi. Just as reindeer herding, fishing and forest property are shared in different ways and degrees by both Sámi and Finnish people alike, so also differences in people's understandings of 'nature', and of their relations and responsibilities towards it, cut across ethnic lines.

This point may be exemplified by an incident that took place in Ivalo, the main town of the municipality of Inari, in 1997. A public demonstration had been organised to protest against the implementation of the *Natura 2000* project. The event was presented by the media as appealing to everyone, under the slogan *Urhataanko Inari Naturalle?*, meaning 'Do we sacrifice Inari to the Natura-project?'. However, although the slogan referred to the whole of Inari Municipality, in reality the small group of participants were mainly forest owners, a large proportion of whom were Finnish and a much smaller proportion Sámi. This 'group', whose members did not share the same reasons for participating in the demonstration, was officially supported by the MTK, the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners. This union is politically close to Keskusta, the Centre or Agrarian Party, whose supporters are mainly involved in activities that relate to farming and forestry. To those who did not participate, the provincial paper described the event as representing the unified response of 'local people' against interference from the European level. This projection of a unified local consciousness was part of a hegemonic practice that Lehtinen also observed during the Kessi conflict. The provincial paper, *Lapin Kansa*, used to hold a virtual monopoly in providing the local residents with vital information about official policies carefully translated into laymen's language.

To sum up, the range of reactions among Sámi people towards the *Natura 2000* project can be sketched as follows. Those Sámi people who own allotments of forest but do not practise reindeer herding as a relevant source of income, share the view of most Finnish residents that these plans represent a threat to their livelihood. However, as they are unable to claim that forestry is a traditional Sámi livelihood, they have to emphasise their Sáminess by asserting their inalienable rights to exploit natural resources within Lapland. On the other hand those Sámi who herd reindeer as a main or secondary source of livelihood recognise the danger that logging, mining and other industrial activities may damage the pastures and threaten the survival of the herd.[9] Thus they see the creation of protected areas, in which only they should be allowed to operate (as in the case of the Sallivaara Reindeer Association, which operates within the boundaries of the Lemmenjoki National Park), as a way to protect their herds, their traditional life-style, and hence, their Sáminess.

In theory, this interest group should share the same aims as 'green' activists from the South. However, Sámi are suspicious of the extent to which the activists would support their traditional mode of subsistence, given that it includes hunting both to control predator numbers and for food. Similarly, there is

some friction over reindeer herding styles between Finnish and Sámi herders, in that not only have they different approaches to the reindeer economy as a whole (Ingold 1988 *passim*), but also Finnish 'herders' are more likely to combine herding with farming and forest felling activities as an integral part of their livelihood.

Biodiversity Including 'Us'?

Despite its geographical position, Lapland is very rich in its variety of animals and plants. We have also seen in this article that differences in people's modes of subsistence are many and are not neatly aligned along inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic boundaries. In other words, given that not all Sámi people are reindeer herders, and not all Finnish local residents are involved in forestry activities, then the question is how can all this diversity, both human and non-human, be protected?

Clearly, any working solution must depart from the opposition in the approach to the forest that has marked the debate in Lapland as elsewhere in the world, between perceptions of nature/forest as a resource to be exploited along commercial lines, and as a pristine wilderness to be protected and conserved. In the first case, the tendency is to stretch the boundaries of the logic of the market to cover nature at large, whereas in the second case the tendency is to close the boundaries around nature leading to its further alienation from humankind. This latter tendency would ultimately lead to the 'musealization' (Lehtinen 1991: 146) of nature through the restriction of access to more and more areas.

One example for such conceptual discontinuity between human beings and nature in relation to environmental conservation came from one green activist from the South of Finland I interviewed during the fieldwork. He belonged to the Finnish Nature League and then worked as a Project Manager for the Finnish branch of the World Wildlife Found (WWF). After a few years of working on a conservation project related to ancient forests in Russian Karelia, he was fired because he was not doing what he was supposed to do. Instead of pursuing the environmental goals set by the WWF Headquarters, he started to concern himself with local people's interests and realised that the politics internal to the WWF, in practice, did not consider people as a priority. There were also irreconcilable differences while he was at the WWF as he was collaborating with his friends in the Nature League of Finland and Greenpeace, in order to realise his dream of working with local people and thereby creating the basis for real environmental protection. However, he was told to be realistic. According to the interviewee, his mentors at the WWF held the view that 'it is realistic to conserve 1000 km^2 [of forest] but unrealistic to give local people any real say in how to use local resources. That's the way things are, they say'. Now he lives in a small village near Inari and works on small local projects which involve eco-friendly modes of subsistence on the premise that

in Sámiland 'according to international conventions, local indigenous people should have a say'. He also organises activities to raise awareness of environmental issues and writes in local papers, as he now believes that a proper link with local people is the first step towards a more harmonious approach to a realistic, environmentally sustainable economy.

