

Natural Resource Co-Management & Cultural Heritage Sustainability:

The Sámi in Lapland & the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in the Chippewa National Forest

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Abstract

This research paper highlights the topic of natural resource co-management and how it pertains to the sustainability of cultural heritage for the Sámi in the Laponia World Heritage Area and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in the Chippewa National Forest. Following the introduction, the segment on the history of land rights and use briefly describes background history to the problem of colonization through territorial consolidation of traditional homelands, and how such an act severed the Sámi and Ojibwe land-based living relationships. Next, the concept of co-management is discussed and how it pertains to cultural sustainability and natural resource management. Subsequently then, moving on to discuss the Sámi and Ojibwe in relation to their cultural heritage landscape. The focus turns to introduce the Sámi and reindeer herding, the Laponian World Heritage Area, and the “Laponia Process”, the name given to the ten plus years of political debate regarding Laponia. Next, the paper communicates the history of the Ojibwe, the Reservation and Chippewa national Forest and the collaborative efforts between the Ojibwe, and Minnesota state and federal agencies. Concluding in final thoughts on the topic of resource co management as it pertains to cultural sustainability of indigenous heritage.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage, Co-Management, Natural Resources, Sámi, Ojibwe

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Land decolonization is a slow and painful process for many whose livelihood depends on the natural resources. It is necessary to generate new perspectives on what it means to co-manage natural resources between indigenous and dominant societies. This research paper focuses on the cultures of the Sámi in northern Sweden and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in northern Minnesota. It will comment on two successful case studies of natural resource co-management specifically looking at the Sámi in the Laponian World Heritage Area, and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) in the Chippewa National Forest (CNF). These land bases have, for generations, provided the resources needed for the sustainability of their socio-economic growth and cultural heritage. The Leech Lake Band and the Sámi have usufructory rights (rights based on usage since time immemorial) in their traditional territories which have either been upheld or not in court proceedings. The ambiguous statutes of these policies set in place by governmental administration have long been an obstacle for the LLBO and Sámi to fully exercise their self-determination. Their cultures, traditions and values have not always been respected by the dominant society and the exploitation of their homeland has caused many ethno-political land-based struggles. Becoming involved in sustainable natural resource co-management with majority culture has been a challenge. The goal of this research project is to identify how the co-management of natural resources such as the Chippewa National Forest and the Laponian World Heritage Area assists with the sustainability of Sámi and Ojibwe cultural heritage.

History of Land Rights and Use

It is important to understand background history and knowledge of the problem inherent in the territorialization of another's land. It is also pertinent to realize that, "colonization never stopped, it merely changed" (T. Frandy, personal communication, June 12, 2015).

Territorialization can be defined by practices executed by the majority/dominant culture that fix, consolidate and exclude forms of access and rights to claim against the minority. Such an act produces and maintains unequal power relations and struggles. Colonization patterns within and around the Sámi and Ojibwe communities happened very differently. For the Sámi, colonization was the product of national border closings: the implementation of internal policy geared towards racialization that delineated the boundaries of Norway, Sweden and Russia from each other into the demarcation they are known today. For the Ojibwe, progression of the industrial age called for egregious exploitation of ore and more importantly, their timber. Places comparable to Lapponia and the Chippewa National Forest have been seen as sources of conflict because they "serve as a microcosm for the history of conflict and misunderstanding that has long characterized the unequal relations between" majority and non-majority culture (as cited in Carroll, 2014, p. 31). These changes occurred over hundreds of years for the Sámi, but dispossession in the case of the Ojibwe lasted merely fifty years. Reclamation and land acquisition not only "repairs intergenerational trauma caused by forced severance from the land but also reinforces sovereignty through power consolidation and re-territorialization" (Carroll, 2014, p. 38 & 33).

The history of land rights and land use for these traditional communities is highly contested and leaders in the communities slowly find themselves being able to play a role akin to partner and participant rather than observer during policy making. To respect cultural rights is to

have an understanding of the distinctive forms of living that brought about these rights (Holder, 2015, p. 3). “For indigenous communities; relations to the land are not merely a matter of possession and production but a material, spiritual element that they must fully enjoy” (Holder, 2014, p. 8). Previously, the Sámi and LLBO were perceived to be little more than “wards of the state” and were required to be administrated externally by the governments whose legal practices and codes/laws were “enacted with disregard to them and their unique situation as a people” (Sillanpää, 1994, p.10). The policies concerning these communities contributed to and were largely based on racial discrimination and paternalistic attitudes.

General Brief and Territorialization History of the Two Cultures

The territorialization policies of the Kingdom of Sweden and the USA/State of Minnesota certainly shared many characteristics, but it is beyond the scope of this research paper to define them in any detail. Mostly, the traditional economy upon which the Sámi and Ojibwe depended was destroyed by settlers and their homesteads whose forest removal policies included slash/burn and clear-cutting for agricultural fields and livestock farming. In the case of the Sámi, the separation of Norway, Sweden and Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries caused devastating border closings which affected their economic and nomadic style of life. The Ojibwe signed a succession of Treaties in which their lands were forfeit but the rights to hunt, fish and gather on those lands were supposedly retained. This disintegration of the land base was detrimental to community cohesiveness and stability and led to the deterioration of the original economy of dependence on subsistence lifestyle. This reduction in the size and area of historic biennial reindeer and Sámi migration routes in Lapponia and the hunting/fishing/gathering areas of the Leech Lake Band made way for coerced assimilation into the mainstream economic sector of the majority population (Sillanpää, 1994, p. 39).

