

# Managing Laponia

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Carina Green

# Managing Laponia

A World Heritage as arena for  
Sami ethno-politics in Sweden



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#### **Abstract**

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This study deals with the implications of implementing the World Heritage site of Laponia in northern Sweden. Laponia, consisting of previously well-known national parks such as Stora Sjöfallet and Sarek, obtained its World Heritage status in 1996. Both the biological and geological significance of the area and the local Sami reindeer herding culture are included in the justification for World Heritage status. This thesis explores how Laponia became an arena for the long-standing Sami ethno-political struggle for increased self-governance and autonomy. In many other parts of the world, various joint management schemes between indigenous groups and national environmental protection agencies are more and more common, but in Sweden no such agreements between the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Sami community have been tested. The local Sami demanded to have a significant influence, not to say control, over the future management of Laponia. These were demands that were not initially acknowledged by the local and national authorities, and the negotiations about the management of Laponia continued over a period of ten years. This thesis shows how the local Sami initially were marginalized in the negotiations both because of their alleged “difference” *and* because of their alleged “similarity” to the majority population. By navigating through what can be described as “a politics of difference,” the Sami involved eventually succeeded in articulating their cultural and historical difference in such a way that they were perceived as different but equal in relation to the other actors. By describing the many twist and turns of the negotiations between the local Sami and the local authorities, this thesis shows how the involvement of international agencies and global protection aspirations, such as the World Heritage Convention, might establish a link between the local and international levels that to a certain extent bypasses the national level and empowers indigenous/local peoples and their ethno-political objectives. As such, this study demonstrates how local/indigenous peoples’ involvement in environmental protection work is above all a political issue that ultimately leads to a situation where their relation with the state authorities is reshaped and reassessed.

*Keywords:* Laponia, World Heritage, Swedish Sami, ethnic mobilization, articulation, indigeneity, nature conservation management

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*To mother and father*



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Finally, I would like to thank my mother and father. They too have helped me in so many ways and keep making it possible for me to be an anthropologist that sometimes is more "on the road" than at home. But I also thank you for keeping me grounded, for providing an environment where, as a child, my thoughts were never locked in a box but allowed to soar and imagine, which early on made me realize that the world is both so much bigger and so much smaller than a human being can grasp. I dedicate this work to you.



# 1 Introduction

In August 2006 I met with one of my key informants at the Ájtte museum in Jokkmokk. There was a conference on Sami research in which we both participated, and now we had found time to meet and have a cup of coffee and chat about all the things that had happened since we last met. As I sat down at her table she gave me a big smile and she seemed high in spirits. “We won a great victory!” she announced, and continued: “Have you heard the latest news on Laponia?” I told her that I had heard rumors that there were new developments under way, but asked her to tell me what she knew.

She had been involved for several years as one of the Sami representatives in the lengthy and often controversial conflict over how to organize the UNESCO World Heritage site of Laponia in Norrbotten, Sweden. This is a World Heritage site that is situated on traditional Sami reindeer herding lands, and the Sami reindeer herding culture is formally protected by UNESCO along with the natural features of the area. The Sami involved had fought for ten years to get a stronger position in the negotiations with the local authorities and all along their goal had been to gain majority on a future board of management for the World Heritage site. Now, my informant told me how, finally, the Government had given its consent to start a process with the clear objective to create a management structure with a Sami majority on the board and with more focus on Sami issues. This acknowledgement was what the Sami involved had demanded for ten years time without receiving much sympathy. Having followed this conflict during this period, the sudden shift in the stance of the Government surprised me, as it had obviously surprised my informant. Her happiness was not to be mistaken. “We won a great victory!” she repeated. “This is history being written. David has won over Goliath!”

These are strong words. How can a World Heritage site prompt these kinds of feelings? The World Heritage phenomenon is widespread in the world today, and in Sweden alone there are currently 14 different World

Heritage sites.<sup>1</sup> Normally, both the nomination process and the implementation of a World Heritage site occur without much disagreement and dispute. New signs are put up and everybody hopes for more tourists. But there are exceptions to that, and Laponia proved to be one of these exceptions. The relationship between the Sami community and the Government or “the state” (and the regional and local authorities) has a long history of injustices, distrust, and misunderstanding. The conflict that came about after the appointment of Laponia has been influenced in many ways by these previous, unresolved issues between the actors involved. The international input from the World Heritage appointment also came to play a major role as a new component in the constellation of actors with an interest in the protection of the area.

Gaining influence over Laponia became part of the overall ethnic struggle for the local Sami, and to a certain degree also for the wider Sami community in Sweden. But how did this conflict come about? And how was it played out? These are the central questions addressed in the thesis. I will focus on the period from the appointment in 1996 to the new governmental intervention in 2006 that basically granted the Sami what they had asked for in the negotiations.

Joint management schemes of different kinds between indigenous groups and nature conservation authorities are well established in many parts of the world, something that strengthened the Sami determination to be part of, and even to some extent in charge of, the management of Laponia. The reason they did not already have a greater say over these issues was traceable to “a colonial past” the local Sami would argue. And in many ways colonial structures were seen by the Sami involved as very much still at work in society today. Laponia became a reason not to let these structures be further reinforced, but rather to be a beginning for a decolonizing process. With the new turn in the conflict, a new door in the history of Swedish environmental legislation was opened. No wonder my informant was excited. It appeared that power structures might potentially change as a result of the local Sami group’s tough strategic standpoint and persistence.

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<sup>1</sup> The other World Heritage sites in Sweden are the agricultural landscape of Southern Öland, Birka, and Hovgården, the church village of Gammelstad in Luleå, Engelsberg Ironworks, the Hanseatic town of Visby, the High Coast/Kvarken archipelago, the mining district of the great copper mountain in Falun, the naval port of Karlskrona, the rock carvings in Tanum, the royal domains of Drottningholm, Skogskyrkogården, the Struve geodetic arc, and the Varberg radio station. All of these are cultural sites, except the High Coast/kvarken, which is enlisted as a natural site.

## Background, purpose and theoretical point of departure

The first time I heard of Laponia was a late afternoon in January 1998. It was my supervisor, Professor Hugh Beach, who brought it to my attention. Tuorpon sameby<sup>2</sup>, where he had been conducting fieldwork for so many years, had become incorporated into Laponia, and he was organizing a project on this relatively new World Heritage site in Norrbotten. Apparently there was a growing conflict between Sami and non-Sami residents in the area regarding how best to manage Laponia. This was the first time I really reflected on World Heritage as a phenomenon, on the motives behind it and of the implications when it is implemented locally. I realized that it implied interesting anthropological discussions like those on Power, Globalism, Indigenism, and Political Ecology, to name just a few. The motive behind the World Heritage Convention is to safeguard, protect, and preserve natural areas and cultural sites that are unique from a global perspective. But what was it exactly that was to be “preserved” and “conserved,” to use the words of the World Heritage Convention? And how could you possibly preserve and conserve a so called “living culture” such as the local Sami reindeer herding culture that was now part of the justification for the appointment of Laponia? How is it possible to preserve a “living culture?” And where was the discussion on the ethical implications connected to this? Who decided what natural areas and cultural sites were to receive World Heritage status? And if you were to bring matters to a head: what natural area or cultural heritage was *not* unique enough to deserve that status? Where was the line to be drawn? What happened in different local contexts when a World Heritage appointment was to be implemented?

In our initial discussions we also found the potential for the local Sami to be involved in the future management of the site to be interesting. Since it was situated on their traditional territory and the actual justification was based on both the nature and the local Sami reindeer herding culture, one would assume that they would play a vital role in the local discussions on how best to manage this newly achieved status of the area. How influential had the local Sami been in the appointment work? Who wanted the area to gain World Heritage status to begin with, and why? Intrigued by the initial question and issues that the World Heritage ap-

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<sup>2</sup> The sameby (the literate translation being *Sami Village*) is an economic association for a group of reindeer herders that jointly use a certain geographical area. For more on the historical background and juridical and structural organization of the samebys, see Beach 1981:360-393. The term will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

pointment of Laponia gave rise to, we could not help but stay interested and updated on the developments of Laponia.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis grapples with the implication of implementing a global protection ambition, such as a World Heritage site, locally. Through the lens of implementing a World Heritage site, it explores the works of the contemporary “popular” aspiration to include local and indigenous peoples in conservation work worldwide. On a general note, it seems like there are both environmental concerns and equity motives behind this aspiration. First there is the insight that local or indigenous peoples have valuable knowledge that will secure sustainable development where “conventional” science has failed, and secondly there is a wish to return (some) control to people who have been unjustly deprived of such control through historical colonial encounters (e.g. Conklin & Graham 1995; Ellen et al. 2000; Scanche 2000; Hunn et al. 2003). The participation of local peoples, and especially indigenous peoples, in environmental management is therefore inevitably linked to an ambition to improve their rights to self-determination (Li 2000b:144). For the indigenous group it is often not the actual implementation of their “traditional knowledge” that is of key importance. A more important issue for the indigenous groups involved is a wish to increase their level of control and responsibility of the management. As anticipated, local peoples’ and especially indigenous peoples’ involvement in environmental management means that their relations with the state authorities responsible are often contested, re-shaped, and reassessed (Chatty 1998; Beach 2001; Conklin & Graham 1995; Dahlström 2003:124f; Dahlström & Green 2008). The Laponian process serves as a good case in point here. In gaining World Heritage status,

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<sup>3</sup> I started my doctoral studies at the Department for Archeology and Sami studies at Umeå University, before transferring to the Department of Cultural Anthropology and Ethnology at Uppsala University where I had conducted most of my undergraduate studies. I have been involved in several projects that relate to Laponia: 2000-2002 the project *Managing the Wilderness and Dilemmas of Cultural Ecology: Laponia – Saami Landscape and World Heritage Site*. Members were Hugh Beach (project leader), Åsa Nilsson Dahlström and myself, sponsored by the Swedish Research Council (VR). In 2004-2006 the project *The World Heritage Site Dilemma: Environmentalist and Indigenous Movements in Collision*. Members were Hugh Beach, Åsa Nilsson Dahlström (project leader) and myself, sponsored by VR. In 2005-2006 the project *The local reality of a World Heritage site: power structures and identity processes in relation to the management of the Sami cultural heritage in Laponia*, sponsored by the Swedish National Heritage Board (SNHB). In the second of these projects we compared the management processes in Laponia with those of three other structurally equal World Heritage sites: Tongariro National Park in New Zealand and Kakadu and Uluru Kata-Tjuta National Parks in Australia. Even though this thesis focuses solely on Laponia, my experiences from this comparative study have nevertheless given me deeper understanding of the implications of implementing a World Heritage site, especially if it entails indigenous interests.

Laponia came to serve as a platform for a Sami ethno-political articulation that challenged the prevailing status of the environmental protection agency as the exclusive manager of the area, and that aimed at decolonizing the Sami-State relationship.

My purpose is to show how this ethno-political articulation, while very much part of a long-standing Sami struggle for increased self-governance and control, unfolded when the new global element of a World Heritage site was brought into the local context. Through the establishment of Laponia, a direct link between the World Heritage Organization (under the body of UNESCO) and the locally involved Sami emerged, and led to a restructuring of the relations between the local Sami community and the local authorities. Since different joint management schemes between indigenous groups and the respective conservation agency are common abroad, the World Heritage status came to represent an internationalization of environmental discourse in the Laponian area. It opened up for new possibilities for the local Sami when it came to claiming the right to control the management of the site. While the involvement of national and international agencies and global protection aspirations, such as the World Heritage site, might have detrimental effects on local/indigenous peoples' ability to influence local processes, as shown by Dahlström (2003) and Beach (2000:95), this study shows how the "global eye" of the World Heritage organization also can work to empower local/indigenous peoples in their ethno-political objectives aspirations.

As already revealed, the local Sami were eventually successful in their struggle to be an active part in organizing the management of Laponia. But even if the World Heritage appointment generated a new setting and a new platform where the Sami claims for more influence could be aired, it does not in itself explain why the Sami involved in the Laponian process in the end had most of their demands met. So how was this success reached? This thesis will show how the local Sami were initially marginalized in the negotiations by the other non-Sami actors involved, both because of their alleged "difference" *and* their alleged "similarity" to the majority population. I will show how the Sami involved succeeded in navigating through a "politics of difference" (comp. Young 1990) to position themselves as an actor of equal status in relation to the local authorities by articulating their cultural and historical distinctiveness and their indigeneity. It is worth noting, however, that this was done within the frameworks of the normative structure of the majority society, a fact that enabled the local Sami to "be heard" and not so easily brushed aside.

There are many other examples of similar processes from other parts of the world in the anthropological literature, and some of these theoretical

discussions help to shed light on the incentives, developments, and consequences in ethnic mobilizations linked to processes such as the Laponian case. Since the local Sami struggle for influence and control over Lapponia came to revolve around issues of indigeneity as opposed to those of local people in general, it is mainly on writings directly connected to indigenous political mobilization that I have relied when analyzing, understanding, and comparing the development in the Laponian case.

When it comes to indigenous ethno-political mobilizations from a general perspective, Clifford (2001) makes a most significant point when he argues that indigenous struggles are to be seen as ethnic movements that entail both histories and futures, both traditions and modernities, and are articulated through contingent relational aspects that make sense in the specific historical and spatial context. To Clifford, then, indigenous peoples' ethno-political mobilizations:

...are about finding ways to exist *in* a multiplex modernity, but with a difference, a difference derived from cultural tradition, from landedness, and from ongoing histories of displacement, travel, and circulation. (Clifford 2001:483)

To be able to be different within a “multiplex modernity,” and to be *perceived* as different was ultimately what the Sami involved in the Laponian process managed to achieve, and this proved to be an effective position in order have their aspirations and demands heard.<sup>4</sup>

However, being perceived as culturally different might not always mean being portrayed in positive terms by outsiders. Being seen as culturally different might also lead to being described as primitive, ignorant, and culturally backward. This *marginalization* ascribed by outsiders has been thoroughly discussed by Tsing (1993) and Li (1999), for instance, in their works on upland tribes in Indonesia. Although the ethnographic context of their works differs from the Swedish/Sami setting brought up in this study, on a conceptual level, these authors contribute to the understanding of marginalization and agency of marginalized groups. This will be further discussed later on in the thesis. Marginalization ascribed by outsiders is also a theme present in my study. Opinions from non-Sami of how “the Sami” behave or what the nature of their character is, has at times negatively affected the possibilities for the local Sami to take on the

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<sup>4</sup> This thesis will not go into a more general philosophical discussion on how much a multicultural nation state can, or should, deploy a “politics of recognition” and to what extent, and under what forms, it might grant “special rights” to subaltern groups (c.f. Taylor 1992 and Fraser 1995).

responsibility for a management organization. As will be shown in this thesis, there have been attitudes, based on notions, that they do not have a sufficient knowledge of environmental conservation management to assume that role, and that they lack adequate insight into, and understanding of, the structures of the majority society. According to some non-Sami parties they are too different in this respect.

My intention, however, is to show that the local Sami in the process were marginalized in *two* ways: both because they were seen as “too different,” too unqualified to understand what it takes to organize the management of a protected area, but also on the grounds that they were too integrated into the majority society, “too similar“ in a sense. This second assumption has been prevalent in the discussions among the local actors throughout the process. The reasons for the Sami in the area having special rights and a greater influence on the shaping of the organization around Lapponia than other non-Sami locals have occasionally been questioned. As will be shown, historical and cultural differences between Sami and non-Sami locals are not always obvious, but rather underplayed in the everyday life in the community. After all, as a non-Sami local told me, “we all have drops of Sami blood running in our veins.” Many locals contest therefore the argument that the Sami involved should have special rights on the basis of “ethnic difference” (to many peoples, ethnic difference often seems synonymous with genetic difference). The Sami involved in the process felt, however, that they were indeed different, maybe not genetically, but culturally and historically, and that this justified a particular perspective and a strong say in matters relating to Lapponia. The possibility of being accepted as an equal partner in the negotiations with the other local actors was most difficult to achieve for the Sami involved at the very beginning of the process. Some would question why the Sami involved organized an actor group of their own at all. They could be represented by the municipalities, it was argued. After all, just like any other citizen, they had been able to vote and elect the present politicians in the latest municipal election.

The Sami involved being “too different” and/or “too similar” to have any significant influence on the management of Lapponia were two opposite perceptions among the non-Sami actors at the beginning of my field study. Strangely enough, these two perceptions often coincided and could be aired by one and the same individual. They both, as we will see, led to a marginalization of the Sami involved, a dismissal of their demands and aspirations to play a dominant role in the management of the World Heritage site. Either they were too much of an “Other” to take part in conser-

vation management, or they were “too similar to us” to have an immediately identifiable position as particular actors with legitimate claims.

This study shows how the Sami involved, in order to reach an equal position, accentuated their cultural and historical difference in relation to the non-Sami actors involved. This was done, for instance, by articulating their status as an indigenous group. Ethnic mobilizations as *articulations* have interested writers such as Hall (1996), Li (2000a) and Clifford (2001). They use the concept to show how an ethnic mobilization, which might or might not form under the name of indigeneity, is not invented out of nowhere, but neither is it only rooted in local historical and cultural contexts. Stuart Hall has inspired both Clifford and Li in their use of the concept, and his work has also been important for this thesis in helping me understand and explain the complexity of the ethnic mobilization triggered by the appointment of Laponia. Articulation, as Hall (1996:141-142) understands it, has a double meaning. It is both the utterance, the actual language used to describe a position, and also the combination of different elements that construct that position and make it comprehensible both within the group in need of mobilization, and to those outside of the group. Hall emphasizes the significance of all contingent elements that shape any kind of mobilization. The specific economic, historical, and social context is important here, as is the objective of the mobilization itself and the inherent character of the relationship between the actors (in terms of power relations, for instance). The articulation perspective points to the importance of the relations with contemporary ideologies and social phenomena, and not only relations with other ethnic groups (cf. Barth 1969), in order to understand why a specific mobilization takes on a specific form and expression.

In the thesis I will further argue that the Sami involved accentuated their difference by pointing to the past, colonial history, to explain the unequal relationship between “the state” and the Sami community. For them, the way the Laponian process developed proved that there was still a colonial mentality inherent in the structure of society. The Sami were once again met by a paternalistic attitude and subsequently side-stepped, it was argued. This stance by the Sami involved will be interpreted as a *self-ascribed marginalization*, where they appear to put themselves in an inferior position. However, as will be discussed, this self-ascribed marginalization most importantly entails agency. Not only is the current unjust situation explained in a historical light, it also becomes a reason to turn the tables and change the asymmetric power structure. The works of Nora (1989); Antze & Lambek (1996); Kenny (1999); White (2000), and Said (2000) have shown that the *collective memory* of the past should first

of all be seen as representations of the past that give meaning to and explain present situations and relations rather than work as a mere record of historical events.

As already implied, the “politics of difference,” is nonetheless a narrow path to walk. How different can you be without being perceived of as the stereotypical “Other” and yet be different enough to be recognized as the culturally and ethnically distinct group, that is able to communicate ethnic markers that resonates with your own understanding of who you are? The Sami representatives navigated through the traps of being marginalized as a result of being perceived of as “too different” and being “too similar.” I will argue that they succeeded in pursuing their demands in the end because they managed to appear “different enough,” culturally and ethnically, in order to be seen as a distinct group, but not so different that they risked being marginalized as the primitive “Other.” Significant here was the way that the responsible Sami representatives expressed their standpoints and aspirations within the structures of the dominant society. By accentuating their historical, cultural, and ethnic distinctiveness through channels recognizable to the other actors, the positioning was effective. They were heard and could not be brushed aside.

## A selection of earlier work

Part of this study was conducted in close cooperation with Åsa Nilsson Dahlström.<sup>5</sup> In her thesis from 2003 titled *Negotiating Wilderness in a Cultural Landscape - Predators and Saami Reindeer Herding in the Laponian World Heritage Area*. Dahlström focus on how the environmental discourses that concern Lapponia are negotiated by the local reindeer herders. Together our dissertations serve as a comprehensive study of both the natural and cultural values inherent in the Lapponian process (see Dahlström 2003:11).

Hugh Beach’s extensive work on questions that relate to the Sami society has greatly inspired my understanding of the situation for the Swedish Sami. His thesis, *Reindeer-Herd Management in Transition - the Case of Tuorpon Saameby in Northern Sweden*, published in 1981, describes the situation for the reindeer herders in Lapponia long before a World Heri-

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<sup>5</sup> Åsa Nilsson Dahlström and I have worked together since we got a first small grant to do a pilot study of Lapponia from Åjtte, the mountain and Sami museum in Jokkmokk. Since then we have worked together in three consecutive projects funded by the Swedish Research Council, both on Lapponia directly and other related issues. Some of the fieldwork that this thesis is based on has been conducted together with Dahlström.

tage was ever considered. Hugh Beach has also followed developments in Lapponia and in his article “World Heritage and Indigenous Peoples – The Example of Lapponia” (2001) he describes the predicament that Sami reindeer herders of Lapponia face when it comes to negotiating environmental sustainability and economic sustainability within a “cultural preservation discourse” of a World Heritage site.

Besides the above-mentioned works and a licentiate dissertation by Christina Rådelius in political science in 2002,<sup>6</sup> not much has been written academically on Lapponia *per se*. However, Katarina Saltzman (2001) wrote her thesis in ethnology (Lund University) on the implications of implementing another World Heritage Site in Sweden. Here she describes the hesitance of the local farmers in the County of Öland towards the World Heritage appointment, and how the national authorities eventually managed to negotiate and convince the farmers to endorse the World Heritage Site. Another book that deals more with the concept and discourse of the World Heritage Convention is the ethnologist Jan Turtinen’s (2006) dissertation. By conducting fieldwork at the World Heritage Secretariat in Paris, Turtinen explains what goes on behind the scenes of the official actions and statements of this organization. Here the political aim and activities of the convention (and the committee and secretariat) are scrutinized and questioned, and the local implications of the global World Heritage idea are investigated. Turtinen’s book has sharpened my own conceptions when it comes to the very core of the World Heritage phenomenon and its underlying objectives and uses (further developed in Chapter 3).

When it comes to the ethnic mobilization of the Sami, several works are worth mentioning. Harald Eidheim’s book *Aspects of the Lappish Minority Situation* was published as early as 1971 but is still widely referred to on matters that concern the Sami identity process. Here he explores how the negotiation and reconstruction of identity markers developed in the Sami community he studied, as a result of the relationship with the majority population. Another important work is *Ethnicity and Mobilization in Sami Politics* (1976) by Tom G. Svensson, which brings up the development of the Sami political system in Sweden and how it works in “modern” society. Further, among the extensive work done by Robert Paine, two articles on Sami ethnic mobilization are worth mentioning here: “Norwegians and Saami. Nation-States and the Fourth World” (1984) and “The Claim of the Fourth World” (1985). In these articles Paine discusses minority-majority relations from a Sami perspective and

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<sup>6</sup> Rådelius focus on possible models for a successful co-management of Lapponia.

the predicaments of the asymmetric relationship between the nation state and its encapsulated minority and the negotiation that the nation state does when it comes to balance between equal rights for all citizens and special rights for the minority. Finally, an important contribution is the article “Quest for Equity: Norway and the Saami Challenge” by Trond Thuen (1995). Thuen also analyzes the cause and consequences of the asymmetric power structure between the Sami society and the (Norwegian) nation state. Thuen argues that “the state” has a hegemonic power position in relation to the Sami, which leads to a situation that it is “the state” that has the power to determine how encounters between the two groups are defined and played out (Thuen 1995).

In recent years, Ebba Olofsson (2004) and Christina Åhrén (2008) have both presented dissertations on the Sami identity process. Olofsson shows how people with “mixed” ancestry (both indigenous and non-indigenous) negotiate and express their ethnic identity. According to Olofsson the ethnic belonging emphasized by these individuals changes over time depending on their life situations. Åhrén brings up the difficulties many Sami individuals run into when either trying to reconnect with the Sami community (sometimes after rediscovering Sami ancestry as adults) or when trying to break the social norms of the more “traditional” Sami way of life.

Israel Ruong’s book *Samerna* (1982)<sup>7</sup> (The Sami) provides a good description of Sami pre-history, colonial experience, and early mobilization. In more recent years, Lennart Lundmark’s studies (1998; 2002) on Sami-State relations in Sweden have shed light on the colonial history of the traditional Sami area, *Sápmi*<sup>8</sup>. In the historical sections of this thesis I will also rely on Veli-Pekka Lehtola’s book *The Sámi People: Traditions in Transition* (2004), where he covers the most important historical episodes and events for the Sami people in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Two of the most influential writers on Sami history in recent times are Ulf Mörkenstam and Patrik Lantto. Mörkenstam’s dissertation appeared in 1999 and discusses perceptions of “Samihood” as it is displayed in the Swedish legal system. Mörkenstam reveals the close relationship between public policies and the construction of Sami identity, and the role of public policy in constituting the perception of the Sami as a collective, homogeneous group. Lantto’s study (2000) deals with the Sami political mobilization in first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lantto shows how the Sami estab-

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<sup>7</sup> This book was first published in 1969, but the 1982 edition was extensively revised.

<sup>8</sup> *Sápmi* is a term that refers to what is today considered the core Sami area. It covers most of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. For a discussion on the origins of the term and its ethno-political use see Eriksson (2002).

lished a political platform as a response to the public Sami policies proclaimed by the Swedish Government and describes the strategies adopted by the Sami in Sweden in order to make their claims and wishes heard.

## Method

The Laponian area is situated close to the municipalities of Gällivare and Jokkmokk. This is where most of my informants live, and this is where I have conducted most of my fieldwork. I have usually stayed in Jokkmokk, from where you can go to Gällivare by bus, a trip that will not take you more than approximately an hour and a half. The reasons for choosing Jokkmokk as the base for my fieldwork are numerous. As mentioned earlier, in 1997 my colleague Åsa Nilsson Dahlström and I applied for a grant from Ájtte, the mountain and Sami museum in Jokkmokk to be able to deepen our newly awakened interest in implications of implementing a World Heritage site in the area. We received this grant, and it allowed us to take a small reconnaissance trip to and get acquainted with the area and with the people involved in the Laponian process. We made friends with many of the employees at the museum and were provided with an office there during this stay, and also during following periods of fieldwork. Many of the Sami involved in the Laponian process live in Jokkmokk, and it is in Jokkmokk that the Laponian office has been placed and also the office of the samebys involved. It has therefore been natural to use Jokkmokk as the base for my studies. The fact that Jokkmokk is relatively close to my own home (it only takes me a day to travel by plane and bus to Jokkmokk from Stockholm) has meant that I have been able to go there many times instead of staying for longer periods of time. Apart from one month-long visit to one of the reindeer herding summer camps within the Laponian area, my trips to Jokkmokk and Gällivare have lasted between three weeks and three days, and I have made approximately twelve such trips. But even if most of my informants live in the Jokkmokk/Gällivare area, some do not, so I have also conducted interviews and met my informants in various places in Sweden and occasionally abroad. Many but not all of my informants are of Sami origin. I have also interviewed many non-Sami persons that are part of the process due to their professional position, but also non-Sami locals with an opinion on this subject. Further persons representing authorities on both the national and international levels have been interviewed. However, since my aim has been to try to understand the underlying forces behind the strategic choices made by the representatives of the local samebys, the views of the

informants adhering to the Sami community have been of special interest to me. I have relied on the experiences of 5-6 key informants and further approximately 12-14 informants that have contributed extensively to this study. Beside these there are large numbers of people that I have talked to during the years and whose contribution has been important. These informants range from officially appointed representatives from the samebys and the local authorities in issues regarding Lapponia, to other members of the samebys, non-Sami locals, tourists, other employees at the local authorities, representatives of the national authorities, etc. Most of the time I have used semi-structured interviews when talking to my informants. This means that I have had a number of questions or issues that I have wanted to discuss. However, often the meetings have more had the character of conversations or discussions rather than interviews, and on many occasions we have talked about a lot of other things (more or less related to Lapponia) besides my thought-out topics. In the very beginning of my field studies I did a few recorded interviews. However, on these occasions I felt the informants were often a bit apprehensive and negatively affected by this. After I stopped the recording, they would continue to talk and bring up other things that they thought were of a more sensitive nature. Therefore, I soon stopped doing recorded interviews, and since then I have made short notes during or immediately after the interviews instead. As soon as possible afterwards I have written down reports from the meetings.

My methodological perspective when it comes to this study has always been one of analyzing the *process* of implementing Lapponia as a World Heritage site. I have subsequently focused on talking to people directly involved as representatives from their respective actor's group in the negotiations, or persons somehow linked to the process. I have not, therefore, prioritized involving different categories of people (men/women, young/old, reindeer herders/non-reindeer herders and so on) in my material in order to get a holistic perspective or a statistically more solid result. Since the objective of the study has been to follow, understand, and analyze the development of creating a management plan for Lapponia, the opinions and thoughts of the individuals more or less directly involved in this work, regardless of their background, came to constitute the core of my study.

Even if long-term fieldwork in a specific geographical location is still important for many anthropologists, there has been a shift in the last few decades towards transnational phenomena or process-focused studies that are not necessarily grounded in a particular local setting (See e.g. Knowles 2000). And, as mentioned, a more processed focused perspective applies

to the way I have collected material for this study. Meeting informants at conferences, having email correspondence, or in other ways interacting with them away from the actual location have therefore been important parts of my study as well. As already indicated, I have conducted everything from recorded interviews to informal coincidental talks with people. The most common contact, however, has been through semi-structured interviews or more informal talks with persons that I have arranged to meet beforehand. There are people that I have met only once and briefly, and others that I have interviewed repeatedly.

On a few occasions I have felt that the informants have perceived our meeting as asymmetric in terms of the power and knowledge held by me as the researcher in relation to them, the researched (cf. Helgesson 2006:41f). This has made it more difficult to develop a real dialogue, but these have fortunately been only a few rare occasions. Often, the people I have talked to, and my key informants in particular, are familiar with the purpose of my research and engage in discussions with me rather than acting as subjects of conventional interviews. Further the Laponian case has from time to time been debated in the media. I have therefore followed the media coverage of the process and of my informants' dialogue through the media. Reports, statements, and formal pronouncements about proposals sent for review to different organizations and agencies<sup>9</sup> are often published on the Internet. I have also abstracted material from the archives of authorities in order to get a fuller picture of the development of the Laponian World Heritage site. Besides interviews and on site observations, then, I have also made use of the media coverage (mainly newspaper articles) of the Laponian process. Most of the written materials I have used are official or semi-official documents from the various authorities and actors involved. These include minutes from meetings, official statements, review statements, regulations and decrees, propositions, press releases, and official correspondence between different authorities or actors.

I am Swedish. But even though I am usually conducting field work within the borders of my home country, when interacting with my Sami informants I am also partly interacting within another culturally different sphere. I am saying "partly," because even with my Sami informants I do share many cultural points of departure. For instance, I share my informants' language, since all of the Sami informants I have worked with

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<sup>9</sup> In Sweden it is common to send out various proposals and suggestions for review, evaluation, and comments to a broad spectrum of agencies and organizations concerned before a decision is taken. In Swedish this is called to send something out on *remiss*. Lacking a precise English term, I will here call these documents "review statements."

speak Swedish, although some have Sami as their mother tongue. My knowledge of Sami is unfortunately quite limited. Many of them are university educated, and there is often a preconceived understanding of how I, as a researcher, will use the data I collect. Living in the same society, regardless of ethnic background, also means that you share a lot of the same social codes and symbols. So even though one might argue that there is a “Sami” protocol and values that are different from the “Swedish” ones, the borders between these two ways of behaving are vague and intertwined. In other words, there has not been any broad social divide between me and my Sami informants that has had to be overcome. But there are differences nevertheless. There is of course a detailed body of knowledge, both tangible and intangible, that comes with living a Sami way of life that I have but limited familiarity with. Even if I do have a very basic understanding of the North Sami Language,<sup>10</sup> and have been present in Sami situations and context enough to have a feeling for those unwritten rules of behavior and conduct, I am far from fully skilled in this respect.

Even though I share a lot of the social and cultural norms with my informants, my ethnic background, and the fact that I am an anthropologist, have been of significance. Some of the Swedish informants were very particular in telling me their perspective on things, and I often felt that there was an underlying assumption that I was on “the Sami side” in the conflict. For some of them it also seemed important to educate me on how “the Sami” lived and where their way of thinking came from. And for some of my Sami informants, the fact that I was a Swedish anthropologist automatically put me in a situation where I was, at least initially, viewed with some suspicion. With my profession (and ethnic background) I was seen as part of the “Swedish colonial structure” in some cases. However, these occasions have been few in number, and it is in fact more common that my Sami informants endorse my research interest.

Being an anthropologist interested in questions that relate to the Sami community, I have always been made aware of the skepticism that some of my Sami informants have toward my position as an anthropologist. Not that I have encountered any open hostility toward me as a person, but I often get questioned about why I am interested in Sami issues, not

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<sup>10</sup> There are a number of different Sami dialects (since some of them are so different that they are sometimes referred to as languages rather than dialects), often divided into three main categories: East Sami dialects, North Sami dialects and South Sami dialects. In the Laponian area North Sami and Lule Sami (a variant of North Sami) are the dialects most commonly spoken.

being a Sami myself, and who I work for, who sponsors my projects, and how I will use my material. I have often sensed that my aims and underlying perceptions of Sami people have been, more or less subtly, assessed when I meet someone for the first time. There is a precaution among some Sami when it comes to outsiders, sometimes referred to as “wannabes” that have a romanticized view of Sami peoples and Sami culture, and demand to find out all that they can about Sami handicraft, traditional clothing, pre-Christian religion, and so on. Some of my Sami acquaintances have expressed how sick and tired they are of being studied and that they feel that the Sami community has had enough of this.<sup>11</sup>

There is one incident in particular that sparked my interest in methodological matters and heightened my understanding of the sensitivity and seriousness underlying these issues in the minds of many of my informants. In the account below my position as an anthropologist was strongly questioned, but it is also a story that says something about the relation between a minority and the surrounding society and of the positioning of many indigenous communities toward state authorities (or the State), and toward research in general.

This episode took place at an early stage of my study of Lapponia, in the fall of 1999. I was sitting in the kitchen of a sameby member. He is a reindeer herder, middle aged, and rather active in ethno-political concerns. I had called him beforehand, as I had received his phone number from another informant, and asked if he could spare me an hour or so, and I explained why I wanted to talk to him. This was my first encounter with him, and he agreed to meet me in his home. So there we were, sitting in his kitchen drinking coffee, chatting as the more “formal” part of the interview was over. The house was empty since the rest of the family was out. Suddenly he looks straight at me and says: “Why do you want to do this?” I was not sure what he meant and he continued: “I mean, why do you want to be a researcher?” I felt rather stunned by his question and attempted to explain why I had become a researcher and concluded that this is what I do well, this is what I am good at. “So,” he says, “you’re not good at doing the dishes, then?” At that point I was struck by his bluntness and interpreted his statement a nothing but prejudice against me as a fairly young female researcher. But then he continued to talk, saying that he did not think that non-Sami people should, or could, conduct any

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<sup>11</sup> The last decades, the number of Sami researcher has increased and there is in general terms a larger interest for how, and by whom, Sami related research is carried out (e.g. Grenersen 2002). There are discussions within the Sami community on whether (and in that case how) to create some kind of system in order to approve of, or have an overview of, research carried out in the Sami area or on Sami related issues.

research on the Sami people and their culture. I told him that I did not agree. What he was saying would imply that all ethnic groups in the world would only be allowed to carry out research amongst their own people, and that would not only be impossible in practice to uphold, I also suggested that this might produce very narrow and insular studies of occurrences around us. He agreed, but continued to make it clear to me that he did not respect what I was doing. “It is not fair,” he said, “that your research reports will reach the men in power, your words will be heard, but not mine.” I agreed with him that this was of course an example of the current unjust power structure in our society, and that I too felt that this was in many ways unacceptable. But then again, there are also many Sami researchers interested in issues relating to the Sami society. We concluded our discussion and continued to chat, and he offered me a ride back into town. There were no hard feelings and no more comments on my lack of competence as a researcher. On the contrary, he said I could contact him again; which I have done on a few occasions, and the issue of my position as a researcher has never been brought up again.

This is a situation that I have been carrying with me, and I have come to analyze and reconsider it over and over again. At the time I was puzzled by his words. My first reaction was that it was first and foremost the gender insensitive views of a middle-aged man that I had encountered. I am by no means the first female anthropologist that has encountered difficulties due to presumptions of gender relations in the field, even if this was a very mild form of discrimination (cf. Moreno 1995). But I soon realized that his statement also says something about a more general feeling among many Sami people toward research and researchers. In the Sami community, as in many other minority communities, anthropology (maybe more than research in general) is closely related to the majority society, to (post)colonial attitudes, exercise of authority, etc. Due to this, at times I have felt the need to defend myself in Sami contexts for being an anthropologist in the first place. To some of them, (anthropological) research reflects a colonial attitude that some feel is still prevalent in society today. So even if they know that I do not actively endorse the perceived contemporary power structure, and many Sami informants support my work, I am still implicitly, as a researcher, considered to uphold that very structure.

There is a trend throughout the pan-indigenous world today to reject how the “Western” world’s pursuit for knowledge has been conducted and the colonial features inherent in this endeavor. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) explores this viewpoint in depth in one of her books, which has

attracted much attention in both indigenous communities and among researchers on indigeneity. She explains that:

Many researchers, academics and project workers may see the benefits of their particular research projects as serving a greater good ‘for mankind’, or serving a specific emancipatory goal for an oppressed community. But belief in the ideal that benefiting mankind is indeed a primary outcome of scientific research is as much a reflection of ideology as it is of academic training. It becomes so taken for granted that many researchers simply assume that they as individuals embody this ideal and are natural representatives of it when they work with other communities. Indigenous peoples across the world have other stories to tell which not only question the assumed nature of those ideals and the practices that they generate, but also serve to tell an alternative story: the history of Western research through the eyes of the colonized (Smith 2005:2).

I believe she is successful in capturing the essence of what many individuals adhering to an indigenous identity, including many Sami people, feel and firmly believe in, and Tuhiwai Smith’s book is becoming an increasingly popular reference in Sami academic circles.

Today most anthropologists recognize that they are central agents in constructing the field (Amit 2000:14; see also Okely 1992). Ellen (1984:214) also reminds us that it is important to remember that what we call “data” is something that is arbitrarily produced by the anthropologist. It is selective and biased, and might be viewed as data *production* rather than data *collection* (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992:29). As anthropologists we are, simply put, part of the field. All the participants in that field, including the researcher, are part of the intersubjective play and active agents in forming both the research question, the field itself and the result of the study.<sup>12</sup> Subsequently, this means that even if I have tried to observe the process rather than have an impact on it, my mere presence in the field has played a role on some level. This is not to say that my role has been substantial in the shaping or outcome of the Laponian process, but I have for many years now been part of the process as one member of a loosely demarcated group of people that are interested in the Laponian process. The outcome of this study is a result of my interpretations of the reflections and is simply my anthropological understanding of what happened and why.

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<sup>12</sup> This also means that the accounts and stories my informants have shared, and that I bring up in this thesis, are their own interpretation of events and happenings, and not uncontested truths. It mirrors their experiences and memories and their own understanding of the situation at hand.

## Explanation of some of the terms used

*The local actors:* There are three major local actors, or groups of actors that were involved in the negotiation over how the management on Laponia should be structured. They are 1. the County Administration of Norrbotten (I will refer to it as the County Administration), 2. the municipalities of Jokkmokk and Gällivare, and 3. the nine local samebys. The municipalities and the County Administration both represent authorities of Swedish society and will therefore also be referred to as the “local authorities.” This too helps highlight the polarization due to differences of opinion that took place between the samebys on the one hand and the municipalities and the County Administration on the other hand. There are also national authorities involved, and these are the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency<sup>13</sup> (SEPA), and the Swedish National Heritage Board<sup>14</sup> (SNHB). They were mostly involved in the application process and not directly during the negotiation process regarding management that took place after the appointment. The local actors all had representatives that worked with developing Laponia in accordance to the aspirations of their respective group. When it comes to the local authorities, these were both officials and (in the case of the municipalities) also politicians. When I refer to the samebys’ representatives, these are the persons chosen by their sameby to represent them in the negotiation process.

*The wider Sami community:* At times I will speak of “the wider Sami community.” By this I primarily mean the different Sami organizations and the Sami Parliament in Sweden that took an interest in Laponia and followed the process closely. But in this term I also include the general Sami population (even though, as will be shown, this can be difficult to define), and the general Sami society in Sweden and beyond.

*The Laponian process:* I use this concept to indicate the actual negotiation process that followed after the World Heritage status was awarded the area. Even though the same concept is applied today to signify the new cooperation stage that characterizes the relation among the actors and their work of producing a management plan and management structure for the area, I have still chosen to use the word to emphasize the ongoing progression that was so evident to me as the negotiations developed over time.

*The State:* In recent years the “anthropology of the state” has become an important anthropological field (c.f. Gupta 1995; Hansen & Stepputat 2001; Das & Poole 2004; Khron-Hansen & Nustad 2005; Sharma &

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<sup>13</sup> In Swedish: *Naturvårdsverket*

<sup>14</sup> In Swedish: *Riksantikvarieämbetet*

Gupta 2006). Although this thesis will not directly address the anthropology of the state, it will make use of emic (and local) understandings of the State. “The state” is a word widely used in the north of Sweden, by both Sami and non-Sami. It not only refers to the Swedish Government and its authorities but also indicates a certain distance and often skepticism toward the established authorities and agencies. For many Sami it has an aspect of extra remoteness and distrust attached to it. To them, the State is the dominant structure, the colonial structure that is ethnically and culturally different.

*Colonialism, decolonialism:* Throughout this study, these words will be frequently used. To most of my Sami informants, the reason why they had difficulties to be heard and seen as an equal actor in the negotiations is because society is still “colonial” in its structures. For the Sami involved, the Laponian process was also perceived to incorporate the possibility to work as a decolonizing factor that could potentially change at least some of the colonial structure. In many indigenous contexts, these terms are widely used and given a political significance that describes the relation to the dominating society and what is experienced as past and present suppression (e.g. Smith 1999; Burman 2009). In anthropological literature there are many writings on colonialism, coloniality, post-colonialism and decolonialism (cf. Chakrabarty 1992, 2000; Escobar 2004, 2007; Walsh 2007; Mignolo 2007). This thesis, however, is not a contribution to a general theoretical discussion on (post)colonialism or decolonization, but is rather an ethnographic example of how these terms are used in a local setting when issues of ethnic mobilization are at stake.

## Outline of thesis

After this introductory chapter, the next chapter will give an ethnographic background to Lapponia and the Laponian area. I will also provide a general overview of the basic facts about the Sami in the area and the organization of the reindeer herding and reindeer herders. Furthermore Chapter 2 will give a short history of nature conservation management in Sweden. The World Heritage phenomenon can be seen as a continuation of the long-standing ambition to protect and preserve pieces of nature (or culture), an ambition that has a long history in Sweden and has been especially strong in relation to the Laponian area. I will also give a short background to the early political mobilization of the Swedish Sami in order to emphasize the fact that the Sami ethnic mobilization that has taken place in the local community as a result of the Laponian World Heritage appli-

cation is part of a long and continuous struggle for equality and autonomy. Going into negotiations concerning Lapponia then, the relationship between the Sami and the Swedish authorities, on a general level, was characterized by a rather rigid positioning that affected the way the actors related to each other.

Chapter 3 goes more deeply into the World Heritage Convention as a phenomenon. Here I will show the history and background to the convention and how it fits into the UNESCO organization and UNESCO structure. This chapter will explore the motives behind the convention: What natural or cultural phenomena, areas, or objects become World Heritage sites and why? Who decides what piece of nature, cultural landscape, or cultural site is unique enough to be on the list? The World Heritage conventions can, simply put, be seen as a global idea that is implemented locally. The justification for the inscription of the Lapponian World Heritage site will be scrutinized and analyzed from this global-local perspective.

The fourth chapter goes into detail about how Lapponia was nominated and appointed and what the influence and activities of the different actors were at this stage. The development is described chronologically and shows how the first attempts at collaboration soon turned into disagreement and open conflict. Polarization based on ethnicity emerged between the local actors.

In Chapter 5 I continue to describe the “conflict” chronologically. In this second phase of the Lapponian process, the Sami involved turned to the national and also international levels with their predicaments, by writing to both the Government and the UNESCO. The significance of what was described by informants as “the colonial past” (and present, many Sami would claim) is an important factor that has shaped the negotiations between the Sami and the non-Sami actors.