This stark opposition in the approach to forest conservation has increasingly found its way into anthropological accounts, particularly of contexts in which conflicting interests lead to an exaggeration of the differences between the so-called 'Western World' and anything that falls outside its purview. An example of this is given by Campbell (1998), in his research on the conflict in world views between local residents of a Nepalese village, who saw their traditional territories transformed into the Langtang National Park, and the authority that enforced the regulations concerning what residents could and could not do.

In the case cited by Campbell, and in many other examples, as with the James Bay Cree hunters (Feit 2001; Blaser et al. 2004, *passim*), the perspectives of local people and of outside agencies charged with an agenda of global conservation seem to be in direct conflict. However, we also have to be prepared to accept that sometimes this may not be so, as for example with some experiences of co-management of the local resources in Alaska and the Canadian North between indigenous people and the state institutions (Osherenko 1988). Indeed, the environmental protection agenda has not, in Finland, had a devastating impact on local people's lives comparable to that in other, more dramatic examples around the world. Undoubtedly in Finland, democratic processes have allowed for both industrial development, environmental protection and the safeguarding of local traditions, despite some strong internal resistance on the part of certain economic and political interest groups.

Following Bourdieu (1990), we could argue that the devastating effects of environmental policies are not necessarily due to the principles that inform them but rather result from the practices of their implementation. Although indigenous needs and rights are generally acknowledged in environmental policy documents, on a local level people often do not see their rights translated into practice, nor are their needs always correctly interpreted. As I mentioned above, in Finland methods and strategies of forest felling have changed, and from the 'Environmental Principles of the Forestry Authority' approved by its Board of Directors in November 1997, we read that:

> *'The forestry Authority manages, uses and protects the land, forest and water under its administrative responsibility following the principles of ecological, financial, social and cultural sustainability in natural resources. ... we safeguard, also for our part, the conditions of the Sami culture and the natural means of livelihood.'* (Metsähallitus 1997)

As is apparent from this passage and, indeed, from the material published by the Forestry Authority on how the felling programme is to be implemented,

there is a whole rhetoric on how ample space has been given to people to exercise their own livelihood. However we have seen that the public response to actual practices is far from unanimous. People are convinced that they are being politically exploited, though they know that the Finnish Forestry Authority has officially signed up to the principle of sustaining indigenous livelihood and culture, and other examples reveal a similar emphasis. Article 23 of ILO (International Labour Organisation) Convention No. 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries, ratified in Norway in June 1990, reads:

> *'Handicrafts, rural and community-based industries, and subsistence economy and traditional activities of the peoples concerned, such as hunting, fishing, hunting and gathering, shall be recognised as important factors in the maintenance of their cultures and in their economic self-reliance and development. Governments shall, with the participation of these people and whenever appropriate, ensure that these activities are strengthened and promoted.'* (ILO-Convention: 1990)

Another reference to this principle is to be found in the Programme for the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), which is part of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) adopted by the governments of Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States in 1991. In the final 1997 version of the AEPS we read that one of the goals is to:

> *'Promote the participation of local and indigenous people in the development and implementation of policies and programmes relating to the conservation of arctic biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources.'* (CAFF 1997: 17)

Beyond Political and Moral Rhetoric

It is common to programmatic statements of this kind, however, that while they accept that aspects of traditional or indigenous livelihood and culture should be entered as 'factors' in the calculation of future policies, indigenous people—'naturally' bound by tradition—are not supposed to make any calculation themselves. They are treated merely as parts of the equation, rather than as participants in its formulation. As soon as they are seen to be engaged in any kind of accounting—weighing up costs and benefits with a view to potential profit—they are accused of having betrayed their traditional heritage, of having become 'westernised' and therefore no longer worthy of the special regard that western authorities have reserved for authentically aboriginal people. Not only that, but they may also be accused of reneging on the principle—assumed to be fundamental to aboriginal mentality—of respect for the environment, or of 'putting nature first'. The problem for the Sámi people, as indeed

for indigenous people in other parts of the world, is that while like everyone else, they have to make plans and calculations in order to make ends meet, the very fact of their doing so may publicly undermine—in the eyes of the majority—the moral basis (lying in respect for 'tradition' and environment) of their claims to the land and resources on which their livelihood depends.