Brief History of the Territorialization of the Sámi

The detailed history of the Sámi is quite complex and is discussed only briefly, specifically within the context of border closings in their relation to migratory obstruction for the reindeer herders. In the early 18th century, the Kingdom of Sweden/Finland began the consolidation and takeover of their lands and forests with the explicit intent of delineating its borders against Denmark-Norway. When the borders had been agreed upon in the Treaty of Strömstad in 1751, the Lapp Codicil, an agreement between the kingdoms of Sweden and Denmark, was intended to protect the reindeer herding Sámi, who were during this time of border closings prohibited full movement across their traditional migratory routes. Despite this protective contract, further closings occurred and in 1814, Norway dissolved its relationship with Denmark and entered into a pact with Sweden, subsequently beginning border consolidation again, this time against Russia and in 1852, Sweden-Norway whose territory encompassed Finland closed its borders wholly to the reindeer Sámi (www.pasvik-inari.net). The Sámi were caught in a quandary as they belonged to none of the countries formed out of their homeland but were still required to pay taxes to them as though they were citizens. To exacerbate this fact, it was this latter border closing that was the most destructive and brought the destitution of many Sámi fishing and herding communities generally. Finally, in 1905, Norway separated from Sweden, and having delineated their borders against each other sought to implement their policy of internal racial purification, through acculturation and colonization, against the ethnic communities within their population, those being: Russian, Finnish, Norwegian, Swedish and Sámi.

Once borders were consolidated and lands delineated, the newly reclaimed forests were to be used for pleasure, resource extraction, and farming despite the Sámi's subsistence on forest

products. The Swedish term for this idea of a forest commons is called “allemanrätten” (Reimerson, 2013, p. 32-35). At present, ninety percent of Swedish lands are considered protected areas and eighty percent of the forest is held in private ownership (Jeanrenaud, 2001, p. 47). Kaisa Korpijaako (1989) wrote a landmark paper that examines land rights for the Sámi and determined that they had clear title to the lands they occupied. This title had been recognized in the laws and courts in the 17th century into the latter part of the 18th century. Special taxes, such as the Lapp Tax applied only to legally recognized land ownership (Sillanpää, 1994, p. 43). The issue as seen by the Swedish government at the time was that such extensive land tracts could not receive clear titles, and the government did not see the necessity of Sámi reindeer herders owning such large tracts of land as it would have not been in the best interests of all parties. Thus, “the issue is not Sámi ownership to land but the issue is ‘protected rights’,” Mikaelson, a Sámi Parliament representative, exclaims it was more or less confirmed, in 2009 during an European Union address, that Sweden considers it unnecessary and has neglected advancing Sámi rights beyond what is already legally granted (Mikaelson, 2015, p. 217). The Sámi still try to regain these lost rights to land but have been met with testing attitudes. Thus, for the Sámi, the Laponia World Heritage area became a political string, that when pulled, would challenge the leading policies pervading natural resource management and Swedish forest use and rights.

Brief Territorialization History of the Ojibwe

To understand the issue of territorialization as it pertains to management of forest resources for the Ojibwe, one must look back into the history of forestry in Minnesota during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The pristine lands the Ojibwe resided on were prime for lumber barons whose ideas were how the land best assisted economic opportunity, which ultimately was for use as extractive resources. During the Treaty period (1836-1930) numerous treaties had been

signed between the US government and the Ojibwe for the sale of their traditional lands. Lack of intercultural understanding and the involvement of many persons in the treaty transactions permitted many assumptions to remain unstated which led to misinterpretation and general confusion. The Ojibwe lost ninety percent of their land within fifty years through the 1836 Pine, 1842 Copper and 1854 La Pointe Treaties, which opened up Minnesota to lumber, mining and settlement. Subsequently, during the Allotment Era (1930-1950), the Ojibwe were left with only small parcels of formerly vast homelands. It is significant to note that the treaties signed between the US government and the tribes gave recognition to the tribes as sovereign nations with their autonomy and retention of usufructory rights to hunt, fish, and gather on ceded territory (Peacock & Wisuri, 2002, p. 56). Although, these retained rights to cultural livelihood were denied through various legislative and social intolerance, the importance lies in understanding this historical framework because it is critical to understanding tribal sovereignty and the reclamation of hunting, fishing, gathering and land rights sought in the American Indian Movement of the 1970's and 1980's. The rights to manage, receive forest products and financial income from Chippewa National Forest for the Leech Lake Band is essential to expression of these usufructory rights. The collaboration and co-management in the administration of the CNF additionally serves as a framework that other tribal forests and state agencies can emulate.

The transition, for the Sámi and Ojibwe, from bystander to participant, or rather from “wards of state” receiving federal services to independent and capable communities began in the late 1980's, which saw the beginnings of legislative rectification towards the outdated policies. Legislative boosts in policy-making helped to establish a way for the self-administration and control of their own management agencies, resources and programs replacing those of the federal

government. This stronger community development and infrastructure raises accountability while reparation of socio-cultural relationships is re-established (Donahue, 2006, p.16).