In Chapter 6 I describe how the Sami representatives involved positioned themselves as not only Sami but also as indigenous in relation to the other actors, drawing on the rights of indigenous peoples’ stated in international conventions, for instance. This is viewed as a process of articulation that unified the Sami involved, but also strengthened their position as an independent group in relation to the other actors. This chapter brings up how the Sami representatives had to negotiate their indigeneity both in the local context and in a national and international arena. The indigenous discourse has a fairly broad support in the world at least on an ideological level. Also, and as will be addressed in greater detail later, there are also many preconceived notions of “the indigenous” as being ecological saints or the anti-modern heroes of our time. By reinforcing

this discourse and claiming indigeneity, the Sami involved had to navigate through these stereotypes and deeply rooted perceptions. The concepts of *articulation* and *marginalization* will be used to understand and analyze the way the Sami involved accentuated their difference and gained a position vis-à-vis the other actors where they were acknowledged as distinct group in the negotiations over the future of Lapponia.

In Chapter 7 I bring up the importance of the historical relation between the Sami collective and the Swedish nation state. The collective memory of the colonization often works as a narrative in the Sami community, not only recounting a past but also explaining and giving meaning to the current situation and the current perceived hierarchical power relation between “the state” and the Sami. I will also argue that collective memory and the personal experience of being Sami in society today are intertwined and two sides of the same coin. This leads up to a section on how I interpret the perception of the character of this asymmetric power structure between the Sami and the “the state.” The normativity of the nature conservation authorities, both nationally and regionally, is discussed, as is how the Laponian process provided the Sami involved with tools to challenge this normativity.

Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, starts with an account of the most recent developments in the Laponian process, where the involved samebys have succeeded in getting most of their initial claims accepted. With this, a new process has begun where all the major local actors are working together towards a Sami-biased management of Lapponia. But how did they get there? The rest of the chapter will be a concluding account and a summary of the arguments.

## 2 Ethnographic and historical background

The relations today between the local Sami involved in the Laponian process and the local authorities are still affected by the long administrative control by the Swedish nation state and its authorities in the area. In this chapter I will present some of the most important historical processes that have influenced these relations and provide a picture of how the Swedish nation state more and more came to affect the Sami society. When the nation state grew stronger, representatives of authority found it necessary, for several reasons, to administer and regulate the Sami and their livelihoods. Needless to say, the long relationship between the Sami and the state authorities has shaped the nature of their relationship today, including the way the Sami ethnic mobilization is carried out.

After a brief introduction to the area where Lapponia is situated, I will give a background to the position of the *samebys* and the sameby membership and the illusive task of categorizing “the Sami,” an undertaking that is intimately linked to the sameby question. I will also say something about the background to the protection of nature in Sweden and the special relationship that the nature protection agencies have with the Sami in this respect. The ethno-political mobilization of the Sami, both nationally and internationally under the flag of indigenism, will be explored. This will give the reader an understanding of some of the sentiments, narratives, and experiences of colonization that many of the Sami informants emphasize as being at the very core of their fight for influence and control of the management of Lapponia.

Our attention must first turn to an introduction of the area that today, with increasing frequency, is referred to simply as Lapponia.

## The setting

The World Heritage site of Laponia is a 9,400 square kilometer area in the north of Sweden. The area was appointed a World Heritage site in December 1996 and consists of the national parks *Stora Sjöfallet*, *Sarek*, *Padjelanta*, and *Muddus* and the nature reserves *Sjaunja* and *Stubba*. Laponia stretches to the Norwegian border, and there were discussions when applying for World Heritage status to have a transnational site that went all the way to the Norwegian West coast. This however, never became a reality.<sup>15</sup>



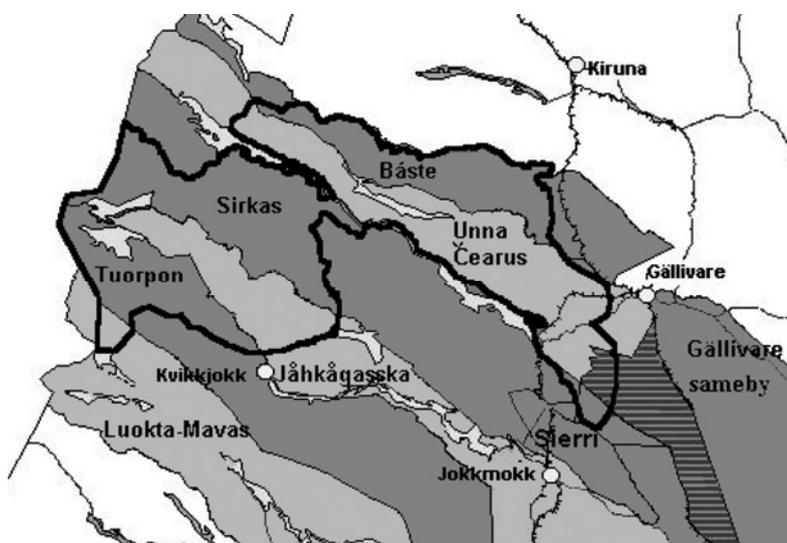
Map 1.<sup>16</sup> Laponia is a 9 400 square kilometers area, situated just above the Arctic Circle.

<sup>15</sup> The main reason seems to have been that the communities living on the Norwegian side (many of them Sami reindeer herders) did not want the World Heritage status. They were concerned that the upgrading of the protection regulations that a nomination would require would affect their ability to access the area and would affect the reindeer herding negatively (Dahlström 2003:248-249).

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.laponia.nu/upload/maps%20of%20laponia.pdf>



Map 2.<sup>17</sup> The nature reserves and national parks that constitute Lapponia, and the two adjacent municipalities of Jokkmokk and Gällivare.



Map 3.<sup>18</sup> The samebys involved in the Laponian process. Udja sameby, however, is not marked, but is situated south of Jokkmokk, right outside this map.

<sup>17</sup> Mijá ednam 2000:12 (<http://www.laponia.info/media/32.pdf>)

<sup>18</sup> Mijá ednam 2000:17 (<http://www.laponia.info/media/32.pdf>)

The area has been the object of nature conservation legislation for a long time; in fact, Stora Sjöfallet and Sarek were among the first national parks to be established in Sweden in 1909, and the formal protection of adjacent areas was gradually introduced during the following decades. Seven samebys have some of their land areas inside the World Heritage area; these are *Báste*, *Unna Čearus*, *Sirkas*, *Jákkákaska*, *Tuorpon*, *Luokta-Mavas*, and *Gällivare skogssameby*. Two others, *Sierra* and *Udtja*, only use small segments of land within the borders of Lapponia for grazing their reindeer at certain times each year. They have been less active in the Lapponia process than the other seven samebys.

No one lives within the World Heritage area permanently, but each summer many reindeer herding families move up to the mountains to be close to the reindeer grazing on the summer pastures.

The municipalities (*kommuner*) closest to the World Heritage site of Lapponia are Gällivare and Jokkmokk. In Sweden, a municipality is an administrative unit and a geographically demarcated area. There are today 290 municipalities in Sweden. Each municipality is governed by a municipal council (*kommunfullmäktige*) that is elected by local voters. Many officials are also employed in the municipal system to carry out the decisions taken by the politicians. In Gällivare's and Jokkmokk's municipalities the largest communities are called just that: Gällivare and Jokkmokk.

Gällivare has about 20 000 inhabitants and has historically been heavily dependent on the mining industry. Besides a Swedish and Sami population, there is also a Finnish minority.<sup>19</sup>

The small town of Jokkmokk is the place where I have spent most of my time in field, and I will therefore go more into depth in describing Jokkmokk and the historical and present relations between the Sami and the Swedish authorities here. Jokkmokk, with only about 5500 inhabitants, is situated about 80 kilometers south of Gällivare and is a relatively small town compared to Gällivare. It has long been an important Sami centre with a relatively large Sami population. There is, for instance, the mountain and Sami museum called *Ájtte*, and a Sami Educational Center (*Samernas utbildningscenter*). There is also a Sami party active in municipal politics called *Samernas Vül*. To many people, Jokkmokk is famous for the market held in February every year. The market was established as early as 1605 and brings tens of thousands of tourists to Jokkmokk each winter. There is no obvious division between Sami and non-Sami when it comes

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<sup>19</sup> There is no municipality today in Sweden where an ethnic Sami population constitutes the demographic majority.

to settlement patterns in the city.<sup>20</sup> Often, people of different ethnic origin (there are also peoples living here that are from other parts of Europe or elsewhere) live next door to each other, and, on an everyday level, ethnic background in itself is not a source of any general conflict within the community. Sami and non-Sami will often engage in the same recreational activities, be co-workers, have children on the same soccer team etc. Many Sami and non-Sami children go to school together. However, this “unity” can often be considered to be rather superficial. Although many people do interact across ethnic boundaries, there is also a clear tendency that Sami (and especially reindeer herding families) and Swedes have deeper friendships and spend most of their time with people from their own ethnic group. In Jokkmokk Sami children also have the right to choose to go to a Sami school, rather than a “conventional” Swedish school, all the way from pre-school to upper secondary school.<sup>21</sup> There, they have the possibility of getting at least some of their education with Sami as the language of instruction. In the Sami school, classes in the Sami language are compulsory even if the students are Swedish-speaking, and the schools also have a policy of focusing on Sami history and cultural heritage.

About 300 kilometers southeast of Jokkmokk is the city of Luleå, situated on the rim of the Baltic Sea. Luleå is a bigger city than both Jokkmokk and Gällivare with around 45,000 inhabitants. Luleå is the administrative centre of the whole of Norrbotten, and it is here that the northernmost county administration office is located. The county administrations in Sweden are the regional offices of the Government, and their objective is to implement national legislation and policies. The board presents itself like this on their homepage:

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<sup>20</sup> However, there is one area in Jokkmokk that is called “Lappstan” (in English “Lapp Town,” *Lapp* being historically the term used in Swedish for Sami, but today considered derogatory). Originally this part of Jokkmokk was built to house reindeer herding families. They were built to be both affordable and close to the lake where the reindeer would stay in the winter time. Today, this area is not exclusive to Sami or reindeer herders (see the discussion on the distinction on these categories later in this chapter) but a substantial number of people living in these houses are still of Sami origin.

<sup>21</sup> All the Sami schools in Sweden are administered by the Sami School Board, located in Jokkmokk. The Sami Parliament is responsible for appointing the board. There are Sami Schools in 5 communities in the northern part of Sweden. The educational program comprises grade 1-6, but there are also pre-school (kindergarten) programs in connection to the Sami schools. In grade 7 Sami students have the option of integrating a Sami-oriented program into their curriculum. This is also a possibility in the first grades for Sami students in areas without Sami schools. In Jokkmokk there is also one school, the only in Sweden, that offers a Sami program for the upper secondary school (*gymnasium*).

The County Administrative Board is an important link between the people and the municipal authorities on the one hand and the government, parliament and central authorities on the other. The work of the County Administrative Board is led by the County Governor.

(...)

The County Administrative Board is charged with a range of tasks, including:

- implementing national objectives
- co-ordinating the different interests of the county
- promoting the development of the county
- establishing regional objectives
- safeguarding the rule of law in every instance<sup>22</sup>

The County Administration of Norrbotten also has the responsibility for administering the reindeer herding law, deciding on the highest number of reindeer allowed in the area, and ensuring that all the samebys comply with this. It also administers permits to use, for example, helicopters and snowmobiles on sameby territory and in the national parks for non-sameby members. In other words, the County Administration has far-reaching influence over reindeer herding, and there is a special mountain branch (*Fjällensbeten*) of the County Administration that is placed in Jokkmokk. Even though the Sami Parliament since 2007 is the responsible authority for managing reindeer herding issues, this responsibility is mainly administrative in nature. The County Administration still remains the authority overseeing that the Reindeer Herding Act is complied with. As mentioned, it is the duty of the County Administration to decide on the number of reindeer allowed in each sameby and to collect accounts from the samebys each year over the number of reindeer. The number of reindeer allowed in each sameby is based on an estimate of how much grazing land is available. It is also incumbent on the County Administration to ensure that the samebys' activities comply with the national regulations concerning nature conservation and culture heritage management.<sup>23</sup> There is a "delegation for reindeer herding" (*rennäringsdelegationen*) that executes and administers the responsibilities of the County Administration on these issues. Three out of seven members of the delegation must be Sami.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/lst/en/>

<sup>23</sup> (<http://www.sametinget.se/1124>; <http://www.bd.lst.se/rennaring/Startpage.aspx>)

<sup>24</sup> (<http://www.bd.lst.se/rennaring/default.aspx?propID=10001442>)

The County Administration is further in charge of the protection and administration of all state-owned land in Sweden and for the management of the national parks and nature reserves. Since the national parks and nature reserves that came to constitute Lapponia all are situated on land that the Swedish nation state claims ownership of (although this is contested by most Sami), the County Administration took for granted that it was their duty to be the most influential party in creating a management plan for the World Heritage site. A management plan is compulsory for any World Heritage site; this is a requirement from the World Heritage organization. When Lapponia was nominated, no prepared management plan was obligatory as a part of the actual application, something that is nowadays mandatory.

To conclude, the samebys and the County Administration offices have a lot of contact on a variety of issues. The samebys that have land inside the national parks and nature reserves in the area are in many ways affected by the presence of the County Administration. Often the County Administration is responsible for carrying out biological surveys and assessments, and inventories of predators or other groups of animals are common. In the Lapponian area the County Administration has often been seen by most of the sameby members that I have talked to as the extended arm of the State, as a controlling and patriarchal remnant of a colonial structure. Without targeting any specific individuals at the County Administration, I have often heard that the agency itself is inflexible, old-fashioned, and colonial in its character. Communication between the samebys and the County Administration has not always been easy, something that this study will illustrate as well. As mentioned, since the County Administration officially has the responsibility to manage the assumed Crown land<sup>25</sup> that Lapponia consists of, the agency felt in the beginning after the appointment in 1996 very much in charge of creating some sort of management plan for the new World Heritage site. But, as will be discussed in later chapters, this self-assumed role as the responsible agency would soon be contested by the other actors, not least by the samebys.

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<sup>25</sup> The assumed ownership by the Swedish Crown has never been officially registered and has been debated and contested (cf Cramér 1966-2009; Korpijaakko-Labba 1994; Allard 2006).

## Who is Sami and who can be a reindeer herder?

It is difficult to estimate the exact number of Sami today. Mainly, this is because the definition of who belongs to the Sami ethnic category is arbitrary. For example, many persons with “mixed” ancestry might float in and out of their Sami identity, and many have through assimilation and integration come to define themselves as part of the majority population. Nevertheless, according to approximate estimations there are about 60 000 Sami people today.<sup>26</sup> About 35 000 of these live in Norway, 17 000 in Sweden, 5700 in Finland and 2000 in Russia. Around 2000 of the Sami in Sweden are living out of reindeer herding (Lundmark 1998:11). Within Lapponia there are about 300 active herders and about 50 000 reindeer.<sup>27</sup>

The fact that it is difficult to estimate the Sami population and to define who is or who is not Sami, is not a unique situation. All ethnic categorizations are blurry in the margins. Most scholars today stress the fact that ethnic belongings are above all social constructions (Barth 1969; Eriksen 2002), but nevertheless very real and important to individuals. The notion of belonging to a Sami collective is no different in this respect. Like all other ethnic identities, Samihood is an ongoing process of creating a sense of “belongingness” among those who trace their genealogy back to a common ancestry, today called “Sami.” The relational aspect of this process cannot be overestimated; it is while mirroring ourselves in, and interacting with, the rest of the world that ethnic identity and ethnic distinctiveness are constructed and articulated. What specific markers and symbol that will be used to display the (perceived) differences are, however, far from a matter of course. But they are never fixed, but changed constantly over time to make sense in the present, in spite of the fact that they are often thought of as more or less unaffected by time.

Christina Åhrén (2008) has shown how difficult it can be for Sami individuals to negotiate their Sami identity. In her dissertation she discusses some cases where “authentic” reindeer herding Sami feel trapped and constrained by the demand that comes with having to lead a Sami way of life. But she also brings up examples where individuals who, through personal choices of older relatives and as a result of governmental assimilation policies, have lost contact with their Sami ancestry and now want to

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<sup>26</sup> However, as mentioned the estimated Sami population varies greatly and is sometimes estimated as high as 80 000 (c.f. <http://www.samer.se/1145>).

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.fjallen.nu/laponia/renskotsel.htm>. The number of reindeer can vary greatly. During a winter with poor weather conditions and scarce grazing, the number can drop drastically.

reunite with their Sami identity and the Sami community. Sometimes there is a resistance from more “authentic” Sami to let “new Sami” (*ny-samer*) or “sidewalk Lapps” (*trottoarlappar*) into the Sami community. As shown by Olofsson (2004) the identity process for those who are seeking or re-enacting a Native/Sami identity often fluctuates and changes over a person’s lifespan, and it commonly means different things and is expressed differently throughout a person’s life. For most of the Sami informants who have contributed to this study, however, the question of “Who is Sami?” or, “Who is Sami enough?” has not been relevant, at least not in regards to the Laponian process. Most of them are sameby members, and as such they are understood, by others and themselves, to be unquestionably Sami. Therefore their identity as Sami has rarely been questioned. On the other hand, what their Sami identity, or rather their identity as sameby members, ought to render in terms of special rights and access to land and resources is another issue. And it is here we find the basis for the issues that came to be argued in connection to the implementation of Lapponia.

### The reindeer herding right and the samebys

It is often heard in Sami politics that general knowledge about the Sami and their history and present life is very limited among Swedes. And this is probably true. Even though it is emphasized in the school curriculum that all children should learn about the Sami, this is very seldom carried out to a satisfactory extent. What people often know and refer to when asked is the Sami association with reindeer and reindeer herding (SKOP 2007). Even though only about 10% of those who call themselves Sami in Sweden today are reindeer herders, there are still a lot of cultural values connected to the reindeer and the life of the herders. It is a very strong ethnic marker for the Sami community as a whole and also something that is recognized outside the Sami community as a strong sign of “Saminess.” To a certain extent this stems from the fact that in Sweden only Sami people possess the inalienable right to herd reindeer. Non-Sami can attain alienable eligibility to herd reindeer through marriage with a sameby member. But unless one is born of herding parents active within the sameby, all those who are eligible to herd reindeer must seek acceptance by the sameby (cf Beach 1986; 2007). However, non-Sami have the right to own “contract” reindeer (so-called *skötesrenar* in Swedish), but these reindeer still have to be looked after by a reindeer herding sameby member. The number of *skötesrenar* was larger in the past and was an important factor in the then often close and cooperative relationship be-

tween settlers and reindeer herders (Campell 1948; Beach 1981:280-281; Nordin 2002, Jernsletten 2007). An exception is the so-called “concession samebys” (*koncessionssamebyar*) where the *skötesrenar* actually constitute the majority of the herd. These samebys are situated in the very Northeast corner of Sweden, in Tornedalen. In the currently eight concession samebys in Sweden, non-Sami reindeer owners are much more active in the herding and on the sameby boards. But the chief reindeer herder still has to be a Sami (for more on concession samebys see Jernsletten & Beach 2006, Jernsletten 2007).

Even though the right to herd reindeer is a collective right that all Sami in Sweden theoretically possess, in practice it is only members of a sameby that have the legal permission to exercise this right. The background to this is to be found in the reindeer herding laws from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These laws tried to regulate the effect that the growing number of settlers and small farms had on herding, and of course also the opposite; the effect herding had on the settlers and the increasing numbers of farms in the North of Sweden. The background to this will be explained further below. First a few words on what the rights of the sameby members consist of. The samebys’ right to use land and water in the reindeer herding area is based on an immemorial right (SFS 1971 §1(2)). This means that the area has been used for reindeer herding for so long that no one can remember when it began. Further, an immemorial right means in short the right to use the land and water for an unlimited time and without contract or agreement (that is, it cannot be leased or sold). One might therefore say that the reindeer herding right is a right that cannot be transferred, must be operated in collective form through a sameby, but is held by individual herders. And, as mentioned, even though all Sami have reindeer herding rights, only sameby members can use this right. It is extremely difficult to become a member of a sameby if you were not already brought up in a reindeer herding family. There is simply no room for more herders or more reindeer. According to estimates made by the Swedish board of Agriculture, each herder has to have around 400-600 reindeer in order to be able to live from herding as main livelihood (Karlsson & Constenious 1997, see also estimates made by the Sami Parliament<sup>28</sup>). However, most commonly, private herds will be smaller, and the family will also depend economically on other revenues. Not uncommonly the wife in the family will have a job outside the herding industry in order to make ends meet. Seen as a unit, the reindeer herding family is often engaged in a combination of different occupations for their income

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.sametinget.se/2810-9>

(Nordin 2007). Also, many families are self-sufficient when it comes to meat (besides reindeer meat, mostly moose and fish) and berries. Nevertheless, the samebys today have virtually no opportunity to take in new reindeer herding businesses in their sameby collectives because of the limited resources. Basically, today, reindeer herding is thus an occupation that you inherit from your parents. If you are brought up within the sameby you have the chance to maintain membership and use the reindeer herding rights. But for a Sami who is not already a member by the sameby by birth, becoming one is virtually impossible, except through marriage to another person with sameby membership.

There is a considerable risk for persons from reindeer herding families who choose another career to be excluded as members of the sameby. In that case this is a decision taken by the sameby's assembly (*bystämman*). However, persons from reindeer herding families who themselves choose not to become active herders, still often retain a close bond to their sameby and can to a certain degree access some of the rights that sameby members have. They might, for instance, be able to fish or hunt with their sameby relatives. But it also depends on each individual and how active they are in helping reindeer herding family members on larger, more labor-intensive, chores, such as the calf-marking or gathering the reindeer for slaughtering. There are also social codes that must be adhered to, and non-members who take inappropriate advantage of the privilege of being part of the sameby community will no longer be welcome.

I mentioned that many reindeer herding families rely partly on moose meat, fish, and berries for sustenance. Having reindeer herding rights means that you can use the area for reindeer herding but also for fishing and hunting,<sup>29</sup> picking berries, building reindeer herders' huts, and taking firewood and handicraft material. Commercial activity (besides reindeer herding) is generally not allowed in the national parks, although there is an exception for the samebys that have their areas within the national parks of Stora Sjöfallet, Sarek, and Padjelanta. Here they have the right to sell *gálhkku* (flat, unleavened bread), fish, dried smoked reindeer meat (*torrkött*) etc. (SNFS 1987:8, 9 and 10). The reindeer herding right is practiced today on more than one third of Sweden's territory, mostly on land claimed by the Crown, but also on private land.

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<sup>29</sup> The only place within the reindeer herding area where moose hunting is absolutely forbidden for everybody is in the *Rapadalen* Delta in Sarek National Park, today part of the World Heritage site of Lapponia.

## Inside and outside the samebys

From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the Swedish nation state's interest in and influence over the Sami population and reindeer herding increased. Until 1886 reindeer herders carried out their herding on so-called "Lapp tax lands" and were organized in *sitas*,<sup>30</sup> groups of reindeer herding families that communally conducted herding. However, with the Reindeer Herding Act of 1886, the right to reindeer grazing lands came to be collectivized and would from now on be used commonly by members of the newly created "lappbys" (SFS 1886:38). The lappbys were formed by merging individual Lapp tax lands into large cohesive grazing areas, and individual reindeer herders were requested to use the grazing only within their own lappby (Cramér & Prawitz 1970:40-41). The Reindeer Herding Act of 1886 did not stipulate, however, who should be called a "Lapp," nor was this an issue addressed by the revised Reindeer Herding Act of 1898 (SFS 1898:66). At this point in time, the definition of who was and who was not a "Lapp" seemed probably more or less self-evident, and ethnic categorization according to language, ancestry, and cultural traits were assumed to be accurate enough to distinguish between "Lapps" and "non-Lapps." (Cramér & Prawitz 1970:40; Dahlström 2003:35).

Under the first reindeer herding laws (until 1928), any Sami was *eligible* for reindeer herding rights, but far from all Sami were engaged in reindeer herding, and even fewer relied on reindeer herding as their only source of income. By this time, many families, both herders and settlers, lived on a combination of livelihoods, and a mix of herding and farming was common in both groups (Beach 1981:309). Among people in general, the ethnic differences between Sami and Swedish inhabitants seem not to have been of any significant importance, and not directly linked to livelihood. Many settlers were of Sami origin, and many Swedes were at least partly engaged in reindeer herding. A combination of different sources of income and sustenance were important to most people that lived in the area regardless of ethnic background. Settlers and families that engaged more full-time in reindeer herding coexisted in a mutually beneficial sharing of goods and services, and it happened that herders offered settlers attractive plots of land in order to have them in their vicinity. Having contract reindeer taken care of by a reindeer herder was important in securing sustenance for many settlers, and as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the interaction between the two groups that this transaction presupposes had important social benefits as well (Campbell 1948; Eidheim 1966; Beach 1981:280-281, Nordin 2002; Jernsletten 2007).

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<sup>30</sup> For a detailed discussion of the *sita* see Beach (1981:59ff)

There were also Sami families that had virtually no ties with the reindeer herding business, but that had been living off of fishing and hunting for generations. However, with the Act of 1886, the right to fish and hunt in the lappby (sameby) area became exclusive to the reindeer herding Sami. As Beach points out:

Fishing Saamis<sup>31</sup> were given no special privileges over land or water. It is easy to see how the misconception that real Saamis are only herders and that herding is the only true occupation of Saamis was not simply a mistake born of ignorance, but rather a necessity for the colonial exploitation of resources and the introduction of the rights of Swedish settlers on the same land. (Beach 1981:306-307)

Rather than complying with the arguments for rights for the Sami people on ancestral grounds (brought forward by both Sami spokespersons and at times by politicians in the Swedish Parliament), the Swedish authorities claimed that the right of the Sami rested rather on occupational grounds. The reason for this, according to Beach, stems from the fact that:

Allowing Saami farmers and farmer-herders to have special usage rights of the land which Swedish settlers could not have and allowing Saamis both to herd *and* to farm in combination without restraint, while hindering Swedes from doing so, would have put the Swedish settlers in a severely handicapped position. It would have ruined the State's ideal of Saami herder and Swedish settler (with assimilated Saami settlers). The State, faced with decreasing herder-settler compatibility, might be increasingly willing to undermine the value of herding rights and the position of contract-reindeer ownership, but, if so, it was to be done on occupational grounds, through the assimilation of Saamis and for the benefit of the settled life and higher civilization, and not for the benefit of the Saamish people *per se*. The transition from Saamish herding was not simply to be one to privileged Saamish farming with Saamish legal and political dominance in the north. (Beach 1981:310-311).

Growing conflict over the resources was indeed a significant reason for the legislators' line of reasoning.<sup>32</sup> Guaranteeing the Sami special rights on the grounds of their ethnic belonging was not in the interest of the Swedish nation state. Mörkenstam (1999; 2002) points out that it was in fact

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<sup>31</sup> Beach uses another orthography than I do and spell Sami with two A (Saami). Also he distinguishes between Saami (in singular) and Saamis (in plural).

<sup>32</sup> For Beach the resource conflicts in the area generated the split between Sami herders and non-herders, regardless of the Social Darwinist influences of the day (1981). Others, like Lundmark (1998, 2002) have emphasized the Social Darwinist attitudes as significant in the shaping of the herder – non-herder split.

the special rights of the full-scale nomads that the authorities were interested in approving and not a distinct Sami ethnic group as such. The dominating view among the Swedish politicians and administrators at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was that there was a growing resource struggle between settlers and reindeer herders. According to the Swedish authorities at the time, the herders did not tend to their herds as carefully as they ought to, and this led to damage to the farmers' lands, caused by reindeer. Mörkenstam notes through Parliamentary statements that the perception of "good" reindeer herding included only a fully nomadic kind of herding as practiced by so-called mountain Sami. Consequently, the legislation came to reject livelihoods where herding was complemented by farming, a lifestyle that many forest Sami<sup>33</sup> families practiced. It was claimed that a "mixed" living only led to conflicts and competition over land, and according to the ruling ideology at the time, farming itself had detrimental effects on herding. The forest Sami were therefore required to "return" to full-scale nomadism or become settlers (and lose their reindeer herding rights) (Mörkenstam 1999:127ff; 2002:117-118). By endorsing such a strong emphasis on full-scale nomadic herding as the rightful Sami enterprise, the legislators took upon itself to define "Saminess" and to collectivize and homogenize the Sami people (or peoples). Support and special rights were to be given only to those who engaged in herding full time (Mörkenstam 1999; 2002; Lantto 2000). According to Mörkenstam, "by defining who is entitled to what, politics constitutes identities" (2002:117) and stereotypes are reinforced.

Besides the growing competition for resources, the influential Social Darwinist ideas came to influence the view on the Sami as a people and also how the reindeer herding laws were stipulated. The focus on reindeer herding as the "proper" Sami occupation relates to attempts by the decisions-makers at the time to "protect" the Sami culture from the degrading "civilization" of the majority society. The nomadic lifestyle was in many ways the antithesis of the Swedish farming society, and the occupation that was therefore considered to be the most Sami in essence. For instance, in the minutes from the Swedish Parliament in 1917, one member of the cabinet aired his discontent with the growing sedentary lifestyle among the "Lapps." He argues, for instance, that:

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<sup>33</sup> The forest Sami were (are) residing more East of the mountain range compared to the mountain Sami. The reindeer herding of the forest Sami has been characterized by more intensive herding, smaller herds, and often been complemented by other livelihoods, such as farming.

The settled life leads to, among the members of the family that do not join in the migrations but stay at home, the fact that they lose interest in the reindeer herd; the interest in reindeer herding thereby ceases to be a concern for the whole family. The whole mode of thought changes; it becomes that of a settler and not that of a Lapp. (Cabinet member Stenberg, 1917, quoted in Amft 2000:73, my translation)

This is but one example of statements deriving from the line of thought that is commonly referred to as the “Lapp should be Lapp”<sup>34</sup> position. This is an expression that is still often used by people, and I have many times heard Sami informants describe the Sami politics of today as nothing but a “Lapp should be Lapp” attitude. The phrase has a clearly negative connotation and is used to reveal what are thought of as generally inflexible, old-fashioned, and anti-Sami regulations. More specifically, it is used to denote the way many Sami feel that the State’s directives control the overall Sami way of life, be it through the reindeer herding law, the regulations for the samebys, or just generally the feeling of being restricted as a Sami in the Swedish majority society. However, as Beach has pointed out, at the time it was coined, the expression “Lapp should be Lapps” hid a more complex state ideology than what is commonly thought of today. It was the conviction at the time that the nomadic life, representing a lower level of culture than farming, would eventually die out. But it also became the goal of the nation state to preserve the nomadic lifestyle. After all, the nomadic Sami were considered to be exercising the authentic Sami livelihood. But that did not mean that the representatives of the Swedish parliament wanted all Sami to be nomadic, nor did it mean that they should not be allowed to be settlers (after all this was the course of higher evolution). Beach has argued that:

In effect, Saami herders were approved of and tolerated, with the conviction that they would not last, and Saami settlers were also approved of as long as they shared no special rights along with the herders to give them an edge over Swedish settlers. What was not approved of was any type of transitional form between herding and farming (the combination). (Beach 1981:311-312)

The division between reindeer herders and settlers were strengthened in the Reindeer Herding Act of 1928 (SFS 1928). In § 1 it is stated that a “Lapp” is someone who possesses the right to herd reindeer. Thereby the

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<sup>34</sup> The phrase “Lapps should be Lapps” was first used by the vicar and elementary school supervisor Vitalis Karnell from Karesuando in a newspaper article in 1906 (cf. Lundmark 2002:70).

law classifies only those who are eligible to herd reindeer as “Lapps.” Those who had earlier been considered “Lapps” but were not eligible to herd were now according to the law to be equated with persons that were not Sami (Cramér & Prawitz 1970:42).<sup>35</sup>

Many of the Sami that were not considered eligible for reindeer herding came to lose their Sami identity. Some took on more Swedish-sounding names and began speaking Swedish rather than Sami. But then again, many held on to their “Saminess” and maintained a strong affiliation with the Sami community and Sami culture (Olofsson 2004; Åhrén 2008).

In the 1971 Reindeer Herding Act the division between those Sami who had the right to herd and those who did not have the right to herd remained (SFS 1971:437, § 1)<sup>36</sup>. In the amendment to the Reindeer Herding Act in 1993<sup>37</sup> (SFS 1993:36) the right to herd reindeer was no longer constrained to occupation, but became a collective right for all Sami. However, membership in a sameby remained a criterion for accessing this right. The Sami political life today is still very much affected by the Act of 1928 and the fact that some Sami are members of samebys and have exclusive eligibility to use the Sami immemorial rights, while most do not.<sup>38</sup>

The clear division between eligible reindeer herding sameby members and non-eligible Sami had far-reaching consequences for the Sami community as a whole. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resource-consumer conflicts merged with the Social Darwinist ideas at the time and led to this devel-

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<sup>35</sup> Another important and much-debated issue brought about by the 1928 Act was the fact that Sami women eligible for reindeer herding rights lost this right if they married a man without reindeer herding rights (Cramér & Prawitz 1970:44; Amft 2000; c.f. Beach 1982).

<sup>36</sup> In this Act the legislators tried to rationalize the reindeer herding to make it more efficient and profitable for the herders. There had been reports that the poverty level among the reindeer herders was alarming in comparison to the rest of the Swedish population. The 1971 Act was designed to alleviate the poverty by attempting to rationalize the reindeer herding. The new Act came to be heavily criticized as it meant that the same number of reindeer would be distributed to a reduced number of herders, causing each herder to have larger herds. For further discussion, see Beach 1981:295-296, 1983 and 1986.

<sup>37</sup> However, this piece of legislation came to be criticized because it took away the exclusive hunting and fishing rights of the samebys. It also laid the ground for the Sami Parliament in Sweden, something that came to be both applauded and criticized. I will come back to this later in this chapter.

<sup>38</sup> For many years there has been a lively discussion on whether or not to open up the samebys to non-herding Sami as well, and if so, how this could be organized in practice. A Governmental report came out in 2001 (SOU 2001:101), but discussions are still ongoing and a position paper (*betänkande*) is currently being processed by the Government offices. However, it is not probable that a decision is about to come soon. The issue on extended samebys has been debated before, not least in the 1960s and 1970s (see Beach 1981:418ff; SOU 1975:99).

opment. My point here has merely been to offer a short account of the how and why the Swedish nation state came to be more directly involved in the reindeer herding business and in the regulations that surround the samebys, since this is of importance for the basic understanding of the relations among the local actors in the Laponian process. However, it is also interesting to note that the division between sameby members and non-sameby members is something that is often brought up when I was discussing contemporary Sami issues or Sami-State relations with my informants (whether Sami, non-Sami, sameby member, or non-sameby member). Commonly, one refers to the 1928 Act and sees the definition in § 1 concerning who should be called a “Lapp” as something that destroyed the possibility of a sound collective Sami identity. According to many, it is the State’s fault that the Sami are now a divided people, and that there are deep conflicts between those who can access the immemorial rights to herd and those who cannot. Many times I have heard, for instance, that most of the political turmoil in the Sami Parliament can be blamed on the Reindeer Herding Act of 1928. In several versions I have heard accounts of how the 1928 law worked as a knife that cut the Sami people into two halves. In these accounts the conflicts over the resources that Beach (1981) sees as the main reason for the legal development is generally not emphasized. Instead, people will bring up the racist and Social Darwinist ideals as the decisive factor behind the legislators wish to support the reindeer herding Sami population only. The informants will claim that it is the State that, through this legislation, wrongly defined who is Sami and who is not. In this way, the descriptions of the Act of 1928 come to serve as narratives of the colonial past,<sup>39</sup> and as a tool for explaining the current situation for the Sami (both inside and outside the samebys).

## Nature protection in the area – a background

In many ways the World Heritage phenomenon can be seen as a part of, or as a continuation of, the nature conservation practices that have preoccupied nation states for a little more than a century. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the first national parks was established, first and foremost in the “new world,” in North America and Australia, for example. But in many ways, as has been suggested by Sörlin (1988) and later also by Mels

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<sup>39</sup> Narratives of the colonial past and the concept of collective memory will be further discussed in chapter 7.

(1999:68) the northern part of Sweden can be compared to the frontiers of other “new” nations. And it is true that the northern part of Sweden was more sparsely inhabited than areas further south, but the state authorities were still in many ways present and active. For example, trading with the Sami and collecting taxes from them had been going on for hundreds of years. The Swedish authorities also encouraged, with tax reductions for instance, southern families to move up north and to establish themselves as farmers (Ruong 1982:52). The church had long been persuasively carrying out missionary work in the Sami area, and in many ways the Swedish nation state was administratively present at this point in time. The interest in extracting and using the natural resources is also something that goes back a long time in history. As early as in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, three silver mines were in operation (e.g. Hultblad 1968:74; Beach 1981:73). There are many stories about how the local Sami were forced to use their reindeer to transport silver to the smelting plants. Those who refused were treated cruelly or even tortured (Beach 1981:73). Nevertheless, it was not until the industrial era that the demand for using the natural resources became important on a larger scale. Timber from the large forests and energy from the waterfalls would come to play an essential role for the industrial revolution in Sweden as a whole. In other words, there was a need from the nation state to “use” the resources that up till then had been untouched in the Sami area and here, the north of Sweden, just like the huge frontiers in North America, came to play a significant role, and the interest from the nation state increased (Sörlin 1988:97, cf Mels 1999:69). With that came a realization that some of this “wilderness” ought to be conserved and preserved and saved from the infringements of civilization. The concept of “wilderness” in itself became “reorganized as a cultural and moral resource and a basis for national self-esteem” (Nash 1982:67; c.f. Cronon 1996). It touches upon another concurrent factor as to why the enthusiasm for establishing national parks became so strong at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nationalism was on the rise, and creating a national identity became important. The wilderness developed into a symbol of the untouched “fatherland,” the pristine and the original (Mels 1999: 69). These were times of patriotism and nature romanticism, but also of emerging tourism. From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a fascination with mountains became increasingly popular among Europe’s high society, and from the middle of this century a number of organizations were established that focused on mountain recreation. The aesthetics of mountain areas and the emphasis on physical exercise was appealing for the European ideology at the time (Robertson 1977; Johannisson 1984:27; see also Dahlström 2003:194-195).

There was no real contradiction between preserving nature and using its resources. It was as if the great forests and mountains of the north were just waiting to be explored by tourists as well as by forestry companies and mining prospectors. There was a feeling at the time that the area was endless, and to sacrifice a piece of it for the extraction of natural resources did not threaten the picture of it as, above all, untouched wilderness (Aronsson 1997:115). Among the first national parks to be established in Sweden in 1909 were *Sarek* and *Stora Sjöfallet*, both today included in Lapponia. These are huge areas<sup>40</sup>, as are all the national parks and nature reserves in the mountain area, at least compared to protected areas further south. Some have suggested that this has a great deal to do with the “convenience” of setting aside such large areas in this particular part of the country. The mountains were scarcely inhabited, and the Sami inhabitants had no recognized formal ownership (Sandell 1995:137). Another explanation for why certain areas were thought of as suitable for the establishment of national parks has been put forward by Frost & Hall (2009). They suggest that these were areas that were often considered “worthless land.” They could not be “used” by the nation state or cultivated or even inhabited on a large scale (see also Reinius 2009).

The support for the establishment of national parks and the passion for Nature and Wilderness, however, were never concerns for lower-class people or people living within the vicinity of protected areas, quite the opposite. The aspiration to protect Nature and to promote the great outdoors was more than anything a matter for the urban, educated people, for the upper-class and bourgeois establishment (Sörlin 1988:82). These people were, in fact, the very same persons that were active in the Swedish Tourism Association<sup>41</sup> (Löfgren 1989; Mels 1999:75). From the beginning, then, the tourism industry was tightly linked with the mountain areas and with the aspiration to protect their natural environment. And, as will be illustrated in parts of this thesis, this is a relationship that has remained important to this day. The Swedish Tourism Association still has strong interests in the area with their network of trails and hostels and with their marketing of mountain trekking as a very special category of tourism.

Nature protection was a cause for the nation state, the sciences, and the Tourism Association, and from that perspective it is not surprising that

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<sup>40</sup> Sarek is 197 000 hectares (<http://www.naturvardsverket.se/sv/Att-vara-ute-i-naturen/Nationalparker-och-andra-fina-platser/Nationalparker/Sarek/>) and Stora Sjöfallet 127 800 hectares (<http://www.naturvardsverket.se/sv/Att-vara-ute-i-naturen/Nationalparker-och-andra-fina-platser/Nationalparker/Stora-Sjofallet/>).

<sup>41</sup> In Swedish: *Svenska Turistföreningen (STF)*.

the local Sami were not consulted during the establishment of the first national parks. In a report in 1907 from the Nature Protection Committee (an organization under the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences) the Sami presence was acknowledged but this did not prevent the establishment of national parks since they were “so intimately associated with the nature in their territory that they so to speak complement it” (in Sörlin 1991:266) They were not thrown out (as has been the case in the establishment of other national parks), but there were no attempts to consult or inform the local Sami.

Even if there is no general resistance from the local Sami towards already established national parks and nature reserves in the area today, many of them will stress the point that the protected areas were established without Sami consent and have since then been managed by the Government without real Sami influence.<sup>42</sup> This is often expressed as an example of the colonial structure still at work in the relation between the Sami and the State today. Also, many draw attention to the fact that the protection of the area has not stopped major intrusions like logging and the establishment of large hydro electric plants being built even inside the national park.<sup>43</sup>

A lot of good grazing and calving lands have been lost because of this, and this is something that the older generation of herders, especially, often return to in conversations. Once, a middle-aged herder talked to me about the importance of not wearing down the land more than necessary. It is after all, in his words, the very foundation for their existence. Therefore it is important to plan ahead and try to get the reindeer to go to certain places in order to save other pieces of land for later grazing. But he explained that this is much more difficult today than it was when he was young. The main reason for this is that the big dams at Lule River were built in the 1960s,<sup>44</sup> and large areas of the best grazing and calving land for his sameby disappeared under water. This man did not have much hope of a World Heritage appointment being able to prevent major dis-

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<sup>42</sup> There is, however, a general skepticism towards establishing new protected areas in the North of Sweden and the Sami are not more skeptical than non-Sami people (e.g. Sandell 2000). In some areas (for example Vindelfjällen in Västerbotten) the local samebys have supported the idea from SEPA to turn the nature reserve into a National Park, but other local interests have yet to endorse the thought. The main reasons for skepticism are usually that there is a lack of local influence and that a protection policy would be a potential threat to the local usage (hunting, fishing, snowmobile driving) of the areas (cf. Sandell 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Today, the building of windmill parks and the establishment of mines are being discussed throughout Sápmi (and in other parts of Sweden).

<sup>44</sup> This man talked about the dam being built in the 60s. However, a whole series of dams were being built in the 1900s in both Little and Big Lule Rivers. Many other encroachments were made that also affected the reindeer herders (Beach 1981:237ff).

turbances like this to occur in the future. So far he had watched several encroachments being made in spite of the fact that the area had been a national park since 1909. His overall feeling was that the State does whatever it wants to do, and the Sami have no real influence and no possibility of stopping it.

The relationship between indigenous peoples and the nature protection agencies is often difficult or strained because of controversies over land and resources. Land regulation is the tangible evidence of the colonization. It is the land that was taken, or claimed by the Crown, and it is the land that now is claimed (back) by indigenous groups. The importance of more intangible, or spiritual, meanings that are embedded in the landscape cannot either be underestimated. Not only has the physical land been lost, but also more spiritual values that are inherently attached to it. Conservation agency employees are often perceived as direct personifications of the State by indigenous peoples with claims on contested land areas. Conservation managers in the Swedish as well as Australian and New Zealand World Heritage sites in my field work areas state that they are many times blamed by indigenous representatives for everything the national governments or different state authorities do or say in relation to indigenous peoples. It seems not uncommon that they feel they become the scapegoat for everything the Government does or says that relates to the indigenous group. In many ways this particular relation, between indigenous group and the governments' environmental conservation agencies, is at the very core of state authorities - indigenous affairs, and this is where it often clashes. This is very much the case for the Laponian process also. As will become clear in the coming chapters, there was an already established relationship between the Sami and the local authorities, and especially with the County Administration, that to a large extent was characterized by mutual distrust.