During my fieldwork, there were rumours that the Finnish government was contemplating the introduction of higher tax on income from felling. The reaction I heard from a number of people, Sámi and Finnish alike, was that rather than regulating the market, such a measure would give an economic incentive to fell the forest before the tax increment was enforced. Informants understood this measure as another obscure manoeuvre that would override people's wishes to fell their forest when and if they need to and not because they have to. Moreover, with the awareness of the power of the media and the global resonance that actions have in the eyes of the public, Sámi forest owners felt that, if they were put in the position of having to fell their forests, they would be more likely to be seen as 'eco-unfriendly' than other forest owners living in the south of Finland. In short, bad publicity would erode their moral advantage in the battle for achievement of rights over their land. For the same reason, many herders felt also uneasy about the artificial feeding of reindeer. They feared that they would come to be regarded as just like farmers.

In this connection, it is important to emphasise the fundamental difference between the abstract ethical principles informing policies that may be imposed on people from outside, and the morality that finds its basic principles in the lived experience of daily life, as with one of my informants, whose livelihood is almost entirely based on freshwater fishing, reindeer herding and snare hunting. When I asked him to tell me what he thought about environmental protection, he said that these programmes are controversial because they 'reduce the areas where people can practise their subsistence, the *elintila* ['life-space'], forcing them to move out. In Brussels, these *herrat* [politicians] know it and [he believes] in this way they can create the last nature paradise'. He went on to explain that the contradiction lies in the fact that while, on the one hand, they grant indigenous people the right to exercise their traditional forms of livelihood, on the other hand, they are restricting fishing and hunting rights in those areas that have been included in the *Natura 2000* protection programme. If we consider that these protected areas encompass about 70% of the territories inhabited by the Sámi, what our politicians and the Forestry Authority are doing is, according to this interviewee, selling off people's livelihoods in exchange for this *Natura 2000* from Brussels. Then once they have set this *Natura 2000*, it will not be long before they invent another *Natura 2001*, with further restrictions for those who are left. So he wonders how they are going to protect his rights when, at the same time, they prohibit anyone, including the Sámi people, from freely exercising traditional subsistence activities in protected areas. To reinforce his point, he added that he had heard rumours that in future the hunting of willow ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*)

with snares may be banned, and people would only be allowed to hunt it with rifles. This is supposedly because the snare makes the animal suffer too much. He said that it is impossible to make a living by hunting the willow ptarmigan with a rifle, but it has been possible to hunt it for centuries using snares.[10] In another interview with a North Sámi reindeer herder and souvenirs tradesman, we see a similar position. Although this informant owns a reindeer herd of considerable size, he relies on his business activities for income, rather than on his herd. He thinks nature protection plans are needed nowadays because too many things have changed. He gave me one example to show how limits once set by nature nowadays have been set by people themselves. Formerly, he said, herders wished to have large herds and they still do now. However in the past there were no fences and the reindeer had to be looked after and herded day and night. When the herd became too large, and there was not sufficient pasture for it, then even if the herders were skilled they could not possibly keep the herd together and many reindeer would 'return back to nature', i.e. they would go astray. As these half-tame reindeer wandered around, they would either die, become prey to wild animals or join another herd in an area where the pasture was abundant. Nowadays pastures are all fenced, and if the herd becomes too large it will starve. So it is the herder's responsibility to make sure that the size of the herd is right in relation to available pastures. This man still believes that, in certain matters, herders know how to treat reindeer right. He does not for example agree with animal rights activists who say that catching a reindeer by the antlers should not be allowed because it is painful for it. Nor does he agree with any politician from Brussels who may decide that the practice should be banned, because they hardly even know what a reindeer looks like. Following this line of thought, he also wonders how long herders will still be allowed to earmark their reindeer. 'If they don't like us catching a reindeer by the antlers, then they will be even more appalled when, there in Brussels, they see that in order to earmark, we have to cut bits of the reindeer's ear off'.

CONCLUSION

In the above mentioned examples, we can see that people's moral principles are different from those generated behind desks and in laboratories. Their relationship with the environment at large is based on moral principles that emerge in their very engagement with its constituents. A common statement that everyone repeated to me is that people are 'part of nature', *just like anything else*. This runs counter to any project that strives to separate humankind from nature, that seeks to convert a global perspective of total 'intra-action' to a globalised, layered 'inter-action', or that moves from a perspective that sees the constituents of the world as interconnected within an all-embracing cosmos, as in the Sámi worldview, to one in which humankind sees its own agency as the unifying force that ties together a cluster of otherwise separate elements.