Land-Based Relationships

The individuality and cultures of the Sámi and Ojibwe are intricately connected to the specific places and practices borne from the landscapes they inhabit. The land is the fabric of their cultural integrity evoking memories and histories essential to their identity as people. The place-names given to landscape features help to create a map of who they are and where they come from. The character of a people who derive their means of existence from land-based activities are intertwined with their surroundings in such a way that the landscape represents an extension of the body. When part of the forest is burned for cattle fields or flooded by dams for hydro-electric energy, those parts of the body, as they experience these traumas never fully recover and are then able to be of assistance only in minimal capacity.

The Sámi and Ojibwe traditional belief systems hold that all things in nature, animate and inanimate, must be respected because the relationship is one of deep symbiosis and reliance-- a circle of interdependence. It is a way of life in which ecological balance is paramount. From the Sámi and Ojibwe point of view, to understand nature and the cycles of life, death, rebirth, and harmony is to have genuine love and appreciation for respectful 'stewardship' as opposed to 'ownership' of the land. The mentality is to recognize the value of what nature gives and not take more than is needed. The Ojibwe have a teaching called the Time of the Seventh Fire. It reveals the path of either a scorched earth not available to anyone or the path of the alive, green earth available for use by the next seven generations. In keeping conscious the idea that decisions made today affect the next generation and all thereafter, it is this second path that the Sámi and Ojibwe adhere to.

Environmental justice and natural resource sustainability for the Sámi and Leech Lake communities are of contemporary and relevant issues. Dams, forestry, mining and development have all marked the earth in tragic ways for the Leech Lake reservation and Sámi homeland, Sápmi. Laponia as a World and Cultural Heritage site has evaded such severe physical destruction thus far. Damage done to the natural resources on which the Sámi and Ojibwe rely “directly impacts their communities’ ability to exercise and perpetuate cultural identity, spiritual beliefs and traditions” (www.glifwc.org). It is a challenge for indigenous or ‘fourth world’ communities to be heard as the political influence and presence needed to legislatively change conditions on vital resources as land, water, hunting and fishing rights is daunting, costly and filled with bureaucracy. For the Sámi and the Leech Lake communities, after being denied the right to be part of social conscience and human status for centuries, engaging in discourse concerning land use management and rights are top priority.

Co-Management

Co-Management can be a useful tool when: the resources are valued by two or more groups, there is shared responsibility and rights, and when the groups need to come together for a short or long term goal (Bussey, 2013, p.12). It contributes to reciprocal restoration or mutual restoration of land and culture in such a way that the product is cultural revitalization and renewal promoting restoration of economic integrity (Kimmerer, 2011, p. 258). Moreover, it is a solution to diverging systems of resource administration between the local community and the federal or state which ends unilateral decision making and enhances the capability of the minority communities to demonstrate their credibility in ensuring the sustainability of their diverse biological resources. In an effective arena establishing cooperative management, uneven distributions of power are improved and the disputes can be resolved or alleviated (Zachrisson,

2008, p. 154). Although, what co-management means as it pertains to shared power levels in each situation is a point of contention that must be dealt with as the unique relationships vary between the various actors (Berkes, George, Preston, 1991, p. 2).

For indigenous communities, management of natural resources can be considered to be management of self. Having stronger shared power levels increases community identity heightening the value of self-worth as the management role of their natural resources improves. The community sees its contributive value to the conservation and sustainability of their natural resources and heritage. The response then is to develop their self-worth into a political declaration for the advancement of the community. The points to be made for intercultural cooperative management of natural resources are validated as seen through:

- assisting in political empowerment
- assisting in stronger cultural identity
- revitalizing culture and language through land-based activities
- assisting the implementation of management plans incorporating the use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Western Scientific Ecological Knowledge (WSEK).

The various levels of power-sharing exhibited in the arena of co-management are:

- Parity: true co-management with joint decision making.
- Consent: junior partner, ability to veto or right to revise management decisions.
- Advisory: formalized role for junior partner-specifies form of their decision making.

- Consultation: decision maker consults with other parties but not required to respond to other parties' concerns.
- Notification: all parties with interest should be notified of management decisions but no requirement for parties to be consulted (Sanders, 2008, p. 10 &11).

Politically, co-management is effective for building trust and respect reducing jurisdictional disputes by alleviating troublesome turf wars. This creates a conducive environment where all parties can be proactive instead of reactive (Sanders, 2008, p. 11). Co-Management of natural resources strengthens intercultural understanding and acceptance by lowering cultural barriers between tribal and non-tribal entities which increases effective solutions and problem-solving. Such a gesture allows for nation building stemming from the reclamation of lost power of own affairs and reorganizes the relationship with self and other governments whilst reducing dependence of federal government (Sanders, 2007, p. 33). This reclaimed sovereignty over one's own infrastructure reinforces cultural values and cohesiveness.