## Political mobilization of the Swedish Sami

Here I will give a brief historical introduction to the way the Swedish nation state came to control more and more of the traditional Sami territory in Sweden, reindeer herding and the general life of many Sami. This has already been touched upon earlier, especially in connection with the effects of the Reindeer Herding Acts and the significance of the samebys. Here, the focus will more be on the Sami response, protests, and ethnic mobilizations that the nation state's increased interest in Sami territory and life has occasioned.

## The nation state grows stronger

As mentioned in the previous chapter there has been interaction and cultural and economical exchange between Sami and neighboring peoples since time immemorial. For a long time the borders between the emerging nation states (Denmark-Norway, Sweden and Russia) were undefined. However, during the 14<sup>th</sup> century the borders between the countries were starting to be drawn. In the Nöteborg Peace Treaty in 1323 the line was specified between Novgorod (Russia) and Sweden. Sweden then further strengthened its northern border in the Telge Agreement in 1328, making the Ume River the northernmost outpost. Settlement north of the river was declared forbidden, partly to protect the Sami's rights and partly to protect the exclusive rights of the merchants at that time (Lehtola 2004:22-23). But these treaties were constantly violated by Sweden, who promised settlers freedom from military service and taxation, at least for a limited period, if they moved north of the border. This resulted in wars and unrest, and it was not until the treaties in Knäred 1613 and Stolbova in 1617 that a more permanent peace was reached (Lehtola 2004:23).

During the middle Ages, trade with the Sami and the right to collect taxes from them were carried out by so-called *birkarlar*. These were men that formed an association of merchants that had an exclusive right to trade with the Sami and then later to collect taxes. They divided the land between them in different regions in which they conducted their business, and called these districts "Lapp-lands" (*Lappmarker*). Because the borders between the countries (Sweden, Norway-Denmark and Russia) were still so vague, some Sami would at times pay tax to all three kingdoms (Ruong 1982:48).

As the Swedish nation state grew stronger, so did its interest in the land closest to its northern border. King Gustav Vasa, who ruled in Sweden 1523-1560, is famous for strengthening the governmental control and making Sweden into a centrally managed state. His policies also reached the Swedish part of Sápmi. The *birkarlar* are thought to have made fortunes from their trade and taxation of the Sami, and they only paid a small percentage of their income to the Swedish nation state. Gustav Vasa doubled the taxes and decided that the Sami were to pay the taxes directly to the state authorities, instead of to the *birkarlar*. He appointed certain enforcement officers, so called *lappfogdar*, who were now to be responsible for collecting the taxes. Most *lappfogdar* were, however, old *birkarlar*. The *lappfogdar* became the Government's ears and eyes in the northern parts of the country. Besides collecting taxes they were to buy skin from the Sami on behalf of the Crown, be responsible for the

reindeer owned by the nation state, and administer justice (Ruong 1982:48). All contacts between the Sami and the authorities were to go through the *lappfogdar*, and with time the system came to be heavily criticized by many reindeer herding Sami. Nevertheless, the system of *lappfogdar* was not abolished (although changed over time) until new directions came with the reindeer herding act of 1971 (SFS 1971:437).

The policy at the time of Gustav Vasa's reign was that the Northern region would "be open to everybody" (Ruong 1982:50). In a decree in 1542 the king announced that anyone who chose to set up a homestead in the northern parts of the country would not be stopped and that all areas that were not settled belonged to the Swedish Crown (Ruong 1982:50). The Swedish nation state thereby claimed sovereignty of the land in relation to the other nation states. This was done to protect the interest of the Crown, but it was also an attempt to draw lines between settlers and reindeer herders and look after the interest of both of these groups (Ruong 1982:50, 52). The right of the Sami to use the land was at this stage unquestioned.

As early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century missionaries attempted to Christianize the Sami, and the demand to give up the old beliefs intensified as the Swedish church successively sent more priests to the northernmost parishes.<sup>45</sup> Some Sami would voluntarily embrace the new faith, while others resisted or accepted and used both religions as they moved in and out of the Swedish and Sami spheres in society (Rydving 1993). Later Christianity became important to many Sami. For instance, the religious fraction started by Lars Levi Laestadius in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century became important as a social network and came to play a role in the Sami identity process in general (Steinlien 1996, Minde 1998).

## Political organization begins

No actual political organization of the Swedish Sami, or of the whole Sami community, was visible until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has been suggested by Lantto (2000) that the main incentives behind the early Sami mobilization was a strong opposition against the Swedish Sami policy. In the beginning of the century the Sami protests focused mainly on the policy-making national level, but shifted, and at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the actions of the regional and local authorities that gener-

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<sup>45</sup> For more information on Sami pre-Christian beliefs see Bäckman 1975; Ahlbäck 1984; Hultkrantz 1992; Rydving 1993. Johannes Schefferus wrote a book on the lives of the Sami in 1673 called "Lapponia," which entails information of Sami pre-Christian practices and which has been used as an academic reference up to our days.

ated the most criticism from the Sami community (Lantto 2000). Sami resistance grew to the encroachments of the Swedish nation state and the increasing number of farms and settlers moving in on the grazing lands and disturbing the migration routes of the reindeer.<sup>46</sup>

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, a Sami woman named Elsa Laula was very active in exposing the situation of the Sami. She wrote many articles in the Swedish press and cooperated with Swedish parliamentarians who at this point in time wrote quite a number of petitions to the Swedish Government trying to shed some light on the plight of the Sami (Ruong 1982:185ff). Besides the loss of land to settlers, one of the most burning issues was the situation for the Sami school children. This was addressed in a parliamentary bill in 1908, signed by 15 members of the Parliament (Ruong 1982:183ff). According to this bill children from reindeer herding families ought to be put in special schools, so called “Nomad schools” (*nomadskolor*). At this time five different types of schooling existed for the Sami children. They could attend the “Lapp folk school” (*lappfolkskola*), the “catechism school” (*katekesskolor*), “winter courses” (*Vinterkurser*), the “public folk schools” (*allmänna folkskolor*), or the schools of the Swedish Missionary Society (*Svenska missionsällskapets skolor*) (Ruong 1982:189-190). But these schools were considered by the authors of the bill to be unfit for the children of reindeer herders since they made them lose interest in the reindeer herding life. The idea of having a specially designed nomad school created enthusiasm among the politicians, and, in a proposition in 1913, it was declared that a school system would be developed that was adapted to the special nature of the nomadic children, and that would not take their interest away from the reindeer herding nomadic lifestyle. (Ruong 1982:134,190-191). The then current dominant “Lapps-should-be-Lapps” policy meant that children of reindeer herders often had to endure their time in school crammed into small wooden Sami huts, the idea being that the comforts of proper houses or beds would work to impoverish the Sami culture and speed up its supposedly inevitable downfall. The children often suffered from diseases due to the poor living conditions where large-scale infections frequently ravaged; TB was one of the most severe epidemics at the time, and many Sami children died from the disease (Lundmark 1998: 97ff; Lundmark 2002:76ff; Ruong 1982:189f).

Elsa Laula was the key figure behind the first general meeting of Sami held in Trondheim in February 6,<sup>47</sup> 1917, and the first meeting among

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<sup>46</sup> However, it must also be noted that some Sami applauded these encroachments. They entailed job-opportunities and improved infrastructure, for instance.

<sup>47</sup> February 6 is therefore the Sami national day.

Swedish Sami was held in Östersund in 1918 (Lehtola 2004:48 see also Ruong 1982:192ff). After that several Sami organizations were created, newspapers and magazines were started, and meetings and conferences were organized, both nationally and across the borders. However, the assimilation policies interfered not only in the organization of reindeer herding, but in all issues that concerned the Sami. Even if the situation for the school children slowly improved, it was not until the 1940s that proper school houses were built for the children from the reindeer herding families. The nomadic school system developed and got modernized and formed the foundation of what is today the Sami school system.

At the meeting in Östersund in 1918, voices were raised to start a Swedish Sami monthly magazine. The following year, in 1919, Torkel Tomasson founded *Samefolkets Egen Tidning* ("The Sami People's Own Magazine"). The magazine changed name in 1961 to *Samefolket* and is still published today (Ruong 1982:144-145). In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it had proven difficult for the Swedish Sami to establish a large national organization. This, according to Lantto (2000), made their position quite weak and made it difficult to form a cohesive Sami strategy that could communicate Sami interests and demands vis-à-vis the Swedish Government. After the Second World War, however, the Sami in all three Nordic countries established different organization that were eventually successful in engaging in a dialogue with national authorities (Sillanpää 2002:85; Lantto 2000). The first large organization in Sweden was the National Union of Swedish Sami, in Swedish called *Svenska Samernas Riksförbund* (SSR). SSR was founded in 1950 with the objective of safeguarding and promoting the cultural, social, and economic wellbeing of the Sami community as a whole, but with a special focus on reindeer herding issues. Ever since, SSR has been an important social and political force in the mobilization of the Swedish Sami and has often acted as a strong voice in different conflicts with the authorities (Lantto 2000).<sup>48</sup> Other Sami organizations that did not have the immediate connection to reindeer herding were also established around this time in Sweden. The National Association of Samiland, *Same Átnam*, the Swedish Sami Youth Association, *Sáminuorra*, and the Swedish Sami Union, *Landsförbundet Svenska Samer* (LSS) are the most influential of these. They are all active

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<sup>48</sup> In the Laponian process, the SSR has not been very actively involved in the Laponian process, at least after the area gained its World Heritage status. However the organization appeared as co-author of a petition to the Government in 2001. Nevertheless, certain individuals with high positions in the organization has been unofficially engaged and interested in developments, and no doubt has the Laponian issue been discussed within the SSR organization.

in the political debate both within the Sami community and with the surrounding majority community.<sup>49</sup>

As for many other minorities and indigenous peoples, a cultural and political renaissance took place in the 1960s and 1970s (see e.g. Sillanpää 2002; Lehtola 2004:70ff). Sami cultural expressions increased in popularity and significance within the Sami community and often reached an outside audience as well. Traditional Sami singing, the *yoik* became a stage art and was performed in concerts and recorded.<sup>50</sup> Sami handicraft, *duodji*, saw a revival, and many Sami organizations in all three Nordic countries were established during these years. In 1956 the *Sami Council* was established. This is a politically oriented organization that today comprises eight Sami associations from all four countries, and they hold conferences every 4<sup>th</sup> year. Even though the political and cultural status of the Sami continued to improve, the encroachments and exploitations of resources in the reindeer herding area continued. The rights to land and water became a burning issue, and many Sami and non-Sami protesters contested the large dam constructions in both Norway and Sweden. The most famous of these protests is the Alta conflict in Norway that lasted from 1969 to 1982.<sup>51</sup> During the last years of this conflict protesters would guard the Alta-Guovdageaidnu River to obstruct the machines and workers from continuing the construction, and a hunger strike right in the middle of Oslo, in front of the Norwegian Parliament, attracted considerable attention in 1981. The Norwegian Government had to put a lot of money and prestige on the line before they could finally open the power station for production. Even if the river was finally dammed, the Alta conflict had a large impact on both the Sami community as a whole and on the Nordic nation states' Sami policies. Issues concerning Sami rights came up on the political agenda, and the history and present situation between the state authorities and the Sami were discussed and debated. The main reason for this was that the media coverage of Alta was

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<sup>49</sup> As with SSR, these organizations have not made official statements concerning Lapponia, except for Sáminuorra also appearing as co-author of the petition to the Government in 2001. They have nevertheless been engaged "beneath the surface" many times. Individuals in all these organizations have had access to information on Lapponia through the media or personal contacts, but have not taken public stance on the matter.

<sup>50</sup> It was a minor revolution to many Sami when they started to hear yoik performed publicly. For many the yoik had for long been regarded as inappropriate and even sinful. Most famous among the artists that started the yoik renaissance are probably the group Deatnogátte Nuorat from Norway and the famous multi-artist Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (also called Áillohaš) from the Finnish side. For those interested in reading more on the art of yoiking see Arnberg 1969; Gaski 1987; Jones-Bamman 1996, Stoor 2007.

<sup>51</sup> For a deeper analysis of the Alta conflict, see Björklund & Brantenberg 1981; Paine 1982 and Lehtola 2004:72ff; see also Minde 2005.

far greater than had been the case in previous conflicts between the Sami and any of the nation states. This time, televised reports of Sami huts (*lávvu* or *tältkåta*) set up in front of the Norwegian Parliament with hunger striking and yoiiking Sami protesters raised the general public awareness of the situation for the Sami population.

## The indigenous movement is formed

It was in this era that the concept of *indigenous peoples* became influential in the international arena. It had been included in the International Labor Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention and Recommendation as early as 1957. This was a time when most parliamentarians and scholars still talked about the original or aboriginal inhabitants within nation states as "primitives." But a growing trend of international conferences and conventions put focus on these groups, and the necessity for themselves to identify as *indigenous* peoples in order to benefit from these international juridical documents emerged (Niezen 2000:119-120). The concept quickly spread both in academia and politics, and soon became more or less used and accepted in many parts of the world. Indigenous peoples themselves started to travel, and a growing network of transnational indigenous associations and friendships developed. They often found that they had many things in common, especially when it came to the colonial experience and in their dealings with their respective governments.<sup>52</sup> Their cooperation grew over time and gained more influence in the international political field. Indigenous groups from North America together with Scandinavian Sami were the driving force behind the establishment of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in 1975 (Sillanpää 2002:86). The WCIP would in many ways become a groundbreaking interest organization from the perspective of the indigenous peoples' movement. Even if it represented far from all the groups we know as indigenous today, it became important as a coordinating unit for those who were represented and worked as a lobby group with reference to the UN (Saugestad 2001:47). It is important, as Saugestad reminds us, to understand the present indigenous movement "against this background of a long process of mobilisation, and as a reflection of the emphasis on human rights evidenced in the UN Charters" (Saugestad 2001:47).

During this period the Sami in Sweden played an increasingly greater role on the international indigenous stage, but also mobilized politically

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<sup>52</sup> Since the discussion on indigeneity in part came to influence the relations among the local actors in the Laponian process, I will come back to the concept of indigenism later in the thesis, primarily in chapter 6.

within the national borders. The status of the Sami as an indigenous population was recognized by the Swedish Government in 1977,<sup>53</sup> and the Sami remain the only officially recognized indigenous group in Sweden.<sup>54</sup> After both Finland and Norway had established Sami Parliaments (in 1973 and 1989 respectively) the Swedish Sami got their own Parliament in 1993. Election to the Swedish Sami Parliament is held every four years. To be able to vote, one must be accepted on an electoral register. The two criteria for being accepted are that first, that the person self-identify as a Sami, and secondly that they speak, or have spoken, Sami in their home *or* that their parent or grandparent have spoken Sami in their home. You also have the right to be placed on the electoral register if you have a parent that is, or has been, on the register (more on this later in this chapter).<sup>55</sup> The three parliaments are cooperating in the Sami Parliamentary Assembly, established in 2000. The Russian Sami have observer status in the assembly.

After the achievement of establishing the WCIP, the indigenous movement, with the Sami as an active force, continued to have an open dialogue with the broader UN system to raise awareness of the situation for the indigenous peoples of the world. Yet another success came when the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues was established in 2000, with a Sami from Norway, Ole Henrik Magga,<sup>56</sup> as its first president. The Permanent Forum is an advisory body to the Economic and Social Council and has the mandate to relate to a range of human rights issues that affect the lives of indigenous peoples. Every year it holds sessions in the UN building in New York where the delegates discuss matters of relevance to them and try to influence different policies and conventions adopted by the UN. The latest accomplishment was the long-discussed United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peo-

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.regeringen.se/sb/d/7951>. The recognition came as a result of the suggestions made in prop. 1976/1977:80.

<sup>54</sup> Every now and then a fraction of the meänkieli-speaking group (*Tornedalsfinnar*) in the very north-east corner of Sweden, close to the Finnish border, will make petitions to the Government claiming indigeneity (calling themselves *Kvänner*). However, so far they have not been successful in their pursuits (c.f. Elenius 2007). Nevertheless, they have the status of a national minority together with Sami (also an indigenous people), Jews, Roma, and Swedish Finns (<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2184/a/19444>).

<sup>55</sup> In his article "Self-determining the Self: Aspects of Saami Identity Management in Sweden" Beach (2007) has pointed out the difficulties involved in applying criteria that draw on both essentialist as well as constructivist ideas. Beach suggests new variables for acceptance on the electoral register that better mirror the actual life situation for many Sami today. With the language quickly diminishing in some areas, Beach charts a system based more on the principle of a phase-in clause, rather than a phase-out clause, that is, based on cultural competency and more flexible in nature.

<sup>56</sup> Ole Henrik Magga was also the first president of the Norwegian Sami Parliament.

ples (UNDRIP) that was finally adopted in September, 13 2007. Sweden, along with an overwhelming majority of other countries, ratified the Declaration. Only four countries refused to ratify: the US, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia.<sup>57</sup> If implemented literally, the Declaration can have far-reaching consequences for the recognition of indigenous groups as the owners, not only users, of their traditional lands, and thereby on their possibility of managing the land and the resources. In an official statement, the Swedish Sami Parliament said that it looks forward to implementing the Declaration together with the Finnish, Norwegian, Russian, and Swedish people and their governments and elected parliaments.<sup>58</sup>

As Sillanpää (2002:104) points out, there has been a considerable change in attitude and awareness in the world in recent years when it comes to minority groups' and indigenous groups' predicaments and need for legitimacy. Minority and indigenous organizations themselves have been the driving force behind the increased interest in legal actions taken to improve the situation for these groups. In Sweden, too, this rise in awareness can be said to be of a rather recent date. In a historical perspective the Sami have been seen as *a regional problem* (Sillanpää 2002:83) that needed to be taken into consideration at times, rather than a distinct ethnic group that had an evident right to their own culture, language, land, and water, etc. Another issue addressed by both Sillanpää (1994; 2002) and Mörkenstam (1999; 2002) is the fact that the Sami in Sweden were assimilated into the majority society by being, just like any other citizen, entitled to and subject to, the general welfare society (including schooling, health care, eligibility to vote in local and national elections, etc.). They were not, in other words, stigmatized by poverty and social distress in the same degree as has been the case with other indigenous peoples (e.g. Dahre 2005:29ff). As mentioned earlier, Mörkenstam (1999; 2002) notes how the Sami were both homogenized and collectivized as a consequence of Swedish legislation and its focus on reindeer herding as the only ground for special rights. But, as argued by Sillanpää (2002:105), it is also only in recent times that the authorities have come to appreciate the fact that the Sami want to enjoy certain rights from a collective point of view. The seeking of collective rights rather than individual rights give the Sami a stronger position vis-à-vis the Government and is more in line with other indigenous claims worldwide.

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<sup>57</sup> It is important to note here that ratification means different things in different countries. In Sweden, the fact that the Government ratifies a convention or declaration does not mean that it becomes legally binding, but only work as a recommendation.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.sametinget.se/2834>

Although many nation states seem to support the idea of increased autonomy and improved rights for indigenous peoples on an ideological level, it is often more difficult to implement these ideas in practice within their own country. Sweden is hardly an exception in this respect. This is obvious when it comes to ILO Convention 169 – the Indigenous and Tribal Convention that was adopted in 1989. Although supporting the Convention in general terms, the Swedish Government has yet to ratify it. It is foremost Article 14 that has caused a discussion within the Swedish political and juridical establishments. Article 14 states that:

1. The rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognised. In addition, measures shall be taken in appropriate cases to safeguard the right of the peoples concerned to use lands not exclusively occupied by them, but to which they have traditionally had access for their subsistence and traditional activities. Particular attention shall be paid to the situation of nomadic peoples and shifting cultivators in this respect.
2. Governments shall take steps as necessary to identify the lands which the peoples concerned traditionally occupy, and to guarantee effective protection of their rights of ownership and possession.
3. Adequate procedures shall be established within the national legal system to resolve land claims by the peoples concerned. (ILO 169, Article 14)

There has been a long debate in Sweden whether Sweden should, or could, ratify the convention. As mentioned earlier, most of what is today used as reindeer herding land (and thereby connected to the Sami immemorial right) is considered by Swedish law to be Crown land. To what extent a ratification of ILO 169 would change this and whether these territories would in effect be owned by the collective Sami population, as Article 14 seems to imply, is still an unsolved issue. Norway, which has ratified the convention, made the interpretation that the intention in Article 14 was to be equated with the users' right that the Norwegian Sami had in their traditional areas. However, in Norway the final word has not been said whether this is indeed a valid interpretation of the Convention.<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, the Norwegian ratification has put extra pressure on the Swedish Government to ratify ILO 169. An official commission of inquiry found that it was indeed possible, with only minor legislative alterations, to ratify the Convention and strongly recommended the Govern-

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<sup>59</sup> For a more detailed account of the Norwegian ratification and implementation of ILO 169, see Sillanpää 2002:103.

ment to do so (SOU 1999:65). However, ten years after this investigation the Convention is still not ratified. A majority of the Sami political establishment in Sweden is very critical of this fact. But there is also a large Sami political fraction that is doubtful about ratification. They maintain that this would only benefit the reindeer herding Sami in the samebys and not the vast majority of the population that are not members of a sameby. This would, it is argued, further increase the split between sameby members who can enjoy the exclusive Sami rights, and those who cannot. There is also a very strong opposition against a ratification of ILO 169 among many non-Sami locals in the North of Sweden. They claim that their access to the areas for hunting, recreation, fishing, and so on would be seriously constrained. As will be mentioned later in the thesis, the issue of ILO 169 sometimes came to be intertwined with the Sami aspirations in regard to the Laponian process. Representatives from the non-Sami actors would on occasion say that the Sami “stubbornness” when it came to Lapponia was just a way for them to put pressure on the Government to ratify ILO 169. One official from the municipalities has also told me that he was of the opinion that if ILO 169 had been ratified, they would not have been able to prevent a Sami majority on a future board of management (this was stated before the Government intervened in 2006). Some of the samebys’ representatives have come to the same conclusion. When the conflict was still ongoing, they argued that if they could get to a point where they have a strong say in matters concerning Lapponia, this would be one step closer to getting the Government to ratify the Convention.

The discussion above points to the fact that international developments and the relative success of the indigenous movement within the UN system is to a significant degree relevant to many Sami in Sweden today, and especially in issues that relate to the rights to control the management and conservation of their land. As will be elaborated on later, the rights of other indigenous peoples and comparisons with other structurally equal situations have been important for the local samebys when trying to get their claims heard in the Laponian process.

### The Swedish Sami Parliament and the issue of “small game hunting”

The establishment of the Swedish Sami Parliament was unfortunately accompanied by the confiscation of the exclusive small game hunting and fishing right of the Sami on the samebys’ territories. So-called “small game hunting” (*småviltsjakten*) had previously been administered through

the County Administration, but they could not issue permits; this was a decision that the samebys made. Some samebys were restrictive in agreeing to permits, others allowed more people to hunt during hunting season. In many samebys they had a well-established organization for handling these matters (Lundmark 1998:131). The new system meant that a parallel list approving Crown permits was established. This new list was (and is) under the control of the County Administration only, and does not have to be approved by the samebys. In other words, the samebys still control the samebys' permits for the small game hunting, but hunters can now choose to seek permission through the County Administration instead of through the samebys. In practice this has meant more hunters in the mountain region, including hunters that might not have used the area before.<sup>60</sup> Also, the samebys no longer have the same degree of control over who hunts and when and where they hunt. Sometimes you hear reindeer herders complain that this has on occasion disturbed their herding.

The day in August when both the new Sami Parliament law and the new "small game hunting" regulation were passed by the Swedish Parliament, and while the then Sami minister Per Unkel stood on the podium to declare this historical moment, a group of protesting Sami, yoiking and waving the Sami flag, had to be removed by the security guards. Both the Sami Parliament and the new regulation concerning small game hunting had been prepared in the same bill. Sami organizations had pleaded for the two matters to be treated separately, but without success.

Beside the protests on the day of the passing of the small game hunting regulations and the Sami Parliament Act, other controversial protests had come even before this decision. In October, at an SSR extraordinary meeting all the speakers were very critical of the new bill (Prop.1992/93:32), and criticized the Government for exercising a colonial, anti-Sami behavior that was the worst they had witnessed in modern times (Vasara-Hammare 2005:45-46; see also Beach (1994:69). At that same meeting, one of the Sami politicians demonstratively went up, opened a door, stepped outside and, in front of the television cameras, set fire to the bill (Vasara-Hammare 2005:46). One delegate at the meeting expressed what everybody was thinking: the establishment of the new

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<sup>60</sup> Not only is it now more common for hunters that are not residents in Sweden to hunt in the area, many Sami that are not members in the samebys have now also been given a greater opportunity to get hunting permits. Persons that are residents of the mountain counties (*fjällänen*) have the opportunity to buy permits valid for a whole year, rather than buying day permits, as non-county residents must do. The reason behind this regulation is to promote local hunters.

Sami Parliament was being paid for by the loss of the exclusive rights to hunt and fish (Vasara-Hammare 2005:46). Still today “small game hunting” is a burning issue in Sami political life, and in the everyday life of many of the sameby members. Much of the criticism of the decision in 1992 is still intact. There have been a few attempts to (re)strengthen the samebys’ control over the small game hunting (in the Ammarnäs area and in Tåssåsen’s sameby) but not on a broad scale (see Sandström 2008; Johansson 1994; see also homepage<sup>61</sup>).

Criticism has also been directed against the constitutional status of the Sami Parliament. It is both a state authority *and* a publicly elected body. As an authority it has to follow the laws and regulations stipulated by the Government, and this has in some ways restrained the Parliament from emphasizing issues of autonomy and self-governance. For example, it is impossible for an authority to sue the Government. This means that there is no scope for the Sami Parliament to challenge the Government’s Sami policies in court (Orton & Beach 1998).

In the beginning, the Parliament had few responsibilities and duties. Its main purpose was to manage Sami cultural issues (prop. 1992/93:32). The duties of the Sami Parliament have since then gradually been extended. For example, recently the Sami Parliament took over the responsibility for reindeer herding issues from the ministry of agriculture (prop. 2005/2006:86).

The Sami Parliament has been active in the Laponian process to a certain extent, formally as a body that is charged with submitting review statements, but also informally by following the Laponian process and, in periods, sending representatives to the local samebys’ Laponia meetings. Some Sami Parliament politicians have on occasion served as unofficial consultants and discussion partners to the sameby representatives.

## Examples of conflicts in the area before Laponia

The ethnic mobilization of the Sami living in Jokkmokk and Gällivare region did not start with Laponia. Even if the Laponian process came to introduce some new elements to the mobilization and the ongoing political and ethnic struggle, there have been several clashes between state authorities and local Sami (sometimes in collaboration with non-Sami) in this area. I will here exemplify this by giving an account of two separate events, previously described by Beach (1981: 416ff).

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.ripjakt.se/>

The first example revolves around a teachers' strike at the Sami Folk High School<sup>62</sup> in Jokkmokk. The background to the conflict was that the school, which used to be a missionary school, found itself in financial difficulties in the late 1960s. They also had trouble recruiting a sufficient number of Sami students. Therefore, in 1968 the school opened its doors to non-Sami students and, in 1972 the operation was taken over by a school board consisting of two Sami organizations and the municipality of Jokkmokk. In brief, the control over the contents and design of the courses came to be in the hands of ethnic Swedes rather than Sami. In the school there was a fraction of a politically active Sami group that criticized this. There was also tension between different Sami constellations among the Sami students. Some of the Sami students from Kautokeino in Norway thought the Jokkmokk Sami were too "Swedish friendly."

Many Native Jokkmokk Saamis feel that the school has been taken over by northern Saamis. These have upon occasion shown themselves to be quite arrogant in their relations with Jokkmokk Saamis. Jokkmokk Saamis have been criticized for their desire to preserve their dialect. They have sometimes been ridiculed for being ideologically soft and friendly to Swedes. In the lunch-room, it could happen that the Saamis at one table would get up and move to another table if a Swedish student tried to join them. A Saami boy who began dating a Swedish girl was ostracized to such an extent that he finally felt that he had to leave the school. (Beach 1981:416-417)

This gives us a picture of the harsh attitude at the school at that occasion, and also an interesting insight into the different groups and fractions of Sami that existed.<sup>63</sup> In 1978, two vacant office positions were filled by two southern, non-Sami speaking Sami individuals. As a protest all Sami language teachers went on strike. Many Sami living in Jokkmokk were outraged by the teachers' action. Many Sami in the southern parts of Sápmi have not spoken Sami in their families for generations. Should they therefore be considered less Sami? The Sami language *was* important, but could surely not be the decisive criteria for employment, many argued. The strike was interpreted as a "Kautokeino action" to outmaneuver the south Sami and make the northern Sami position stronger.<sup>64</sup> Beach

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<sup>62</sup> This is the same school that is now called the Sami Educational Centre. I will have reason to come back to this setting in chapter 4.

<sup>63</sup> Still there are many different wills, attitudes, perceptions and political goals among different Sami groupings, throughout the Sami community. In some ways, Lapponia came to be an example of the opposite, and the significance of "speaking with one voice" was acknowledged.

<sup>64</sup> There was already tension between "North Sami" and "Lule Sami" groups in Jokkmokk. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the nation states' (Sweden, Norway and Finland-Russia)

(1981:417) describes that the conflict got out of hand and soon came to involve many side issues, but on a general level the “Kautokeino group” interpreted the conflict as a Sami-Swedish confrontation, while the “Jokkmokk group” thought of it as an internal Sami struggle for power. It took several weeks for the turmoil to calm down.

The second example also comes from the 1970s, more precisely from 1977. The background to this conflict was that the municipal council in Jokkmokk had offered the State power board (*Vattenfall*) Lake Sitojaure (within the borders of what today is Lapponia) for damming. The State power board had been an important employer in the region for many years, and its presence had a positive financial effect on the whole region. However, the population was decreasing and the municipal politicians thought they had to do something to secure jobs and finances for the community. However, the damming would be more or less catastrophic for many of the herders in the area, especially herders from Sirkas sameby. Grazing land would be lost, both because of flooding and of new roads being built. Further, some of the herders’ summer villages would be put under water, as would important archeological sites. Fishing, which was and still is an important substantial income for many families, would be negatively affected. The politicians would stress that the income that the building of the dam would buy the community the time they needed in order to create new permanent jobs and save the community as a whole. But herders realized that these were indeed words that they had heard before, and they had yet to see those promises fulfilled (Beach 1981:422). Many different groups of people, of different nationalities, rallied with the local herders to protest. And here, contrary to what happened at the Folk High School, the Sami community seems to have been united in its resistance. A campaign was started, led by local people and representatives from the Swedish Tourism Association and the Swedish Society for the

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borders were defined. A consequence of this was that Russia closed its borders to Norway and Sweden in several sequences. Norway and Sweden were also protective of their borders to prevent grazing land to be utilized by Sami who were formally not citizens in their nation state. As the traditional grazing routes were cut off to the east, the pressure on the winter grazing areas around Kautokeino in Norway increased. This was an untenable situation, and many Sami migrated, or were later forced by the authorities to move, further south. Many of them settled in the Jokkmokk area, and since then there have been reindeer herding families of both North Sami and Lule Sami origin active in the local samebys. Naturally, conflicts emerged between the Sami groups, not least since they pursued different herding techniques. Still today a split between these two groups is discernable in the Sami community in Jokkmokk and beyond. For a more detailed analysis of the migration and forced relocation of the North Sami families, see Beach 1981:121ff; Lundmark 2002:126ff; Lehtola 2004:36-37.

Protection of Nature,<sup>65</sup> that was called “Not Another Drop” (*Inte en droppe till*), and that reached national attention in the media. Even the Government’s own investigation pointed out the fact that the area was in need of the highest degree of protection and opposed the project (SOU 1976:28; Beach 1981:422). In the end, the municipality politicians had to give up their suggested plans. Beach explains:

The Sirkas herder Henrik Kuhmunen, who had for 11 years, at the behest of the municipal authorities, driven his reindeer caravan through the grounds of the Winter Fair to please tourists, was one of those whose summer home would be flooded, should Sitojaure be dammed, Kuhmunen, his family and his reindeer went on strike during the Fair of 1977, and in the place of the caravan there came a big, sign-carrying crowd of marchers, consisting of herders and non-herding Saamis from Norway, Sweden and Finland, with a large following of conservationists, local Jokkmokk people and even tourists from the south. Soon afterwards, the head spokesman for the Jokkmokk municipal authority, Sven-Erik Törnqvist, resigned his post and the Sitojaure issue was shelved (for the time being) (...) (Beach 1981:423)

These two examples provided by Beach point to the “shifting alliances of different factions of the Jokkmokk community” (1981:423), but they also offer a background to the ethno-political rise that took place among the local samebys due to the appointment of Laponia. The conflict in the Laponian process is part of the longstanding relationship between the Sami community and the state authorities on a general level. More narrowly, it is part of an ongoing ethno-political struggle for the reindeer herding Sami in this particular area. Some elements were new in the Laponian conflict, but the core of the issue has historical and social causes.

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<sup>65</sup> In Swedish *Svenska Naturskyddsföreningen* (SNF).

### 3 The World Heritage Convention

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Places as unique and diverse as the wilds of East Africa's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and the Baroque cathedrals of Latin America make up our world's heritage.

What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.<sup>66</sup>

These are the first words that meet the eye on the World Heritage homepage, and they say a lot about the background to and the thoughts behind the convention itself. Exceptional natural and/or cultural phenomena are to be protected as evidence of the multiplicity of human life on earth. As this chapter will show the Convention is an example of how the international community has responded to the growing globalization of our time, or, at least, to the assumed consequences of that globalization. The Convention further emphasizes the importance of our past and the significance of the cultural and natural diversity of the world and aims at protecting the varieties of human culture and pristine landscapes that are otherwise feared to be damaged or lost. The focus on specific cultural phenomena and unique natural landscapes resonates with identity processes in this "global" era. As the world around us seems to be changing (sometimes too fast) the protected sites become testimonies of our cultural diversity, of our past, and of our roots. For peoples and local communities directly involved in the different protected World Heritage sites, the appointment often comes to confirm and strengthen the exclusivity of their culture, their history, or the landscape where they live. Often, the establishment of a World Heritage site increases the level of interest in a community for the local history and cultural distinctiveness (Turtinen 2006:64). It might also influence how this history and cultural distinct-

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<sup>66</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>

iveness is shaped and portrayed. As such, the Convention is directly linked to the question of identity politics in the world today. This will be discussed more in detail later on in this chapter.

Another issue that will be addressed is the fact that World Heritage sites are not only thought of as being protected *on behalf* of all the people in the world. The Convention also stipulates a collective responsibility for the protection of these sites.<sup>67</sup> Caring for these heritages and maintaining them intact is our shared duty, according to the Convention. The shared duty means that the national authorities no longer have the sole responsibility for the protection of these sites and areas. There is now also an international interest in the management and integrity of these sites. To some extent, then, the influence of the national level has been reduced, and there is now a “global eye” watching over the World Heritage sites that potentially can exercise a certain degree of influence on how these sites are managed, if not constitutionally, then at least from a moral standpoint. This lays the groundwork for a reinforced local-global connection that, as will be shown in the chapters to come, strengthens the possibility for local peoples (in this case the local Sami) to make their claims heard in an international context.

This chapter will go deeper into the motives behind the World Heritage Convention. What is the history of the Convention, and how does it affect the appointed sites today? But I will start with a brief introduction on the World Heritage Organization as a whole and some of its administrative structure.

## Background

When UNESCO was created in 1948, one of its main objectives was to safeguard the natural and cultural heritages of the world. In 1972 UNESCO presented “The Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,”<sup>68</sup> or “The World Heritage Convention,” as it is commonly called, and it soon became popular among nation states around the world, first and foremost among countries in North America and Europe. By January 2009, 186 countries had ratified the convention, making it one of the more popular and widespread conventions throughout the UN system. The aim of the convention is to establish a list of the most exceptional cultural and natural heritages in the

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<sup>67</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

<sup>68</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

world that are in need of protection. This list is called the *World Heritage List* and the properties inscribed here are seen as outstanding examples of their kind in an international perspective, and so valuable that they ought to be preserved for generations to come. Although still rooted in the desire to preserve “typical” cultural sites or nature areas on a national level, in the World Heritage vocabulary, the inscribed sites are unique to all mankind, and the obligation to preserve these sites for future generations is therefore seen as a collective responsibility.

At the core of the World Heritage Organization is the *World Heritage Committee*. The Committee consists of 21 of the state parties that have ratified the Convention. The state parties on the committee are elected by the *General Assembly* (constituted by all the ratifying state parties) and are usually changed every four years. The country holding the chair of the Committee is changed every year. The Committee holds yearly sessions where they discuss issues under their mandate, such as the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, the financial situation of the World Heritage Fund and how the state parties are to assist in economic matters. At these sessions the Committee also has the responsibility to officially decide on the inscription of new sites on the list. The applications have however always been prepared and evaluated by the applying nation states and by other organizations that work in close cooperation with the World Heritage Organization. Further, the Committee is responsible for examining reports on the status of different sites, and can also decide if and when a site will be put on the *List of World Heritage in Danger*. They can also, although this is extremely rare, delete inscribed sites from the World Heritage List. Before any of the state parties are allowed to put a site up for official inscription before the Committee, they must put it up on a *Tentative List* at least one year in advance. This list consists of inventories of possible sites that each country manages on their own, although there is a standardized form for how to go about this, supplied by the World Heritage Organization.<sup>69</sup> Each country has its own tentative list, but they are all displayed on the World Heritage homepage.<sup>70</sup> Currently, 164 nation states together have submitted close to 1500 sites to the tentative list.

The World Heritage Committee is monitoring the management and status of the sites mainly by requiring two types of reports from the state parties concerning each site. The first type of report is the *periodic reporting* which every country has to submit concerning each site. This is

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<sup>69</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/>

<sup>70</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/>

done every sixth year (Turtinen 2006:65-66; see also World Heritage homepage<sup>71</sup>). In a set template the responsible national authority has to declare how the site is managed and if it lives up to the justification of the World Heritage status. Sweden<sup>72</sup> submitted the first periodic reporting concerning Lapponia in 2006.

The World Heritage Secretariat, the evaluation bodies, or other sectors within the World Heritage or UNESCO organization can also command a second type of reporting, called a *reactive monitoring*.<sup>73</sup> In comparison to the periodic reporting which aims at systematically drawing a regional and global picture of the status of the World Heritage sites, the reactive monitoring is more targeted towards specific sites, and especially sites that are considered to be under some kind of threat (Turtinen 2006:66). The World Heritage Committee then evaluates these reports and decides if action should be taken to strengthen the status of the site. It is as a result of these reports that the Committee can decide to inscribe sites on the "Danger List."

*The World Heritage Centre* or *The Secretariat* was established in 1992 and is today the administrative hub of everything that goes on within the World Heritage Organization. The Secretariat organizes the annual sessions, helps the state parties with the preparation of new sites, updates databases, develops teaching materials and public information, and also organizes various seminars and workshops.

There are three advisory bodies that are linked to the World Heritage Organization: The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). The two first organizations help the committee to evaluate proposed sites, while ICCROM mainly provides advice on how to preserve and conserve the sites that are already on the list. The evaluations of the nominated sites address, among other things, to what extent they live up to the Convention's standards of *authenticity* and *integrity*. Authenticity applies to cultural sites and refers to the nominated site's form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques, and management systems; location and setting; language and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feel-

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<sup>71</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/118/>

<sup>72</sup> In Sweden, the National Heritage Board and the Environmental Protection Agency have a general commission from the Government to handle matters concerning the World Heritage sites. The National Heritage Board was responsible for writing Lapponia's first periodic report.

<sup>73</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/173/>

ing; and other internal and external factors (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2008:32). It is further stated in this document that:

Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2008:32).

However, the definition and application of the concept of Authenticity have been debated within the World Heritage organization and are today given a flexible interpretation frame that allows different cultural understandings of the term to be applied (Turtinen 2006:61).

Integrity, on the other hand, is a concept used to evaluate the status of both natural and cultural sites (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2008:32), but tends to mainly be used to evaluate natural sites (comp. Turtinen 2003:61). Here it is the “wholeness and intactness” of the nominated site that is in focus. It is stated that:

Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the property: a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value; b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property’s significance; c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

This should be presented in a statement of integrity. (Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention 2008:33)

It has been noticed by Turtinen that the use of the concepts like *integrity* and *authenticity* demonstrates how deeply rooted the very thought behind the World Heritage Convention is in a Western mode of thought (Turtinen 2006:61). These terms have their origin in a Western epistemological realm, and can be seen as closely connected to modernity. The use of these concepts is an expression of the search for the undamaged, the untouched, and the genuine (Turtinen 2006:61). This is undoubtedly a major problem for the Convention. It proclaims to take on a global approach but is still very much entrenched in a Eurocentric, Western understanding of preserving and conserving cultural and natural heritage. In this respect it does not differ from other organizations within the UN system; the UN system as a whole can be said to be a Western invention and structures according to Western norms. However, the basic Eurocentric constitution

of the World Heritage convention has made it less popular in non-Western oriented parts of the world. This is a fact that has made the World Heritage Committee emphasize the importance of including more non-Western sites on the list. This will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Let me first say a few words about the *Operational Guidelines*. Before 2005 there were two sets of criteria in the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention which regulated if the nominated site was a Cultural or a Natural Site. There was also a possibility of using both sets of criteria in a nomination, thus making it a *mixed site*. Every two or three years the criteria in the Operational Guidelines are up for review and revision by the Committee. Since 2005, though, the previous sets of criteria have merged into only one category, consisting of both culture-based and nature-based criteria. This development originates from an extended discussion within the World Heritage Committee, as well as within UNESCO in general, during the last decade or so, that has been aiming at diminishing the dichotomy between “Nature” and “Culture” and instead recognizing the link between these two concepts. In fact, this had been one of the main ideas behind the World Heritage Convention from the beginning: the human interaction with nature and the *fundamental need to preserve the balance between the two*.<sup>74</sup> However, when Laponia was given World Heritage status, the two sets of criteria were still at work separately. According to the Operational Guidelines at work in 1996, cultural heritage should:

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius; or
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design, or
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or has disappeared, or
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble, or landscape, which illustrates a significant stage or significant stages in human history, or

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<sup>74</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/>

- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture or cultures, especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change, or
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with ideas or with beliefs, or with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.<sup>75</sup>

And natural criteria should:

- (i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features, or
- (ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological or biological processes marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals,
- (iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional beauty and aesthetic importance, or
- (iv) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.<sup>76</sup>

Being nominated in both categories, Lapponia was officially appointed a mixed World Heritage site under the natural criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) and under the cultural criteria (iii) and (v).

Lapponia gained its World Heritage status during what has been described as a “paradigm shift” from emphasizing the preservation of only lost cultural traditions and values to the inclusion also of living cultures and values (Dahlström 2003:230). This shift was a response to criticism both within and outside UNESCO of the use and definitions of the term “culture.” Initially, when the convention was written, the bias towards targeting the more tangible cultural artifacts was evident. The use of the word “culture” in the convention was seen as rather inflexible and rigid

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<sup>75</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide96.pdf>, page 7

<sup>76</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide96.pdf>, page 12-13

with clear historical connotations, not leaving room for more intangible inclusions (Turunen 2006:71). In the World Heritage convention text from 1972, “Cultural Heritage” is defined as follows:

monuments: architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

groups of buildings: groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;

sites: works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from the reference to ethnological or anthropological points of view when it comes to cultural sites, the definition above leaves out cognitive or intangible aspects of “culture.” But the gradual tendency to include more immaterial cultural values has to a certain extent caused the Committee to change the cultural criteria in the Operational Guidelines in that direction. However, it might be argued that there remains an artifactual tendency in the cultural criteria even today, and it seems to have been difficult to distance the applications of culturally based sites from the archaeological or historically biased versions that defined “cultural heritage” in 1972 to inclusions of more intangible cultural values. The need for a more flexible interpretation of cultural heritage has led UNESCO to launch a new convention called *The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*.<sup>78</sup> It was adopted in October 2003 and is supposed to work as a complementary sister-convention to the World Heritage Convention, thereby attempting to involve more intangible or cognitive aspects of “culture” into the “preservation business.”

Related to the discussions within UNESCO to open up for the possibility of protecting more intangible values is the launching of a special category of criteria that works parallel to the purely natural or cultural criteria. From 1992 onwards there is a category called *Cultural Landscape*,

<sup>77</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>, article 1.