As Lehtinen has shown, precisely this kind of prospect is turning Finland 'into a northern European colony, divided into areas of industrial forest management and into areas of wilderness recreation. The areal relations of these two modes of land use depend on the price the central Europeans are willing to pay for the 'last wilderness' of Europe' (Lehtinen 1991: 147). This passage is in tune with the views of the Inari Sámi fisherman and with that of a member of the Sámi Parliament, who already see in the implementation of the *Natura 2000* project the gradual transformation of Lapland into a leisure ground for affluent Westerners. However, we have also seen that this view is not shared among all local residents and that it cannot therefore be generalised. By the same token, generalised solutions that do not take into account the diversity of local views cannot be representative.

From a theoretical perspective, according to Milton, the analysis of environmental problems should be as inclusive and exhaustive as the topic itself, hence 'problems and solutions are as much cultural as they are physical or biological, and ... cultural research should be part of the package' (Milton 1999: 224). In the light of the material presented in this article, such a holistic approach is necessary in order to address biodiversity in all its different aspects. In Ingold's words,

> '*The human species is ... conspicuously absent from mainstream conceptions of global biodiversity. Species can only be enumerated in the natural world by a humanity that has set itself above and beyond it.*' (Ingold 2000: 217)

Thus it is important to find a way of understanding diversity that ensures a place for humankind in the natural world, rather than just a role in it. In Lapland, as we have seen, the majority of local residents, to differing degrees, welcome nature protection plans. However, whereas these plans are understood by Sámi people in terms of the sense of togetherness they enjoy with 'their nature', as a form of self-control, the same plans are understood by policy makers as a form of control over local residents, exercised through the restriction of access to protected areas. This is why Sámi people cannot accept their exclusion from the planning process. Their own interests and concerns should be a part of the diversity that the plans address. As long as indigenous and local people alike are only informed rather than consulted, then it is true that Brussels epitomises not only geographical distance, but conceptual distance as well. To borrow a remark that I often heard when I asked Sámi people for their opinions of *Natura 2000*, 'Brussels is, indeed, far away'.

Notes

1. I use the term 'Sámiland' as it is preferred by the Sámi people for the region otherwise known as Lapland, or Finnmark, as it is closer to the their own

word, *Sápmi*. However, I shall use the term Lapland to refer to the geopolitical area within the Finnish State territory.

2. In 2005 this park has been combined with the Ylläs-Aakenus Nature Reserve and has been renamed Pallas-Yllästunturi. With a surface of 1020 km^2 it makes it the third largest park in Finland.
3. From my fieldwork interview with a Sámi journalist in 1996 (Mazzullo 2005). In the period 1960-1975 there were developed a series of plans to increase the productivity of Finnish forests, particularly for private owners, that was known as 'MERA I-III'.
4. Analyses based on pure economic variables, such as, for example, that of Ylä-Anttila (1978), did not take into account human variables or contemporary practices.
5. The term *herra* (sing.) means 'mister' or 'lord', and is often used in a derogatory sense to mock the pretensions of those who occupy positions of political or economical power.
6. The term *kaira* can be translated from Finnish as 'uninhabited forest area' or 'backwoods'.
7. The Wilderness Committee was set up with seven out of its eighteen members being forestry officials. Only two representatives came from the Sámi Parliament and from the Hammastunturi Reindeer Association and two representatives came from the environmental movement.
8. In November 2005 the Sámi herders of the Nellimö area have won an appeal lodged to the UN Human Rights Committee for their right to pursue their traditional livelihood, reindeer herding, infringed by the practices of the Finnish Forestry Authority and from the 17th November 2005 all felling in the area has been stopped. However, according to Finnish Forestry Authority releases, on the 30th November 2005 Sámi forest workers have complained to the UN Human Rights Committee because due to the six months moratorium imposed on the felling area they have now lost their employment and this infringes on their rights to exploit the natural resources in Lapland. (http://www.metsahallitus.fi/news.asp?Section=1548 &Item=4081).
9. These aspects have gained some international resonance. In a BBC Breakfast News programme (04/02/00) a report was broadcast on the precarious relations between Sámi and Swedish people over the exploitation of the forest. The Sámi claimed that they should be allowed to use the pasture land freely, and that felling was harming their livelihood. The Swedish forest owners also wanted to be allowed to use their own forest and claimed that forestry *is* their livelihood. On these grounds they thought they should be treated on equal terms with Sámi herders.
10. Concerning this last point, I checked different versions of the European directive on the subject, and there is one, Directive 79/409/ETY, which prohibits the use of snares in hunting ptarmigan (*Lagopus lagopus*, *Lagopus mutus*). However the directive sets its northernmost border at 58 degrees of

latitude, hence leaving the whole of Finland outside its restrictive area. Similar kinds of misinformation are common and people found it hard to keep up with the exact details of this and other directives (1979L0409-EN–05.06.2003-004.001 Annex IV, a; p.40).

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