Politics

While the political history of the two communities is long, complex and laden with Social Darwinism, the contemporary land management problem described in this paper stems from a lack of consociational dialogue between invested parties. Consociationalism is "the working together of the minority and governmental groups in order to establish continuing legal dialogues so that an administrative framework can be established" and is political remedy responding to racial, linguistic and religious conflict (Sillanpää, 1994, p. vi & 5). Since the early 1990's, the communities have begun to receive the acknowledgement and cultural rights owed to them. The political progress made in order to acknowledge the presence of the Sámi and Ojibwe cultural and legal rights has occurred through treaties, memorandums, and revisions to the constitution

(in the case of Sámi indigeneity in Norway and Finland). As patterns of global de-colonization in the 1950's and 1960's led to an abundance of new countries, nationalistic feelings ran high. The devastation of humanity during World War II paved the way for international and non-international cooperation of governmental and non-governmental organizations. Groups such as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Council for Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) and the International Labor Organization (ILO), aided in the acceptance of and cooperation with minority groups and decolonized peoples.

Numerous international documents concerning indigenous peoples' rights have helped to advance their self-determination and autonomy. The United Nations' Convention on Biological Diversity (Article 8 (j)) and the International Labor Organization's ILO Convention No.169, Article 14; recognizes rights and ownership and possession of the people concerned over the lands which are traditionally occupied by them and have historically been used for subsistence and traditional activities. Article 15 calls on governments to safeguard the rights of peoples concerned about the natural resources pertaining to their lands and to include them in management decisions as well as any benefits from these decisions (Sillanpää, 1994, p.159). Although the United States has ratified the ILO's Convention 169, Sweden has not, because other statutes would need to be brought up to date, which has not been a priority for the Swedish government (Sillanpää, 1994, p.161).

Land-based Activities

Co-Management has allowed for a resurgence in the shared participation of land-based activities. The reliance upon, "fish, wildlife and plants to meet religious, ceremonial, medicinal and subsistence and economic needs" provides opportunities for cultural expression and transfer of cultural patterns from one generation to the next (McRoy, 2000, p.48; Carroll, 2014, p. 65).

With the reclamation of land through resource co-management, cultural connections such as ricing, berry picking, hunting, fishing, finding herbal medicines, and craft-making can be re-established. Access to, control of natural resources such as reindeer, wild rice, berries and participating in the making of forest products enhances feelings of solidarity leading to stronger more effective self-government and a deepening of intra and interpersonal relationships. Places used as subsistence extraction for the above mentioned resources in Lapland and the Chippewa National Forest are landscapes seen as “constellations of past activities connected by paths and marked with physical features” that are the basis for their social identity and the point of origin” (Broadbent, 2010, p.193).

Language and Culture Revitalization

One aspect of co-management that can help advance the cultural growth and sustainability of the Sámi and Ojibwe is to manage those natural resources that assist with language application and renewal. The preservation of linguistic diversity is realized by administering and managing those natural resources, for instance, of deer, bear, wild rice, reindeer, salmon, etc. By way of language, experiences about life and survival, teaching and spirituality, tradition and oral histories are passed down from generation to generation. It is advantageous to know one’s first language so that the smallest meanings of context can be understood clearly. Using maps in Lapland and the Chippewa National Forest with traditional language place names assists directly in making the connection between the language application of the Sámi and Ojibwe cultures and the perpetuation of self-determination and self-identity. Linguistic and cultural context and meaning of the landscape is contained within many traditional place-names that can be at times inexpressible, as there is an untranslatable richness

for many words and feelings that is unequivocal and can be conveyed with merely one profound utterance.

Education

As Standpoint Theory states, it is difficult seeing one's viewpoint from a standpoint other than one's own (Tabor, 2009, p. 26). The lowering of cross-cultural barriers through co-management increases culturally-responsive education by facilitating the transfer of knowledge about natural resources and land management from one party, agency or generation to the next. For the Ojibwe community, a revitalization in education and specifically language application, the youth will understand the role the forest plays in their culture through hands-on experience in birch bark canoe making, gathering, and ricing and the educational stories told therein. By this direct application to language revitalization and renewal, the elder generations instill an appreciative spirit for iconic cultural activities, wisdoms and the sacredness of the land. Furthermore, in the Sámi communities, by allowing children to contribute to the activities required of a reindeer herder, for instance, migrating with the reindeer in summer, winter and vice versa, how to identify and ear-mark calves, understanding of reindeer husbandry and how to make reindeer bone knives and foods, they benefit and become carriers for future cultural knowledge transmission. Another theory, called the resilience theory, extols diversity as a benefit because having such diversity responds better to catastrophe than monoculture (T. Frandy, personal communication, June 12, 2015). It is important to have cultural and biological diversity because it adds value, is captivating and beautiful and enriches educational diversity of the present and younger generations providing new material from which to learn and be taught. For posterity, it is worthwhile to document and catalogue living cultural forms (Valkeapää, 1983, p.105).