<sup>78</sup> For more information on this particular convention, see the official website: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?lg=EN&pg=home>

which has its own set of criteria and aims at emphasizing the interrelation between human activity and Nature. In this respect *Cultural Landscape* can be interpreted as a *mixed site*, since it comprises elements of what the World Heritage Convention defines as both Nature and Culture. Interesting with the category of Cultural Landscape is also that here, the continuing use of the land is seen as a prerequisite for good maintenance of the landscape. To allow cultural change and the avoidance of “nostalgia” in the conservation of these landscapes is seen as a requirement when evaluating nominated sites in this category (Saltzman 2001:222). Interesting to note here is that Lapponia was actually recommended by the advisory bodies to be nominated as a Cultural Landscape rather than a mixed site, but the SNHB and SEPA (the Swedish national authorities responsible) did not agree to this, for reasons discussed later in the text.

The World Heritage Committee has long been troubled by the fact that most World Heritage sites are situated in the Northern hemisphere and that sites in the Southern hemisphere, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa are underrepresented on the list. Part of the reason for launching the category of Cultural Landscape was to make nominations applicable in areas to date less represented on the list. The thought was that non-Western cultures and societies, both historical and now living, could be nominated more easily. For example, indigenous peoples and their culture could, with the new category, be considered on the list, and their connection to the land and their “traditional knowledge” could be acknowledged (Titchen 1995:214 in Turtinen 2006:71-72). In 1994 an attempt to spread the convention further, the Committee launched a project called the *Global Strategy*. Its aim was to give priority to those parts of the world which until then had had only a few sites on the list and to continue to reduce the Western dominance. Part of the objectives of the *Global Strategy* was also to increase the number of sites based on natural or mixed criteria. Before the *Global Strategy* was launched in 1994, 304 out of a total number of 410 properties on the World Heritage List were purely cultural sites. Further, it was stated that elitist European monuments and architecture were over-represented, “...whereas, all living cultures, and especially ‘traditional cultures’, were underrepresented.”<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy/>

## The global eye – shared heritage sites, shared responsibility

Turtinen emphasizes the fact that the Convention was not established in a vacuum, but must be seen as a result of the increased internationalization of political and social arenas that took place from the 1960s (Turtinen 2006:49). This was when Earth could be seen from space for the first time and the image of a small planet soaring in the endless universe became a very strong symbol of the fragility of the planet and of the connectedness of its inhabitants. The politics of the 1960s brought together the struggle for social justice and international solidarity with an emergent ecological science generating the notion that Earth was an entity worth studying, managing, and fighting for (Tsing 2000: 331). In environmentalist circles it now became important to emphasize the interrelatedness of the different biotopes on the globe and how important it is that we, together, take responsibility for the environment (Elichirigoity 1999 in Turtinen 2006:50.) The unity of the planet was emphasized, and the sites on the list were to be seen as important to everybody, and the responsibility to care for these expressions was to be a collective task. An extract from the very beginning of the World Heritage Convention declares these aims clearly:

*Considering* that the existing international conventions, recommendations and resolutions concerning cultural and natural property demonstrate the importance, for all the peoples of the world, of safeguarding this unique and irreplaceable property, to whatever people it may belong,

*Considering* that parts of the cultural or natural heritage are of outstanding interest and therefore need to be preserved as part of the world heritage of mankind as a whole,

*Considering* that, in view of the magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening them, it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value, by the granting of collective assistance which, although not taking the place of action by the State concerned, will serve as an efficient complement thereto,<sup>80</sup>

The global approach and the emphasis on preserving sites for the good of all mankind and the sought collective responsibility of these sites meant that parts of the conservation regime came to be situated on an interna-

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<sup>80</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

tional level, rather than being solely a national concern. To a certain degree, then, the agency of the nation state in regards to the sites on the list has been transferred to an international level.

UNESCO is constituted by its member states and has no capacity to work as an independent political body. Therefore, the World Heritage Convention is not a legally binding document. However, it is possible for the World Heritage Organization to exert considerable pressure on the ratifying states to follow the agreed recommendations, if there is a majority for this among the member states. It is here that local groups can seek support for their aspirations or predicaments in relation to a World Heritage nomination or implementation, and take advantage of the “link” between people at the local level (affected by, or responsible for, the protected site) and the international community, (represented by the World Heritage Organization). In certain regards, this link can be used to short-circuit the nation state level, and more immediate communications can take place that do not necessarily involve national or regional authorities. This does not mean that nation states are left unheard or disregarded in this constellation. But rather than being an affair that mainly originates from, and is handled by, national conservation authorities and is then simply implemented in different locations, the “interference” of a World Heritage appointment means that there is a third (international) participant in the protection scheme apart from the national authorities and people affected by the actual protected site itself.

There are, however, examples where World Heritage implementations work to reinforce national policies and control at the expense of local ethno-political goals. Hevia (2001), for instance, describes how the state authorities in China “used” the appointments of four cultural World Heritage sites to reinforce the official policies that the Tibetan culture was to be preserved under the name of “multiculturalism,” and thereby further to dismiss the Tibetan people’s goals for autonomy. This example illustrates how tightly linked the international World Heritage phenomenon is to the more common national endeavors to preserve and conserve, both culture and nature of “typical” character, as a way to shape and uphold the “nation” as an imagined community (Anderson 1993). Cultural heritages and the preservation of natural areas have long been of national concern (Löfgren 1989). Rather than being a new “idea,” the World Heritage phenomenon is very much a part of the same old national principals, and can best be described as an internationalization of the earlier national heritage politics (Turtinen 2006:46). Nevertheless, what is new is the fact that there is a “global eye” and a direct link between the local site and the

international level that has the potential to be activated, a link that, even as a potential, proved to be significant for the local Sami in Lapponia.

In other words, with the implementation of a World Heritage nomination, people living in or close to the protected sites have the possibility of enjoying a stronger position vis-à-vis national and regional authorities, a position that they often have not had before. This is one of the important outcomes that the World Heritage status brings to a designated site: the shared collective responsibility of the inscribed property and the direct link between the local and the global arenas. Another incipient effect, besides the short-circuiting of the national level, is new *trans-local* connections occurring between different World Heritage sites, and between specific groups within different World Heritage sites. For instance, representatives from both Sami and local authorities in the case of Lapponia have taken an interest in the development of other structurally similar sites in Australia and New Zealand. In Tongariro, as well as in Kakadu and Uluru Kata-Tjuta, the integration of indigenous ideas and ambitions into the management has come further, and it is interesting for the persons engaged in the development of Lapponia to learn from, and be inspired by, the experiences drawn from these sites.<sup>81</sup>

## Local implementations

What happens, then, when the “global idea” of World Heritage is to be implemented locally? Naturally, the answer to this question differs, and there are as many stories to tell as there are sites on the List. Nonetheless, on a general note one can conclude that it is seldom an uncomplicated or straightforward procedure, and this is especially true if there is a minority or a “living culture” somehow involved in the process. In order to capture and express the aim of the convention, to protect all these different natural and cultural varieties of the world, the World Heritage Convention, like

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<sup>81</sup> The formal role of the indigenous group in each of these sites looks different but is regulated by the management plans. All the management plans can be found on the Web. For Tongariro, see:

<http://www.doc.govt.nz/publications/about-doc/role/policies-and-plans/national-park-management-plans/tongariro-national-park-management-plan/> (and also the latest initiative to towards formal joint management: <http://www.doc.govt.nz/upload/documents/about-doc/role/policies-and-plans/010-tongariro-taupo-cms-kaupapa-maori.pdf>), for Uluru-Kata Tjuta:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/uluru/pubs/management-plan.pdf>, and for Kakadu:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/parks/publications/kakadu/pubs/management-plan.pdf>.

all other such large-scale projects, consists of simplistic and unifying concepts and wordings (Scott 1998:13; Turtinen 2006:58). But when these wordings are to be realized in the different sites, and they have to be filtered and interpreted through the historical, economic, social and political context that exists at each particular location. Here, the relations between local actors are important for the outcome of the implementation. Different local actors have different interests and different agendas, and their mutual history and existing relations often play an important role when trying to realize a World Heritage appointment. Old conflicts and tense situations might flare up, and when there is a minority involved in the process, and particularly if it is an indigenous group, ethno-political issues that go far beyond the actual World Heritage appointment as such often become part of the discussion on how to manage and profile the site. In other words, each World Heritage site becomes a mirror of what the constellation of actors and interests is able, or willing, to create out of the malleable vocabulary of the World Heritage Convention.

The evaluations and justifications of the sites inscribed on the list are also the subject of this malleable language. This is the global community's way of categorizing the heterogeneous local cultural and natural particularities into the World Heritage framework. But in this uniform language lies also an inclination to emphasize the historical dimensions of the sites, their authenticity and integrity. In some cases this uniform language acquires formative influence on the specific site and becomes part of the local agenda and the local interpretation and presentation of the site. Ronström (2001) notes, for instance, that an extensive restoration was made in the medieval city of Visby (on the island of Gotland in Sweden) in order for it to look older and more authentic before it was nominated to the World Heritage List. In fact, according to Ronström, this was a requirement that the evaluating officer at ICOMOS stipulated in order to support its appointment (Ronström 2001:64; see also Turtinen 2006:26). Gjestrum (1999) writes on a similar note about the World Heritage of Røros in Norway, and describes how it has become more common after the appointment to rebuild parts of the city in order to make it look older and more genuine. The reason is of course to make it fit the historical values that are emphasized in the World Heritage justification. In this way, argues Gjestrum, the World Heritage creates a reinvention of the traditional buildings, or rather an invention based on the perception of how the city looked historically. This has led him to point out that cultural heritages are first and "foremost a social construction, something that serves a variety of interests in our time, and should not be seen as something unchangeable or of having a timeless cultural value"

(Gjestrum 1999:47). Cultural heritages are formed and created to fit our image of the authentic and the past.

The inclination towards an historical focus is also a significant element in Lapponia's justification (cited in Chapter 1). The fact that the reindeer herding practiced today is declared worth protecting as the "last and unquestionable largest and best preserved examples of an area of transhumance, involving summer grazing by large reindeer herds, a practice that was widespread at one time and which dates back to an early stage in human economic and social development,"<sup>82</sup> is problematic and has led some of the herders in the area to question, initially at least, the consequences of the appointment. The stereotypical picture of the reindeer herding Sami as an anti-modern, nature-loving nomad is strong. But this is a representation that Sami people in general do not wish to reinforce. The implicit message that the herding that is conducted today is done in the same way as it was done in an "early stage in human economic and social development" is to a great extent exaggerated. With the high-tech equipment that is needed today in order to make the herding industry economically sustainable, it is doubtful if it could be compared to the herding that went on at "an early stage" in human history.

At a conference once I talked to a UNESCO representative about the inclination to overemphasize the past in reference to indigenous peoples and how they often are represented as pre-modern. The woman I was talking to was involved both in World Heritage issues with the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This meant that she had worked in close cooperation with indigenous groups at an international level, not least with representatives of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. She agreed that this indeed was a strong tendency. In her mind, however, it was very important to acknowledge that all cultures must be allowed to change. She explained that it must be clear that when indigenous societies or a particular cultural phenomena come under protection of a UNESCO convention, this does not mean that they will be "frozen in time," like snapshots of a distant past. On the contrary, it is important not to "mummify" cultures or cultural expressions.

Even if it is not the wish of UNESCO as a whole and not the intention of the World Heritage Convention to "mummify" culture, on occasion there is still an emphasis on the traditional and the historical dimension of the cultural criteria under protection, even the so-called living cultures. The very motivation behind the World Heritage Convention, namely to preserve and conserve the sites, is in many instances an incitement to

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<sup>82</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774>

highlight historical values and displays rather than change and development. These attitudes and tendencies are often elusive, however, and more found between the lines than in the open. This is in fact true for most things written and said about Laponia as well. Nevertheless, there is one quotation where the “modernity” of the reindeer herders is noted in negative wordings. In an evaluation protocol concerning the Sjaunja-application (see Chapter 2) made by IUCN, the proposed site was recommended to be revised, with more attention to be paid to the potential threats to the integrity of the environmental sustainability of the area. The report recommended:

...a review of the existing impacts on the natural values of the area as a result of intensified reindeer husbandry and commercial fishery operations. There appears to be overstocking of reindeer and the use of modern technology (helicopters, motor bikes, *cellular phones*, etc.) may well be threatening the sustainability of the resources and could be an issue when dealing with the conditions of integrity for World Heritage sites (IUCN 1990, my italics).

Too many reindeer or motor bikes can certainly have an impact on the environment, but how a cellular phone could constitute a threat to the environment is hard to see. One could presume that it is not to the environment that the cellular phone is a threat but to the stereotypical image of how a reindeer herding Sami should act. Use of a mobile phone obviously does not square with someone carrying out an activity that goes back to “an early stage in human economic and social development.” The representation of the Sami as “eco-friendly” was something that the representatives of the samebys had to negotiate throughout the Laponian process, and this is something that I will come back to later in the thesis.

## On the motives behind the World Heritage Convention

As explained earlier, the perception of the world as a unity, the common home of all mankind, was an important inducement when the World Heritage Convention was created. Turtinen argues that the World Heritage convention, like other similar international initiatives, is ordering and uniting the world by creating not only the “problems” but also the actors

and the solutions. In this way, they bring meaning and structure to their own agenda (Turtinen 2006:53).<sup>83</sup>

Even if the “global era” is to a certain degree the source of enthusiasm and positive emotions, it also gives rise to fears of cultural homogeneity and the loss of local cultural varieties (Hannertz 1996; Featherstone 1990). And it is here that the most immediate motive behind the World Heritage Convention is to be found; it is very much created out of the fear of losing local variations and cultural and natural particularities. The perception that there is something new about our era, that our increased interconnectedness is threatening the multiplicity of human cultures and natural environments on the planet, seems to be quite widespread throughout the world today. Most contemporary anthropologists, however, oppose the most apocalyptic scenarios when it comes to the homogenization of culture (cf. Hall 1991; Friedman 1994 and Tsing 2000). “Globalization,” as such, does not automatically mean that the world will turn into a cultural melting pot.

Some researchers point out that globalization as such is not a new phenomenon; global connections have existed for a long time in human history (Hall 1991:18; Friedman 1994:239). But there is something about the intensification in communication that we experience today with the boost in technology and infrastructure that feeds the feeling of homogenization, and, as Tsing (2000:333) points out, there is an inherent futuristic trait in the concept of “globalization” itself that contributes to exaggerating the significance of “the global era.” Our “global era” is perceived as potentially leading to cultural uniformity, and the emphasis on cultural diversity works as a reaction against the “all power-full global force” (Tsing 2000:339).

Contrary to such views, the World Heritage Convention is based on the idea that globalization is a threat to cultural diversity. In the Convention it is stated that:

*Noting* that the cultural heritage and the natural heritage are increasingly threatened with destruction not only by the traditional causes of decay, but also by changing social and economic conditions which aggravate the situation with even more formidable phenomena of damage or destruction,

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<sup>83</sup> Nonetheless, it is also clear from Turtinen’s study that the ideological initiatives of the Convention are not always what drive involved state representatives and officials within the World Heritage Organization. Behind the façade are also more practical and pragmatic objectives. Turtinen (2006:19) sees shifting agendas, inconsistent viewpoints, and personal or national interests at work under the unifying surface.

*Considering* that deterioration or disappearance of any item of the cultural or natural heritage constitutes a harmful impoverishment of the heritage of all the nations of the world,<sup>84</sup>

The world is changing, and cultural variety is, according to the Convention, under threat of disappearing as a result. Furthermore, the loss of *any* local heritage is perceived of in the Convention text as a loss for us all. It is symptomatic that the unifying perspective of the Convention (losing cultural diversity is a loss for us all) is fused with the diversifying perspective (local cultural and natural expressions must be valued and protected). We are, in Robertson's words:

witnesses to — and participants in — a massive, twofold process involving the interpenetration of the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism [...] (Robertson 1991:73).

In the justification for Lapponia (see Chapter 1), this dual perspective is also visible. Besides the natural beauty and strong biological diversity of the area, it is also noted that the Sami reindeer herding tradition in the area is a *local* example of a *global* phenomenon, and as such it is important to humanity as a whole and has earned its place on the World Heritage List. The convention seems, simply put, to go global and local at the same time. Local cultures or cultural features are “globalized” when inscribed on the list, but somewhat paradoxically the main objective of this is to counteract the expected consequences of globalization itself (Nas 2002:142).

The globalization of the world has changed the dynamics of the relations between nation states, regional institutions, local peoples, and the international community (cf. Appadurai 1996). It has also been suggested that in this “new” situation the local and global arenas are strengthened at the expense of the nation state (Hall 1991:26-27). The power is shifting towards local and global institutions simultaneously. They are inevitably interconnected and can be seen as two parts constituting a whole. Robertson has even argued for the concept of “glocalization” to be used in order to emphasize the interconnectedness of “the global” and “the local” (Robertson 1995:40).<sup>85</sup>

Beach has argued that Sweden's entry into the European Union has meant that the Sami reindeer herders are burdened with yet another level

<sup>84</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> According to Robertson (1995:40), the term glocalization also puts focus on the importance of *space* in analyzing globalism. It is, according to him, usually only analyzed as a consequence of *time*; as a consequence of modernity rather than being tied to space as well.

of regulations. He suggests that parts of the decision-making process has moved further away from the local context, thus making it more difficult for the herders to have an impact on regulations that affect them and their livelihood (Beach 2000:95). Even if such consequences can be seen, the case of Lapponia shows that the interference of an international body like UNESCO, through the establishment of Lapponia, might have the opposite effect on the possibility for the local herders to have an impact on decisions that affect them and their traditional areas. For instance, many of the pro-indigenous propositions and conventions that are produced by the international community have been addressed by the local Sami reindeer herders to strengthen their claims in regards to Lapponia. And when dealing with an international arena, with representatives from UNESCO, for example, they generally find support for their wishes and objectives. In this way, the incorporation of the global context does not primarily pose a threat to the local herders but can rather be seen as a way of short-circuiting the national level and finding new spheres for communication and support.

Even though the appointment of a World Heritage site might be utilized by national authorities to work against local and minority aspirations (e.g. Hevia 2001), Lapponia is an example of how the World Heritage status creates a platform for communication where the voice of the nation state and its authorities is toned down on behalf of local and international voices. Local participation in nature conservation management and the rights of indigenous peoples are issues that are seen as highly significant in different international contexts (for instance, throughout the UN system and especially within UNESCO), and at this level there is generally a positive attitude towards these matters. And in regards to increased indigenous autonomy or increased local influence on protected areas, local communities seem to ally easily with the international level. Often, at least concerning these issues, the distance between the local and the global agendas might be considered less than the distance between national and local agendas. I think this is fruitful starting point when trying to understand the World Heritage phenomenon. On the one hand, it portrays the world as being one entity where local cultural expressions are seen as mere variations of human life, at the same time, the “universal” problems and solutions defined by the Convention are “particularized” by the different sites on the list, and they are seen as invaluable local cultural expressions. Particularism and universalism, globalism and localism are all created within the same discursive framework.

## The World Heritage Convention and the quest for identity

As discussed earlier, the properties that are inscribed on the list are considered by the World Heritage Committee to exemplify the best expressions of a cultural or natural monument, expression, or phenomenon that are representative for humanity at large. The sites are, in other words, the best in their class; or in their category as defined by the World Heritage Convention (Turtinen 2006:64). In other words, when the local Sami reindeer herding culture was recognized as a foundation for appointment of a World Heritage site, this meant that that particular cultural expression was the best example thereof in the world. Consequently, a hierarchical notion of *value* is inevitably connected to the World Heritage idea; some properties are evidently more worth saving than others and become emblems of genuineness and originality. This means that there is a great potential for local patriotism in connection with the World Heritage nominations (Turtinen 2006:64). To have the best example of a globally recognized cultural or natural expression is indeed something that many people representing World Heritage sites are proud of. The World Heritage status guarantees the uniqueness of the appointed site, and for some of the people who feel connected to this site it becomes an important building block in their identity production.

Nas has addressed the intrinsic link between the World Heritage phenomenon and the general search identity in the world today. Nas argues that:

... besides the conservation approach, which has merits of its own, UNESCO is addressing a more profound problem, namely, the search for identity in a changing world, where many communities are uprooted and searching for new certainties and worldviews. (Nas 2002:142)

Thus, the World Heritage Convention is not only uniting and organizing the changing world by defining both its problems and solutions (Turtinen 2006:43), but, in addition to that, it is very much involved in a “re-identification” that is going on today in our global world (Chow 1994:130-131; Ekholm-Friedman & Friedman 1995:134; MacDonald 1997:232; Wall 1999).

The tendency to include “living cultures” (and preferably indigenous communities) and their cultural expressions onto the list is intimately related to the identity process within the World Heritage framework (Wall 1999). Since the image of “the indigenous” is often assigned the role of contradicting the perception of the modern, global, destructive

way of living, they fit perfectly into the framework of the World Heritage Convention. Indigenous peoples become part of the cultural phenomena that are under threat of globalization and therefore entitled to be on the World Heritage List. Since “they” seem to entail what “we” no longer are (traditional, eco-friendly with stable societies), indigenous peoples become something that “we” can reflect ourselves in. From this we can create not only the image of “them” but also of “us” (Hall 1991:21; Conklin 1997:713). At some level we are all, indigenous and non-indigenous, participating in creating and maintaining the image of the “real” indigenous. On an abstract level the expectations of how a “real” indigenous should look, act, or behave might for someone who is indigenous himself or herself be freed of a stereotypical image to the same degree as for a non-indigenous person. However, for many of those who adhere to an indigenous identity, the stereotypical image can also feel restraining and narrow-minded. To negotiate with the image of the “real” indigenous and with different Sami emblems and images is something that most Sami have to do in different situations. This is part of the ongoing relationship with people from the majority population, the state authorities, other indigenous groups, and other Sami. Chapter 6 will offer more on this negotiation process and its significance in the unfolding of the developments around Lapponia.

The general perception of the stability and anti-modernism of indigenous communities is to a certain extent brought forward in the initiatives to target and market these communities as outstanding examples of specific pieces of human cultures and occupations, although they are often presented as remnants of the past. They become key elements in the identity process mentioned by Nas, as they serve to represent the opposite of the instability and modernism of the “global” era. Again, the justification for the Lapponian World Heritage site is one example where the reindeer herders’ way of life is defined as an example of a pre-historic way of life. In the beginning of the Lapponian process, many of the local Sami were worried that the historical connotation of the justification would mean that there would be stronger pressure on them to comply with a more low-tech, traditional kind of herding, or that they would be seen as eco-villains (compare Beach 1993; Beach 1997; Dahlström 2003:292) if they did not. At the same time the support for indigenous peoples from the international community was something they could use to gain political points and to strengthen their position contra the State as an indigenous community.

The eagerness to link indigenous peoples and nature goes far back in the history of the Western world (cf. Redford 1990; Ramos 1998:71).

And the willingness on the part of the international community to include local<sup>86</sup> and indigenous groups in nature conservation work today partly draws on old perceptions of these groups as “noble savages” and “natural conservationists.” However, it seems that the admiration and support for indigenous and local management decreases if these groups do not continue to behave as true natural conservationists or true anti-modern, anti-capitalist societies. Often indigenous communities and environmental organizations have common goals and cooperate, but frequently this cooperation runs into trouble when the indigenous group turns into eco-villains for some reason. Conklin and Graham (1995) and Conklin (1997) describe such a situation in their articles about the collaboration between Kayapó Indians and environmentalist organizations in Brazil. When they Kayapó stepped too far out of the framework of eco-morality and primitivism, the support from the environmentalists declined considerably.

In 2001 several indigenous groups organized an initiative for an indigenous interest group within the World Heritage apparatus. The organization was to be called WHIPCOE (World Heritage Indigenous Peoples Council of Experts) and was thought to act as an advisory body directly under the World Heritage Committee. WHIPCOE, however, was never realized due to the fact that a majority of member states were against such an organization and thought it better to look out for indigenous interests through the already established connections and platforms of the indigenous movement within the UN and UNESCO system. Whether it was because of the more political organization of indigenous groups in relation to the World Heritage structure or not, it is difficult to say, but the fact remains that no new mixed sites with a living indigenous culture as part of the appointment have been established after the WHIPCOE discussions. There are, nevertheless, a few sites “in the making” that include indigenous interests and where indigenous peoples are active in the nomination process. An example is Atikaki/Woodland Caribou/Accord First Nations (Pimachiowin Aki) in Ontario Canada.<sup>87</sup>

One might conclude that the World Heritage Committee, and maybe UNESCO in general, have had a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards indigenous peoples. One must bear in mind that UNESCO is an organization built upon the representatives of nation states. It can only reflect

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<sup>86</sup> The term “local” (peoples or communities) are most commonly used in international conventions and policies when discussing the need to re-distribute the power over management and control and to assure that other kinds of knowledge-systems besides conventional Western science is recognized. Minority groups, tribal peoples and indigenous peoples are usually groups that falls under this category.

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.whitefeatherforest.com/enterprise/unesco-world-heritage-site-project/>

nation state interests, even though these might be generalized to unified ideas. On the one hand, indigenous peoples' cultures are characterized, for the most part, as "traditional" and fit very well into the profile of cultural criteria worth protecting, thus according well with the spirit of the World Heritage Convention. On the other hand, the ethno-political aims and consequences of indigenous peoples' involvement in the Convention are more difficult to handle for UNESCO. Indigenous politics often deal with difficult and complex matters like land claims, levels of self-governance and the role of the Government and its authorities in indigenous affairs, and these are issues that the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO do not feel they have the mandate to interfere in. A UNESCO representative once explained to me that the World Heritage Convention, like other conventions, can never order nation states to do things, only recommend what should be done in order to fulfill the integrity of the justification and honor the spirit of the Convention. As such, the World Heritage Convention and the UNESCO is non-political. And the World Heritage Committee often seems careful in "taking sides" if or when a conflict between an indigenous group and a nation state appears. This is clear from an example that Turtinen (2006: 107ff) refers to that deals with the World Heritage site of Kakadu National Park in Australia. There, the Government had started to construct a uranium mine close to the borders of the site itself in the late 1990s. This was done so close to the border of the actual site that the integrity of the site itself was considered to be at risk. Being a mixed site that besides the natural criteria also included the culture of the local aboriginal groups meant that the Government was not only criticized by environmental groups but also by the indigenous community. Not only were the natural criteria at risk here but also the cultural criteria. One of the aboriginal groups in the area, the Mirrar, had a direct connection to the land where the mine was to be established. For the Mirrar people, the area was sacred, and establishing a mine would desecrate the area.<sup>88</sup> At an extra meeting of the World Heritage Committee in 1999, the issue was ventilated, and the Kakadu site was at risk of being put up on the List of World Heritages in Danger. A representative from the Mirrar group held an emotional speech to the committee where she urged them to take the Mirrar's opinion seriously and to help them stop the Government from using the mine. According to Turtinen, the Mirrar woman's speech made an impression. The consequences of the decisions made at the World Heritage Centre became real all of a sudden and a

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<sup>88</sup> During my own (brief) field trip to the area I also heard that it would in fact be dangerous to construct the mine. The spirits living in the area were considered dangerous and not to be tampered with.

glimpse of the every-day life of one of the many sites became visible to the members of the Committee and to the other officials and representatives gathered at the meeting. However, at the end of the day, the Mirrar's petition was considered by the Committee as only one interest among many from the Kakadu site (Turtinen 2006:111). The Committee decided finally to follow the Australian Government's line and did not put Kakadu up on the List of World Heritages Sites in Danger. The Committee was satisfied to hear that a dialogue had been commenced with the Mirrar people and that environmental concerns were being looked into. However, Kakadu continued to have the Committee's critical eye for quite some time and was up for discussion on other occasions after the extra meeting referred to above (Turtinen 2006:112).

Turtinen concludes that "the controversies around Kakadu National Park illustrate the very difficult roll held by the Committee, and the restricted possibilities that they have" (Turtinen 2006:113). The ratification of the Convention means to some degree that the sovereignty of the nation states is set aside. But if the Committee comes to decisions that challenge the will of the ratifying states, it simultaneously poses a threat to the very Convention itself. The Convention can only function as long as the ratifying states support it (Turtinen 2006:113-114). If the Committee would push the principles of the Convention too hard it could therefore have an opposite effect.

As the example of Kakadu and the Mirrar people show, for indigenous peoples involved in World Heritage sites matters like protecting and maintaining their lands and culture are intrinsically linked to the World Heritage appointment itself. And for them, the World Heritage appointment is inevitably linked to ethno-political issues. But how much can or would the World Heritage Committee really do in order support indigenous groups if they were put to test? The UNESCO organization is as a whole stands out as very pro-indigenous. In an official text that defines the association between UNESCO and indigenous peoples it is among other things said that:

Through its partnership with indigenous peoples, UNESCO seeks to support them in addressing the multiple challenges they face, while acknowledging their significant role in the world's cultural landscape.<sup>89</sup>

And further that:

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<sup>89</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=35393&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=35393&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

UNESCO's activities with indigenous peoples are framed by its missions to protect and promote cultural diversity, encourage intercultural dialogue and enhance linkages between culture and development. The organization is thus actively involved in implementing the Second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (2005-2014) which is intended to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous peoples in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health,<sup>90</sup>

With close to a glorifying approach, UNESCO, at a general level, declares its support for indigenous peoples. But, as the Kakadu case referred to above shows, it seems difficult for the World Heritage Committee to implement the grand words when many different interests and opinions are at stake. The Mirrar opinion is one of many for it to consider.

During a UNESCO conference in Tromsø in November 2004, I asked one of the UNESCO representatives there how she reacted to the fact that more and more indigenous groups are coming to UNESCO asking for help to improve their situation in some way. In fact, several indigenous groups with interest in different World Heritage sites had openly asked UNESCO for support during the conference. The representative replied that this was a sensitive matter, but generally UNESCO would not intervene in what could be defined as internal affairs of a particular nation state. However, the day after my conversation with the UNESCO woman, during one of the seminars, a delegate from the Efe people, from the Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo, stood up and confronted her with the same issue. Living within the borders of Okapi Wildlife Reserve in the Democratic Republic of Congo, a World Heritage site based on natural criteria, he asked what UNESCO could do to help his people, since they found themselves in a difficult situation. They felt that the forest was being logged in spite of the World Heritage status and their traditional lands, and way of life, were being threatened. The answer this time was a bit different. The UNESCO representative said that UNESCO can certainly try to help. They can, for instance, function as mediators between the nation states and different groups within its borders, especially if there is a situation where a culture or a natural area under UNESCO protection is being in danger of losing its integrity.

Quite possibly, this double message reflects the dilemma that UNESCO and the World Heritage Organization face at the moment. If they were to get more involved in indigenous affairs this could mean that they would take on a more political role, taking, for instance, a stance in

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<sup>90</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=35393&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=35393&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

matters regarding increased self-governance and better juridical support for land-rights. This would be a development that member states would be very reluctant to support. On the other hand, if they do not become more active in helping and supporting indigenous peoples, the integrity of the protected nature and culture could be at risk, and they could risk losing their self-proclaimed image as supporters of indigenous peoples' rights. But regardless of the ambivalence towards indigenous peoples' claim for support and influence, the fact remains that the image of them seems to fit superbly into the frames of the World Heritage Convention. The stereotypical "indigenous" is supposedly leading a life according to traditions and embodies both nature and culture, in other words they are in many ways the ultimate target for the Convention's preservation goals:

Despite these advances, indigenous peoples remain *particularly vulnerable to the impacts of globalisation and climate change*. Often victims of displacements, dispossession of their lands, or lack of access to basic social services, it has become increasingly difficult for them to transmit their distinctive knowledge, values and ways of life from one generation to the next.<sup>91</sup>

## WHIPCOE

Not only are there a number of examples of indigenous groups being involved in conservation management in general throughout the world, but more specifically the World Heritage experience is shared with other indigenous groups as well.<sup>92</sup> There have been attempts among the indigenous groups within the World Heritage community to organize in order to improve their position in relation to both UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee and to their national governments. The idea was first put forward at the World Heritage Committee's 24<sup>th</sup> session in Cairns, Australia, in November 2000,. Alongside the Committee's meeting there was also a Forum of Indigenous Peoples that assembled to discuss indigenous matters in regards to the World Heritage Convention. They wrote a petition to the World Heritage Committee expressing their worries. Basically, they were concerned by:

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<sup>91</sup> [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=35393&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=35393&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

<sup>92</sup> Again, besides Laponia there are for instance three other World Heritage sites where the "living culture" of an indigenous population is part of the cultural criteria. These are Tongariro National Park in New Zealand and Kakadu and Uluru- Kata Tjuta National Parks in Australia, but there are also other sites where an indigenous group is involved, even if their culture is not actually part of the appointment.

...the lack of involvement of Indigenous peoples in the development and implementation of laws, policies and plans, for the protection of their holistic knowledge, traditions and cultural values, which apply to their ancestral lands within or comprising sites now designated as World Heritage Areas,<sup>93</sup>

The suggestion was to have an indigenous organization that would act as an advisory body to the World Heritage Committee. The proposed organization came to go under the name WHIPCOE (World Heritage Indigenous Peoples Council of Experts) and its goal was to increase the influence of indigenous populations within the World Heritage community and to spread knowledge and information in matters that concerned indigenous peoples. The question was then further developed and presented to the 25th session of the Bureau of the Committee in Paris, in June 2001. After this meeting the proposal was sent out for reviewing to the member states. There was, however, only lukewarm interest from the member states, and only a few responded. Some of the state parties that did answer requested more information on the subject, some thought it better to let the already established indigenous organizations within the UN-system also deal with the World Heritage issue, and some were in favor of the idea of establishing WHIPCOE as an advisory body to the World Heritage Committee.<sup>94</sup> In Winnipeg, Canada, a workshop was held in November 2001 to prepare the question to be issued at the next World Heritage Committee session.<sup>95</sup> At the meeting in Winnipeg, a Sami representative was involved in a WHIPCOE-meeting for the first time. This representative did not come from one of the samebys, but was an employee from Ájtte, the Sami museum in Jokkmokk. Apparently, it was the Swedish ICOMOS<sup>96</sup> that had been asked by the international mother organization whether the Sami would like to be represented. The Swedish ICOMOS then turned to Ájtte with the request. But Ájtte attained knowledge of the meeting only a few days in advance and did not have time to discuss the representative question. Accordingly, they sent one of their employees. Although of Sami origin and to my knowledge generally highly regarded in the local Sami community, he was not an official representative of the samebys. The involved samebys did not hear of the WHIPCOE issue until months after the meeting, and this is something that has been commented on from both Ájtte staff and sameby representatives as being “unfortunate.” As the official representatives for the di-

<sup>93</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/repcom00-annexes.htm#annex5>

<sup>94</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-496-8.pdf>

<sup>95</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/activities/documents/activity-496-4.pdf>

<sup>96</sup> As already mentioned ICOMOS stands for the International Council on Monuments and Sites.

rectly involved local Sami, the sameby representatives would have liked to attend the meeting. Without criticizing the role of Ájtte or the Sami representative at the meeting, the situation is still illustrative of how weak the position of the samebys and their representatives was at this point in time. My educated guess is that if this had occurred a few years later, the chance of the sameby being directly asked instead of Ájtte would have been much greater. And if the question had been directed to Ájtte (apparently the responsible officer at the Swedish ICOMOS personally knew the then head of the Ájtte museum) it is likely that that it would have been immediately forwarded to the sameby representatives and the coordinator. But at this stage the sameby group was still struggling to be seen as the self-evident Sami representation in the Laponian process. Hopefully this chapter has shown how the significance of what was later known as the Mijá ednam group grew over time.

The petition was debated at the 25<sup>th</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee in Helsinki. The outcome was that the Committee would not sanction the proposal. In the report from the meeting it is said that many member states found it difficult from a juridical point of view to give WHIPCOE the status of an advisory body because indigenous peoples were already represented in other bodies within UNESCO. The problem of defining “indigenous” was also a major stumbling block for many member states. There is often confusion when it comes to the definition, and some countries brought forward the fact that they thought it would be complicated to reach a consensus on which ethnic groups would qualify to be part of WHIPCOE, and which would have to stand outside. But in the report it is also said that WHIPCOE, as an organization, is welcome to continue its objectives outside the structures of the actual Committee:

It was proposed that indigenous peoples could meet on their own initiative, be included as part of State Party delegations to the Committee and were encouraged to be involved in UNESCO’s work relating to the intangible heritage (World Heritage Committee 2001:57).

The attempts to establish WHIPCOE is an example of the collaboration of indigenous populations on the international arena, but it also shows how difficult it is to manage to gain a significant position at the center of power. The WHIPCOE idea has been put on ice for the time being, but it is fair to say that the debates and the requests put forward by indigenous peoples resulted in a higher awareness of indigenous peoples’ special position within the World Heritage forum. After the WHIPCOE discussion the cultural division and the natural division within the UNESCO struc-

ture have begin to cooperate more, and the awareness of the importance of Cultural Landscapes and human intervention on biological diversity has increased. Today, traditional knowledge, especially that of indigenous peoples, is highly regarded and attended to within UNESCO in general and also in matters concerning the World Heritage Convention. This was, as we have seen, also something that the Sami representatives brought forward in their rhetoric and their proposals in regards to Laponia.

If WHIPCOE had been established as an advisory body directly under the World Heritage Committee, the occurrences taking place in the local community in regard to Laponia would probably have developed differently. Backed up by WHIPCOE, the samebys' claims would no doubt have appeared more convincing to the local and national authorities.

## 4 Polarization and antagonism

This chapter will describe the events that unfolded as a result of the appointment of Laponia in 1996. The three groups of local actors: the samebys, the County Administration, and the municipalities all had their own expectations regarding the new World Heritage status of the area, and to agree on a common course forward proved to be more difficult than many had anticipated. Since the area was already under protection as national parks and nature reserves, there were already management plans in place that stipulated the management and regulations of the area, but due to the World Heritage nomination a new and refined management plan was called for. In fact, the importance of consolidating a management plan for the site was stressed by the Committee in their decision in December 1996.<sup>97</sup> But as was briefly discussed in the previous chapter, implementing the global intentions behind the World Heritage Convention locally can be difficult in many respects. It is at the local level that the grand but vague words must be interpreted and put into practice. Here, local actors often have different hopes and intentions with the World Heritage site. And it was here that the great divergence between the local actors was displayed in the case of Laponia. The opinions differed concerning the changes that ought to be made in the already existing management plan for the area. As the account below will show, the samebys here stood out as the most innovative group. They wanted to see a new management structure develop that ensured the priority of the reindeer herding activities in the area, with a strong emphasis on the Sami culture connected to it. They also demanded a Sami majority on a future board of management to guarantee this. The other local actors had difficulty accepting this, claiming that it was not possible within the framework of the current legislation.

On the surface, this was what the ensuing “conflict” was all about. But beneath the surface there were many reasons why the different local actors took the standpoints they did and acted the way they did. The general explanation is to be found in old and fixed relations between the Sami

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<sup>97</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/repcom96.htm#774>

community and the authorities of the state. As recounted earlier, in Chapter 2, conflicts between the Sami in this particular area and the authorities have been numerous. Even when there is not a specific “struggle” going on at a particular moment, there can be said to be a constant, latent, state of tension between the Sami community and the state authorities. This is especially true for the reindeer herders in the samebys and the County Administration. The County Administration is the authority responsible for implementing the reindeer herding act<sup>98</sup> and the predator policy<sup>99</sup> (the predator policy are of importance to the herders as predators tend to kill lot of reindeer). Many of the reindeer herders are critical of major aspects of both the predator policies and the reindeer herding act. The relationship between the County Administration and the herders is theref

ore often fraught with difficulties.<sup>100</sup> The strained relations were something that also came to affect the negotiations concerning Lapponia (Dahlström 2003).

## The making of Lapponia

There are different reasons for nominating World Heritage sites. However, pragmatic justifications seem common among the nation states. Turtinen (2006:12) argues that many nation states have objectives beyond the actual Convention text in mind when they choose to nominate new sites. A World Heritage status means increased international attention, prestige, an increased number of tourists and work opportunities. These reasons probably lay behind the Lapponian nomination as well. The County Administration explicitly thought of the nomination as a means to market the area for tourists, but also to strengthen its environmental protection, by making it structurally equal to, for example, the Grand Canyon and the Galapagos Island. If the Lapponian area was to achieve World Heritage status, this would broaden the understanding of the great biological value of the area and highlight the need to continuously protect it (SEPA 1995).

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<sup>98</sup> The current reindeer herding law is from 1971 (SFS 1971: 437) but was partly amended in 1993 (SFS1993:36).

<sup>99</sup> The current predator policy was developed in a bill from 2000 that concerned predator policy (prop. 2000/01:57).

<sup>100</sup> There are differences between different regions, however. For instance, from reindeer herders in the county of Västerbotten I have heard much more positive opinions regarding the officials at the County Administration there compared with what I have heard from their Norrbotten counterparts.

The story of the Laponian World Heritage site begins as early as the 1980s, when one of the Nature reserves, Sjaunja (today included in Lapponia) was nominated by the Swedish Government to the World Heritage Committee. This nomination was based on natural criteria only. However this application was rejected by the World Heritage Committee on the grounds that it lacked exceptionality (Dahlström 2003:243). The preparations to improve and geographically extend the application began. At this stage, the basis for a nomination was still meant to rely on natural criteria only.

A new application draft that included an extended natural site circulated among different authorities and other instances in 1995. Both municipalities were in favor of the nomination, but were a bit concerned that it would mean restrictions on outdoor recreation for local people. Also the Sami Parliament consented, even though it too hesitated. Its main concern was that a World Heritage appointment would lead to stricter regulations in the area and that this would effect the future development of reindeer herding (Dahlström 2003:252). The Sami Parliament also reacted to the proposed name for the site: “The Lapponian Wilderness Area.” In the review statement, the Parliament clearly pointed out that the area is a Sami cultural landscape that has been inhabited from time immemorial. To the Parliament representatives this was anything but a “wilderness area” and suggested a name for the site that would acknowledge the Sami history and presence there (Sami Parliament reg. no. 49/95 quoted in Dahlström 2003:253). The name was later changed to simply “the Laponian Area.” Again, the name discussion illustrates a discrepancy in attitude and expectations concerning the suggested World Heritage site, a discrepancy that became more evident as time went by.

According to an informant at the National heritage Board (SNHB), an official at the Ministry of Education, Research and Culture<sup>101</sup> contacted the person responsible for the cultural World Heritage nominations at the SNHB to say that it was really a shame that the Laponian nomination did not include cultural criteria, and was only being launched as a natural site. The responsible officer at the SNHB agreed and immediately contacted the head of Ájtte, the mountain and Sami museum in Jokkmokk to see if there was any interest on their part in including Sami culture in the application. This official also called the Chairperson for the Sami Parliament to discuss the matter. He was supposedly very enthusiastic. A formal Sami cultural inclusion would resolve many of the issues he had with the nomi-

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<sup>101</sup> *Kulturdepartementet* in Swedish.

nation in the first place.<sup>102</sup> I have also been told from informants at the SNHB, that their idea at the time was to nominate Lapponia as a Cultural Landscape, rather than a mixed site.<sup>103</sup> Apparently this was also recommended to the SNHB in their talks with the World Heritage secretariat and with the IUCN and ICCOMOS. According to SNHB informants, the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), however, refused to agree to this, the reason apparently being that if Lapponia were to be a Cultural Landscape the whole process would fall under the SNHB jurisdiction and the SEPA would lose its influence and control over it. The people in charge there were not prepared to do that after all the work they had put into the nomination so far. This is another example of a developing discrepancy in the way the World Heritage nomination was viewed. Many actors involved have pointed out the fact that the natural criteria had been overemphasized in the early applications and planning of Lapponia. The SEPA (and its regional authority, the County Administration) has seen the appointment of Lapponia as mainly their responsibility. This reflects the area's previous history as consisting of the oldest and largest protected areas in Sweden, appreciated for their natural beauty and unspoiled landscape. On these grounds, according to my informants, it was not easy, and apparently not possible, for the SEPA to turn over the responsibility of the new World Heritage site to the SNHB. Nonetheless, they did agree to a mixed-site application.

Therefore, after many twists and turns, an application was sent in to the World Heritage Committee in 1996 that sought World Heritage status for an extended area that included many of the well-known Swedish national parks and nature reserves in the mountain area, but now on the basis of both natural and cultural criteria. Also, as was discussed in Chapter 3, a focus on intangible cultural values and "living cultures" was now developing within the World Heritage Organization, and the idea of including Sami culture in the nomination must have been thought of as something that enhanced the possibilities of a positive outcome for the application this time. The inclusion of the local Sami reindeer herding culture and the reason why Lapponia was being launched at all as a mixed site must be understood in relation to this shift in focus in the international arena.

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<sup>102</sup> To Dahlström, the same informants have told the story a bit differently. In her account it is the Chairperson for the Sami Parliament that takes the initiative for an inclusion of the Sami culture into the nomination and calls up the person in charge at the SNHB. Who called who first is, however, of minor importance. What is significant to point out is that it was these individuals that together came up with the idea to formally include the local Sami culture as part of the actual application.

<sup>103</sup> See Chapter 3 for the difference between these two categories.

The official justification for the inscription of Laponia is:

The Committee decided to inscribe the nominated property on the basis of natural criteria (i), (ii) and (iii) and cultural criteria (iii) and (v). The Committee considered that the site is of outstanding universal value as it contains examples of ongoing geological, biological and ecological processes, a great variety of natural phenomena of exceptional beauty and significant biological diversity including a population of brown bear and alpine flora. It was noted that the site meets all conditions of integrity. The site has been occupied continuously by the Sami people since prehistoric times, is one of the last and unquestionably largest and best preserved examples of an area of transhumance, involving summer grazing by large reindeer herds, a practice that was widespread at one time and which dates back to an early stage in human economic and social development.<sup>104</sup>

The justification above mentions that Laponia meets the requirements of three natural criteria and two cultural criteria from the set of criteria presented earlier in chapter 3. Laponia was found to be:

Natural criteria:

- (i) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ii) be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;
- (iii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;

Cultural criteria:

- (iii) Bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (v) Be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;

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<sup>104</sup> <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/774>

## The pursuit of responsibility and influence

The Swedish Sami Parliament was at first hesitant to the idea of a World Heritage site. In a conversation with Dahlström, the Chairman for the Sami Parliament at the time stated that they were not prepared to accept a situation where, again, the Sami that used the land would stand outside the management and decision-making process. This was what happened when the national parks and nature reserves in the area were established (Dahlström 2003:253). In order to be able to consent to the World Heritage idea, the Sami Parliament argued that the Sami presence and influence on the area had to be recognized to a larger extent.

When it was decided that the Sami culture was to be included, the cultural part had to be inscribed into the application. As it turned out, the part on Sami culture was submitted only about three months before the application was due. Up until then the whole focus had been on the natural protection of the area, with the Sami culture only mentioned briefly when addressing the fact that reindeer herding was an enterprise carried out within the proposed site. It was the head of the Sami and mountain museum in Jokkmokk, who was asked by the SNHB to make the cultural addition to the application. Three months is obviously a very short time, especially in comparison with the years and years of work that had been spent on developing the natural criteria. Less time and fewer resources were spent on the cultural part of the application, something that has been commented on many times by the samebys. Culture was simply added to Nature (Dahlström 2003:255). The split focus also reveals the divide between the SEPA and the County Administration, on the one hand, and the other local actors, especially the samebys involved, on the other hand, in terms of what they considered to be of key significance in the nomination and appointment of the area. This division has thrived on and has been the main basis for the disagreement over management issues. It can be seen as the first sign of the polarization that was about to become more apparent with time. Throughout the process, the County Administration has been criticized for putting the management emphasis almost solely on the nature and geology of the area and not sufficiently acknowledging the Sami cultural heritage. Dahlström writes that the fact that the Laponian World Heritage site started out as a purely natural site has continued to echo in today's negotiations over the management of Lapponia (Dahlström 2003:242). Even in the early stages of discussions among the local actors, then, there are clear divisions among them when it comes to perspectives and viewpoints regarding Lapponia as a World Heritage site. The differences in perspective also resulted in their inter-

preting the malleable language of the Convention in different ways. Exactly what was to be preserved, and in what way? Other things besides what the majority society usually includes in the concept of sustainability came to be discussed among the local samebys. A more comprehensive approach was taken, and the need to protect cultural traditions, language politics, improve the Sami school system and pre-school opportunities, genealogies, family life, history, and colonization were among other things discussed, besides biodiversity and nature protection issues. Sustainability as understood from a more holistic viewpoint by local/indigenous groups is something that has been noted throughout the world. Needless to say, these differences in environmental perception also come to alter the way an area is managed when (or if) there is a shift towards a more local- or indigenous-biased protection policy (Ingold 2000; Beach 2001:217; Dahlström & Green 2008, e.g. Hunn et al. 2003).

### The helicopter ride

From the time that a mixed site was launched, the samebys involved were more directly drawn into the actual application procedure. For instance, the samebys decided to appoint a member from each sameby to act as their representatives in all matters that concerned Laponia. In spite of the fact that many sameby members thought that too little time and resources were spent on the Sami inclusion in the application, many have expressed satisfaction with the information they got on the World Heritage plans. There were meetings held for all the samebys concerned, where they could express their opinions. But still, there were already at this point many potential areas of mistrust and mutual suspicion lingering under the surface. As discussed above, the Sami reindeer herding culture was included in the nomination at the very last minute, and this was a fact that irritated some of the sameby members. There is one interesting episode that many of my informants, both sameby members and authority officials, keep referring to, an incident that made many of the sameby members feel brushed aside by the other actors in the process. This episode illustrates the underlying suspicion among the actors that existed from the very beginning.

This story concerns an evaluation of the Laponian area that occurred during the appointment process. A representative from the IUCN was brought on a helicopter ride together with a person from the County Administration, one from the SNHB and one from the SEPA. They were flying over the Laponian area, inspecting and evaluating it. Even though the representatives from the samebys, after being invited, came and in-

formed and discussed with the County Administration and the international representatives on a preceding meeting, they were not asked to join in on the helicopter ride. I am not sure what officially lay behind this decision. A helicopter does not have unlimited space, and this might have played a role in why representatives from the samebys were not invited.

Regardless of the reason behind not having Sami representation on the helicopter, the fact remains that quite a number of members from the samebys who I have talked to mention this episode with some frustration. When no representatives from the samebys were invited on the helicopter ride, many interpreted this as a typical situation, and one quite familiar to them, where the authorities discard Sami opinion, not seeing them as equal partners in the negotiation.

It is also worth mentioning that in the report that was the outcome of the helicopter ride, the international representatives concluded that parts of the Laponian area were threatened by overgrazing, something that could create a predicament for the future integrity of the World Heritage status. Whether or not, or to what extent, the mountains in the area are affected by overgrazing and trampling of reindeers is a question that has been debated over a long period of time, and where the scientists and the reindeer herders have often had contrasting opinions (Beach 1997). At both the SEPA and the County Administration the overgrazing theory also seems to be a commonly accepted “truth” (Dahlström 2003:283). It was this “truth” that was spread to the IUCN representatives during the helicopter flight. As there was no sameby representation in the helicopter, there was no possibility of preventing the opinion of the authorities to be spread also to an international level, thus recreating a contested “truth” that many sameby members felt was based on a misjudgment rooted in the fact that the reindeer herders’ knowledge simply was not taken seriously.

In this perspective, the infamous helicopter ride became symbolically important and seemed to confirm the widespread feeling among many sameby members that they were not considered equal partners in any involvement with the authorities. One woman (a member of one of the samebys) explained her view of the “helicopter incident” to me. She said that she felt as though it had become some sort of “truth” that the concentration of reindeer in certain areas generated overgrazing. According to her, there was “a Greek” that was flown over the Laponian area in order to evaluate it. He was some sort of international authority. He came to the conclusion that there indeed were areas in the mountains that had been overgrazed. The woman questioned how he could have known so much about the matter to begin with. Where did he get his information

from? And what could he possibly have seen from a helicopter? It can be noted here that there was never a “Greek” person present during this evaluation. Except for one person from New Zealand, everyone on the helicopter ride was an ethnic Swede. But the reference to the “Greek” signifies that the evaluator was truly an “outsider” that did not have much knowledge about the situation in Laponia and the situation for the herders. This added to the feeling of exclusion and harm, and the helicopter story became a symbol of that.

The discontentment on the part of the samebys when it comes to the helicopter ride has been noticed by the authorities. However, one representative from the national authorities told me that even though she was aware of the fact that many Sami felt brushed aside by not being invited to ride in the helicopter, this was largely due to misunderstandings, and she thought that their reactions to the whole incident were exaggerated. According to this version, the evaluators’ stay in the area, leading up to the helicopter ride, was filled with meetings with Sami representatives. Also, during the actual flight, the pilot made several stops within the proposed World Heritage area, and the passengers would then hike for a few kilometers before they were picked up again, and during these walks they met some Sami people of the area and chatted with them. In short, the fact that there were no Sami representatives on the actual helicopter was not significant for the evaluation per se. One of the persons present in the helicopter later explained to me that the fact that there were no Sami represented on the actual helicopter ride had no importance to the outcome of the flight whatsoever, and was not meant to exclude any group in any way.

The helicopter ride has many different layers and potential interpretations, but the core theme brought up by representatives of the samebys that have commented on this is the fact that this is seen as more or less a “typical behavior” on the part of the authorities. There is a strong feeling that the authorities do not, as usual, recognize the importance of including the Sami on equal terms. For many of the sameby members, then, this episode seems to confirm a preconceived understanding of their asymmetric relation with the State and its authorities (and personnel). This is expressed, for instance by distancing oneself from the people on the helicopter by noting that it was a foreigner, “a Greek,” that made the assessment that there was overgrazing on their land. To the Sami involved, the fear that not only the Swedish authorities, but through the World Heritage application also international authorities, would have an impact on and set the rules for the reindeer herding business, and consequently the Sami culture, was revealed here.

From the authorities' point of view, on the other hand, this was also seen as "typical behavior" from the Sami involved. They seem to have overreacted to the situation and misunderstood the aim of the evaluation. The fact that there was no Sami representative on the helicopter did not mean that they were not heard. The part about the overgrazing was not recognized to be of such political sensitivity. The assessment of the mountain fauna was probably passed on by the representatives of the SEPA and County Administration to the IUCN representative, who was responsible for submitting an evaluation report to the World Heritage Commission. Contested opinions regarding the condition of the mountain fauna, and the view of many herders that there simply is no over-grazing nor any threat thereof in this area, are simply not taken seriously. In fact, the reindeer herders' position is at times met with suspicion, since they are speaking in their own self-interest. They are simply not seen as "objective," in contrast to the assumedly "neutral" representatives of local, national, and international authorities (Dahlström 2003:288). The overgrazing discussion was sensitive. In a way it indicated that the reindeer herders were "eco-villains" (Beach 1997; Dahlström 2003:292ff) without any legitimate claim for influence on the environmental management of the area. If the local Sami herders are to be seen as "eco-villains," then, logically, Lapponia would need protection *from* them, rather than being managed in cooperation *with* them.

The "truth" of the over-grazing theory points us to the unequal power balance between the reindeer herders and the authorities. The authorities are unquestionably seen as credible in their own right, while the herders are seen as an interest group without the same objective perspective. It is the environmental authorities that possess the power to determine and interpret both the problems and the solutions for the environmental agenda (Dahlström 2003:288-289). Their perspective becomes normative, and any contesting discourse has difficulty being heard.

Thus, expressing this normative view and passing it on in different situations is not considered a political act, but rather to state the facts, and those who control the normative discourse seldom recognize the power position that they hold. The story of the helicopter ride demonstrates this fact clearly and underlines the asymmetric power structure between the Sami involved, on the one hand, and the authorities, on the other, even before the actual negotiation over management of Lapponia had begun.

## From collaboration to disagreement

In December 1996, in Merida, Mexico, the nomination was approved by the World Heritage Committee, and the World Heritage site “The Laponian Area” was born. A “Laponia-council” was formed consisting of representatives from the two municipalities, the County Administration, the samebys, the municipality tourism departments, and also from the Ájtte museum. Very soon, however, it was clear that there were different views and objectives concerning Laponia among the different groups represented. One of the clearest demarcated divisions was whether the emphasis should be on the natural or cultural aspect of the appointment, along the lines already discussed in the section above. Rather than going along with the other actors or taking on a compromising approach in the discussions, the Sami representatives put emphasis on their position as a separate group in relation to the other parties in the council. After a while all of the members of the council seemed to agree upon the fact that they could not cooperate in a satisfactory way and the work was discontinued.

As discussed earlier the Sami Parliament had been involved in approving of a Sami inclusion in the World Heritage nomination. As democratically elected representatives of the Sami community they were interested in assuring a satisfactory outcome from a Sami perspective. Also, some of the leading Sami politicians had themselves ties to the area and to the involved samebys and were therefore concerned from a more personal standpoint as well. This meant that behind the representatives from the samebys in the first Laponia-council (and throughout the process), there was a larger Sami community supporting the viewpoint and the strategic choices made.

## Fears and expectations

When the Sami inclusion in the World Heritage status was first discussed and when the site finally became appointed, there were both fears and expectations locally, as well as some confusion when it comes to the real purpose and consequence of a World Heritage appointment. In general, both sameby members and other locals were somewhat puzzled when Laponia was discussed, saying that no one really understood what a World Heritage was and what it really meant. Many, especially sameby members, were afraid that Laponia could mean further restrictions and more authority control. A common opinion was (and still is to a certain degree) that the very idea of a World Heritage site was something that came “from above;” it was a result of initiatives made on a national level

without much local input.<sup>105</sup> In other words, people in general did not feel responsible for, or active in, the decision to nominate Lapponia. Initially, this impression of not being in control of what was happening in their neighborhood brought forward feelings of resentment and skepticism.

Another concern of many of the reindeer herders was whether the World Heritage inclusion would lead to further restrictions in the area. So far, the immemorial right of the herders allowed them to build huts, take wood for fire, handicraft material, fishing and so on. I felt this great uncertainty about how the World Heritage would change things during my visit to the Staloluokta summer camp in 1999. For instance there was a rumor going around that it would be virtually impossible in the future to build new huts on the different samebys' summer camps areas, and I was asked several times if I knew whether or not this was true. Some said that they would apply for a "building permit" immediately, even if they did not intend to build huts at once, but just to make sure that they would be able to do so in the future. How Lapponia would affect the predator policy or in any other way restrict the herding was vividly discussed during my stay. Being aware of, and having studied the UNESCO documents and the somewhat rigid definition of culture, some were also worried that the World Heritage status would increase the demand on them to behave in accordance to a stereotypical ideal. "Are we to be a living museum in the mountains, for the tourists to study?" more than one upset reindeer herder asked when discussing the possible scenarios of Lapponia with me. Still, the Sami political organizations, many sameby members, and other locals have remained in favor of the World Heritage site. Apart from being greatly honored for being part of a World Heritage site, it was often expressed that the appointment could also serve as an extra defense against potential mining and forestry in the reindeer herding area, even though the lands within Lapponia were already under some protection as national parks or nature reserves.<sup>106</sup> Many Sameby members also hoped that a World Heritage site would increase the number of tourists in the area, and looked forward to a future in the tourism business. Also, Lapponia

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<sup>105</sup> This is actually also noted by the municipalities in their management proposal. They see the lack of local initiative as one of the reasons why the cooperation at a local level has not been successful (*Strategiska frågor för utveckling av Världsarvet Lapponia 2000:8*).

<sup>106</sup> Currently this is a much debated issue. An international mining company has gained permission to start prospecting for minerals within the Laponian area. Many authorities and organizations have protested and individual politicians have even raised the question in the Swedish Parliament. The case is currently being appealed. There are also historical events that show that the protection of national parks is negotiable when resources are needed for "good of the nation." One such example is the gradual damming of the Stora Lule River, northwest of Jokkmokk.

would help put the “Sami people on the map,” thus gaining more international support for the Sami ethno-political struggle.

The municipalities have in general terms been more favorable towards the idea of having a World Heritage site.<sup>107</sup> Their main intention has always been to increase the number of tourists in the area and thereby to generate much needed job opportunities with the help of a World Heritage appointment as the strong attraction. The main concern of the County Administration seems to be to strengthen the conservancy policy of the parks and reserves included. Even though their documents speak positively of expanding tourism and of the importance to acknowledge that the area is foremost a Sami cultural landscape and not a wilderness, the focus lies mainly on the protection and preservation of the environment (Laponia – vårt världsarv 1998).

As stated earlier, many sameby-members thought of the whole Laponia idea as something that came “from above” and was not initiated by them, although some have expressed that they were quite content with how they were informed and asked to contribute with ideas and opinions when the mixed application was being written<sup>108</sup>. Skepticism towards the idea of having a World Heritage site in the first place was, however, the dominant attitude among both sameby locals and others. To the sameby members, fears of how a World Heritage listing would affect reindeer herding and the Sami culture in general were matters of worry. There was also the broad underlying issue of responsibility, influence, and control. Who would manage the World Heritage site? And more specifically, what would the Sami influence be?

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<sup>107</sup> Worth noting here is that at this time there were only non-Sami politicians at the highest level in both Jokkmokk and Gällivare municipalities. There are Sami politicians, however, within the long-established national parties as well as in local Sami-oriented parties. Also, there are many Sami who are employed as officials within the municipalities. As a matter of fact, the municipality official in Jokkmokk responsible for Laponia was for many years a Sami woman. She is not a sameby member, but nowadays she is engaged as a politician in the Sami Parliament. She has been very critical towards the samebys’ actions, but belongs to the same party as some of the sameby members who have been most unwilling to compromise on the issue of Laponia.

<sup>108</sup> There was an official enquiry initiated by the County Administration and formed by the municipalities in 2002. The enquiry went out to local entrepreneurs, associations, and samebys (Municipality of Gällivare 2002, reg. no. 2002/074). But according to my field notes, an enquiry took place already in the mid 1990s, supposedly initiated by the County Administration. I have not been able to track down this first enquiry. My point here is that many of the sameby members at this point seemed quite content with the information they got regarding the new World Heritage site and that the other actors tried to keep the communication channels open. Nevertheless, the attitude towards the actual World Heritage appointment as such remained skeptical among many.

Talking to the Sami political establishment at this stage, I found that they expressed that it was important to show engagement and to establish themselves as an important actor in the process. There was a concern that they would be outmaneuvered by the authorities. During one of our talks, a Sami politician once emphasized that the interplay between nature and culture is a very important trend internationally and in regard to Lapponia this is always underlined, in conversations with UNESCO, for instance, but in his opinion, the Swedish authorities did not really at this point draw adequate attention to this fact. Again, he felt that the bias was still towards the Nature part of the application, and that the combination of the cultural and natural criteria was not being taken seriously. In this respect it was extra important for him that the Sami not “sit on their hands,” or they would not be able to gain the influence over Lapponia that they thought they should have.

### “Why do they turn Lapponia into something political?”

Behind the visions beginning to be outlined by the samebys’ representatives stood the very top stratum of Sami politicians, some of them with interests of their own in the area, but not official representatives of the samebys. The political elite immediately acknowledged the potential importance of the Lapponian process to extended Sami self-governance, and their input in the whole procedure cannot be underestimated. Many of them have acted as advisers, motivators, and even initiators at times to certain events and strategic choices. Personal ties, friendships, kinship affinities, political party bonds are all examples of relationships that the sameby representative have, and have used, in order to shape and gain approval for the decisions taken. For instance, the Sami Parliament has been informed about how the process is going and has periodically had representatives present at the sameby meetings. This has, however, not been recorded in any official records, but told to me by my informants. In this way the sameby members came to have a rather large support group behind them in the negotiations, making them quite unique in comparison to the other actors; they came to represent, not only the samebys involved, but in a way also the wider Sami community. This was a fact that was somewhat neglected by the other local actors, at least early in the negotiation process. Talking to municipality politicians and officials at this stage they often accused the samebys of “politicizing” Lapponia.

One representative for the municipalities that I talked to was especially annoyed. In his mind the samebys were confusing the question of La-

ponia with other issues, especially with the ILO-169<sup>109</sup> discussion. He said that if ILO 169 had been ratified, there would have been no choice but to give the Sami the right to majority representation on the board. He clearly indicated that this was not a scenario that he agreed with. It would be better, he thought if the Sami could see it for what it was: two different processes. The ILO-debate and Laponia had nothing to do with each other. I remember him exclaiming: “Why do they turn Laponia into something political!”

But other actors have also aired their skepticism on this issue. An official at the SNHB told me that early on in the process, when they were trying to include the Sami culture in the application, there were virtually no discussions about whether and to what extent the samebys should be included in the management organization. All the people included in the work at that time assumed that there would be some kind of group on the local and regional level with representations from all the stakeholders, and that that group would work out a management plan for the area. Never could she have anticipated the kind of trouble over management issues that later developed. She said that it was such a pity that the Sami quarreled over this and refused to join any negotiations with the other actors. Personally she was convinced, she said, that the Sami were using the issue of Laponia as a tool in order to make the Government ratify ILO 169. To her mind the Sami were using the situation to gain political advantages. But she also saw some similarities with other indigenous groups. In her experience all indigenous groups acted like this: if they do not get what they want, they withdraw from negotiations. She also made a note that the small office that the County Administration has in Jokkmokk<sup>110</sup> is to a large extent managed by people of Sami origin. But, she said, this is obviously not enough to count as Sami management. It is interesting to note here the way this informant sees all Sami, and even all indigenous peoples, as a homogeneous group. In reality, not all Sami were interested in the Laponian issue or had the same opinion as the representatives from the samebys. Some Sami worked for the authorities, for instance in the local County Administration office in Jokkmokk, or for the municipalities. Some of my informants have been Sami persons holding this kind of position and through their profession not always agreeing with the demands made by the samebys. Nevertheless, the tendency to group all Sami together is common, and the collective categorization of them has histori-

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<sup>109</sup> This convention is introduced in Chapter 2.

<sup>110</sup> This office is called “the mountain unit” (*fjällenehten*).

cally facilitated the possibilities for the Swedish nation state to control and assert power over the Sami society (e.g. Mörkenstam 1999; 2002).

Most other actors had difficulty understanding the strategy behind the choices the samebys' representatives had made in the negotiations. But in many ways they were right in their analysis of the situation: for the samebys' representatives, Lapponia was only one piece in a bigger puzzle, a tool to reach a better position in the general struggle towards greater self governance. The fact that a strong Sami influence in Lapponia could mean that The State felt more pressure to ratify the ILO-convention was something that was discussed quite openly, for instance.

The discrepancy in perspective toward the plan of implementing a World Heritage site between the samebys, on the one hand, and the other actors, on the other hand, were quite clear in this respect. For the local authorities this was essentially a non-political matter, while for the samebys it was only political. However, from an international perspective, indigenous cultural claims are usually directly linked to aspirations for increased political power and strengthened self governance on the whole. The case of Lapponia represents no exception.

## Polarization and positioning

It was decided in the Lapponia-delegation that the main three actors in the Lapponian-process (the County Administration, the municipalities, and the samebys) should each produce their own vision of how they thought the World Heritage site should be designed and managed in the future. The County Administration was the first of these three to finish their document. This first proposal by the County Administration was called *Lapponia – vårt världsarv*, meaning "Lapponia - Our World Heritage." This was a document that that came to be much criticized by the others for not sufficiently addressing the cultural perspective of Lapponia, and focusing too much on nature conservation aspects. However, the significance of the reindeer herding culture for the appointment of Lapponia is mentioned. There is a description of the cultural landscape, and it is stated that even though some historical and archeological research has been done, much work remains (*Lapponia – vårt världsarv* 1998:11-12). The inseparability of the natural and cultural landscapes is also addressed:

Lapponia is unique. It is unique because of its nature. It is unique because of the living culture of the Sami. It is unique for the interplay between nature and culture.

We must progress carefully if the values of Lapponia are to remain unharmed. We can show and share the area, but it must be done on Lapponia's terms. Any activity that exploits the nature and culture will take away the possibility for a long-term use of Lapponia.

The vision for Lapponia is that nature and culture should remain intact. That people will have the opportunity to experience and learn about the nature of the mountains and the culture of the Sami. That people who visit Lapponia can show consideration for the Sami so that the reindeer herding is not negatively affected. The vision is that all this will be able to happen at the same time – the preservation and the usage. This places high demands on us all. (Lapponia – vårt världsarv 1998:14, my translation)

Nevertheless, it is the opinion of the County Administration that it should continue to be responsible for giving the different cultural sites and values in Lapponia the necessary protection. In producing a plan for how this will be done, the County Administration's plan states that *interested parties within the samebys shall be participants in this work* (Lapponia – vårt världsarv 1998:16).

This alleged lack of interest in the cultural criteria in this report from the County Administration (as well as in the management proposals that were to follow) has been interpreted, as we will see, by both the samebys and the municipalities as a sign of a lack of interest in the Sami cultural heritage, and a testimony to a standpoint that emphasizes the wilderness characteristic of the area rather than seeing it as a cultural landscape. The constant critique from the Sami side (and sometimes also from the municipalities) toward the County Administration's attempts to suggest a management plan that all parties could agree upon signals a deep divide between, foremost, the Sami community and the other actors in the process.

After the criticized first management plan from the County Administration was published, the municipalities and the samebys started the work of making their own management proposals. They both finished their reports in 2000. The samebys' document was ready slightly before the municipalities' and was called *Mijá ednam*, which means "Our Land," and the municipalities called their proposal *Strategiska frågor för utveckling av Världsarvet Lapponia*, or in English "Strategic Questions for the Development of the World Heritage Site of Lapponia."

The work to produce the *Mijá ednam* plan was done by using the consultation process recommended by the Agenda 21 document.<sup>111</sup> Representen-

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<sup>111</sup> The Agenda 21 document was created as a spin off from the Rio Declaration of 1992. It recommends democratic and local participation in matters concerning sustainable development, and has been widely adopted in Sweden on a regional and local level.

tatives from the samebys involved spent many hours discussing the future of Laponia and how to present their wish to be involved in the management. A coordinator<sup>112</sup> was employed to organize the work and also an editor was employed to transcribe their wills and aspirations into written text. The editor<sup>113</sup> was a local woman with a lot of experience from international environmental politics. She had worked within a NGO for quite some time and had for instance worked in Canada on similar issues. The coordinator was originally from the area, but had lived in the southern parts of Sweden for many years, and had among other things been involved in municipality politics there. He came to organize the work of producing the Mijá ednam plan, and became the spokesperson for the samebys in all matters that concerned Laponia. Due to his previous experiences, he was used to administrative and investigatory work and highly skilled in both the language and structure of authority organization and enquiries. He had also previously been interested in environmental matters and was competent in matters concerning environmental politics and nature protection policies.

Both the Mijá ednam plan and the municipalities' plan were rich and thorough documents which attempted to take up all perspectives on Laponia and its future management; including for instance nature protection policies, tourism, infrastructure, Sami cultural heritage, reindeer herding, and management organization. In the following pages I will focus on how the attempts at realizing a management plan turned into seemingly endless disagreement among the local actors, disagreement that reached the ears of both national authorities as well as UNESCO. The Sami involved in Laponia share the experience of being part of a World Heritage site with other indigenous peoples, and there have been attempts for these groups to organize, but so far without success. But from an international outlook, the ethno-political element in the Laponian process is hardly surprising. The Sami, being very active in international indigenous politics, used both their knowledge and juridical position as an indigenous people to try to increase their influence in the debate of influence over the management of Laponia.

Many rounds of review statements, official petition responses, and propositions have been produced over the course of the Laponian process. They may seem endless, and at times tedious and even counterproductive,

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<sup>112</sup> For those with insight into the Laponian process, it is hardly difficult to identify him, but since I am not using names for any of my informants I will simply refer to him as "the coordinator" for the sake of consistency.

<sup>113</sup> "The editor's" name is not used for the same reason that "the coordinator's" is not used (see footnote above).

but they also provide an understanding of how the conflict could become so antagonistic. Here I will give an account of both official and unofficial reactions to the events that took place, and they will hopefully give an explanation for the reasons behind, and the consequences of, the polarization between, primarily, the samebys (backed up by a larger Sami community) and the local authorities. In many ways, the Mijá ednam plan in itself, as well as the process of producing it, turned out to be a platform for the ongoing ethno-political mobilization between the Sami community and the state authorities. I will come back to this point.

### Throwing gavels and closing the ranks

In the fall of 2000 there was a new attempt to start the negotiations among the local actors. This time the discussion forum was called the “Partnership Council.” Local business interests and the Ájtte museum were also loosely connected to the Partnership Council. But it did not seem easier this time to get along. At the meetings, the main issue negotiated was how to shape the future management organization. However, discussing it did not bring the actors closer together, but rather the opposite. Positions and standpoints seemed to become more set.

The samebys’ coordinator delivered their views on the management and the future of Laponia at these meetings. Talking to representatives from the local authorities, I clearly found that that he has not always been so highly regarded in the eyes of the samebys’ counterparts. One of the municipal politicians told me that he thought the coordinator was impossible to work with, and that he had stirred up the feelings within the samebys and turned them against the other actors. The politician reflected on the fact that the coordinator originally was from the area but had lived most of his years in the south of Sweden. This led the politician to argue that the coordinator had denied his Sami background for the major part of his life. And then, when he returned to the Sami area he had all of a sudden become “so very Sami” and turned everything into political issues and mobilized the samebys through agitation.

The politician remembered the last meeting of the Partnership Council in 2001, where he had been quite harsh and, admittedly, impolite to the coordinator (see also Dahlström 2003:330). Other informants have told me that what really happened was that the politician had become so angry with the coordinator that he had thrown the gavel at him.

The politician had later apologized for his behavior, but according to his own belief the event had led to a situation where all the Sami from the samebys had closed ranks behind the coordinator and since then appeared

more as a unified front against the other actors. To the politician this was a shame, and he was not at all sure that the members of the samebys *really* were on the coordinator's side, and that it was the coordinator's idea to take such an uncompromising position in regard to a Sami majority on a future management board. On the contrary, he was convinced that a majority did not stand behind his ideas and that he himself, in his own words a well-liked politician among many Sami, would be able to talk the sameby members out of their stubbornness, if given the chance. However, he did not feel that it would be right to bypass the official Sami body in this respect.

To the politician his own behavior at the meeting was one of the main reasons why the already tense situation deteriorated. And this is partly confirmed by some of the sameby representatives. Several people have commented on it, and one of them told me that this incident was certainly a sad point in the history of the Laponian process. The politician seems to be right on one account, however: his behavior added to the frustration and disappointment of the sameby representatives, and was part of the reason why they turned away from the negotiating table. It made them close ranks behind the coordinator. Contrary to what the politician expressed, all sameby members that I have talked to expressed their confidence in the coordinator. He is generally talked about as being skilled at what he does and that his competence has contributed been valuable. More than once I have heard it stated, however, that the Mijá ednam plan is the result of the discussions that representatives from the samebys have had. It is their will, their wishes. Again, contrary to what the politician suggested, the sameby representatives make it clear that the coordinator did not act as an agitator in any way.

The commotion at the meeting actually contributed to the feeling of solidarity among the sameby members and played a part in keeping the group together. In the light of the politician's behavior at the meeting, the task they had set out to accomplish – a majority on a future board of management and to contribute to the general decolonization of society – seemed more important than ever to the sameby representatives.

## Correspondence and suspicion

As mentioned earlier, even before the meeting in 2001, the relations between the different local actors were flawed. Correspondence between the coordinator and the County Administration shows how tense the situation was (County Administration 1998, reg. no. 103-11234-98). Even before the actual work of producing the Mijá ednam plan had begun, the

coordinator applied for money at the County Administration on behalf of the samebys to be able to organize the work of producing the plan; in regards to this there was a correspondence via mail and fax where the County Administration asked the coordinator to clarify certain things in the application. This communication shows the hesitation and apprehension between the two parties. For instance, the County Administration reacts to the fact that the samebys seem to want to “change” certain things. In an email to the coordinator an official at the County Administration asks for certain clarifications in the samebys’ original application text. Among other things the application has left the County Administration uncertain of the samebys’ opinions on the proposed management plan that the County Administration presented in 1998. They asked the samebys therefore to clarify whether they wanted to go in another direction than what had been described in the County Administration’s plan.

In his answer, the coordinator says that since the discussions regarding Laponia have just started among the samebys, he is not sure exactly what the outcome of those discussions will be. The samebys’ management proposal was at this point far from finished. However, already at this stage the coordinator states that there seem to be divergent views between the samebys and the County Administration. According to him:

...if we assume that the County Administration’s current work follows the lines drawn up in the first program, there are for example differences in opinion concerning what the first-hand undertakings should be. (County Administration of Norrbotten 1998, reg. no. 103-11234-98, my translation)

He also underlined the importance of the samebys’ having a dialogue with the surrounding world in these matters by stating that they are planning to have open conversations with local and regional bodies, the SEPA, UNESCO, the World Wildlife Fund, and others.

The email correspondence continued, and in their answer the County Administration reacted to the wordings regarding the samebys’ belief that there was difference in opinion regarding what the first-hand undertakings should be. They now asked the samebys to specify what they considered these differences to consist of. The coordinator replied and tried to point to the issues that were of importance for the samebys, and that had not been given enough focus by the County Administration. He also suggested that there might be a new and different way of thinking nature protection management:

The samebys regard Lapponia first and foremost as an asset for the existing businesses; reindeer herding, hunting and fishing. The goal is to bring forward the reindeer herding legislation as equal to or superior to, the segments on protection in the Nature protection legislation. The number 1 undertaking should be to secure a sustainable reindeer herding industry. The current plan<sup>114</sup> has preponderance towards the commercial possibilities of tourism. There is a fear that the reindeer herding business again will be secondary to a “new” interest. The needs of the ongoing, current culture ought to be the guiding principle. The plan does not address future issues of responsibility, forms of management, and actual own viewpoints on the current regulation. Maybe this was never the purpose, and it is of little importance now. It might open the door to innovative thinking. The “Sami plan” will plunge into this with an international outlook and will hopefully be able to suggest another composition than the current management system. (County Administration of Norrbotten 1998, reg. no. 103-11234-98, my translation)

But the County Administration was still not satisfied with the samebys’ intentions with the management plan and wanted more information before they could grant financial support. So, again, they contacted the samebys’ coordinator to ask for clarification, especially on the suggestion to increase the status of the reindeer herding legislation in relation to the nature protection legislation. This time, the answer from the coordinator is a bit more frustrated. In a facsimile he responds to the County Administration’s official. Here is an excerpt of that answer:

I received your email this afternoon. Unfortunately, you have highlighted the entire text so it is not clear exactly what part of my answer bothers you. (...) As a parenthesis, I can mention, that we had a very nice visit of a group of EU officials a week ago. They are preparing the new regional-political supports. The Swedish official emphasized that the main intention with the new supports is to find new rules, to examine the current regulations and to question the conventional norms. I am sure that we could lift out some parts in the application – if this is necessary to pull it through – but it does not feel right. At the same time, our intention is not to do something entirely absurd. (...) But it must be permissible to have viewpoints on the value of current legislation and regulations. (...) Considering the possibilities for change; the Government is right now conducting a review of the Reindeer Herding Act<sup>115</sup> that bodes well for the samebys and for the development in Lapponia. If we succeed with the project, resulting in concrete documents, the samebys involved will be well prepared to meet

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114 I.e. the first proposal for management plan made by the County Administration.

115 Most probably, the review discussed here is report form the Swedish parliament, SOU 1999:25, called “The Sami – an indigenous people in Sweden. The question concerning the Swedish ratification of the ILO Convention 169” (in Swedish: Samerna - ett ursprungsfolk i Sverige. Frågan om Sveriges anslutning till ILO:s konvention nr 169).

the new legislation. In other words, it is not a question of doing an in-depth study of juridical primary information or to provoke criminal deeds. (County Administration of Norrbotten 1998, reg.no. 103-11234-98, my translation)

The key points in this reply revolve around two major themes: firstly, change does not necessarily have to be a bad thing – in fact it is the wish of both the Government and the EU, not only the samebys, and secondly, the samebys are not trying to achieve anything that would fall outside the legal framework.

The beginning of the polarization between the samebys and the County Administration is starting to become visible through this correspondence. The irritation and mutual suspicion is obvious. Clearly, the County Administration is uncertain what the samebys' objectives are with suggesting possible changes in the current nature protection legislation. To my knowledge, the mandate of the County Administration had not been questioned before by the samebys in this way, and this created a situation where the officials at the County Administration felt that the prevailing system and power relation between the two parties were being scrutinized and questioned in a way that they had not previously experienced. The persons involved from the samebys did not have the same political power as the authorities did. This situation is equal to that of many indigenous groups. Paine (1985:51) has argued that this lack of power means that the dominated group cannot use certain political strategies commonly used by the dominant group, like economic sanctions or physical force, but they can and do use the "moral opposition" strategy. The moral strategy consists of values that are placed within the framework of the dominant structure, and are therefore recognized by, and familiar to, the other dominant party. As Dahlström points out:

...local Saami reindeer herders most often present their claims using the established discourse that is accepted by the negotiating parties. While remaining within the established discourse, local Saami contest their ascribed position and identity, which is determined by the dominant society. (Dahlström 2003:325)

As will be further discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, part of the success for the local Sami in the Laponian process was due to the fact that in many different ways and on different levels they used the dominant, or normative, discourse in order to be recognized and not so easily brushed aside

## 5 Going national and international

In this chapter the conflict deepens. The samebys stand firm in their belief that they will not enter negotiations unless the management organization is discussed. And on this issue they are not prepared to back off from their demand that there should be a Sami majority on the board of management. Not having the same political power, they claimed moral superiority over the other actors instead. As described by Paine (1985:51 and Dahlström (2003:325) these moral values are situated, however, within the framework of the dominant, normative structure. As we shall see they claimed to co-manage, or even to be responsible for the management of Lapponia largely on the grounds that they had already managed the area for thousands of years. They also felt strong support from the international community and international conventions that supports indigenous participation in management schemes and the rights of indigenous peoples to their traditional lands and waters. This was a frame set that the other local actors could understand, and even support as a “global intention.” It seemed however more difficult to see these intentions realized at a local level.

This chapter will continue to show how the long and often problematic relationship between the local reindeer herders and the representatives of the authorities affected the climate of the negotiations over Lapponia. Tania Murray Li (2001b) has argued that in the case she studied, in Sulawesi, Indonesia, governmental attempts to bring “development” to the inlands are complicated by the already problematic relationship between governmental officials and the small minority groups occupying the inlands. She says that:

...attempts to bring about planned change have been rendered complex not because information is lacking or because the targets of intervention are rebellious or culturally different, but because government officials and those they would constitute as clients are already enmeshed in sets of economic and political relationships in which their own identities, desires, and practices are deeply implicated. (Li 2001b:62)

Even though Laponia and Li's case study differ both geographically and thematically, there are similarities between these two groups: the governmental representatives and the minorities have an already established view of one another that deeply affects the communication between them. Preconceived notions, partially based on earlier contacts, influence the present relationship and the character of the negotiations. In spite of the differences between the two cases, Li points in a direction that is indeed very valid for the study presented here. The often difficult relationship between the local samebys and the local authorities spilled over to the Laponian process. That is hardly surprising. What is important to point out, however, is that the actors' "identities, desires, and practices" (in Li's words) are intrinsically drawn into this relationship. In the negotiations, the ethnic identity, the sense of "this is who we are, and this is what we want, and how we do things" is always present, and in fact became stronger as the process went on. This is most clear among the Sami involved. Moreover, I would add, the interaction between these actors constantly regenerates and shapes their "identities, desires and practices." It is an ongoing relational cycle that confirms the identity and sense of belonging to the groups involved. Their very relationship is part of their identity.

## The process continues...

In the account below the chronological account of the Laponian process continues. As will be shown, the group of representatives from the samebys continued to feel that the other actors did not consider their views. They saw Laponia as a proof of the colonial structure that still existed in society. As we shall see events that took place in Jokkmokk predominantly in the wake of the Laponian process further strengthened the samebys' representatives in their persistence to use Laponia as a tool to decolonize society and somewhat change the power structure between the State and the Sami. As the Laponian process went on, the samebys turned not only to the Government and the national area with their problems, but also to the international level, notifying UNESCO about the situation in Laponia.

## Us against them

The editor who helped the samebys write and revise the Mijá ednam plan has explained how it could be difficult at times to put together the different views of the members of the group and at the same time try to adopt

a language that would work in the levels of authority of society and be accepted by different nature protection and cultural heritage organizations worldwide and nationally. But she also gives witness to the fact that there seems to have been a suppressed need among the sameby members to talk about many things at their meetings, not all of them directly related to the World Heritage issue. They often brought up other subjects like the importance of family relations, the importance of supporting the Sami language, the experience of colonization, among other things. Some of these views were later integrated into the Mijá ednam plan, which in the end became not only the samebys' vision of how the management of Lapponia should be organized but also a record of their view of their history and the landscape and their will to take on a greater responsibility for the land, a responsibility that they thought was theirs to begin with but that had been taken away from them due to legislation enacted by the State over the course of history. This resembles the experiences made by James Clifford (1997:188ff) during a meeting held at a museum in Canada. Old ceremonial objects were taken out and a group of Tlingit elders were invited to attend the event and to have the opportunity to comment on the regalia. However, instead of explaining the history of the objects, the elders started to pray, sing, and tell stories about lost lands and traditions. They talked "around" the objects rather than about them. Clifford argues that the museum at that time became a *contact zone* rather than a place for consultation and research. A contact zone, argues Clifford is to be understood as a space where people separated both historically and geographically come into contact and form relations, and how people and subjects are constituted by and in an ongoing asymmetric power relation. As such, it is a contingent space of colonial encounters (Clifford 1997:192). Lapponia could similarly be seen as a contact zone. Hence, for the Sami individuals involved, Lapponia, and the future management of it, had to do with a range of other things besides where to put up signs, how best to promote tourism, or how to shape the management structure of the area. Getting together and trying to form the samebys' management plan became an arena for discussing how to strengthen the Sami culture, the Sami languages, and Sami rights in general and how to integrate them in the Lapponian process.

Many of the representatives from the samebys have told me how rewarding they thought the whole process was. Not only did it work as a vent to air all kinds of issues that had bothered them or that they found important in this context, but they felt that for once they were doing something that could make a real difference. They felt right away that they had the support of the international community, since joint man-

agement is the rule in all other comparable World Heritage sites and that local and indigenous participation in management of environmentally protected areas is reinforced in several important conventions that Sweden has ratified. Also, many found the method used, with the Agenda 21 approach, truly democratic in the sense that everybody in the samebys had a chance to be heard. With the coordinator and the editor interpreting and mediating their views, they soon felt they made small steps of progress along the way already from the very beginning. In the end they were all satisfied and proud of the outcome, the Mijá ednam plan.

The atmosphere created during these long hours of discussing and coordinating the Mijá ednam plan was to be decisive for the outcome of further developments. The samebys' representatives came to be a tightly knitted group that felt that they had an important task and a great deal of responsibility on their shoulders. One representative told me that from the very beginning those in the group talked about how important Laponia was for the whole Sami community. They saw it as an effective "tool" in the overall struggle for increased Sami self-governance. The condescending and colonial attitude that they felt they met from the local authorities also contributed to the feeling of unity and solidarity among the sameby representatives. The other local actors became a common "enemy" that further reinforced their determination to use Laponia to make a real difference. Over the years, sometimes when talking to the samebys' representatives, it strikes me that there was an "us" against "them" feeling that developed among them. With the simultaneously global and local perspective that the World Heritage status offered, Laponia was an optimal platform for the ethnic mobilization of, not only the local Sami, but also the wider Sami community. This is not to say that every sameby member saw the developments in the Laponian process as the major issue to worry about. For many, other more practical matters (economic issues, predator policies, etc.) often overshadowed the twists and turns in negotiation over how best to manage Laponia. Nevertheless, the appointed representatives were expected to "report back" to their respective sameby and keep the rest of the members informed if anything important happened concerning the process. And for the representatives of the samebys, as described above, the feeling of being at the center a potentially very significant turning point in the Sami-State relationship was noteworthy. This group became tightly knit and was staunch in their objectives of accomplishing change and improving the Sami influence on conservation management in the area. Their persistent strategy of holding on to the demand of discussing nothing short of a Sami majority on a future board of management (rather than the things they would agree on

with the other local actors) seems to have been accepted by all members of this group.

### The 10% that mattered

From the time that the municipalities' and the samebys' proposed management plans were finished in the early summer of 2000, the County Administration tried to revise a management proposal that all concerned parties could agree upon. However, as already mentioned in Chapter 1, it would not be until the summer of 2006 that an agreement was reached. The seemingly endless stream of proposals, official letters, and review statements proved to have little effect in pushing the process forward. But it illustrates the positioning of the different local actors.