One other aspect of educational value, generally seen as a negative economic enterprise and exploitative of the people producing the culture is ethno-tourism (tourism for the sake of visiting and experiencing the indigenous culture of country). The duality of how the Sámi and Ojibwe are perceived by the public and how they actually seen in their own community is problematic for identity (T. Frandy, personal communication, June 12, 2015). Although the problem exists, it is not without a positive solution and ethno-tourism in the control of those producing the culture enriching educational outreach as an informative approach for the touring patrons who are then able to draw their own conclusions of the culture without the influence of external bias based on their personal experiences. Prejudices about the perception of their culture from an outside standpoint is dispelled when the voice of the minority is represented For those tourists who want a more meaningful experience, the Sámi offer valuable opportunities to try reindeer herding first hand as they hire individuals for herding, marking and corralling the reindeer, also offered are opportunities to experience arctic sleigh rides, and overnight stays in a Sámi *Ghoáti* or *Lavvu* (a tent structure resembling a Native American wigwam or tipi). Furthermore, having tourist board signs and visitor centers catered to educating the public about heritage management of cultural and natural resources is an endeavor that has been undertaken in both Laponia and the Chippewa Forest.

Education through intergenerational land-based teachings engender good feelings in the Sámi and Ojibwe youth about the protection and responsibility of their community resources so to prevent any damaging development threatening their home base. Teachings and wisdom are not taught through formal institutions but rather in the outdoor classroom. Transferring cultural knowledge across generations in this way enhances the pool from which future skills and experience can be drawn. The youth will understand the significance of learning their language

as it pertains to resources and other culturally specific knowledge with the crucial understanding that what happens in the present affects those for many generations after.

When used to respond to the education of personnel involved in forest management and land planning, two epistemologies reflecting the views of western and indigenous knowledge prevail. The Sámi in Laponia have yet to see the fruits of their recently implemented plan, accepted in 2013, but the Chippewa National Forest and the LLBO Division of Resource Management (DRM) have attempted to incorporate the use of both epistemologies into their management activities

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). Refers to local knowledge and observations of natural phenomena that inform values and perspectives (Bussey, 2013, p. 2). Included are the knowledge, practices and beliefs of a community that taken together create an understanding of the environment stratified through layers of oral histories, traditions, and other cultural material (Griffin, 2009, p. 14). Characterized by holistic respect for all things, emphasis on practical knowledge and skills, including the physical linking of the metaphysical world to moral behavior and conduct are integrated into daily subsistence practices. Limitations include difficulty communicating knowledge that is not easily reproduced because of the sacredness of topics in addition to the disintegration of family structure that severed the connections to those individuals whose experiences and memories retain the spiritual connections to the land (Bussey, 2013, p. 62). It is also used, generally, for long term solutions.

Western scientific ecological knowledge (WSEK). Western Scientific Ecological Knowledge is characterized by part to whole thought with emphasis on one species or stand (forestry term for a plot of trees, shrubs, etc.) taken from the whole. The understanding is based on skepticism and scientific tools, observation and measurement, mathematical models and

procedures have been used for short term solutions. Limitations include being seen as, “too recent to be trusted” and “disrespectful”. “If the Elders are not offering scientific advice, the Forest Service sometimes ignores what you say”, exclaims one tribal elder of the Leech Lake Band (Bussey, 2103, p. 63). It has also been known to disregard cultural consideration in order to serve the short-term needs of a single species of extractive asset (Griffin, 2009, p.10).

Compare and contrast. With the international trend in sustainability gaining positive attention, the review of literature posits that Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) or Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and Western Science Ecological Knowledge (WSEK) each have pros and cons. With reference to implementing management plans, it would not be beneficial to rely solely on one epistemology or the other. Quite reasonably, the consensus is that an integration of both epistemologies would produce the most positive and cooperative outcome. Despite differences, they do have common overlap in principles: honest inquisitiveness, relatively stable knowledge systems that do not fluctuate radically, and the understanding of universality and the interconnectedness of all things. In similarity of skill they use pattern recognition, empirical observation in natural settings, verification through repetition, understanding of plant/animal behavior and cycles along with habitat needs (Bussey, 2013, p.12). Conclusively, it would be prudent for WSEK not simply to integrate certain TEK ideas into its directive because utilizing only certain aspects of the “depth of wisdom and experience” inherent in TEK would be seen as oppositional to conducive consociational dialogue in addition to continuing “political domination and cultural exploitation” (Bussey, 2013, p.12).

Now that there is an established understanding of cooperative management and how it assists with cultural heritage and sustainability for the Sámi and Ojibwe, the research paper will

now comment on two cases studies of successful co-management in Laponia and the Chippewa National Forest.

The Sámi in Laponia

Sámi

The Sámi can be considered a special entity/group because they are recognized as the only indigenous group remaining in Europe and have been throughout the centuries stigmatized, subjected to intolerance, paternalistic notions, and relegated to the status of inferiority. Although, this recognition is widely accepted, the challenge lies in the modern course of thought that Sweden is taking against this stance. The Sámi, through their determination for self-preservation, won the majority on the management board of Laponia in 2011. Concurrently, the challenge of majority board management had been overcome, but another question challenging their indigenous status arose. The Swedish government contests Sámi identity by referring to the centuries of acculturation and assimilation into the Swedish population. Stefan Mikaelson a Sámi parliamentary politician, illuminates the audience at the Gargia Conference, a conference associated with the UiT Arctic University of Norway, as to who the Sámi consider themselves to be in relation to the world around them:

We the Sámi people, the indigenous people of Sápmi. Our land is divided into four countries and stretches northern Scandinavia all the way to the Kola Peninsula. Our people have lived here since time immemorial managing the lands and waters with great care and respect. Our culture is based on a life in which humans and all other living beings are interrelated. We view nature as a soulful living being. Our view of nature

stands in sharp contrast to the western view of nature. Only through deepened mutual understanding and increased cooperation can we create a common future.