When the municipalities' and the samebys' plans were ready, all three major actors established that they agreed on 90% of the proposed plans for the future of Lapponia (compare Dahlström 2003:330). The 10% they could not agree upon concerned mainly the representation on a future board of management. The samebys suggested that the majority in the decision-making organization should consist of Sami persons (Mijá ednam 2000:9), a requirement that the other actors could not accept. In their comments to the Mijá ednam plan, the County Administration is positive toward many things. But at the same time they are very clear on their assessment that the County Administration has the overall responsibility for the area. This is the body that is the representative of the Swedish nation state in the region, and this is expressed through both their authority role and their management role (County Administration of Norrbotten 2000, reg. no. 10252-2000). In other words, they did not feel that they had the mandate to agree on a board of management for the World Heritage site where the samebys' representatives were in the majority. The municipalities were equally doubtful. An official from the municipal office in Jokkmokk told me that she personally could imagine a future where the samebys' had a more profound influence, but she also pointed to the fact that there are matters in which the municipality simply cannot give away its role as the responsible authority. In her opinion there was no constitutional scope for this. This is a viewpoint that I have heard many times from municipal officials and politicians. According to Dahlström, some municipal representatives have even told her that they thought that the municipalities were the institutional body best equipped to manage Lapponia. The grounds for this kind of reasoning came from the opinion that the municipalities represented the "common interest" among people in the local community, while the samebys only repre-

sented a “particular interest” (Dahlström 2003:331). In other words, the municipalities also represented the members of the samebys who, like other local community inhabitants, had voted in the municipal elections and chosen the municipal politicians in a democratic process. From the samebys’ perspective, this was not acceptable. They had not voted in the municipal elections to let the politicians there look after their interests in the Laponian process. From the start then, the samebys have fought to be seen as equal partners in the negotiations and not as a mere interest-group.

As mentioned, when pressured on the issue, representatives from the municipalities and the County Administration would usually answer that they were not constitutionally able to agree to the samebys’ demands. Sometimes, though, other more direct opinions have been expressed. When asked what the main reasons were for not complying with the samebys’ suggestion concerning the board representation, a municipal politician told me that in his opinion a Sami majority on a board of management would mean that the whole area would be risk being closed off to all others. There would also be trouble when it comes to the predator issue. A bit sarcastically he said that he feared that there would not be a single predator left in the mountains if the samebys were given the responsibility for the management.

But, as mentioned before, to the sameby representatives, a Sami majority on the board was indeed an important issue, important from the beginning, and gaining in importance as they experienced more situations of colonial structure and attitude as the processes went on. Their resolve not to give up on their demands of first solving the issue of representation on the board and to stand firm in their beliefs that Sami majority on the board was the only acceptable outcome grew stronger by the opposition and perceived injustices that they met. All along, sameby representatives have told me that they have felt that they have absolutely nothing to lose by following a strategy of withdrawal from the negotiations with the other actors until their demands were met. Over the years, there have been discussions and attempts to resolve the situation, but these attempts have always been interrupted, and on a few occasions the sameby representatives have officially declared their withdrawal from the negotiations. The reason for standing outside the process, as understood by one of the sameby representatives, was that by doing so no one could come and “run over” the samebys and then say that “you were in the negotiations, you are part of the decisions.” It is better then to stand outside the process. This would make the decisions taken by the other actors less valid. On this particular occasion I was also told that there are things that the same-

bys would like to accomplish with Laponia that they would not go public with at this stage. They were being a bit careful not to frighten and discourage the other actors.

## Writing to the Government in 2001

In 2001 it was rather clear to the samebys that the other actors would not agree to allow a Sami majority on a future board of management. Since the strongest objection from the others was that they did not feel that this could be justified constitutionally, the samebys (together with SSR<sup>116</sup> and in consultation with the Sami Parliament and the Sami Youth Organisation *Sáminuorra*) handed over a petition to the Government where they appealed to the Government

to create opportunities for a local management board with a Sami majority over the World Heritage site of Laponia (Ministry of Agriculture 2001, reg. no. 2001/2594/SU; see also Dahlström 2003:333:ff). Again, the samebys emphasize their belief that Laponia is an area where new models and solutions to nature protection could be tried in order to achieve “ecologically sustainable, socially successful, and economically prosperous Sami/local development in accordance to the criteria decided by the World Heritage Committee” (Ministry of Agriculture 2001, reg. no. 2001/2594/SU). In the petition the samebys describe how the first attempts at negotiations very soon proved difficult, since the local actors had such differing views on how the management structure and the actors’ representatives on a board of management should be organized. Also, they voice their disapproval of the attitude they have met from their counterparts:

Neither the County Administration nor the two involved municipalities have so far bothered to review the samebys’ viewpoints and propositions more closely. The motivation for this is said to be that our suggestions do not fit in with the current legislation and that this is a political concern. The questions at issue regarding the authority of a management board, its juridical position, and its general responsibility are now unsettled and are not intended to be covered by the proposal for a management plan that the County Administration is preparing. With that, the discussions have been discontinued. The samebys regret this course of events and realize that the question regarding the management of Laponia needs to be lifted to a higher level of authority for assessment. At this moment there is regretfully

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<sup>116</sup> The SSR (The Swedish Sami National Association, in Swedish: *Svenska Samernas Riksförbund*) is an interest organization that acts in questions that regards Sami issues in society at large. They are composed mainly of Sameby clientele and focus on the interests of this clientele.

no room for a positive local/regional dialogue. This is even more unfortunate considering the fact that the work of producing the samebys' proposal for a management plan is the result of what might be the most genuine Agenda 21 process ever conducted in Sweden with a real bottom-up perspective and with a committed and stable support behind it. (Ministry of Agriculture 2001, reg.no 2001/2594/SU:2-3, my translation)

With this appeal, the samebys wanted to seek support for their views on how to manage Lapponia, and to highlight their position as the progressive party, seeking change and complying with international trends and developments in the field of Nature protection policies. Also, by emphasizing the successful Agenda 21 process, they basically let the Government know that this was the genuine opinion of the samebys involved, not only the loud claims of some political elite with no real contact with the grassroots people.

The County Administration had the chance to comment on the samebys' petition. In a review statement to the Government they were very critical of both the samebys and of the Government (County Administration of Norrbotten 2001, reg. no. 12774-2001). Again, they said that they only acted on the basis of the mandate they had as the Government's regional representative and that any management structure had to be consistent with the current legislation. Further they urge the Government to peruse the management proposals of all three actors and not only Mijá ednam, which were enclosed in the samebys' letter to the Government. In their statement, the County Administration strongly refutes the accusation that they had not properly reviewed the samebys' viewpoints and propositions. On the contrary, they claim to have had a thorough internal discussion concerning the contents of the Mijá ednam plan. But for them, the bottom line was still that:

From the perspective of the County Administration, local influence and local participation in the management of protected areas is of major significance. The forms for this, however, must rely on a mutual trust among the parties in the collaboration and must be conducted within the framework of the prevailing legislation. The participating parties must be prepared to follow the common national "rules of the game" *that we together as a nation have built up* in form of legislation and national goals. (County Administration of Norrbotten 2001, reg. no. 12774-2001, my italics, my translation)

Most Sami people that I know, and certainly the samebys' representatives in the Lapponia process, would not subscribe to the County Administration's standpoint that "we together as a nation" have formulated the legislation and the national goals. Generally, they would not feel that they had

had any influence in the establishment of national laws or regulations; “the rules of the game,” then are not their rules, but the rules set by authorities, or the State, which has been imposing these rules on the Sami population for generations. The quote above could be interpreted as a conscious attempt on the part of the County Administration to emphasize the viewpoint that the Sami are also part of the nation and just as much participants in forming the national legislation as any other citizen. I am not sure whether this is what the formulation was meant to imply. Neither have I heard any of the sameby representatives’ comment on the specific wordings italicized in the quote above. However, based on what I have learned from listening to the sameby representatives’ views and perspectives, this formulation is a typical example of a notion that, to them, is colonial in character and that does not consider even the possibility that there could be other ideas on how to structure the conservation management of the area. This position from the County Administration is exactly what the sameby representatives have been trying to elucidate and transform throughout the Laponian process.

In my view the quote is an example of the normative discourse on conservation management that can be said to have hegemonic tendencies and that has prevailed among both national and local environmental conservation agencies in Sweden. The feeling of being detached from the process of shaping laws and regulations can of course be true for all Swedish citizens. When the Swedish nation state was beginning to be formed and centralized in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, “Swedish” was not an identity that most inhabitants would use. At that time, regional or local identity markers were much more common and comprehensible to people. “Swedish society” with its structures, laws, and regulations is (as are all nation states) a social construction that has been more or less forcibly applied to both regions and groups of people, and a hesitation vis-à-vis “the state” has been prevalent in many parts of what we today call Sweden. The difference is that nowadays most members of the Sami community see themselves as a separate ethnic entity, with their own history and cultural heritage that is separate from what we today refer to as Swedish history and cultural heritage. Many Sami people, and to an extent reindeer herders in particular, do not feel that the Swedish nation state and the Swedish legal system is representing them. On the contrary, they often find it unfitting and unjust. In contrast, most ethnic Swedes would feel represented by the institutions of the nation state to a higher degree.

In the above-mentioned comment to the samebys’ petition in 2001, the County Administration pointed to the fact that the disagreement and

inability among the actors to cooperate had led to a *polarization* (County Administration of Norrbotten 2001, reg. no. 12774-2001) on the matter. From this point onwards, much of the positioning made by the local actors in regards to Lapponia was based on prestige, and there clearly was mutual suspicion among the others. The viewpoints were clear and fixed, and there seemed to be very little room for negotiation. In general terms the polarization that took place was mainly between the samebys (and in many ways the larger Sami community) and the local authorities (i.e. the County Administration and the municipalities). Like the County Administration, the municipalities too were annoyed by the fact that the Government had only considered the proposals from the samebys and not been interested enough to look at the proposals from the other local actors (Municipality of Jokkmokk 2001, reg. no. 574-2001.878). In an official statement from Jokkmokk municipality it is also pointed out, with some frustration, that the samebys did not address the 2001 petition to either of the municipalities, but only directly to the Government. This fact is very illustrative of the nature of the relations between the samebys and the authorities at this time. The samebys did not feel that their proposals on how to solve the management issue would really be heard by the other local actors and that they would not be met on equal terms. They had nothing to gain by going through the local authorities first, and therefore they turned directly to the national arena in the hope of gaining some acceptance for their aspirations.

The municipalities did not recommend compliance with the samebys' petition in 2001. They stated that the main reason for this was that they sought some sort of cohesive World Heritage agenda from a national perspective, where guidelines and policies for how to manage, not only Lapponia, but all the other World Heritage sites in Sweden as well, were established (Municipality of Jokkmokk 2001, reg. no. 574-2001.878).

Even though the municipalities have not been able to agree on a Sami majority on the board until recently, and even though they at this stage were critical of the samebys' actions, throughout the process they have often assumed a mediating role between the samebys and the County Administration, and at times been equally critical towards both actors. A typical approach on the part of the municipalities can be well represented by what a municipal official once told me. He said that the two things that annoyed him most with the Lapponian process were that the samebys were refusing to cooperate and that the County Administration did not take its responsibility as the authority officially in charge. He said that he personally believed that the samebys had made a mistake by using the

strategy to stand outside all negotiations. He asked himself if it would not have been better for them to be part of the negotiations and try to gain power from within the process. He believed in their goals but not in their means. And when it came to the County Administration, he maintained that their mentality was outdated and that they seemed to have very few new ideas when it came to conservancy policies, and this made the process move forward very slowly.

It is better left unsaid whether it was because of the criticism from the County Administration and the municipalities in their review statement, but the Government's reaction to the appeal from the samebys was that they simply referred the matter back to the County Administration on the grounds that the SEPA, after receiving the World Heritage appointment, had commissioned the County Administration to prepare a proposition for the future management for Lapponia together with the other actors concerned. In other words, to the Government this was an issue that needed to be solved at a local level (Ministry of Agriculture 2001, reg. no. 2001/2594/SU).

The process was back to square one. It had proved virtually impossible to agree among the local actors when it came to resolving the main issue: how to distribute the representatives on a board of management. And now, the local communication was tainted by ethno-political arguments and positioning based on prestige and to a certain extent on enforcing prevailing power structures to a degree where it seemed impossible to meet. Thus, in reality, the appeal to the Government in 2001 did not lead to much. The general feeling among many of the Sami involved at the time was that the Government was acting in a cowardly manner by not taking a clear stance on the matter. One opinion was that the Government was afraid to support the Sami too openly on this, because if they supported a Sami management of Lapponia it would be more difficult to explain the reluctance to ratify ILO 169.<sup>117</sup> The general perception was therefore that the issue of who should manage Lapponia was a discussion that the Government was afraid to engage in. This shows how sensitive the case of Lapponia had become. One could interpret the decision from the Government that this was a matter that should be solved locally as a confirmation of the contrary: this was a question that had the potential of setting a precedent, if handled by national authorities. If the local Sami in the Lapponian area were to get governmental support to be responsible for a protected area, who knows what would be next.

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<sup>117</sup> The ILO convention and its connection to the Lapponian process were discussed In Chapter 2.

## John the Wolf

After the samebys' petition to the Government in 2001, the process became a sort of waiting game. Sporadic meetings among the actors took place. The County Administration followed the request made by the Government to produce a proposal for a management plan that would involve the interest of all the local actors. This new proposal by the County Administration will be discussed below.

Other related issues occupied the agenda instead. A wolf wandered into the Laponian area.<sup>118</sup> This in itself is not such a big surprise as wolves do at times come into the reindeer herding area. This particular wolf, however, turned out to be special. After it was sedated and examined by the County Administration and the SEPA, the authorities established that he came from the northeast and had to be from the territory of Russia and Finland. As such, he was a welcome input to the Swedish wolf population, which was suffering from inbreeding. Large sums of public money were spent to monitor the wolf, which was named John. Wolves are always an annoyance to the reindeer herders. Many herders have explained to me that it is not only the fact that they are good hunters and kill many reindeer, but the reindeer are so scared of them that the mere scent of a wolf will set them running in all directions, and it might take days for the herders to gather them back together again. John and the way he was monitored came to symbolize many of the things that the herders in general thought were wrong with the current predator policy. A group of women from the samebys got together and wrote a letter to the Government, to all the parties in the Swedish Parliament, and to UNESCO and the UN. The reason behind the letter was to point to the perceived untenable situation for the reindeer herders in the area (Sámi Radio June 4, 2002; Dahlström 2003:254). What is interesting about this letter is that it was called "The cry from Laponia."<sup>119</sup> The World Heritage was used to draw national and international attention to the precarious situation of the local Sami. Eventually, John disappeared. His tracking device went silent, and he was never seen again. This story shows how well Laponia worked as a platform for the Sami ethno-political agenda. By referring to the herding, threatened by the wolf and by a predator policy that was seen as unjust, as having World Heritage status, the local and national authorities could easily be short-circuited.

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<sup>118</sup> See Dahlström 2003 for a detailed account on the events that unfolded after the wolf came into the area.

<sup>119</sup> *Skriet från Laponia* in Swedish.

## The debacle with the guide training

Apart from the commotion with John the Wolf, the Laponian process had at this stage, around 2002, come to a standstill. However, the municipalities felt it was necessary to get started with some of the more tangible tasks concerning Laponia, even if the issues around the management organization did not seem to be resolved. The main goal for the municipalities to have a World Heritage site in the first place was to develop tourism and, through this and other related activities, to create more job opportunities in the community. So in 2003 the municipalities launched a project called *Laponia – Sustainable World Heritage*, which aimed at promoting Laponia as a World Heritage site and developing a sustainable cultural tourism in the area. The project started a training program to certify tourist guides with special knowledge of Laponia as a World Heritage site. This enterprise, however, proved to be the start of a heated debate in the local community. The turbulence that followed in the local community made it clear that the situation regarding Laponia was now so antagonistic that it was impossible to do or say anything at all that concerned Laponia without this automatically being turned into an ethno-political disagreement. The conflict was to a great extent acted out through the media. Therefore, a lot of the references in the account below derive from newspaper articles and statements made on the Sami radio.

The guide training debacle took place in the summer and early fall of 2003. The project team invited the samebys to talk about the guide training since part of the aim of the course was to educate the participants in Sami culture and history. But the samebys did not want to participate in the discussions, according to some of the sameby representatives that I talked to, since they viewed the whole venture as directly linked to the unresolved management situation. The project team decided to start the guide training program anyway. They now turned to the Sami Educational Centre, SEC, which is situated in Jokkmokk, with a request that they take on the specific part on the course that included knowledge about Sami culture and history. The board of SEC consisted mostly of local Sami persons, and they were intensely aware of the problems of creating a management plan for Laponia and of the polarized situation between the samebys and the other local actors in this respect. In some cases there were even members from the samebys involved that were representatives on the board of SEC. The board of SEC had the same interpretation as the samebys and immediately recognized the proposed guide course as part of a wider management issue. They therefore turned down the proposal to be responsible for part of the course. However the chair of the

board, herself a Sami, but not a member of any of the samebys involved, went ahead anyway and accepted the course, thus overruling the SEC board. To Sami radio she said that she did not think that the samebys lack of enthusiasm about cooperating with the municipalities and the County Administration was reason enough to reject the guide course. To her this was a business deal. She saw the project as a potential client and the course as an economic transaction (Sámi Radio August 22, 2003).

Representatives from the samebys now demanded that the course be stopped immediately. According to the current coordinator<sup>120</sup> for the samebys, the whole question of how to organize the management of Lapponia had to be solved first, because otherwise no clear idea of what to do with the Laponian area would ever come about, and there would be a lot of uncertainty regarding the responsibility of certifying the tourist guides (Sámi Radio August 29, 2003). After several meetings with the samebys, the SEC board called in an extra meeting where the SEC board for a second time voted against providing the guide course. As a consequence the chair resigned, together with one other board member that had supported her. An interesting detail is that the former chair later became employed by the project to give the course that SEC had turned down, but now as a freelancer.

One of the board members of SEC, a Sami woman representing a local Sami party, and also member of one of the samebys involved, later said that it was a unanimous decision to turn down the guide course and that the actions of the chair were highly regrettable. She also disagreed with those who argued that political values should not determine what kind of education the SEC should consider providing. She went on to say that everything is politics, and after all the SEC board consists mostly of politicians. She argued that in a democracy it is in situations like these that you have the possibility to speak up and to highlight the very questions that you are put there to defend in the first place. In this specific matter, she felt that it was the duty of the Sami on the board to give voice to Sami objectives and be loyal to the Sami struggle (Sámi Rádío October 8, 2003).

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<sup>120</sup> The coordinator at this particular point in time was not the same person as before (see Ch. 4). The first coordinator had a position with the Government at this time. But later he resumed his role and again worked as the samebys' coordinator. To my knowledge these changes in employment were not due to anything other than practical job-opportunity reasons. The position as coordinator for the samebys has always been project based, and it has been difficult to guarantee long-standing employments. At times, they have not been sure that there would even be enough money to support the position. This has meant that the first coordinator has felt it necessary to look for other employment on occasion.

It is clear from the above account that there was a wider assembled Sami community that supported the samebys' strategies at this point. Many Sami, and especially politically active Sami people, felt that it was their duty to support the samebys' struggle, which at times was also seen as "the Sami struggle," as the above-mentioned Sami politician exemplifies.

There was an official demand from the samebys that the guide training program be terminated. The main reasons for this were that the samebys felt that:

The planning of the course is insufficient; it is unclear for whom and for what a possible certification will be applicable, and the form of examination is wrong. The samebys have not been asked to participate, in spite of the fact that the premier task for the guides is to present the land and the culture of the Sami. (County Administration of Norrbotten 2003, reg. no. 17999-2003, petition from the samebys to the municipalities, my translation)

Others involved in the project on the part of the municipalities confirm that the samebys were in fact not asked to participate in the guide training or in the project in general. One official from the municipalities said that this was caused by the negligence of new recruitments. The new employees were simply not aware of just how infected and sensitive the situation was, or that the appropriate thing to do in any case would have been to confirm the ideas with the involved samebys.

In their official response, however, (County Administration of Norrbotten 2003, reg. no. 17999-2003, response to petition from Gällivare municipality) the municipalities say that the reason that the planning of the course seems insufficient and unorganized is because it has not really been properly prepared yet, and it is precisely here that the Sami competence would be welcomed and needed. They establish that they *had* invited the samebys to take part in the project group, just as they are always invited to cooperate in the procedure of developing the management plan for Lapponia, but that they participated only in the first introductory meeting. In their response they express a wish that the samebys still might consider being part of the project, since their competence is needed, thus renewing the invitation to the samebys to cooperate. However, they assert that in any case they have no intentions to discontinue the guide training at this stage.

These two statements are quite typical of the lack of communication among the local actors at this point. The samebys say that they had not been asked to participate, and the municipalities say that the samebys had

been invited to participate. It is one person's word against another's. For the samebys the guide training program became a venture that exemplified the perceived injustices, and therefore it became symbolically important. Here it was shown that the authorities did not listen to the samebys but went ahead and made decisions that concerned Lapponia before gaining approval of them from the Sami community. And then, when they were questioned about it, they could not see where they had failed. This was classic colonial behavior in the eyes of many Sami involved.

Even if the situation in regard to the guide course has calmed down considerably since the summer of 2003, people in Jokkmokk still talk about this debacle. The project has been offering the guide course without the SEC being involved and without the consent of the samebys. Quite a number of people are now certified Laponian guides, but the persons responsible for the course keep telling me how difficult it is for many of the local Sami who want to attend. Taking the guide course is not something that they want to go public with, afraid that they would be seen as "traitors" in a sense by other Sami in the area. I have heard from sameby members that the atmosphere at this time in Jokkmokk was very harsh, and there was a merciless attitude towards those Sami who chose to have any contact with the project and the guide training course. Contacts between interested Sami and the project had to be taken "under the radar," and it was important for all involved that these attempts at communication and cooperation not be made official. The project employees and the guide course organizers also realized how delicate the situation was for those Sami that wanted to have contact with them, and did not in any way go public with who the individuals were or to what extent their services were used by Sami. After a while, the intensity of the disagreement concerning the guide training program abated, and an increasing number of certified guides are of Sami origin or even members of one of the Lapponia samebys.

The story of the guide training illustrates the strict positioning and polarization between the samebys, on the one hand, and the local authorities, on the other. This is also a situation that made the involved samebys close ranks even more and to become even more devoted to their objectives and their struggle. In conclusion, the sameby representatives and the work conducted with producing the Mijá Ednam plan, the meeting where the politician through the gavel at the coordinator, and the guide training debacle are all events that have contributed to a development for the Sami involved in the Laponian process to be engaged and to use the issue of Lapponia for the ongoing ethno-political struggle. It created an "us against them" feeling, which also contributed to the polarization that took place.

It was, it seemed, the Sami against the authorities once again. For the Sami representatives, the unsuccessful negotiation process added to their experiences of being trapped in a colonial situation, and an asymmetric power structure.

### ... And continues

The disagreement with the guide training program showed everyone involved just how deep the discrepancies were. Nevertheless, the municipalities were eager to continue with their project, with or without SEC's help with the guide course. During the debacle with the guide training program, the County Administration was working on yet another new proposed management plan for the area.

### The final proposal from the County Administration

After the Samebys' petition to the Government in 2001 the County Administration began to work on a revised proposal for how to manage Laponia. They tried to involve the other local actors by keeping a dialogue going with them on how to go forward in the process. In September 2003 the samebys replied to a draft version of a management plan for Laponia. Here, they were very critical of the proposed management. Again, they accused the County Administration of not taking the Sami culture into consideration at all in regards to the future management of the World Heritage site. In their reply the samebys reminded us that the SEPA and the County Administration did not want the Sami culture to be part of the World Heritage nomination at all, but that they now have an obligation to recognize the value of Sami culture as part of Laponia's status as a World Heritage site since both the Swedish Government and UNESCO have decided upon the importance of making this a mixed site. Respect for this perspective is totally lacking on the part of the County Administration according to the samebys. The samebys conclude by stating that:

The Government and the National Heritage Board have to put forward their guiding principles for how a management plan can be prepared to fulfill the requirements of UNESCO. It is insulting for the Sami population in the area to have their native region and their history valued in accordance with this draft version of a management plan. (County Administration of Norrbotten 2001:10, reg. no. 12453-2001, statement by the samebys in Laponia, my translation)

The schism between the samebys and the County Administration is apparent here, as the samebys take on an irreconcilable approach by describing the proposal from the County Administration as *insulting* to the Sami in the area. We must not forget that this took place at the same time as the guide training debacle and there were a lot of upset feelings and frustration among the Sami in the area, especially in regard to Laponia. The sameby representatives did not feel that the Sami culture was given priority in any instance when it came to Laponia, whether it concerned the future of tourism in the area or the work with creating a sustainable management plan.

The Sami Parliament also sent in a reply to the draft version of a management plan in September 2003. They emphasized Laponia as an area that had the potential to be an experimental area when it comes to trying new management solutions involving expanded local participation that would not only be ecologically sustainable but also socially and economically sound. The Sami Parliament also highlighted the question of international law and pointed out that there are several conventions signed and ratified by the Swedish Government that speak in favor of delegating a larger amount of responsibility to the Sami people in general, and in particular when it comes to the management of their traditional areas. The County Administration is not up-to-date with these obligations, and the proposed management of Laponia as presented in the draft is, according to the Sami Parliament, characterized by a perspective that can be traced back to the times when the national parks were first created (Sami Parliament 2003, reg. no. 190/03).

The general opinion vis-à-vis the County Administration from the sameby's representatives is reflected in the statements made by the Sami Parliament above. They consider the County Administration to be stuck in an old-fashioned way of dealing with management issues. But it was not only the sameby representatives and the wider Sami community that believed the County Administration to be inflexible and old-fashioned. The municipal officials and politicians have often aired a similar opinion. One person working for the municipality once voiced his frustration when the role of the County Administration was brought into the conversation. This person saw their actions in the Laponian process as a display of autocratic attitude and authority. First of all, he argued, they had not been paying enough attention to the cultural criteria of the World Heritage nomination in their different management proposals over the years. And the experience was that they simply did not listen to the wishes and suggestions from any of the other actors. They were inflexible and uncom-

promising in their interactions with the other parties. Another representative from the municipalities also indicated that the County Administration's mentality was obsolete. He thought that they did not have the ability to tie together nature conservation with cultural conservation. And besides, he added, some of their officials seemed really difficult to work with.

It is clear that even though the main polarization here was that between the samebys' representatives (and in many ways the larger Sami community) and the local authorities, there was also a split between the County Administration and the two other local actors. The samebys and the municipalities would claim that they had a more progressive approach toward local participation in conservancy and an ability to make the necessary link between natural and cultural protection which, ultimately, was one the main arguments for the appointment of Laponia as a World Heritage site in the first place. The difference here is that the municipalities had nothing to lose by keeping the communication lines with the County Administration open, whereas the samebys had more things at stake: not only did they defend their participation in the management of Laponia, they were also trying to make a difference for the Sami community as a whole. Laponia had the potential to become the positive example that others could follow, and to secure a strengthened position when it came to the management of traditional Sami territories.

Not surprisingly, the County Administration would not agree with this criticism. The authority thought it was doing all it could to consider the interest of all local actors without violating the mandate it had from the Government. One representative from the County Administration once told me that no one at the County Administration would personally mind if the samebys were given the responsibility to manage Laponia, or if they got the majority of seats on the future management board. This was not the issue. But again, in that case the Government had to issue new directives. All the County Administration's employees were doing was to follow the directives given to them by the Government. And the current ones simply did not allow this.

Talking to the Sami Radio in August, 2003, the sameby coordinator revealed his discontent with the County Administration's new draft plan (Sámi Radio August 7, 2003). The criticism that has been present from the very beginning of the Laponian process appears here too. The coordinator says that the draft plan only considers the environmental protection of the area and totally neglects the Sami culture. And this is serious, so serious that the samebys are considering asking UNESCO to withdraw Laponia from the World Heritage list. To my knowledge, this request to

UNESCO was never written. Official contacts with UNESCO were taken at a later stage, which will be discussed below. However, this shows the potential for the local Sami to have direct contact with the international community and to short-cut the local and national arenas. The mere threat of going to UNESCO with their predicaments was probably an effective strategy for the Sami. Both local and national authorities knew by now that this direct link between the local Sami and the international community was strong and not at all improbable.

In October 2003 the County Administration called the other local actors to a meeting to discuss the proposed management plan and to reach some agreement on basic issues. This time the samebys came to the meeting, in spite of their critical stance toward the draft proposal, since the composition of a future management board was supposed to be discussed. However, this meeting did not seem to bring the parties closer. The samebys stood firm that a Sami majority on the board was the only acceptable scenario for them, and the other actors concluded that it was not in their mandate to accept this. In short, nothing had changed, and the polarization between them remained unchanged.

In December 2003 a final proposal was put forward by the County Administration. It was much in line with the draft version that had been criticized in the review statements earlier that year (County Administration of Norrbotten 2003, reg. no. 12453-2001). The samebys responded with a short but definite answer: they stated that all cooperation with the County Administration was to be immediately interrupted and that the samebys, from this point onwards, would work independently of the County Administration's planning with regard to the Laponian process. They added that they could not allow that the guidelines for natural protection would be decided upon independently from the guidelines concerning cultural protection. And this is a requirement that they feel that the proposed management plan did not live up to. The samebys further noted that they wanted the financial situation for the samebys to be settled before they could enter into the negotiations, and that they would stand firm in their previous opinion concerning Sami participation and mandate on a board of management (County Administration of Norrbotten 2004, reg. no. 12453-2001, statement from the samebys in Laponia).

### Writing to the Government in 2004

Shortly after stating that they, again, intended to interrupt all further collaboration with the County Administration, the samebys turned to the Government once again, now with a newly developed management pro-

posal of their own. The samebys had now established an economic association named after their first management proposal; Mijá ednam.<sup>121</sup> In Mijá ednam's proposal the absolute significance of Sami influence on the management is stressed in order to fulfill the conditions set by UNESCO in the appointment of Laponia as a World Heritage site. The samebys say that:

...in the end it is the members of the samebys who, through their individual and shared activities, will determine the future of the Sami cultural landscape in Laponia. (Ministry of Agriculture 2004, reg. no. 2004/523, proposal to the Government from Mijá ednam, my translation)

The international development toward an increased influence of indigenous peoples in management is again emphasized. This is, they argue, often seen as a prerequisite in order to reach an efficient and successful management that is biologically as well as socially sustainable. Therefore, the Mijá ednam group suggests the Government allow for a trial period between July, 2004 and June 2007 and to make the required changes in the legislation by special decree. Mijá ednam has three alternatives for how a management organization could be structured:

1. The Sami Parliament as the administrator. The Sami Parliament, the two municipalities and the County Administration should elect representatives to a Mijá ednam collaborative council.

2. A local management administration. The samebys, the two municipalities, and the County Administration constitute a non-profit collaborative organization.

3. A Laponia delegation at the County Administration. A delegation within the County Administration system assumes responsibility. The Sami Parliament, the two municipalities, and the County Administration will elect the representatives.

In all these suggested alternatives the Sami representatives are proposed to constitute the majority.

This time the County Administration and the municipalities were somewhat favorably inclined towards the proposition. At least they did not totally dismiss it. The County Administration said in their answer that they opposed an independent management organization with a Sami ma-

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<sup>121</sup> The primary reason for doing this was simply because it is easier to seek financial support for an established association than an unrecognized group of people. But it was also thought to give the samebys a more accepted position as an actor to be reckoned with.

majority, but they suggested the third alternative, a delegation under the County Administration, to be looked into further. However, they saw this as a long process where all actors would have to collaborate and participate in an open discussion. Nothing is said about whether or not the County Administration felt it possible to have a Sami majority in this delegation (County Administration of Norrbotten 2004, reg. no. 512-2985-04). The municipalities did not have a clear opinion regarding any of the three suggested management alternatives but said that there was a need for a governmental review of the Swedish World Heritage sites in general and of Laponia in particular. They found it difficult to take a stance on the suggestions made by Mijá ednam since:

... there is a need to clarify and illuminate certain basic conditions before the question of local Sami management within the World Heritage site of Laponia can be decided upon. (Municipality of Jokkmokk 2004, reg. no. 196-2004.878, my translation)

Among other things the municipalities thought that there was a lot of confusion concerning concepts like *management* and *local management*, and this needed to be sorted out before one could discuss the future management structure for Laponia.

Even though nothing substantial can be said to have come out of the Mijá ednam proposition in 2004, the petition marks the beginning of the end of the long disagreement in the local community that surrounded the Laponia process for so many years. The Government again asked the County Administration to deal with the problem and to prioritize the matter. But things were about to change. In the periodical evaluation<sup>122</sup> in 2005, it was noted that there was still no functional management plan for the area and that there was disagreement among the local actors.

## Writing to UNESCO

A few months after the new management proposal was presented to the Government, the samebys sent a letter to UNESCO. In this letter they asked to be participants in the 7<sup>th</sup> extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee in Paris, December 6-11, 2005. In the answer from UNESCO the samebys were told that they have two alternatives: either they ask the Swedish Government to be part of the Swedish delegation at the meeting or they can come as observers. However, an observer status

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<sup>122</sup> This is an evaluation issued by the World Heritage Committee that all World Heritage sites have to go through on a regular basis. See chapter 3.

does not admit the participants to speak unless the chair specifically requests them to do so (Letter from UNESCO November 19, 2004) The samebys take the advice and write to the Government asking to be part of the Swedish delegation.<sup>123</sup> This is what their letter says:

**Request from Mijá Ednam to be allowed to participate in the meeting with the World Heritage committee as part of the Swedish delegation.**

As a step in increased Sámi right of self-determination for the Laponia World Heritage area, the Sámi villages in Jokkmokk and Gällivare have – by means of the Mijá Ednam Association – worked out a program (Mijá Ednam – Sámi Village Laponia Program) with suggestions for the development and administration of the world heritage area.

Mijá Ednam made a final suggestion to the Government (2004-0217) concerning the administration of the Laponia World Heritage area. The matter is under preparation within the Agricultural Department and the Cultural Department. The decision [sic] is expected to be made by the Government.

**Mijá Ednam requests of the Government:**

to be a part of the Swedish delegation on the World Heritage Committee at its Seventh extra session, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, on December 6-11 2005.

Mijá Ednam wants to give information and opinions directly to the World Heritage [sic] Committee concerning the work done up to this point on the Laponia World Heritage. (Letter from the samebys February 19, 2005)

The samebys did not want to accept an observer's status which would probably not give them the opportunity to speak before the World Heritage Committee. Instead they requested to be part of the delegation. The statement that they wanted to inform the Committee of the work done so far in the Laponian process must be considered a concealed threat to the other local actors and to the national authorities as well. It would have been interesting to see what the speech to the Committee would have consisted of, and whether or not the Government would have accepted them as part of the delegation in the first place (or what would have happened if they had not). However, the request to UNESO and the Gov-

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<sup>123</sup> Besides being sent to the Government, the letter was also distributed to the Sami Parliament and to UNESCO, for their information.

ernment had quite an ignominious ending. A while after the letter to the Government was sent, it was revealed that the samebys had mixed up the dates. The 7<sup>th</sup> extraordinary session of the World Heritage Convention was not to be held in December 2005, but had already taken place on the same dates in December 2004. One of the representatives from the samebys later told me how embarrassing he thought it was to have mixed up the dates. But at least, he said, they showed the Government that they meant business and that they really were prepared to go to UNESCO and make them aware of the situation in Laponia. And even if Sami participation in a World Heritage Committee meeting ultimately came to nothing, the writing of the letters and the fact that they showed that they were prepared to speak before the Committee might have contributed to the changes that were to come. At this point it had become clear that they were an established actor in the negotiation process. They had used the official channels to voice their disapproval with the way things were being handled. By bypassing the national level they created a space, a platform, where their wishes and predicaments were taken seriously.

The internationally endorsed local participant strategy was starting to impinge on Swedish environmental policy. One example of this is the detailed and thorough report issued by the Government on the possibility of enhancing the implementation on traditional knowledge into the Swedish legislation (Tunón 2004). In this report the predicaments in regards to Laponia were extensively dealt with. Also, members of the Sami Parliament were constantly bringing up the question of Laponia when meeting their counterparts in the Government. Laponia, and the problems in creating a management plan for the World Heritage site, was now often spoken of, at least in the local newspapers. There were also new people coming into the process, especially from the municipalities and the County Administration. All these things put together guaranteed that the situation slowly started to change and the standstill in the negotiation was about to be broken. In chapter 8 the new wave of collaboration will be further elaborated on.

## Speaking with one voice

Sometimes the Laponian process is spoken of as a unifying experience for the samebys involved. Over the years, there have been many other issues that have engendered disagreements and minor conflicts among them, mostly concerning winter grazing areas for the herds or other territorial matters. But, as one of the representatives from the samebys once told

me, the Sami involved in the Laponian process decided early on that political differences in opinion could not be allowed to destroy Sami unity in regards to Lapponia. It has therefore been more or less taboo to bring in the Laponian question as a topic in the election campaigns for the Sami Parliament elections, and this is an agreement that has been accepted by the different Sami parties almost without exception.

As mentioned, some of the representatives from the samebys are also active politicians in different Sami parties and even members of the Sami Parliament. Other politically active Sami have also been brought into the process through their fellow party members, even if they are not descendants of one of the samebys in the area. Without being official representatives, these persons have through their own experiences and knowledge acted as consultants and sounding boards at times. This is a factor that has contributed to spreading the Laponian issue and made it into a pan-Sami concern. Thus, across party boundaries, there has been a consensus among the leading Sami politicians to “speak with one voice” in regards to the Laponian issue. According to many informants, there were, naturally, disagreements and conflicting views at times among the representatives. The differences in opinion could sometimes be caused by individual ideas, but also by different samebys’ and different reindeer herding families’ having differing viewpoints and different expectations. But nevertheless, the importance of standing united in relation to the local authorities, to the national authorities and to UNESO has been acknowledged from the perspective of the Sami involved. The discussions did not reach the public sphere, but were dealt with inside the group. Considering the dissonances that exist within some samebys<sup>124</sup> and within the Sami Parliament, it is quite remarkable that the “Sami voice” in regards to Lapponia came across in such a unified way.

In a way, I think the issue has been both too important and too insignificant for the Sami individuals, organizations, and political parties that were not directly involved in the Laponian process. It was insignificant because there were really no legal changes in access to land or changes for reindeer herding proposed. So, if none of the samebys’ demands were to be met by the other actors, nothing would be lost. A reindeer herder from one of the samebys involved that was not active in the Laponian process once said to me that the Laponian process was not even close to the top

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<sup>124</sup> For instance, in the samebys in Lapponia there is still some discord between the original Lule Sami herders and the North Sami herders. As a result of the demarcations of the borders between the nation states in the North, many of the northernmost reindeer herding families lost considerable grazing land. Many moved, or were moved, to the southern samebys (Beach 1981:121ff; Lundmark 2002:126ff; Lehtola 2004:36-37).

of his agenda. What concerned him was if he had to buy extra fodder for his reindeer that winter and what that would cost, how to get the County Administration to give his sameby a permit to shoot some bears that had bothered the herd, or how he would have time to take the course on “Small Businesses” that the Sami Educational Center was giving. He said that if the representatives had a breakthrough in the negotiations, they would tell the rest of the sameby members, and then he might start being interested in the future of it. Besides, they provided continual information from their work with Laponia, which was good. On the other hand, the issue has been acknowledged as an matter of principle and one that has a potential to be of importance to a wider Sami community than the directly involved samebys. This has been expressed to me by many different Sami, inside and outside the negotiations, and I have already mentioned this many times so far in this thesis. Laponia was ultimately a matter that could pave the way for entirely new ways of including the Sami in nature conservation management, and, in the end, to strengthen Sami self-governance. And as such, it was too important to have a political debate (at least at this stage) that would ruin many of the arguments from the samebys’ side, and that would make the “Sami voice” seem less unified. From perspective of the samebys involved, as for a wider Sami community that took interest in the development, Laponia was never merely a local phenomenon but from the beginning part of a wider pan-Sami (and even indigenous) struggle for increased rights and political influence. One of the representatives from the samebys once told me that it was their intention all along to appeal to higher authorities regarding the management issue. They never really believed in any support from the local or even national authorities. Right from the start, it is on the international arena that they expected to find encouragement for their request to be responsible for the management.

From the beginning, then, the samebys compared their own situation with similar ones in other places throughout the world. In the Mijá ednam plan they bring up cases from New Zealand, the US, Australia, Bolivia, Canada, Tanzania and Kenya to compare with the situation for the Sami. They conclude that if the national ambition and legal preconditions to meet the wishes and rights of the indigenous peoples involved in the protected areas could be measured on a scale, Sweden would probably rank in the middle. The Mijá ednam plan ranks Australia as the most progressive country, followed by Canada, New Zealand, and the US. Tanzania is ranked at the bottom (Mija ednam 2000:27). In the Mijá ednam plan, however, the national and local authorities are urged to think more progressively in these matters and to allow a strengthening of Sami influ-

ence in conservation management to the extent that the legal framework admits. Contrary to the County Administration, the samebys believe that a change in this direction is possible within the prevailing legal structure. Laponia is considered a golden opportunity to try new ways of “thinking” nature conservation management in Sweden. Drawing on examples from other similar cases around the world, the samebys wanted to show that involving indigenous groups in conservation management is not only a possibility, it is more or less the only politically correct way to go. As mentioned earlier in this chapter UNESCO was officially contacted in matters related to Laponia on at least two occasions. No doubt there were also other unofficial occasions where Laponia was addressed in an international arena: at transnational Sami encounters, at different indigenous meetings,<sup>125</sup> and during talks with UNESCO<sup>126</sup>.

In the last two chapters I have more or less chronologically recounted how Laponia came to be a World Heritage site and how the local negotiations on how to manage the area unfolded. The local actors all had different expectations for the World Heritage status, and this led to a situation where collaboration became impossible. Instead polarization between the local authorities, on the one hand, and the local samebys, on the other hand, became apparent. The national authorities were contacted by the samebys in an attempt to reach some general guidelines on how to create a management with a strong Sami influence. The significant roles that many other indigenous peoples have in conservation management throughout the world were used by the samebys as examples of how some sort of joint management or even indigenous-biased management might look. Also, on a few occasions UNESCO was directly contacted by the samebys in regards to Laponia. In other words, even though the question of how to structure the management of Laponia was to be solved locally, the process soon outgrew the local context.

From the very start, the Laponian-process was treated by the samebys as part of a bigger, more wide-ranging Sami struggle for increase self-

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<sup>125</sup> One person, for instance, from one of the samebys within the Laponia area (although not a sameby representative) is active in the international indigenous political sphere for a long time and is now also one of the sixteen expert members on the board of the United Nation’s Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. Being from the area and understanding the potential political importance of a strong Sami influence on Laponia, he has been personally interested in the process.

<sup>126</sup> But here the contacts probably consisted mostly of representatives from the NAB who were also concerned of the developments in the Laponian process and the obvious politization that the attempts of implementing the World Heritage site showed signs of. Speaking at a few occasions with some of the officials at UNESCO, it is obvious to me that Laponia, and the problems there, was not an unknown case to them.

governance and autonomy. A wider Sami community has therefore been interested in the developments of Laponia. It had the potential to be an example of a protected area with a greater amount of Sami responsibility and control, and where the exclusive control of the SNAB and the County Administrations would be reduced. As has been shown by the examples in these chapters the long and often strained relationship between the reindeer herders and the authorities (especially the County Administration) has meant that there were a lot of underlying emotions and preconceived notions among the local actors going into the negotiations. Needless to say this has influenced the situation. The samebys' representatives have repeatedly accused the other actors of being colonial in their attitude toward the samebys. For them, the way the negotiation process developed proved that a colonial structure is still prevalent in society today that opposes Sami rights and Sami initiatives. For the sameby representatives this made the significance of Laponia even more important as part of a de-colonial development.

Slowly, during the approximately ten years that the future management of Laponia was debated and discussed, a change in attitude and approach took place among those who had first rejected the Sami demand to have a majority of the seats on a management board. A number of factors conspired to shape the preconditions that would lead to the decision to start the work of creating a management organization that put the reindeer herding business and the Sami culture in focus, and that would indeed have a board of management with a Sami majority. This will be further addressed in Chapter 8. The next two chapters will go more into detail about how and the samebys' strategy was shaped, how and why their indigeneity was articulated. Further the importance of the past will be discussed as a source of the colonial narrative and as a way of understanding the asymmetric power structure between the local authorities and the samebys.

## 6 Indigenous positioning

A seemingly endless stream of management proposals, review reports, interrupted negotiations, restarted negotiations, and writings to both the Government and to UNESCO were made over a period of approximately ten years. The atmosphere among the local actors can only be described as heated, and many times they were all frustrated that the process was moving forward so slowly. As I point out, the crucial matter for the involved samebys was to position themselves as an independent actor on an equal footing with the County Administration and the municipalities. The samebys experienced that they were considered to be only a consultation group or, at worst, an interest group among others. Their ambitions, however, were much higher. Due to the significance that the local reindeer herding Sami culture had in the justification, the concerned Sami were prepared to assume responsibility for the whole management of the site, and subsequently also demanded a majority of seats on a future board of management. Seeing Lapponia explicitly as an important tool in the general struggle for increased self-governance, they were persistent throughout the process, and did not find this ultimatum open for negotiation.

In this chapter, and the next, I will go more deeply into how the Lapponian negotiations came to act as an articulation process for the local samebys, where the importance of accentuating their cultural and historical distinctiveness in relation to the non-Sami actors turned critical. Emphasizing their indigeneity became a significant move for them in order to establish themselves as a distinct actor. The cultural differences between Sami and non-Sami had oftentimes been underplayed previously; after all, they were all living side by side, and they were all part of the general welfare system. Cultural differences were at times valued and exposed, but political consequences of their distinctiveness were seldom discussed or given any attention. The support for indigenous peoples that is so highly valued internationally and within UNESCO (as discussed in Chapter 3) was difficult to put into practice and was not immediately accepted by the other actors as an appropriate ground for the samebys to claim equal negotiation status.

## Accentuating difference

Once, in the midst of the conflict, a local politician expressed to me his frustration at the samebys' persistence. He had also noticed the indigenous claims starting to enter the process. He said that he had not thought of it before, but it had just entered his mind that the samebys could very well play on their indigeneity and "get help" from the international community. If they were to pursue that road, the politization of the process would increase, and this would in his mind be an unfortunate development.

He told me that he lived next door to one of the persons who represented the samebys in the Laponian process. They had always been on good terms with each other and often he, as a politician, had been able to solve sameby related matters with his neighbor whenever they happened to run into each other. There had never been any formalities needed. On the contrary, their relation had always been characterized by informality and familiarity. However, he told me, his neighbor had now suddenly "turned indigenous" as a result of the unresolved issues with Laponia. He said that he was starting to get tired of hearing that the Sami should have the responsibility for the management of Laponia on the basis of their indigeneity, and, most important of all, that they should have the majority seats on a future management board. The politician felt that they could not talk to each other in the same informal manner any longer, at least not when it came to matters regarding Laponia. And Laponia was at this point the most burning issue in their conversations. He made a remark that if there is a disagreement that involves larger ethno-political matters, the Sami often "plays the indigenous card", and this was unfortunately, in his mind, what the Laponian process had come to. He hinted that he thought this was a bit exaggerated, almost ludicrous. He knew, of course, that his neighbor was Sami, and that the Sami population is officially recognized as an indigenous group in Sweden. But, as mentioned, the historical and cultural differences between Sami and non-Sami were underplayed in the local community most of the time. The man I was talking to concluded his account by adding that all of a sudden the local Sami flaunted their indigeneity around as if they thought they were "some kind of Indians."

As discussed in Chapter 2, there had been clashes between the Sami and the local authorities before over such issues as plans for the develop-

ment of hydroelectric power and logging on reindeer grazing areas. But to representatives of the local authorities, the World Heritage process was definitely not an issue to turn into a political debacle or to involve indigenous ethno-political matters. To him, therefore, the strong reaction from the representatives of the samebys involved and their resilience in sticking to their demands in the negotiations surprised the other actors, and the emphasis on the indigenous identity and rights seemed exaggerated and somewhat inappropriate. As was shown in Chapter 4, representatives from both local and national authorities have been surprised and some also annoyed at the “stubbornness” of the samebys. To some of the non-Sami representatives in the process, their perception of what indigeneity was seemed difficult to apply to their well-known Sami counterparts and often long-time acquaintances. For many of the Sami involved, though, the indigenous identity has, broadly speaking, for quite some time been part of their overall ethnic identity; it is just that they have not always voiced it so openly before, and especially not in the local setting. Here, when ethnic relations are concerned, they are usually perceived of as Sami first and indigenous second. The fact that the World Heritage status is a global phenomena and the fact that there is such a strong support for indigenous peoples within UNESCO created an arena where the Sami claims and statements entailed references to the international support for the rights of indigenous peoples. Also, since quite a number of Sami politicians (among them some of the local Sami with influence over the Laponian process) have been active in indigenous issues on the international arena for a long time, arguments stemming from an international indigenous agenda (not least the UN Forum for Indigenous Issues) were close at hand for the samebys’ representatives.

There are other examples before Lapponia when the Sami have been marginalized because of their perceived “similarity” to or high degree of integration into the majority society. Another example of how the assumed lack of cultural distinction has made it difficult for the Sami community to claim exclusive rights as an indigenous people is found in a statement from the County Administration to the ministry of agriculture concerning a commission of inquiry (SOU 1999:25) on whether Sweden should ratify ILO 169<sup>127</sup> or not. In this document the County Administration is negative towards a ratification of the Convention. The County Administration argues that the question needs further inquiry and consideration (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999, reg. no. 00-4730-

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<sup>127</sup> The ILO 169 convention and its connection to the Laponian process was discussed in Chapter 2.

99). However, the agency throughout the statement speaks positively on the intention in the Convention to strengthen the culture of indigenous cultures and the need in the north of Sweden to further investigate and document old Sami beliefs, traditional knowledge, and historical and archaeological sites (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:3, reg. no. 00-4730-99). It also suggests mandatory consultation with the samebys, especially when it comes to issues concerning forestry in the winter grazing area (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:9 00-4730-99). But on the whole, the County Administration is very hesitant about ILO 169 and feels it will take a long time before Sweden can ratify the Convention. Apart from the fact that ratification would lead to more administrative work for the County Administration (and for the samebys) the main objection is that a ratification would further reinforce the tension between samebys and those private landowners whose lands are situated within the reindeer herding area (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:7, reg. no. 00-4730-99). User's right and ownership of land are also issues that the County Administration thinks need to be more closely investigated (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:6, reg. no. 00-4730-99) and also Section 8, § 13:2 and § 15, which concern indigenous peoples' right to natural resources. Here, the County Administration opposes the suggestions in the inquiry that the Sami must have a real possibility of influencing the use of natural resources.

When the County Administration is to decide in matters regarding natural resources different interests always have to be weighed carefully. The County Administration is doubtful if it is possible in these matters to take into consideration the viewpoint of the Sami in a way that would meet the requirements of the Convention. The question on the extent of, and the significance of, the Sami rights to natural resources must therefore be carefully be investigated and evaluated before Sweden considers if it is possible to ratify the Convention. (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:10, reg. no. 00-4730-99, my translation)

The County Administrations hesitance about ratification of ILO 169 came as no surprise, and many of the problems they bring up in their statement are difficulties that also a large part of the Sami community agrees with (this is true especially for many of the non-reindeer-herding Sami). However, what is interesting for the argument presented in this chapter is what is said on the first pages of this statement. Here, the County Administration explains why it is so hesitant about the general implications of the Convention. It seems that the Convention and the County Administration have two completely different views on the "dif-

ference” of the Sami people and what this potential “difference” could mean. First the Convention’s standpoint is clarified:

In the preamble to the Convention it is said that one of the main objectives of the Convention is to eliminate the earlier alignment towards integration and assimilation and to acknowledge the ambitions of the indigenous peoples, on their own terms, to have control over their institutions and economic development. (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:2, reg. no. 00-4730-99, my translation)

Then the County Administration responds to this stance, from a local and regional perspective:

The County Administration observes that the Convention in some parts differs from the current understanding concerning equal treatment and special treatment. The County Administration would therefore like to point out that Swedish ratification of the Convention would result in a new way of thinking when it comes to the position of the Sami in the Swedish society. In this statement the County Administration intends to illuminate what the possible consequences of the suggestion in the inquiry might have for the County of Norrbotten.

It is the opinion of the County Administration that the Sami can be considered highly integrated into Swedish society. This circumstance is the basis for the County Administration’s standpoint in this statement. (County Administration of Norrbotten 1999:2, reg. no 00-4730-99, my translation)

This statement from the County Administration sheds light on the attitude towards the Sami status as an indigenous people in Sweden and in the local community, and what possible rights that position should entail. It is important to note here that the County Administration was not alone in having the standpoint expressed above. If anything, many individuals and other organizations or authorities considered the County Administration progressive. From my experience, it is common among people in general to question Sami rights on the basis of their integration into the mainstream society. Since the Sami in general terms seem to be well off, they look no different than the rest of us, they talk like us (most of the time), they dress like us (most of the time) and they are just as dependent on and part of the modern, monetary society as the rest of the society, why should they have special rights? More than once I have heard different variations of this viewpoint put forward.

In the Laponian process, the perception that the local Sami were too “similar” to the rest of us became a threat against their aspirations to have a given position as equal partners alongside the municipalities and the

County Administration in the negotiations. In response to this the sameby representatives emphasized their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness. Articulating difference in relations to the other, non-Sami, actors became a necessary and natural part of the process for the involved samebu members. “The difference” was mostly manifested in talks and statements from the samebys’ representatives. They constantly reminded the other actors that they spoke from another position, that they had a different history (characterized by experiences of colonial injustices) and a different view on sustainability and environmental protection. Another manifestation of this difference is that the Sami language<sup>128</sup> came to be gradually more used by the samebys’ representatives as the process developed. To call their management plan “Mijá ednam” (Our Land) is of course an example of this, and a statement of the samebys’ position and intentions in relation to the other local actors. Today, after the new collaboration between the local actors has been at work for a few years, this is even more evident. Many of the official documents today have both Sami and Swedish headings, although Swedish is still the lingua franca in the actual texts. Moreover, the few informative signs in the Laponian area are in Lule Sami, Swedish, English, and German. Today the place called “Stora Sjöfallet”<sup>129</sup>, where a visitor’s center is being built is more and more being referred to by its Sami name: *Stuor Muorkke* or *Stuor Muorkegártje*. The issue of language was also an important discussion among the samebys’ representative when they drew up the Mijá ednam proposal. To better establish the Sami language in the area and incorporating it in the work with the management plan, they suggested, in the Mijá ednam plan, different measures to realize this. Here they argue that the correct Sami names should be used on all the places and localities used in all Laponian information. They also want to start a project with the goal of preserving and developing the Sami language in Lapponia. Finally they suggest that both Swedish and Sami should function as official languages in Lapponia (Mijá ednam 2000:59).<sup>130</sup>

Nevertheless, the accentuating of difference was mainly done by the samebys’ representatives through emphasizing their unique historical and cultural background and their indigeneity. The “contents and displays” of that indigeneity is sometimes contested internally by many Sami. I know

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<sup>128</sup> By Sami languages I here mean the North Sami and Lule Sami dialects since these are the ones most frequently spoken in this area.

<sup>129</sup> Stora Sjöfallet National Park is named after this place within the park.

<sup>130</sup> This is how it is expressed in the Mijá ednam plan. It is unclear if they actually mean that Sami and Swedish should be official languages in the physical area of Lapponia or if they mean in the process of developing and managing Lapponia. I suspect it is the latter.

of Sami who often feel awkward in international indigenous contexts when the pan-indigenous rhetoric does not resonate with their own experience of being Sami in Sweden. Often this has to do with claims that indigenous peoples live closer to nature, lead a more environmentally friendly life, or are naturally anti-capitalistic. They feel that statements of this sort do not really speak for them and should not lay the foundation for their claims for increased rights and self-governance. However, in the case of Laponia, positioning themselves as indigenous in relation to the non-Sami actors was a clear demarcation that validated their demands for more influence and control over the management of their traditional lands. It worked as an articulation that positioned them where they wanted to be seen: as an equal, but different, partner in the negotiations about how to manage Laponia.

## Articulation

It was clear from the work of producing the Mijá ednam plan that the samebys' representatives wanted the Sami culture to be seen as a pivotal part of the World Heritage status and that this required a strong Sami influence on the management:

When UNESCO appointed Laponia a World Heritage site, the Sami cultural landscape, and the presence of a now living Sami Culture, was given great significance. In other words, Sweden has an obligation to “protect” and “preserve”, not only the unique natural landscape, but also the now living Sami culture in the area. A basic condition for a living culture is development, and it is only the Sami, the holders of the culture, that can be the driving force in such a process. (Mijá ednam 2000:19, my translation)

Throughout the Mijá ednam plan, it is also evident that the samebys' representatives wanted to establish that they had a different way of perceiving things than the majority population. Here are a few examples:

Traditionally, the Sami, like many other indigenous peoples, perceived the Earth animate and alive. It has been self-evident that the natural resources should be used – but not exhausted. (Mijá ednam 2000:32)

To develop specific environmental policy programs is not a traditional Sami way dealing with issues concerning sustainable use of nature and natural resources. (Mijá ednam 2000:35)

As pointed out before, the Sami trades assume a holistic view of nature, culture, and sustenance. The traditional trades, reindeer herding, hunting,

and fishing, constitute an inseparable whole. (Mijá ednam 2000:37, my translation)

In these quotations historical and epistemological differences between the Swedish and Sami worldviews are assumed. The samebys wanted to highlight the fact that it was their distinct culture that was part of the World Heritage justification and that this differed from the culture of the surrounding majority population.

The Sami “struggle” in the Laponian case shares many similarities with other indigenous “struggles” around the world. For instance, Sidsel Saugestad (2001) argues in regards to the ethnic mobilization of the San people in the Botswanian part of Kalahari that there are indeed many obstacles that have to be overcome in order for the dominant discourse to be changed and for the dominant society to listen to a minority group. First a platform must be created that can include many of the minority sub-groups, which can be initially widely dispersed. Also the mobilizing group must find a language that can explain this common platform and be communicative to a broader group. Saugestad argues that the institutional framework of the dominant society creates an inequality when it comes to access to power and economic resources, which in turn leads to a structure where the minority is regarded as an underclass. To the San people in her study, this “feeling of inferiority created by such asymmetries in power and resources is among the strongest barriers to indigenous empowerment” (Saugestad 2001:231). She notes that it is a dual process that has to take place in order to cultivate change in a hegemonic power structure. First a mobilization has to take place within the minority group itself. This is often a long and painstaking route “where deeply internalised feelings of insecurity and inferiority must be overcome by those who have been the most exposed to discrimination” (Saugestad 2001:231). This process means that different ethnic markers will be brought forward to emphasize the distinctiveness of the minority in relation to the majority society. Secondly, this internal mobilization must then be translated and presented to the majority society and the authorities in order to be communicative and successful. To Saugestad this development in ethnic mobilization practices hopefully establishes “two partners as different but equal in value” (2001:231).

The situation in Laponia came in many ways to be similar to what Saugestad describes from Botswana. The World Heritage became a platform that united not only the samebys involved but also the Sami political establishment at large. And, as mentioned earlier, the importance of

“speaking with one voice” in Laponian matters was acknowledged by the Sami involved.

Many of the explanations provided by Saugestad on how platforms for ethnic mobilization are formed and how the claims are put forward resemble the discussion concerning the concept of *articulation* (Hall 1996; Li 2000a; Clifford 2001). The term articulation suggests an act of speaking, but as these writers suggest, there is more to it. Articulation offers an understanding of the flexibility and contingency of an indigenous group’s positioning. Clifford explains:

The politics of articulation (...) understands frontier effects, the lining up of friends and enemies, us and them, insiders and outsiders, on one side or another of a line, as tactical. Instead of rigid confrontations – civilized and primitive, bourgeois and proletarian, white and black, men and women, west and third world, Christian and pagan, one sees continuing struggles across a terrain, portions of which are captured by changing alliances, hooking and unhooking particular elements. There’s a lot of middle ground; and crucial political and cultural positions are not firmly anchored on one side or the other but are contested and up for grabs. (Clifford 2001:477)

In other words, the whole context of why and how an (ethno-) political mobilization takes place shapes the character of the articulation. The objective of the “struggle”, the social, economic, political and historic relations to surrounding counterparts and other actors, is decisive for how the articulations will develop. Different rhetoric, liaisons, and outlooks become relevant in different situations. The articulation is what resonates with the situation at hand and with the goal of the mobilizing group. However, the possible connections and liaisons are not completely unbounded by historical and social contexts. Some “tools” used in an ethnic mobilization continue over time (compare Clifford 2001:481), because for an act or articulation to be successful the “tools” must be mutually recognized by both the mobilizing group and the surrounding society. Li acknowledges this and argues that the positioning that an ethnic mobilization is trying to achieve is a dual process in the sense that the articulation of that positioning enables the unification of a more or less dispersed group of people. But at the same time it speaks outwards and makes sense to the outside world and to the dominant society. The indigenous articulation is a combination of contextual unification within the group in relation to counterparts outside the group. She states that:

The conjunctures at which (some) people come to identify themselves as indigenous, realigning the ways they connect to the nation, the govern-

ment, and their own, unique tribal place, are the products of agency and the cultural and political work of *articulation*. (Li 2000a:151)

Further, Li underscores the importance seeing the act of articulation as provisional. Cultural identities, and how they are negotiated and expressed, are always the subjects of the changing world around us (Li 2000a:152). Articulations are also always limited by the possibilities in terms of fields of power and “places of recognition” that are provided by the outside world (Li 2000a:152; Hall 1995:8). This means, Clifford argues, that:

In articulation theory, the whole question of authenticity is secondary, and the process of social and cultural persistence is political all the way back. It is assumed that cultural forms will always be made, unmade, and remade. Communities can and must reconfigure themselves, drawing selectively on remembered pasts. The relevant question is whether, and how, they convince and coerce insiders and outsiders, often in power-charged, unequal situations, to accept the autonomy of a “we.” (Clifford 2001:479)

The significance of the “remembered past” will be further dealt with in the next chapter. The point I want to make clear here is that I see the positioning of the samebys in the Laponian process as an act of articulation along the lines that the above writers have presented. For the samebys, referring to international indigenous rights and applying a vocabulary more directly used at an international arena (for instance within the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and other international indigenous movements) than at the local level was a way not only to unify the group internally but also to make sense of their aspirations concerning Laponia to the outside world. The international emphasis on the rights of indigenous peoples is an agenda that is known and easy to endorse for everyone. It is also an agenda that is especially applicable in this case, considering the international and indigenous-friendly profile of UNESCO and the World Heritage Convention. When it came to matters concerning Laponia, and their aspiration to have a responsible role in the management, the “indigenous” articulation resonated with how the involved Sami perceived themselves in this situation.

In Hall’s understanding of how articulation emerges, social forces, classes, groups, political movement, and so forth are not to be seen as unified entities that “find” or “invent” an ideology. Rather:

The process is quite the reverse. One has to see the way in which a variety of different social groups enter into and constitute for a time a kind of political and social force, in part by seeing themselves reflected as a unified

social force in the ideology which constitutes them. The relationship between social forces and ideology is absolutely dialectical. As the ideological vision emerges, so does the group. (Hall 1996:144)

This thread has been picked up by other writers on articulation. It emphasizes the fact that any social group is in a sense a social categorization, adaptable and re-definable in relation to its current status and objectives in the surrounding world. To point to the constructedness of social categories is not a new thing in social science (e.g. Hobsbawn & Ranger 1983; Linnekin 1983; Handler 1984; Hanson 1991). What is important here, however, is to point out that the way the articulation is expressed for a mobilizing group is not predestined or innate, but neither is it simply made-up or imagined. When it comes to a group's self-identification as indigenous, something that was emphasized by the local Sami in the case of Laponia, it is important to note that it is not:

...natural or inevitable, but neither is it simply invented, adopted, or imposed. It is, rather, a *positioning* which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes, and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle (Li 2000a:151).

In accordance with Li, I want to stress that the Sami articulation as being indigenous in this study was ultimately about positioning. The discussion on articulation helps reveal why the Sami involved emphasized their indigeneity in relation to the other actors. To put it simply, this was the ideological element that best expressed their aims in this particular situation and that had the ability to accentuate their difference in relation to the non-Sami actors. But it was not "invented" or used as a result of a calculated strategy from the Sami side. Emphasizing their status as an indigenous people resonates with how they perceived themselves in this context, and it was an ideology that is well established in the society at large. However, as will be discussed, in the local setting the stereotypical image of "the indigenous" did not immediately echo the image of the Sami among non-Sami locals and non-Sami representatives in the Laponian process.

In Li's study, referred to above, the indigenous identity was introduced to and adopted by a tribal group in Indonesia. For the Sami involved in Laponia the indigenous connection was already established, but most often employed on national and international levels. However, through the attempts to position themselves in the negotiation process, they articulated that indigenous identity, and it came more directly to have an impact on local politics as well. Again, accentuating their cultural and

historical distinctiveness brought the sameby representatives together as a group and also defined them as a coherent counterpart in the eyes of the other actors, even if there was, as we have seen, considerable suspicion about the focus on indigeneity at first. The concept of articulation helps us see the duality hidden in this course of action, and the Mijá ednam plan illustrates this articulation on almost every page. Here, the samebys involved emphasize the Sami history and connection to the land. For instance:

To us, Lapponia is the land where we live, where our forefathers have lived and where the reindeer live. This is the land that we have inhabited and managed for thousand of years and that we, through “users’ rights” see as our own. (Mijá ednam 2000:8, my translation)

The document speaks here to all Sami people in the area. But there are also a lot of comparisons made to other indigenous peoples and the importance of indigenous peoples’ involvement in the management of their traditional land as pointed out in several international conventions and documents is highlighted. It is clear the samebys with the Mijá ednam plan wanted to position themselves as an indigenous people, among others, somehow affected by environmental (and cultural) conservation, and they underline the significance of nature for them, as an indigenous community:

Like many other indigenous peoples, the Sami have traditionally considered the Earth alive and animate. It was obvious that nature was to be used – but not consumed. The samebys state in their vision that the Sami people have “lived off of and in Nature and been careful only to live on Nature’s surplus.” Recycling is a late phenomenon in the Swedish environmental debate, but was, out of necessity, an obvious fact in the Sami self-subsistent household and something that many Sami persons still today remember being brought up with. (Mijá ednam 2000:32, my translation)

The position that the involved Sami articulated was to a certain extent that of an environmentally friendly indigenous people, based on the fact that they, in their own worlds “have already managed Lapponia for thousands of years” Mijá ednam 2000:9, my translation). This was the foundation for their differentiation in relation to the other actors in the process. But, as Li points out, pursuing the image of an environmentally friendly indigenous group can be an articulation that “channels alliances along binary pathways” (2000:173) and was a road that the sameby representatives embarked upon with caution. This point will be touched upon further below.

## To be heard

I now want to draw attention to the limitations of an articulation, or rather to the limited possibilities for an articulation to be successfully heard and understood by the dominant society. As has been discussed so far, the act of articulation is about emphasizing the right political connections and liaisons and the right rhetoric. A mobilizing group's articulation also unites a group internally, and makes sense as a united group to the surrounding world. But articulation also suggests the art of speaking. The position of the mobilizing group has to be articulated through words. Saugestad (2001) has described this process as being successful only if conducted within the frameworks of the dominant structure. Otherwise one's claiming difference and recognition will remain what Ardener (1975) has referred to as a *muted group*. Ardener's discussion revolves mainly around women trying to position themselves in a patriarchally structured society, but has bearing also on other groups in society that are feeling, or are perceived of, as having a marginal position. These groups are not muted in a literal sense, but not heard, not capable of getting the message through to the dominant group in society. In order to be heard, the communicative process must, according to Ardener, take place within already established dominant structures. Only then will the dominant group recognize the opposing group's words, and a communicative interaction can take place.

Through analyzing ethnic mobilization in the Pacific region, Keesing (1989, 1992) has a similar understanding of the possibilities for a structurally inferior group to be acknowledged. He too asserts the importance of establishing a platform within the dominant structure of society and sees this process as threefold. Keesing (1989:23) argues that the dominated group is already incorporated in the hegemonic<sup>131</sup> structure because firstly, the subaltern groups internalize the premises and categories of the majority society. Secondly, the struggle must be conducted within the institutional realities created by the dominant society, institutional realities which are perceived as objective. And thirdly, the hegemonic structure defines the semiology through which claims to power must be expressed.

To be successful, then, difference cannot take on an entirely counter-hegemonic course. Or rather, the counter-hegemonic message must be

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<sup>131</sup> I find the concept of *Hegemony* difficult to use, burdened as it is with a long history of Marxist writing. I prefer here to see the structure at use in, and by, the dominant majority society as a normative structure, or a dominant structure, although, admittedly entailing many of the elements brought forward by writers on hegemony. In the next chapter I will come back to the normativity of Swedish environmental politics.

delivered within the contested hegemonic structure. Saugestad notes that, paradoxically, this is also one way in which the dominant structure is maintained:

The Hegemonic position of the dominant strata is not necessarily maintained by physical coercion but, rather, by the subordinate groups' 'voluntary' internalisation of the premises and categories of the dominant. (Saugestad 2001:231)

One can thus argue that the aim to change a dominant structure, put forward by minority groups (and often indigenous groups), might instead be interpreted as an inverted cementation of that very structure. However, it is important to highlight the message of the dominated groups, once they establish themselves as a communicative partner. When they have positioned themselves within the hegemonic structure, and once they are heard, in Ardener's sense of the word, their counter-hegemonic aspirations come to life (this is when prevailing power structures are threatened by change). This means that the actual changing of a dominant structure often takes place from within. So rather than strengthening the dominant structure *per se*, the counter hegemonic movement, if it succeeds in its mission, will establish a new structure that is not similar, but related to the old one.

To be heard, then, and seen as a culturally distinct group the samebys had to express their articulation in a way that was noticeable to the other actors, in a way that fitted the structures of the dominant society. Partly this was done by using the already established pan-Sami symbols and ethnic emblems. The pan-Sami movement has succeeded in unifying many of different Sami groups bringing forward ethnic emblems and symbols that are unifying to the majority of the different Sami sub-groups; the traditional "singing," or yoik, can be mentioned as one of these unifying traits, as well as the traditional clothing, the language, Sami handicraft, and reindeer herding, just to mention a few.<sup>132</sup> These are customs and items that are identifiable not only to a heterogenic Sami community but also well recognizable to a non-Sami audience as being typi-

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<sup>132</sup> Sometimes some of these associations that are thought of as being quite stereotypical and prejudiced among many Sami; for instance the reindeer herding business only employs about 10% of the Sami population in Sweden, but it is still on top of most non-Sami peoples' minds when they think of the Sami and Sami activities. This was confirmed by an opinion survey published in 2007. The survey was made by SKOP (a Scandinavian opinion institute) and there over one third of the interviewed answered "reindeer" or "reindeer herding" when asked what their immediate thought was when they heard the word "Sami." Nevertheless these ethnic markers are all strong symbols for Samihood and are effective in creating an alleged uniqueness and a strong position for the Sami as a pan-group.

cally Sami in character and representations of things that the majority population associates with *Saminess*. It has been noted by Eidheim that these ethnic emblems often complement the national or cultural emblems of the dominant society, so that they are more or less a reflection, an alternative characteristic of the nation state and the majority population, a phenomenon that he has calls *complementarization* (1971:75). The complementarization concept further underlines the importance of accentuating difference within the realm of what is definable from the perspective of the dominant society. In an everyday situation, however, being a reindeer herder, for instance, is not primarily something you do to be different in relation to the Swedish majority society. To most herders, their profession is above all an economic enterprise and a way of making ends meet. Nevertheless, many of them recognizes the inherent cultural aspect of being a reindeer herder and expresses the importance of keeping the business going in order to pass on an important aspect of the Sami culture to their children and to the Sami community as a whole (Nordin 2007).

For the samebys involved in the Laponian process, the event that more than anything worked as a unifying episode among themselves was, as referred to earlier, the work of writing the Mija ednam plan, the samebys' proposal for a management over the Laponian area. As already mentioned, the sameby members involved in this procedure express that it was a rewarding job in many ways, where they could discuss common grounds and wishes in a way that they had not had the time or opportunity to do before. It is fair to say that out of this cooperation between the samebys involved there grew an alliance that was engaged, resolute, and unified in its statements. According to many of the people involved in this work the discussions were deep and broad, and included almost every aspect of the reindeer herding life. The Mijá ednam plan became a visible document of a common viewpoint, a much thought-through and, among the samebys, widely supported wish for the future of the World Heritage site and the Sami involvement in, and responsibility for, the management of it. This worked as a mobilizing factor for the samebys and something that knitted them together as a group. One sameby representative explained to me that it was a great feeling to be able to achieve such a document, and for once feeling equal with the authorities in this respect.

Even if the feeling of inferiority among sameby members is not generally as severe as among the San people that Saugestad worked with, there is still a latent feeling of being structurally inferior, of not being seen as capable of mastering the more administrative and official business of the dominant society. The fact that they overcame parts of these sentiments is an important explanation for why the members of the working group

behind the Mijá ednam plan speak so enthusiastically about the whole process. And this is, as Saugestad (2001:231) notes vital in order for ethnic empowerment to be successful. The Mijá ednam plan and the work leading up to the finished document in many ways became the inward mobilization factor that Saugestad (2001:231) identifies as the first important step in a successful mobilization. But the finished product also became the outward sign that indicated Sami unity and distinctiveness towards the non-Sami parts in the negotiations and thus illustrates the second phase in an articulation process; the ability to present and translate the internal mobilization so that it will be recognizable to and heard by the majority society and its authorities (Saugestad 2001:232). The work of producing Mijá ednam, its focus on the discourse that would give the samebys credibility in relation to the outside society (“the indigenous right to influence conservation schemes discourse”), and the actual words and communicative ability of the document are all together a classic textbook example of an articulation process.

Many of the ideas in the Mijá ednam plan were inspired by globally established ideas on indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination and involvement in management on their traditional lands. For many years the United Nations Human Rights Council has worked on a *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Finally in September 2007, a draft version was adopted by the General Assembly. Article 26 brings up the responsibility that the state parties will have to ensure that indigenous peoples have influence and control over their traditional lands. Article 26 reads:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired.
2. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.
3. States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned.<sup>133</sup>

The UN declaration is referred to in other declarations made by the Pan-Sami movement. The claim that the nation states should recognize the

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<sup>133</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/en/drip.html>

rights of the Sami to "possess, manage and use own land and sea areas and utilize their natural resources is, for example, repeated in Article 13 of the Honningsvåg Declaration,"<sup>134</sup> and further developed in the proposed *Nordic Sami Convention*. Here, a whole chapter is dedicated to the Sami right to, and co-management of, land and water. The idea of indigenous management of their traditional land, and subsequently Sami management of Lapponia, is a key concept throughout the Mijá ednam plan. It is stated that:

Indigenous peoples have a key position when it comes to "preserving" biological diversity and the world's remaining natural areas worth protecting. This insight has initiated the large international environmental organizations to bring forward certain guidelines and programs for indigenous peoples and natural protected areas. They all unequivocally emphasize the importance of recognizing the traditional rights of indigenous peoples. Particularly significant is the right to land and the usage of natural resources, and also the importance of the active participation of the indigenous peoples in the management of protected areas. (Mijá ednam 2000:31, my translation)

Relying, then, on the international framework that endorses indigenous governance and management of environmentally protected areas, the samebys could apply the same ideas to Lapponia. The Mijá ednam document again:

We, the Sami, have managed Lapponia for thousands of years. We have the knowledge, tradition and motivation to continue to manage Lapponia without leaving large imprints in the landscape – in spite of new times and modern technique. We are determined to take our responsibility to protect the nature and the biological diversity and we consider ourselves to be especially suitable to preserve the Sami culture in the area.

(...)

But we, the Sami who have lived here in generations, and still live in Lapponia and who are dependent on the area for our subsistence, should logically have control over the future development of the area. We therefore consider that Lapponia should have a management model that guarantees all local actors influence and where the majority in the decision-making organization consists of Sami persons. (Mijá ednam 2000:9, my translation)

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<sup>134</sup> This declaration was the outcome of the 18<sup>th</sup> Sami Conference, held in Honningsvåg, Norway in October 2004, representing member organizations of the Sami Council in Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden.

The connection between indigenous peoples and the environment is one of the discussions that have been fairly well established in mainstream society. So by highlighting this discourse as one of the major reasons for the local Sami, as part of the indigenous community, to have a real influence and preferably the responsibility for the management of the World Heritage site, the Mijá ednam plan raised the issue within an already well-known framework.

The language used in the Mijá ednam plan also adhered to the dominant structure. It was written in typical “official language” and was therefore immediately accessible to the local authorities. Not only was it thoroughly done with a lot of details of the present situation and the proposals for the future management of the World Heritage site, it also shared the rhetoric of the dominant structure. The Mijá ednam plan accentuated Sami cultural, historical, and epistemological difference. As such it offered a Sami alternative to “the state’s” policies in regard to the protection of nature and culture, but it was presented in a language recognizable to the dominant discourse, to the authorities and its officials and politicians. In Keesing words, the dominant structure “defines the semiology through which claims to power must be expressed” (Keesing 1989:23), otherwise accentuating difference will be outside the definable and left unheard.

In conclusion then, there was a well-established pan-Sami ethno-political platform, when the negotiations over the management of Lapponia began. But this platform, the defined distinctiveness of the Sami as an ethnic group, was mainly a discourse that was dealt with on an international and pan-Sami level and only applicable in certain pan-Sami cultural events or on a trans-national political level, and not often on a practical day to day basis in the local community. Nevertheless, this pan-Sami and indigenous ethnic claim was emphasized in relation to the non-Sami counterparts in the negotiation and rhetorically defined the difference of the involved Sami.

The Mijá ednam plan marked the beginning of the involved samebys’ objective to change the prevailing monopoly of the County Administration, as the only responsible conservation body in the area. Here they underlined the importance of a joint-management model, with strong Sami influence and control. This will be further dealt with later; suffice it to say here is that the difference of the Sami in relation to the non-Sami accentuated in the local community at this point in time by the samebys involved in the Laponian process received a great deal of inspiration from the international indigenous community and from the pan-Sami movement, communities, and movements that some of the sameby members are active members in.

But allowing indigeneity to be emphasized might also mean that a bit of one's flexibility and inventiveness when it comes to exercising one's identity is lost. The perception of the assumed traditionalism and eco-morality of indigenous peoples is a strong notion, and often enough becomes what many perceive of as the major defining factor between the indigenous and the non-indigenous. Achieving difference from this perspective and claiming higher eco-moral values can also mean obtaining power. Wade has made this observation in reference to the concept of "Indians" in the South American realm, but his underlying point is applicable to many situations, including the Laponian case. He argues that:

It is not enough to observe that modernity has always had its counter-current not that current and counter-current have always been in a relation of ambivalence, opposed yet merging, imitating while deriding each other. It is also necessary to observe that each taps the other, empowering and disempowering in unpredictable ways. This is perhaps most evident in a colonial relationship, where the relation between modernity and its alter is most clearly that between modernity and primitivism.

[...]

The more 'savage' and remote the Indians, the more powerful they are said to be – even among Indians themselves. (Wade 1999:76-77)

Again, accentuating their difference in relation to the other local actors had the potential of giving the samebys a better position and not being marginalized on the basis of their "similarity." But it also tapped into the perceptions of modernity and primitivism that, even though it might be concealed in politically correct terms and phrases, are still part of the fundamental objectives of the World Heritage idea as a phenomenon (see Chapter 3).

In accentuating difference, then, the involved Sami had to navigate through these stereotypical images of them being some sort of "natural conservationists" and their own belief that they had the right, the responsibility, and the knowledge to manage the area, regardless of how "modern" or "traditional" they were. While communicating their aspirations to the other actors in a way that was very much part of the normative discourse and in that way might be distinguished as "non-Sami" or "modern," the sameby representatives nevertheless were aware of the power that "traditionalism" has in this context. One of the sameby representatives told me that when composing the Mijá ednam they were always aware of this and talked a lot about how to point to the historical connec-

tion that they have to the lands and how they, according to international law ought to have a right to be influential in the management of them, without falling into the “noble savage” trap and appear only as traditional “people of nature.” He also said that they sometimes “threw in” short sentences and wordings that still spoke of the intentions of samebys to keep the motorized reindeer herding to a minimum. That would calm down those who thought it was important to keep the reindeer herding in the area as traditional as possible. But to him personally, the important thing was to strive for a reindeer herding that was both environmentally and economically viable, and it was up to others to call it traditional or modern. But, he argued, there was no harm in reassuring others that the samebys took responsibility for the environment and were still somewhat “traditional.” Besides, he concluded, it might be interpreted as “modern” to start using skies instead of snowmobiles when possible.

In some respect, then, accentuating their cultural difference in relations to the other actors meant navigating through the expectations of them behaving according to the stereotypical ideal of the Sami reindeer herders as “natural conservationists” and showing their aspirations to manage Lapponia in a sustainable manner, both culturally and environmentally. The samebys wanted to put across that they were good conservationists – their long presence in the area was in itself proof of that – but without being categorized as “noble savages” of our time.

## Being indigenous in Brussels and being indigenous “back home”

In the last few decades the indigenous movement has gained extensive international support, confirmed not least by the establishment of the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues within the United Nations in the year 2000. It is mainly on the international political arena that the indigenous discourse has been formed and articulated, and indigenism as such is above all a “global movement” (Niezen 2000:119). Niezen writes that the indigenous movement from the very beginning found it significant to create a strong collective organization and exercise lobbying at the international forums (Niezen 2000: 121). But the focus on international attention means that the influence and validity on a local level is sometimes lacking, as we have seen illustrated through the Lapponian case. There is strong legal support from the international community, expressed, for instance, in different conventions, support which does not always find immediate applicability or encouragement locally. The Lapponian case

shows how an indigenous articulation locally can be met with quite the opposite reaction: irritation and sometimes even frustration.

## Indigenism as a global discourse

Although successful for the samebys in creating a recognized position, emphasizing their indigeneity had both advantages and risks. There is a lot of support to be gained internationally for indigenous claims, but there is also a certain indigenous framework, an expectation, for how an indigenous group is defined and ought to behave.

The most commonly used definition is the one presented in the ILO 169 Convention concerning indigenous and tribal people in independent countries. In Article 1 it is said that the convention applies to:

- (a) Tribal peoples in independent countries whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations;
- (b) Peoples in independent countries who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the populations which inhabited the country, or a geographical region to which the country belongs, at the time of conquest or colonisation or the establishment of present State boundaries and who, irrespective of their legal status, retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions. (ILO Convention 169, article 1)

There is no official definition of “indigenous peoples” within the UN-system, however, mainly because it has proven impossible to achieve a global consensus on the matter. The situations in parts of Asia and Africa are such that it is virtually unfeasible to determine what groups would or would not fall under the definition of “indigenous.” Since the legal framework surrounding the concept is so strong, many nation states have been reluctant to proclaim, officially, indigenous groups within their borders, afraid that one consequence might be increased tensions between different ethnic groups who would fall into different categories (e.g. Karlsson & Subba 2006). But even so, many countries, including Sweden, have willingly affirmed the indigenous cause in other international

forums and conventions.<sup>135</sup> On a global level the idea of the indigenous and support for indigenous rights can be seen as rather uncomplicated. Who does not support the idea that the Australian aboriginal communities or the Amazonian Indians ought to have a high degree of self government and be paid back for the injustices committed against them? At least on a conceptual level indigenous claims are often supported in international bodies. In practice on national levels, however, many indigenous groups still suffer from structural injustices and are deprived of their territories and means of subsistence. On a local level the abstract idea of the indigenous must be filtered through the intricate web of local history, relations, and negotiations over resource distributions and so on. Here, indigenism must be made tangible and filled with meaning, and then it might be more difficult to render the same support for indigenous claims.

A Sami man, who is involved in Sami politics, once told me that he found it so much easier to be a Sami in Brussels than back home. The further away from Jokkmokk you get, the easier it becomes to be Sami, he said. By “easy” he meant that he felt that his ethnic identity was not questioned or the source of endless discussions on land use, predator policy, or the size of governmental benefits. In Brussels, he said, they were interested in listening to the Sami predicaments and claims and interested in knowing more about them as a people. However, he admitted, there is a preconceived notion of the Sami as living in harmony with nature and being “traditional.” In Brussels he personified the idea of the indigenous, showing up in the corridors of power in his traditional clothing. In Jokkmokk on the other hand, he was a recognized Sami, no doubt, but here the indigeneity of the Sami and their affiliation to the indigenous community does not to any great extent reach the everyday political agenda. He was not perceived of as “exotic” in the Jokkmokk setting, at least in his own ironic interpretation of the situation. He felt he was the same person in both Jokkmokk and Brussels, but the way he was conceived differed.

Many researchers today point to the fact that the notion of indigenism itself is not a self-evident ethnic categorization, but should above all be viewed as a relational term like any other ethnic labeling (c.f. Ramos 1998; Niezen 2000; Li 2000a; Ingold 2000: 134ff). The concept itself has proven to be highly arbitrary when it comes to including or excluding specific groups of people. Basically, who is indigenous and who is not? Adam Kuper is one of the anthropologists that have brought forward this

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<sup>135</sup> As mentioned earlier, an exception is the ILO 169 Convention, which Sweden has signed but not ratified.

viewpoint most vigorously in the latest years. In his much discussed article in *Cultural Anthropology* in 2003, called “The Return of the Native,” he emphasizes the difficulty of defining indigenous peoples. He sees the concept as mainly a political tool, used by those groups of peoples that can fit into the arbitrary definitions, reinforced by the UN system, a political tool that in most cases leads to greater conflicts between different ethnic groups. According to Kuper (2003:395), the indigenous identity is most often introduced by NGOs and supported only by a political elitist segment of the promoted indigenous society in question. Kuper further understands the indigenous discourse as created and active within a Western structure, and thus rendering the objectives of the indigenous movement in general quite dubious and paradoxical. He even compares indigenism to the nationalistic movements that flourished in Europe from the mid 19th century and about a hundred years onwards. Kuper ends his article with a somewhat dark prediction:

And so the indigenous-peoples movement garners support across the political spectrum for a variety of different, even contradictory reasons. (...) But whatever the political inspiration, the conventional lines of argument currently used to justify “indigenous” land claims rely on obsolete anthropological notions and on a romantic and false ethnographic vision. Fostering essentialist ideologies of culture and identity, they may have dangerous political consequences. (Kuper 2003:395)

In the ensuing comments and discussion, many of Kuper’s colleagues were critical of his strong standpoints (see *Current Anthropology*, vol. 45(2):261-267.). Their main argument was that Kuper failed to acknowledge that the indigenous movement basically is a local response to dispossession, and that it ultimately attempts to work in favor of decolonization and unequal power relations, even if most of the critical researchers also recognized the sometimes dominant role of NGOs when it comes to shaping and introducing the indigenous identity.<sup>136</sup> Most discussants were of the opinion, however, that the comparison Kuper makes between the indigenous movement and the nationalism that flourished in Europe in the last century was quite exaggerated and unjust. Some of his critics were very upset and even suggested that Kuper’s argument gave nourishment to powers that violated the human rights of indigenous populations:

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<sup>136</sup> When it comes to the Sami community in Norway, Sweden and Finland the influence of NGOs in developing an “indigenous awareness” has not been substantial. Among Sami (and other indigenous people) in Russia, however, there seems to be a higher degree of NGO involvement in the indigenous identification process (see for instance Vladimirova 2006).

...Kuper claims that indigenous rights advocates seek “privileged rights” for indigenous people over others and that this claim is based on a “blood-and-soil” argument that he links to apartheid and Nazi ideologies. His argument is currently very popular with some multinational corporations and certain conservation organizations being criticized for dispossessing indigenous peoples of their lands and resources. (Kenrick & Lewis 2004:263)

There are definitely many accounts from around the world that verify the influential role that different NGOs have on the introduction of, and the development of, indigenous formations and mobilizations (c.f. Li 2000a; Vladimirova 2006). But what Kuper seems to miss, and what is important in the case of Laponia, is that indigenous peoples – regardless of the flaws in the definition and the social constructedness of the concept – have created an identity, a realm of belonging, that stems from the experiences they do have in common: the experience of being colonized, discriminated against, deprived of land and resources, and so on.

Kuper’s article is important in the sense that it addresses the inherent role of the dominant society in shaping indigenous identities, objectives, and strategies. In many ways the indigenous movement is not only a response to the dominant “Western” society, but also a part of that very structure. Kuper’s article nevertheless seems to lack any acknowledgment of the agency of indigenous peoples in positioning themselves in relation to their counterparts or toward the dominant society, as shown for instance by Li (2000a). This is what the samebys in the Laponian process did. They articulated their difference, using their indigeneity to highlight the fact that they were not merely an interest group but rather, a local actor that ought to have a well-established role in the negotiations on how to best manage Laponia, alongside the other local actors. The indigenous articulation mirrored how they perceived of themselves in relation to the other actors and the surrounding world in this specific process at this specific point in time.