Our relationship to nature is difficult to put into words. To live in nature, and to live directly from what nature can give, creates an immediate relationship between us and nature (animals, each other). We rely on a living relationship to Sápmi, our home. If we - or someone else- destroys nature, it will also harm our culture.

They are a circumpolar people and their nine distinct languages of the Finno-Ugric language family speak to the strikingly diverse topography and disadvantageous border closings that have, historically, kept each Sámi community separated (Broadbent, 2010, p. 2 & 15). Their homeland region, Sápmi, covers the lands of four countries: Norway, Sweden and Finland. The smallest group resides on the Kola Peninsula in the Murmansk region of Russia. The significance of their languages as a key factor differentiating the Sámi from the Swedes is conveyed by Sámi politician, Israel Ruong, as he comments on this aspect of their living culture “language is the map of Sámi reality” (Lehtola, 2004, p.14). For instance, there are numerous descriptions speaking to the diversity of snow that are so precisely detailed and accurate in their description that they are used for scientific purposes (Lehtola, 2014, p.14). For instance, in English, the word for bear is bear but in Sámi, depending on which of the nine languages being translated, there can be five to ten words for bear. In this way, the richness of the vocabulary is untranslatable. An exclusive component to Sámi culture that is fascinating to note is joiking (pronounced yoiking). This metaphysical release of singing emotion with or without words to call respect and remembrance for someone creates expressions of feeling transcendent of the material world. Traditionally, theirs was a way of life in which time had no place, with environmental and ecological balance being paramount.

Each Sámi community was divided into a *siida* that had territorial responsibility for the management and use of hunting, gathering, fishing or reindeer herding in a specific area. The foods obtained in the territorially managed areas were distributed to the family and then the rest of the *siida* community so that all were provided for. In the latter half of the 18th century and beginning of the 19th century, disadvantageous border closings between the countries of Norway, Sweden, and Russia/Finland reduced the once vast homeland of the Sámi. During this time, the Sámi were forced to pay taxes to all four countries but were eventually required to maintain home-base in one country despite their nomadic lifestyle. This was problematic as they belonged to themselves as a people not under the jurisdiction of the Crowns of Europe and have since seen it this way in to present times. This delineation of borders decreased their economic livelihood from hunting, fishing and gathering and shifted their cultural subsistence to focusing on livestock and more specifically the herding of reindeer. Reindeer herding in Laponia is one of the last places in the world that boasts and maintains annual human/animal migration, called transhumance. The vibrant and captivating scope of history of the Sámi and their distinctive Nordic culture is beyond this project to detail at any length and is only described minutely.

Reindeer Herding

In Sweden, reindeer herding is an ancient livelihood for the Sámi herders who have the exclusive right, based on ethnicity, to herd reindeer and must belong to one of the fifty-two registered *Sameby* or Reindeer Herding Communities (RHC). The herders have a special relationship with their animals and derive many resources from them: meat, milk, blood, bones and furs, are all processed for food, utensils and clothes. Forestry practices, predators, land and interest conflicts are a challenge to the practice and continuation of herding.

After the devastation of World War II, beginning in the 1950's, the Sámi herders became a powerful economic interest group and who were given special governmental privileges because they were suppliers of reindeer-an abundant provision of homegrown food. The children of these prominent Sámi herder businessmen became vital supporters of the Sámi reawakening movement in the 1970's and 1980's (Roland 77). No longer used to support solely the herders' families and the members of the *siida*, reindeer herding commercialized. The reindeer today are less domesticated and the herders must maintain larger free-roaming herds that require hundreds of acres (Conrad, 1999, p. xvii). Traditionally living with their herds and migrating along with them in all seasons, the Sámi today have adopted contemporary lifestyles moving only in the summer and winter. With the reindeer roaming freely across Laponia, they must be collected with assistance from snowmobiles, helicopters and/or motorcycles.

There are many whose thought regards Laponia, despite its listing as a Sámi cultural heritage landscape, as a place with pristine wilderness untouched by human activity and consider reindeer herding with vehicles a destructive process to the integrity of the landscape and the biodiversity therein (Dahlström, 2003, p. 3). One point of contention between the herders and the various agencies is overcoming this anti-modernist thought regarding the use of modern vehicles in performing traditional reindeer herding duties. Such thought is problematic when used to argue that people of indigenous backgrounds should have to use traditional methods instead of the modern ones their society is used to in facilitating the process of a traditional activity. For example, in the case of the Ojibwe, the prohibited use of four wheelers in the forest to retrieve a fallen hunt or, as previously mentioned, the use of helicopters in reindeer herding.

The Laponian World Heritage Area

Laponia is a 9,400 square kilometer area consisting of four national parks; Stora Sjöfallet, Sarek, Padjelanta and Muddus. It is also composed of two nature reserves: Stubba and Sjaunja, along with “protected continuous mountain areas”: Sulitelma, Tjuoltavagge and the Laitaure delta (Dahlström, 2003 p.1). Encompassed within the territory are seven registered samebys: 300 herders caring for 50,000 reindeer (Dahlström, 2003, p. 2 & 47). In 1996, Laponia was nominated to be a World Heritage Site by the Swedish government because of its pristine geological formations and seemingly untouched, unmatched wilderness. The controversy began when the original nomination of Laponia was denied because of its lack of acknowledgement of the Sámi’s reindeer herding infrastructure which has been in place and in use for thousands of years. Laponia is not only a wilderness but also a cultural landscape; this was an important aspect of the application for world heritage status.

The “Laponia Process”

Throughout the ten years of negotiations called “The Laponia Process” (1996-2006) between Norrbotten County municipality, the Sámi parliaments and NGO’s and the Swedish government, Sámi politicians staunchly requested that a co-management board of Laponia have a Sámi majority. Their evidence presented factual, continuous sustainable reindeer herding and respectful ecological management in the area for thousands of years (Green, 2009, p. 124). They eventually won board majority in 2011 having received much support from the local and international community and in 2013, the plan was put into effect (Reimerson, 2013, p.__). In the discussions for specific topics to discuss in the management plan for the Laponia Area, they included the importance of family relations, Sámi language support, guide training, tourism, and management structure. The Sámi stated their intentions for the management of Laponia to be a

place where “new models and solutions to nature protection could be tried in order to achieve economically sustainable, socially successful, and economically prosperous Sámi/local development in accordance with the criteria decided by the World Heritage Committee” (Green, 2009, p. 130).

During the “Laponia Process,” these meetings amongst the Sámi politicians contributed to a deeper sense of autonomy in that the members involved felt “small steps of accomplishment” in alleviating deep colonial influence. Because of strong international community support (UNESCO, WCIP, etc.) and responsive discussions amongst the Sámi representatives regarding many different issues, not just those about Laponia, they felt it was a rewarding process. They called their management plan, *Mijá ednam*” or “Our Land” (Green, 2009, p. 126 & 117). Its directive explains their determination to “take on greater responsibility for the land” that they felt was already theirs, but had been taken unjustly due to legislative policies enacted by the state (Green, 2009, p.126). *Mijá ednam* is significant because it is an “effective tool” that explains clearly the objectives of what co-management means in the present and future for the Sámi in Laponia. In addition, it is a historically accurate record of the Sámi from their viewpoint and “emphasizes their unique historical and cultural background and their indigeneity” (Green, 2009, p.127 & 157). *Mijá ednam* is an empowering piece of literature for changing dominant discourse, prevailing over colonial attitudes and overcoming the struggle for Sámi self-governance; it positioned them as “equal, but different” in the negotiations (Green, 2009, p.158).

Transitioning from an understanding of the daunting but successful study of the Sámi’s struggles for a majority on the management board in Laponia, the paper will now focus on how co-management has successfully worked for the LLBO.

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe

Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO)

Winona LaDuke, A member of the White Earth band and environmental activist among many things, sums up the Ojibwe relationship with the forest:

Our community is a forest culture. The Anishinaabe people are a forest culture. We are not a prairie or plains culture....And what you find is that to actually be a forest culture you have to have a forest in which to live. (p. 50)

The Ojibwe (Chippewa in legal terminology), or Anishinaabeg as they call themselves, Native Americans of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Canada are a forest-based people of ancient origin. According to their migration story they originate from the Algonquin tribes of the east coast and moved throughout the centuries into northern interior America following a sacred Miigis Shell. It brought them to a place where food [manoomin-“good berry” or wild rice] grows on water. The last stop in the migration story was a turtle-shaped Island that is Madeline Island, what is now part of the Apostle Islands National Park. As seasonal people, they moved with the animals of the forest and participated in seasonal land-based activities such as maple syruping, fishing, birch bark canoe making, ricing, harvesting, gathering medicinal herbs and berries, and arts and crafts. Their lives were intimately tied to the forest in which they inhabited and throughout the generations, the traditional ecological knowledge stored in their oral histories and place-names gave technical expertise of the materials based in their surroundings. The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe are members of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe (MCT) and reside on their reservation, created out of the 1854 Treaty, near the towns of Cass and Walker and boasts the largest wild rice producing lake, Lake Winnibigoshish in northeastern Minnesota.

Chippewa National Forest and LLBO Reservation

Tribal lands opened for timber exploitation because of the Allotment Act or Dawes Act of 1887 and subsequent Steenerson Act, a logging act of 1904. Many parcels of land were divided up and sold off making the reservation and forest a “patchwork quilt” checkered with lands being owned by band members and non-tribal persons, especially those non-tribal entities interested and invested in the mining and lumber business (Tabor, 2009, p. 26). What is now known as the Chippewa National Forest began as the “Ten Section Area” of the Minnesota Forest Reserve in 1902. The egregious exploitation of these forest resources attracted the attention of a woman activist group in Minneapolis/ St. Paul whose goal by creating a recreational park was to keep what was left of the original white and red pine forests. The Minnesota National Forest Act of 1908, after being staunchly challenged, was finally accepted and the first National Forest was created that was to be managed solely by the United States Forest Service. The 1902 “Ten Section Area” of the reserve became the Minnesota National Forest and, in 1928, the name was later changed to the Chippewa National Forest in recognition of the tribe on whose land it resides. Interestingly, there is a section of the Chippewa National Forest that was missed during the clear-cutting due to surveyor error. This portion called “The Lost Forty” is one of the only remaining areas of old growth forest in Minnesota (www.fs.usda.gov). Until legislation in the late 1970’s affirmed tribal treaty rights, it was illegal for the tribal members to hunt, fish, and gather resources for subsistence and livelihood in their forest. This depletion of economic welfare brought on deep destitution and community breakdown that still is recovering.

The US Forest Service manages approximately 666,620 acres within a 1.6 million acre surrounding and the overlap with the reservation is between 42%-44% (www.fs.usda.gov). In

actuality, the Leech Lake Division of Resource Management actively maintains and manages only 7% of the forest inside the borders of the tribes' sovereign territory (Bussey, 2013, p. 25).

Collaborative Work/Research and the Co-Management Process

Previously, Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) policies regarding the forest and the resources contained therein made no mention of tribal cooperation or involvement, in part owing to a fundamental lack of respect for the field known as ethnobotany (the study of the relationship between plants and people (Sanders, 2008, p. 4). Between the years 1986-1990, US Congress passed several statutes authorizing the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to treat First Nations like states. Although this was a step in the right direction in alleviating colonial influence on the reservations, tribes did not, initially, have enough means, financial and non, to compete with well-funded state programs (Suagee, 2012, p. the right to protect).

Since that time, the collaborative efforts between the USDA Forest Service (US FS), Chippewa National Forest (CNF) and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe (LLBO) Division of Resource Management have largely been positive. The relationship between the agencies and communities in general has provided collaborative community empowerment through cultural outreach activities, recruitment events, joint award programs for environmental stewardship and forest heritage assessments. In addition, community outreach and engagement has been effective as CNF seeks to recruit members of the LLBO as volunteers such as the tribal youth for participation in the Youth Conservation Corp (YCC) program. CNF rangers also mentor high school students and host interns from Leech Lake Tribal College. In conjunction with the Department of Labor and the Elder Circle, CNF provides job training for local tribal elders who aim to re-enter the workforce (Bussey, 2013, p. 24). Other goals of the US Forest Service in their interactions with the Band include consulting the LLBO Division of Resource Management

when conducting timber sales, meeting local Indian councils and gathering input about inquiries as they relate to issues at hand.

Decisions to advance policy have produced helpful agreements and organizations establishing foundations for further cooperation of resource management between the state and tribal actors. One intermediary organization, the Great Lakes Intertribal Fish and Wildlife Commission in Northeastern Minnesota (GLIFWC) is composed of eleven member tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan whose goal is to provide:

Natural resource management expertise, conservation enforcement, legal and policy analysis, and public information services in support of the exercise of treaty rights during well-regulated, off-reservation seasons throughout the treaty ceded territories. GLIFWC is guided by its Board of Commissioners along with two standing committees, the Voigt Intertribal Task Force and the Great Lakes Fisheries Committee, which advise the Board on policy. (www.GLIFWC.org, n.d.)

Since 2013, this organization has been the intermediary in establishing a cooperative agreement called the Memorandum of Understanding or “MOU”, between the US Forest Service and the tribes whose lands are covered in the four national forests in the ceded territory (McRoy 49; Sanders 34). In its directives, there are guidelines for tribal gathering rights and coordination of individual and shared management responsibilities. This agreement has been influential in assisting with open political dialogue between the sovereigns and helps to establish better communication and agreement between the tribes and the state/federal governing authorities. One other document used by the Chippewa Forest has been the Interagency Resource Management Agreement (IRMA). Because of the high litigation factor of land disputes IRMA came together as a solution for avoiding such legal disputes brought on by short-term crisis and

limited capacities of both indigenous and non-indigenous governments to manage resources independently (Sanders, 2008, p. 10).

Conclusion

In conclusion, co-management is effective and can be done and is demonstrated in two successful case studies: the Sámi in Lapland and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe in the Chippewa National Forest. These places were chosen because they are appropriate examples of land decolonization as it pertains to the regeneration of cultural heritage. Co-management serves as an innovative tool that fills in the gaps of previously stagnant dialogue by removing external challenges in order to consociationally come to a resolution for all parties involved. Issues of environmental and social justice are pertinent contemporary global issues and management of natural resources falls under this category. It is not only the indigenous populations dependent on the resources but the global economy. Sustainability of those resources improves the quality of life, advances cultural heritage, education and promulgates the reparation of broken land based relationships for everyone. It is important to have an open-mind and an appreciative spirit when engaging in intercultural dialogue. It is also important to look at the historic legal framework under which many of the political policies have been made. A modernization of the policies to reflect the current situations of the communities in order to integrate the dialogue with the Sámi and Ojibwe into the policies. Although much of Indian Policy is contradictory and complicated, new policies become available as the tribes seek to display their capabilities of self-governance and natural resource stewardship responsibilities. The Sámi are realizing their potential as political associates in managing their lands but threats from mining are ever present and keeping what management role they have is crucial. As previously mentioned, having responsibilities associated with the management of cultural natural resources adds stability to the community by

increasing the feelings of solidarity, communal stewardship and contributive value to society, self and community.

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