### Natural conservationists?

Many glorifying labels are connected to indigenous peoples, but the most prominent of these seem to be the “natural conservationists” characterization (Conklin & Graham 1995:697). They are, in many respects, the Noble Savages of our time, or rather, the *Ecologically* Noble Savages, as Redford pointed out in his groundbreaking article in *Orion Quarterly* in 1990. As pointed out in Chapter 3, UNESCO has an ongoing discussion

on these issues and displays at times a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards indigenous peoples and their connection with the land.

The indigenous discourse is from the beginning formed in relation to the international community, predominantly the UN arena. It was here that the first indigenous representatives (primarily North American Natives and Maori) tried to find support for their predicaments and problems in their communication with their own national governments. Ownership of territory was one of the most vital issues to be approached, and this is one of the reasons why the focus on the eco-morality of the indigenous peoples became so prominent in the indigenous rhetoric. But it was a kind of rhetoric that found its counterpart in the already well-established predilection of the Western-biased international community to view the "Natives" as Noble Ecological Savages. Muehlebach explains:

In this light, indigenous delegates have discursively mapped a number of basic notions and meaning onto concepts of indigenous land. These notions of inter-relatedness, morality, myth, belonging, and sacredness will seem familiar to the reader. They make up part of an at times highly fetishized discourse on indigeneity voiced by both indigenous and nonindigenous actors today. (Muehlebach 2001:417)

Not surprisingly, then, much of the political success of the indigenous community in the last few decades goes hand in hand with a general assumption that environmental sustainability is inevitably related to the sustainability of indigenous societies and indigenous peoples' knowledge about their surroundings is often seen as a guarantee for a successful conservation of natural resources. In the "Bélem Declaration" (1988), for example, as well as in the widely ratified "Convention on Biological Diversity," the inseparability of a sustainable development of natural resources and of indigenous knowledge is pointed out. Furthermore, the right of indigenous people to participate in managing natural resources on their traditional lands is highly accentuated in these conventions. The trend in international environmental politics to include so-called indigenous peoples in conservation practices have led to more frequent and closer links between different environmental groups (often in the form of NGOs) and indigenous populations. But often the environmental movement and the collaborating indigenous group have proven to have different aims and motives behind their engagement. The environmentalists sometimes have major expectations on the anticipated high ecological morals of the indigenous population, an expectation that is often proven to be only a romanticized view of the superiority of ecological indigenous knowledge and morals (c.f. Conklin & Graham 1995; Conklin 1997). As

Muehlebach points out, the emphasis on indigenous knowledge as particularly ecological in character and morally superior in this respect compared to “Western” science are “as old as colonialism itself and have, over the past five centuries, seen as many permutations and ramifications as there have been uses for and abuses of them” (2001:417). Nevertheless, this international trend to incorporate indigenous knowledge into conservation practices has a direct effect on the strategic choices made by the samebys’ representatives in Laponia and the semiotics of these conventions and official papers have been a direct inspiration to the expressions articulated in the Mijá ednam plan.

But claiming access to conservation management on the basis of ethnicity and indigeneity is a tricky road to embark upon, because emphasizing the ecological bond might give additional arguments to those who tend to see indigenous peoples as “natural conservationists,” a romanticized view that the indigenous movement in general terms often feels quite hesitant about. But ecology and ethnicity have been inseparable throughout the indigenous movement’s appearance on the international agenda. The fact that this connection fits so well into the idea of the indigenous as a Noble Savage increases the possibilities of gaining political points by highlighting the linkage between nature and the indigenous mind (Muehlebach 2001:424-425), but it also puts demanding expectations on indigenous peoples to behave according to these high environmental morals. In short, the focus on nature and the environmental connection is often a complicated issue for the indigenous movement. On the one hand, they claim authority over certain traditional places, one argument being that the place itself is often so intrinsically intertwined with their identities that they more or less *are* the place.<sup>137</sup> On the other hand, they reject the preconceived notions of them as “natural conservationists” that are based on the image of the Nobel Savage in Western thought, and ultimately a belittling and condemnatory characteristic.

At least for the Sami involved in Laponia, this is a difficult road to walk. There is a strong desire from the outside world, not least from tourists to find the unspoiled, nature-loving Sami people. During the course of this study I have heard several accounts of tourists, and from tourists, where their curiosity about the Sami as a people is noticeable. Often, the presumptions are displaying an exoticized and romanticized view of Sami society and their seemingly obvious attachment to nature. One telling example is the German tourist I talked to in Jokkmokk on a hot summer’s

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<sup>137</sup> The significance of place has attracted the interest of many anthropologists; see e.g. Jackson 1995; Feld & Basso 1996; Ingold 2000).

day in June. He was going to hike in the Muddus area, which is famous for its rich bird life. During the course of our conversation he expressed an interest in Sami culture, and, when he found out that I was a researcher that had some insight into Sami society, he immediately started to ask me questions about the Sami way of living. He was especially interested in Sami pre-Christian religion and was disappointed when told that there were really no active Sami shamans left today. He ended our conversation by comparing the Sami community with “Indians” and stated that these peoples have a certain feel for nature that Europeans do not have and that they, the Sami and the Indians, live with nature, not against it.

Another tourist I met emphasized the same immediate link between the Sami and nature. This man, in his mid 50s was used to trekking in the mountains, and I met him in a tourist camp in the middle of Padjelanta National Park inside the Laponian area. He told me that he used to be active in an environmental organization during the 1960s. Environmental organizations often had contact with the Sami people during that time, united as they were by the primary goal of stopping exploitation in the mountain area. But he said that he and others in the environmental activists were often disappointed by the Sami since they did not act as they had expected. The Sami were simply not as environmentally friendly as he had anticipated. During our talk he drew attention to another example that pointed to what he thought of as the environmental immorality of the Sami. During the current stay he happened to meet a Sami man who wanted to expand his small tourist business. The problem for him was that the rules concerning snowmobile use in the mountains were so restricted. He wanted to take the tourists on snowmobile expeditions in areas that were now closed to traffic. The tourist I was talking to expressed great disappointment with the Sami man, and said that he should know better. After all, you expect “people of nature”<sup>138</sup> to be more sensitive to the environment than that. I asked him if he was more disappointed about the tourist entrepreneur because he was a Sami than he would have been if it had been a Swede expressing the same views, and he immediately answered that of course he was. He expected the Sami man to be more concerned with nature than any regular Swede, again on the basis that, as a Sami, he belonged to a “people of nature.”

Despite the fact that some of the statements in the Mijá ednam plan, quoted above, might be interpreted as Sami self-proclaimed environmental morality, the reindeer herders often experience the ambivalence of being seen as natural conservationists and at the same time trying to ra-

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<sup>138</sup> The Swedish expression he used was *naturfolk*.

tionalize and develop an efficient herding business with the help of modern technology (Beach 1993; 1997). The former president of the Sami Parliament, Lars-Anders Baer has said the following about the environmentally friendly characteristic, often forced on the Sami population on the whole:

Sometimes you get a feeling that we, the Sami people in Sweden, are just as problematic as the weather. We are just as unpredictable as befits Europe's "last savages," albeit white, and it seems as though no one is willing to, or capable of, doing anything about the problems. Just like the Indians, the Sami are often described as a people of Nature, living in harmony with Nature. Against that background it is quite ironical that the Sami during the 90s have been identified as environmental villains in many different respects. (Baer 1997:34, my translation)

The experience that Baer has of being seen both as a natural conservationist and as an environmental villain is also shared by many other Sami I have talked to over the years. Many Sami people active in the Laponian area and in the Laponian process argue that they have the knowledge to manage the area, since they have done so in one way or another for countless generations. But that knowledge is not necessarily attached to "old ways" of living and working in the area. There is no contradiction, for them, in being Sami and a reindeer herder, using your traditional knowledge, *and* taking advantage of modern technology. The demand to behave in a certain way, according to the "people of nature" concept, is more a perception that is imposed on them from outside, and has in itself strong connotations to the "Noble (Ecological) Savage" idea. However, it must be noted that some Sami themselves approve of the Noble Savage theme. I have heard members of reindeer herding families (although not herders themselves) express a wish for more "traditional," non-technological herding. And one Sami woman I spoke to was quite upset with me when I explained to her that from my perspective, it seems complicated to base an entire Sami ethnic belonging on the perception that the Sami are "natural conservationists," since that, in my mind, is a rather prejudiced and inflexible way of looking at ethnic belonging and identity. She did not agree with my argument and claimed that she thought that there should be greater demand on Sami persons to have a superior environmental morality. After all, she stated, they are a "people of nature."

There are, as the above examples show, a variety of opinions and views when it comes to Sami perceptions of nature and whether Sami people somehow have, and should have, higher moral standards when it comes to environmental protection and management. In my experience, how-

ever, most Sami from the area where I have conducted fieldwork have quite an ambivalent feeling towards themselves as natural conservationists. On the one hand, many of them consider their own environmental knowledge of the area, which ultimately stems from being herders and the nomadic lifestyle that historically has been attached to it as unique and in some respects quite different from the conventional “Swedish” knowledge, brought forward by the authorities, predominantly the County Administration. On the other hand, many of them strongly resist being reduced to “people of nature” and having the ultimate demand not to modernize the reindeer herding practices too much, in order to stay “authentic.” The “authenticity” issue of the Sami, and of indigenous peoples in general, is something that is every now and then discernable in discussion on all levels of society, and seems to be especially present in the views of people that are not from the area and that do not necessarily know any Sami persons or reindeer herders themselves. Once, for instance, a friend of a friend, who had no special insight into Sami issues whatsoever, stated with great certainty that he believed that Sami people did not exist anymore, since they all used snowmobiles and helicopter these days. Not only did he make the assumption, as many people do, that being Sami is equal to being a reindeer herder, he also made the whole ethnic identity rely on a non-modern way of living and conducting herding. Since they were now modern, they were no longer Sami. This may be an extreme statement, but not unique in essence (for an extended discussion, see e.g. Beach 1993; 1997).

Perceptions like the ones illustrated above are all part of the sphere of different and sometimes conflicting opinions, expectations, and demands that the Sami representatives had to navigate through when positioning themselves in the negotiations on influence over Lapponia. The Mijá ednam plan expresses environmental concern, just as other conservation documents would. Even if it is stated that to develop separate environmental “targeted” programs is not a traditionally Sami way of approaching the issue of sustainable use of environmental resources, they still consider it important to deal with these issues as part of the future management of Lapponia generally. They point out wide-ranging goals and principles that they consider to be an environmentally sustainable use and that suggest that specific guidelines and environmental strategies should be worked out from these general principles (Mijá ednam 2000:34-35). But they also consider a more environmentally friendly, and traditional, reindeer herding to be part of the future conservation goals in Lapponia, and point to the fact that there are several projects going on in the area where

a more low-technological reindeer herding is being developed. In the Mijá ednam plan it is stated that:

We realize that if we are to continue to live by reindeer herding, the traditional values have to be imperative. We, too, have an obligation to preserve a living nature, a functioning eco-system and a rich biological diversity for future generations to come. Therefore we must find new solutions that fit the new society, but that originate from the traditional Sami way of relating to nature. Possibly, we have to change attitudes and work procedures within our own enterprises. We, like all others, have to reduce unnecessary consumption and try to live without depleting the resources. Everything we do will be adjusted to minimize environmental damage – whether it is in Laponia, in other places that we use, or in other places around the world. (Mijá ednam 2000:8, my translation)

When asked about these wordings and thoughts in the Mijá ednam plan, one of the Sameby representatives told me that they had chosen to emphasize traditional herding, by using many of the internationally well-known environmental buzzwords, in order to meet the requests from UNESCO, among others. With the over-grazing version, spread from the helicopter “incident” (described in Chapter 4), they felt that they had to prove that they were not environmental villains in spite of their modern reindeer herding methods. If the samebys themselves declared their willingness to comply with current conservation practices and goals, no one would be able to criticize them later for neglecting it. Besides, many of the modern herding aids have proven over the years to be hard on the reindeer herders’ bodies, and many of the older herders are suffering from aches and pains due to the fact that they have spent a considerable amount of time on a motorbike or a snowmobile, often in cold weather and driving through rough terrain. Therefore there have been a lot of attempts in several of the local samebys to use skies as much as possible, or in the summer time, to walk. According to this representative, this could also be seen as a step forward. It did not really matter to him if other people from the outside called it traditional or not, to him that was not an issue. As a reindeer herder you try to find methods that work, it is as simple as that, and it does not matter what people want to call it, he affirmed. But certainly, the reason it was rhetorically expressed the way it was in the Mijá ednam plan was to comply with the expectations and believed assumed preconceptions of, above all, UNESCO.

It must also be noted that the reindeer herders, as well as the Sami community in general, have become more environmentally aware, as has the rest of Swedish society. Recycling, separating your waste, and buying eco-friendly products are today activities that are more or less integrated

into the everyday life of peoples. In the mountain area many people are especially concerned with climate change, since the flora and fauna here are among the first to be altered due to the global warming, a fact that adds to the apprehension and interest for eco-friendly alternatives and ways of behaving.

### Seeing “us” through “them”

The support for indigenous peoples in the world today is touched upon throughout this thesis. This support made it easy for the samebys involved to endorse their strategy and claims in regards to Lapponia in a broad international arena. A World Heritage site involving an indigenous population and their culture, without some sort of joint management scheme seemed difficult to justify from the international perspective. Indigenous involvement in environmental conservation management seems today, simply speaking, to be the only politically correct way to go. As an ideological notion, many individuals and nation states support increased indigenous influence on nature conservation management on their traditional lands. As we have seen, however, the idea of joint management is not always easy to implement on a local level, even though, in theory, it is something that many different actors can subscribe to. Where does this support for the indigenous agenda come from? And how does it influence the samebys’ quest to reach equity in relation to the other local actors through accentuating their ethnic difference? And how does it correlate with the general quest for identity in this global era?

As already discussed briefly in Chapter 3, consequences of what we tend to call “globalization” are that people, money, information, and commodities are spread throughout the world and interact in a way that was unthinkable only a hundred or even fifty years ago. This seems to render a widespread feeling among people in general that the world is becoming narrower in the sense that we are interacting more and mixing our specific cultural traits and practices. This notion is, as discussed in Chapter 3 the main motive behind the World Heritage Convention as such. This has rendered a new wave of re-identification (c.f. Hall 1991:21; Pearce 1995:3000; Conklin 1997:713; Wall 1999:279) or “rerooting” (comp. Friedman 1998:243) in parts of the world today where the loss of visible roots and traditions has set “modern” man to seek a new identity in order to re-discover himself. Stuart Hall claims that it is through others that you can begin to see yourself:

To be English is to know yourself in relation to the French, and the hot-blooded Mediterraneans, and the passionate, traumatized Russian soul. You go round the entire globe: when you know what everybody else is, then you are what they are not. Identity is always, in that sense, a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative, it has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself. (Hall 1991:21)

The global world seeks its contradiction to make meaning and to create a sense of identity. And in a world that seem to have lost its cultural particularities and where people seem to lose their local identities, it is easier to define what we are not than to define what we are. And the values so often associated with indigenous people: high moral ecological values, spirituality, traditionalism, and so on, appear to be exactly what threatens to be lost in the changing global world. The image of the indigenous becomes then in a way an oasis for the global world to rest its mind in, to have as a counterpart to the global, modern, seemingly ever-changing world. By defining “others” you define “yourself” (Conklin 1997:713; MacDonald 1997:232). It must also be pointed out that often enough, so-called indigenous peoples themselves are not free from harboring this idealized picture of the indigenous and from having this “need” for the Other since they, contrary to the stereotypical image of them, are also part of the global, modern, world and rely on images of “the traditional” in order to make sense of “the modern.”

One can note that the preference to group people into the “us “ and “them” has always been an imperative, and is doubtless a universal theme among humankind. However, and without trying to evoke a “West and the Rest” categorization, one might still argue that it takes on a particular tone in European tradition (Pearce 1995:308). Dickason (1984) has shown how the idea of some sort of “Other,” be it the “wild man,” a dog-headed distant race, or the Nobel Savage, has always been present and can be traced back even to Babylon and Uruk and the ancient Hebrews (Dickason 1984:70; see also Jahoda 1999). The image-making of the indigenous (ascribed from the outside) as the Other in this respect is parallel to Edward Said’s famous discussion in his book *Orientalism* published in 1978. Here he shows how knowledge of the Orient was developed through European history, to fit the preconceived notion of how the Orient *ought* to be from the perspective of the European world view. In effect, the knowledge of the Orient was more telling of the European mind than it was of the Orient itself. The Orient, seen as a discourse, has many manifestations in, beyond all, the “Western” hemisphere simply because there seems to be a need for it:

This Other has been seen as both Within where it faces its opposite, and Without, along the two axes of the Beyond, the geographical distant and exotic, and the Before, the temporally distant, and here Otherness works on a sliding scale of increasing difference. Nevertheless everywhere it represents the force which keeps the right and proper in place. (Pearce 1995:350)

For the involved Sami in Laponia, “playing the indigenous card” (in the words of a local politician) meant entering the difficulties of balancing between being different and being “the Other,” in Said’s sense of the word. Trying to be different but equal meant trying to evoke changes in the prevailing power structure, and attempting to challenge the normative discourses at work in the local community. This theme is the topic for the next chapter.

## 7 The weight of the past

As mentioned several times in this study, many of the samebys' representatives have brought to my attention the colonial structures they have seen manifested in the Laponian process and through the interaction with representatives from the other actors. Some of the more out-spoken sameby-representatives have also brought up this point in discussions with local authorities. For instance, one representative from the samebys told me that, during a meeting, she had let some municipal officials know how she felt. She had told them that she considered the current relationship between the Sami community and the State colonial in essence, and that this was also one of the reasons why there were difficulties in cooperating among the actors. She basically told them that they were part of ongoing colonial oppression, and that this became evident through the way they handled the work of creating a management plan for the World Heritage area. In her account, the municipal officials did not respond to this. But, she said, "the whole room went quiet." Apparently the municipality representatives did not know what to respond. Her interpretation, however, was that they did not agree with her and thought she was exaggerating. But again, to her, there was an unequal power structure at work in society that was manifested in the relations. But because of that, the Laponian process did also, to her, entail a potential for movement toward decolonization.

The past is an important factor that shapes the relations between the Sami community and the majority society today, as representations of the past, stories about Sami-State relations are widespread and work in many respects as narratives of colonial history. But it also taps into our time, as many of my Sami informants view the current society as highly colonial in structure and see a clear connection between injustices committed against the Sami society in the past and injustices based on ethnic orientation that take place today. This opinion and experience from the representatives of the samebys shaped much of their attitudes and standpoints in the negotiations with the other actors. Likewise, the non-Sami actors' tendency to underestimate the significance of "the colonial" shaped *their* attitudes and standpoints in the negotiation process. Whether assigned much value or

not, then, the representation of the past became an important factor in the negotiation over the management and control of Lapponia, and is one of the key explanations for the way the process unfolded.

The negotiation process over the management of Lapponia that followed the inclusion on the World Heritage List not only made this elusive colonial structure apparent to the Sami involved, it also gave the local samebys a tangible tool to do something about it, to make it, in their own word, part of the “decolonizing” process. The narrative and representation of the colonial past (and present) became vital in order to achieve a change in the distribution of power and influence. But, as I will argue, it can also be interpreted as an act of *self-marginalization*. For the Sami representatives the Lapponian process was but the latest occasion in a long row of historical events where the Sami had been treated with paternalism and their views and demands neglected. Some would see this as an act of “victimization.” However, what is important here is to see the agency inherent in this self-marginality. It becomes an important part of the articulation of difference in relation to the non-Sami counterparts in the negotiations.

Through its institutions and regulations, structural power renders a normative management model and a way of thinking about nature conservation management when it comes to managing the protected areas in Sweden, among these Lapponia, that is almost hegemonic in character. In this chapter I will explain and give examples of the position that the local authorities had vis-à-vis the samebys and show how the structural inequalities of the normative structure were recognized and criticized by the samebys’ representatives.

## Experiences of colonization

Indigenous peoples worldwide describe their experiences of colonization from a subaltern perspective. Nevertheless, the perceptions and narratives of that experience differ from case to case. Even though the dominating nation state might not work as a physically suppressive agent that with brute force restrain the lives and livelihoods of these groups, there is often an experienced “structural colonialism” that affects their lives. Even in Bolivia, the only country so far with a leader who has a self-proclaimed indigenous identity, and with an official decolonizing agenda, many of the indigenous groups in the country feel they are still being colonized. For them, the colonization sits in the structures of the Bolivian society, and in the “global modernity project” (the influence of the capitalist market, the

spread of consumerism, etcetera), which upholds the ongoing colonial suppression (Burman 2009). In my study, I have not heard the Sami involved talk about being suppressed by colonization from a global perspective.<sup>139</sup> They experience rather a structural oppression that has its core in the the Swedish legal system and in the way authorities are organized and run. For the samebys' representatives the Laponian process came to exemplify many of these colonial structures. Many times when interacting in negotiation with the other local actors, the Sami informants would feel that the structural colonialism became evident and tangible, and they blamed much of the failure to bring the process forward on this fact.

A reindeer herder once told me a story that serves as a good example of how many Sami experience their relation with the Swedish authorities. I was sitting at the kitchen table in a small mountain cabin together with a few members of the local sameby. We were having a conversation about the future of Lapponia when one of the herders, an elderly man, began to describe an encounter he and his brother-in-law had had with a man from the SEPA. They were out on the mountain to keep an eye on the reindeer when they suddenly spotted a helicopter driving two bears in front of it. They saw the bears being shot with an anesthetic gun and falling sedated to the ground. The two men watched the bears being examined for several hours, and the reindeer herder I was talking to made a remark that he felt so sorry for the bears and at the time told his brother in law that this was surely a clear case of cruelty to animals. Eventually, while the bears were still under anesthetic, he and his brother in law went up to the people in the helicopter. They were from the SEPA. Among the SEPA crew was a man that I have heard many stories about. He is rather well known in the reindeer herding community in the area for having strong views and being somewhat "anti-Sami" in his opinion. They started to discuss the current reindeer herding politics, the compensation system for reindeer lost in predator attacks, and the existence of predators in the mountain area. Not surprisingly, they had completely contrary opinions and got into a minor argument. After a while, the bears started to wake up, and the two reindeer herders began to leave and the SEPA people started to get into the helicopter. The last thing that the man from SEPA did was to shout out to the awakening bears that they should hurry up and go and get a reindeer for dinner. The reindeer herder by the kitchen table said that he took the remark made by the SEPA official as a huge insult. He felt upset and violated. For a reindeer herder to have his animals taken by

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<sup>139</sup> This "global colonialism" is often referred to as "coloniality". For a discussion and definition see Escobar 2004; Mignolo 2007; Burman 2009.

predators is always a disturbing incident and as there are not only economic values associated with each reindeer, but also cultural and emotional interests (Nordin 2007). Understandably, to have an authority official so blatantly indicate that the herders could do nothing to protect the reindeer from the predators was, considered an offense. But he also expressed that this was “typical” of the relation between the State and the Sami. The reindeer herder said he believed that the Sami had always been deceived by the State, and Lapponia was only the latest idea in a line of stupidities introduced by the authorities. His pessimistic prediction was that the Sami people would again be conned.

The feelings that the reindeer herder is giving voice to in the account above are filled with resentment and distrust. To him, the State and the Sami are linked together by an unjust hierarchical structure, where the State is the dominant party and the Sami the dominated one. But it is not only on a personal level that these viewpoints are being aired. They are also part of more “official” standpoints on how the Swedish colonization and domination of the Sami community still affect the present circumstances.

In a report from 2008 the Ombudsman against Ethnic Discrimination (hereafter DO) pointed out the discriminatory structures that still affect the Sami in Sweden today, not least in their contact with the authorities. In the report it is stated that:

The Ombudsman against ethnic discrimination has, through the experience of working with the Sami community, learnt that the contact with authorities is often characterized by the unequal relationship between the majority society and the minority, and where the representatives from the majority society have the power. The relationship and contact can also be influenced by the historical experiences that many Sami individuals have. It is important to pay attention to the fact that the authorities are also affected by their history. It is possible that the attitude from the representatives of authority can be shaped by the negative view of the Sami that historically has been predominant in Sweden. Centuries of discrimination and a political agenda whose aim was to assimilate and/or segregate the Sami population have led to the fact that many Sami today lack confidence in the authorities.

(...)

Reindeer herders express a frustration and a feeling of powerlessness in that they are not even considered experts in questions regarding reindeer herding or in issues concerning the areas where they have lived for generations. (DO report 2008:27, my translation)

This description of the nature of the relationship between people of Sami origin and the authorities is shared by many others, not least by Sami politicians. In an interview the then president of the Sami Parliament, Lars-Anders Baer, expressed the view that Sweden has never really confronted its colonial past, and that the reasons for this might be found in the way that the colonization was conducted:

Perhaps Sweden has never come to terms with its colonial past because the Swedish brand of colonialism was never as brutal as that in Norway. (...) Here the policy towards the “Lapps” was more paternalistic. As a result, the structures that were created then are still in place. (Baer in *The Sami – an Indigenous people in Sweden* 2005:62, my translation)

Yet another example is expressed through a report from the Sami Parliament to the CERD (The Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination).<sup>140</sup>

*Politically* Sweden’s official position towards Sami land rights continues to rest on racial and colonial policies developed in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Sweden’s policy towards legal rights to Sami traditional land, waters and natural resources remains essentially the same as during the era when Sweden viewed the Sami culture as inferior compared to the Swedish culture. Even though the Sami people were the first settlers in the traditional territories, and even though non-Sami law recognizes occupation etc. as a means to acquire legal title to land, when tried in court proceedings,<sup>141</sup> non-Sami courts have over and over again found in favour of the

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<sup>140</sup> CERD is an organization within the UN organization. It is the body of independent experts that monitors the implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Sweden is one of 173 State parties that have ratified this convention. The ratifying State Parties have to submit reports on a regular basis on their commitment to fight racial discrimination in their respective countries. Sweden submitted its last report in 2006

(<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/416/18/PDF/G0741618.pdf?OpenElement>). CERD later commented on the report and criticized Sweden for, among other things, the way they have handled Sami rights issues

(<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G08/441/85/PDF/G0844185.pdf?OpenElement>). The Sami report quoted here was sent in to CERD as a complimentary observation to the Swedish report.

<sup>141</sup> This mainly refers to the “Taxed Lapp Mountain Case.” In this long-drawn court case some samebys in the South of Sápmi claimed ownership by immemorial occupation over land, now claimed by the Government to be Crown land. Even though the Swedish Supreme Court found in favor of the Government in this specific case, it still confirmed in principle that immemorial usage of land even by nomads could establish an ownership right for the Sami. The Supreme Court stated that there might be areas, especially in the North of Sápmi where Sami immemorial right is so strong as to constitute true ownership rights (contrary to its current claimed status as Crown land)(c.f. Svensson 1997).

non-Sami parties.<sup>142</sup> The reason is that even though no authority today would claim that the Sami culture is inferior to the non-Sami cultures, the assumption of Swedish authorities remains that the Sami people have no legal right to their traditional land.<sup>143</sup>

Here, we see that both the Sami political establishment and parts of the Swedish political agenda (although the quote above was from the DO and not from the Swedish Government or Parliament *per se*) share the perspective that not only has the Sami community been unjustly treated in the past, unequal power relations and condescending attitudes still exist in the structure of society today. There are of course, differences in degree when it comes to interpretation and perception of the colonial rule (past and present) and the dominating role of the Swedish nation state's structure. But that there has been, and to some extent still is, a general structural inequality between Sami and Swedes, is something that even some non-Sami people would subscribe to. The difference between the ethnic groups lies in the fact that to most Sami people the colonial experience is not only a representation of past events or a structure in the current society; it is also a personally experienced reality. As this chapter intends to show there is also a difference when it comes to ascribing the colonial past significance in the present. For the samebys' representative the Laponian process was in many ways only the last episode in a chain of encounters with the State that revolves around Sami rights. Many of them have felt that the process of negotiation with the authorities regarding Lapponia strengthened this conviction. As shown in the previous chapters, the ambition to change this prevailing power structure, from the very beginning, was also a major objective for the Sami involved in the negotiations. However, to the other local actors the past was not, and most of the times should not be, influential in the negotiations over the future of Lapponia.

## Collective and personal memory

The encounter that the reindeer herder had with the SEPA official is but one of many similar stories that I have heard. It does not seem uncommon that people have felt misunderstood, neglected or unjustly treated because of, in their words, their Sami background, both in relation to authority officials but also in other situations. And the report from the DO confirms this.

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<sup>142</sup> Here the text refers to the many court cases between samebys and forests owners that have fought over the right to use the land, mainly in the Southern parts of Sápmi.

<sup>143</sup> <http://www.sametinget.se/4799>, page 5, my translation.

These experiences are often put into a historical context and seen as part of an ongoing colonial oppression and become part of the colonial narrative of the collective memory. This has been touched upon on several occasions throughout this thesis. But here I wish to investigate this concept further, as it has helped me to understand why the sameby representatives' accusation that the other local actors are "colonial" in their behavior, and that the whole society is being colonial in its structure, have been so often repeated. The telling of the colonial past and present is an integral part of the process of accentuating difference, and aims very much at positioning the minority as disadvantaged in relation to the majority population.

The concept of "collective memory" has been widely used to signify these shared stories of the past (see for example Nora 1989; Antze & Lambek 1996; Kenny 1999; White 2000). It is a narrative in the sense that it is not necessarily *actual* historical events that are at stake here, but rather the representation of them that gives meaning to present relations and situations that is the essence of the collective memory. Nora (1989) speaks of *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memories), where the representations of the past becomes displayed. This might be through physical objects (like a statue) or museums or even through ceremonies and stories. Important here are the relational and changing aspects inherent in the representations and presentations of the past in collective memory. Here past and present in any society are merged, and help us make meaning of our present life. This is not to say that the historical encounters referred to by, for example, indigenous groups, did not take place; discrimination and injustices did occur. But the collective memories in use are a reflection of the relational aspects in the present situation. The reason for them being told, and the way they are being told is "a sign of *our* times" (Kenny 1999:430) more than anything else. Therefore it is not the past itself that is at stake but rather the meaning of the past (Kenny 1999:437).

Collective memories touch "very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority" (Said 2000:176). Said refers to the "art of memory" as something that is inevitably part of a political processes. Collective memory, in this perspective, is shaped and constructed with a specific goal: to provide a trustworthy political position for a certain group of people in relation to other groups. Said sees the discourse on collective memory in the same light as Hobsbawn and Ranger (1983) described the *invention of tradition* phenomenon, and notes that:

...collective memory is not an inert and passive thing, but a field of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning. (Said 2000:185)

Said's arguments, however, seem to fall into the same trap that the invention of tradition debate to which he refers did in the 1980s. Just because the collective memory is a reflection of contemporary society and just because these narratives are used in a political setting and set in constant transformation in response to the changing world around us, this does not mean that they are simply invented or "false" representations of the past. They are, rather, social constructions and shaped in the complex web of ethnic relations, political realities, religious and social structures, etc., that they are a response to. The collective memory *is* giving validation to that ethno-political struggle, as it shapes the perception and interpretation of the experiences made in the present. But to regard collective memories as simply invented or reconstructed stories is to miss the significance and implication of the realm in which they work. Instead, I find it more constructive to think of the shaping of collective memory along the lines that White (2000) suggests. To him:

Cultural analysis of historical narrative and its subjectivities inevitably leads beyond the text (and beyond conscious meaning) to transit back and forth between cognitive/affective processes on the one hand and institutional/historical forces on the other. (White 2000:506)

The collective memory, the historical narrative, what we make of the representations of the past, depends ultimately then on how the *lieux the memoir* are conceived and expressed at a specific moment in time, how the past is articulated to make meaning. In my experience this process is not consciously constructed by its "users" in order to win political points as such. Nevertheless, the historical narrative is intrinsically part of the ethnic identity process for the local Sami in the Laponian case, as it is one way of positioning themselves and accentuating their difference in relation to the non-Sami in general and to the state authorities, more specifically.

Nevertheless, Said correctly argues that that collective memory is "endowed with political meaning." The accounts in Chapters 4 and 5 show how the collective memory becomes part of the identification process that accentuates the difference of the samebys involved in relation to the local authorities, thus validating the samebys' position in the negotiation process. This is a good example how the self-ascribed marginality was formed. Their position is a result of the colonial past, of how the colonial past was interpreted by them. But the emphasis on the colonial past and the collec-

tive memory also unites them as a group and forms the basis for the objective behind their “struggle” in the Laponian process. They feel they have been victims of colonization. Colonial attitudes and structures still stop them from being seen as equal partners, and this is precisely why they demand that things be improved and changed. As such, the collective memory, and the narration of it in communicating with the other local actors, is part of the articulation process described in Chapter 5.

The collective memory, besides working as a widespread representation of the past that explains and gives meaning to the experienced injustice in the current situation, also gets recounted at a personal level, thus providing a framework and a vocabulary for personal experiences (Linde 1997; 2000). Moreover, a traumatic personal memory can be given meaning if seen through the looking glass of the collective memory where it confirms these narrations of the past. When personal memories become the basis for a political or social mission, they not only become part of the collective memory, but also part of the collective struggle for a more equal situation (compare Herman 1992:207). This interplay between the personal and the collective memory is very evident, not least in the stories that I have heard in my field. Collective and personal perspectives in stories about the colonial past and present from Sami informants coalesce and fluctuate all the time. A story about a personal experience will typically have many references to more collective representations of the colonial history merged into it. And an account of the more general story, of the colonial relationship between the Sami and the State, will often be illustrated by also giving more personal examples of this. So when my Sami informants speak of the colonial past (or present) on a more collective level, they will undoubtedly be able to make personal references to that. In this way the collective memory is not something that is far fetched or far away, but rather the opposite; it is close to people and very much intertwined with their personal experiences.

The reindeer herder’s story above, about the meeting with the SEPA official, is typical in this respect. He recounts an occasion when he has felt discriminated against on the basis of his ethnic identity but also remarks that that is typical of how the Sami, as a collective, are treated, and constantly deceived by the State. The historical narrative embeds his personal experiences in an explanatory framework, lending them a sense of meaning. And it also gives him a sense of belonging. He is not alone in experiencing something like this; he shares it with his fellow Sami. The rhetoric of the collective narrative gets infused into personal stories, providing them with a set of key expressions and a framework that “makes sense” because it fits how we perceive the reality of the world in which we live.

But the personal experiences and personal stories also have their impact on the collective memory, shaping and transforming it in response to the changing surrounding world.

## Forgetfulness

During a conversation I had with one of the municipal officials, he touched upon the fact that the samebys' representatives always seemed to bring up the fact that they had been victims of colonization and that this still affects their mutual relationship. The official acknowledged the fact that the State had committed many wrongs in their dealings with the Sami in the past. But that this should impact the Laponian negotiation was for him frustrating and would lead to no good to his mind. It would not lead the process forward. He told me that he was getting quite annoyed by how the things that the samebys carried in their "baggage" were influencing the negotiation situation. To his mind the samebys made a big mistake by letting history influence the present situation. Injustices committed in the past cannot be changed. He meant that it was time for the Sami to leave that baggage behind and to look forward. Injustices committed in the past should not influence or restrain the discussions on the future of the Laponian World Heritage site.

However, to a majority of the Sami involved, this baggage *does* matter, and disposing of it and forgetting about it is simply not a choice, because the difficulties that the samebys' representatives experienced in getting their claims accepted were interpreted as a consequence of the past. So rather than making the baggage lighter, the encounters with the other local actors actually added to its weight. In a way then, they could not dispose of the baggage, as some would request them to do, precisely because the Laponian process *was* the baggage.

Lambek has discussed the importance that the actual telling of a memory has for working as a moral and explanatory model for the present, and in connection with that he argues that "[t]he questions to ask of any given acts of memory are what is affirmed and what is denied" (1996:239), a statement that points us to the fact that not only remembering but also "forgetting", or denying, is part of the collective memory. Matters concerning the Sami community (and the other four official so-called national minorities in Sweden<sup>144</sup>) are seldom discussed in public media. There is also a huge lack of information on these groups and their history and

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<sup>144</sup> As mentioned earlier, there are five official minorities acknowledged by Swedish law: Sami, Jews, Romani, Tornedalsfinnar, and Swedish Finns. However, currently the Sami people are the only ethnic minority also recognized as an indigenous people.

contemporary lives in the education system in Sweden today. One could argue that this shortcoming is part of the Swedish collective memory of the past in relation to the non-Swedish ethnic groups represented within the country's borders. One could also argue that the negligence on the part of the County Administration to involve the local samebys and the local reindeer herding culture into the first management plans likewise is part of the forgetfulness that is characteristic of the Swedish administrative system. And one could also see the inability of the municipal official to see the importance of the "baggage" as part of this forgetfulness, which is no less chosen, selected, or constructed than the collective memory of the sameby representatives. Kenny points out that interpretation of the past always means selection, but in the cases of indigenous peoples' narrations of the colonial past, the selection means "focus on resistance, pain, and adaptation" (Kenny 1999:435). In the case of majority societies, they often assume another perspective and even though they might not ignore the colonization of the past, they seldom ascribe the same significance to it.

## Structural power and agents of power

So far in this chapter the significance of the collective memory for the Laponian process has been discussed: both how it is part of the samebus' articulation and positioning and also how it forms the non-Sami actors' behavior and attitude to the process. While many of the non-Sami informants recognize the colonial past, and also the colonial present, this does not render them "baggage." It is most often only a burden that people in the margin have to carry, in whatever way it is perceived or constructed. To not see the importance the "baggage" has for the samebys is, I argue, an illustration of the asymmetric power structure among the local actors that was evident throughout the Laponian process. To not see, or deny, the significance that the colonial history has in this case is a position that is only available to those in a position of power. Again, not acknowledging the significance of the "baggage" is to neglect the historical and cultural difference between Sami and non-Sami in the local community, and it might be interpreted as a way of marginalizing the samebys' representatives in the negotiations.

This asymmetric power structure that puts the Sami in a disadvantaged situation is part of, and reproduced by, the institutions in society and implemented through a netlike organization (comp. Foucault 1980:98).

It is therefore sometimes difficult to see, describe, or explain. Nevertheless, some of the accounts told earlier, like the case of the helicopter ride or the reindeer herder's encounter with the SEPA official on the mountain, can be seen as two very obvious manifestations of the unequal power structure. But there are countless other more intangible and subtle experiences made by the Sami involved in the Laponian process over the years. It is often in the face-to-face situations that the power structure, perceived experienced as unjust and colonial by many Sami informants, is being experienced. The holders of power positions, the agents of power, confirm and reproduce the power structure through their behavior and statements.

In some of my meetings with authority officials, their position as agents of power in relation to their Sami counterparts has become visible. In some cases, I have experienced that these officials have felt that they ought to teach me a bit about "the Sami," what they are like and how they think. This is when it is possible to capture some of the elusive nature of the power structure. Quite clearly there are many preconceived notions that are not so politically correct lurking under the surface.

For instance, in the early years of my study of Lapponia, a local politician told me that, on behalf of the municipality, he always had tried to help the samebys on many different occasions; not least in administrative issues and in dealings with the County Administration. According to him, he used to say, jokingly, that he was the only credible Sami politician, and this is a statement that he later has understood was accepted among many local Sami as a fact. From this perspective it was difficult for him to understand why the representatives from the samebys were making Lapponia into such a controversy. He did not recognize "his samebys." He was sure that if he only went and talked to them they would understand his arguments. At this point he was convinced that it was certain representatives from the samebys that were true agitators and were only stirring up feelings. Also, from the very beginning of the negotiations, he noticed that it was difficult to get the Sami representatives to comply with the objectives of the other parties in the discussions. One of the explanations for this was, in his opinion, that many Sami persons had a conservative way of thinking and were generally afraid of change.

The politician also had strong opinions on how Sami people, and especially reindeer herders, behave in certain situations. For example, he claimed that the Sami lack inventiveness and in some respect also the ability to plan for the future. He said that he had tried to talk to them about this and told them, for instance, when he hears them complain about the situation of the reindeer meat market, that only the reindeer herders

themselves can change the situation. They cannot always rely on the authorities to do the job for them. This politician states that the Sami usually comply with authorities in the end. They may complain loudly of things in the beginning, but after a while they always listen to what government officials and politicians tell them. He thought that this would come to happen in the Laponian case as well, since they usually accept the proposals put forward by the municipality. If only they would come up with a few initiatives of their own, he would be content with the relations the municipality has with the local Sami.

The attitude displayed by the politician above is an example of a marginalization of the Sami as different, less developed, and in need of guidance. It can also be interpreted as an act of power from the politician's side. For, as Li has argued:

To define particular regions, peoples and practices as marginal, disorderly, traditional, and/or in need of "development" is not simply to describe the social world: it is to deploy a discourse of power. (Li 1999:11)

Portraying someone as different in this way is also to uphold an asymmetric power structure between the perceived Other and Us, the norm.

Despite of these accounts, many of my informants are quite positive when they see how the attitude toward Sami people has changed in recent years. Many say that even if the colonization remains on a structural level, there is a much more open atmosphere now and an acceptance for a multicultural society in general, and this has also benefited the Sami community. Some twenty years ago, for instance, it was not uncontroversial to display the Sami flag at the entrance of the municipal building in Jokkmokk, whereas these days you see it everywhere. But some of the people that have lived through these changes are still affected by their early experiences and are skeptical of the improvements. For instance, I have talked to a number of local Sami who have experienced being bullied at school because of their Sami origin. Even though they are today adults, being called a "bloody Lapp"<sup>145</sup> by other students in school is something that many remember with agony and bitterness. On occasion, I have been told that some of these alleged bullies now have high positions in the local community. One middle aged reindeer herder told me that even though both he and his persecutors were older now, and he realized that the they

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<sup>145</sup> *Lappjävel* in Swedish; a very derogatory phrase actually meaning "Lapp Devil" and unfortunately not uncommonly used when insultingly referring to someone of Sami origin. The adjective "jävla" is not only confined to "Lapp," but can be used with other nouns as well, as it also correlates with the English word "damned."

had matured and with time learned a few things about the Sami culture, and maybe even come to appreciate it to a certain extent, to hear them speak well of the Sami now felt hypocritical in his ears. The wounds from childhood were still not healed.

The significance of these stories lies in the experience of the teller. Such accounts are personal memories and the important thing is not whether they actually took place or not, but the tellers' experience from the situation. However, I think the situation in the local community when it comes to the complexity of the relationship between the Sami, as an ethnic group, and the majority society becomes very clear through examples like these. The colonial experience is never far away for many Sami people in the area, and there are real encounters and emotions to consider.

The relationship between these Sami individuals that remembered being bullied as children, and their alleged harassers (some with high positions within the public sphere), encompasses much of the complexity of Sami-Swedish relations on a general level as well: a range of different attitudes, emotions and actions characterizes it. Attitudes toward Sami as a people, how they are portrayed and perceptions of their constitutional rights vary in the eyes of the general public from between being pure racist to being completely glorifying, and most views are obviously found somewhere in the middle of this scale. Even if neither of these extremes is being put forward by anyone active in the Laponian process, the developments have nevertheless been affected by the fact that the Swedish nation state has had a dominating role in shaping and structuring the society and its institutions. The local Sami are today naturally part of these institutions and even work in them and through them, but these institutions are, nevertheless, in relation to the Sami, products of a Swedish world-view.

## The normativity of Swedish environmental politics

As described more in detail in Chapter 2, the Swedish Government has managed the nature reserves and national parks that constitute Lapponia since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Sami in the area have never been asked to have a role in the administration or in the practical management of the area. There is no constituted consultation practice, and there have, up until now, been no attempts at co-management. Single Sami individuals do work in the administration and sometimes some sameby members will be employed as temporary workers to improve the walking trails that run through the mountains by, for example, replacing

old foot bridges. Over the years this lack of involvement has increasingly been interpreted as a significant testimony to the asymmetric power structure and the prevailing colonial situation that many Sami say they experience today. As the importance of local and indigenous influence on conservation management has been highlighted internationally during the last years, the topic has unsurprisingly also been gradually more acknowledged in the Sami community. The Laponian process itself is evidence of this, and, as mentioned, the Mijá ednam plan emphasizes the international efforts being made to further increase indigenous knowledge and power in nature conservation management.

For the samebys' representatives the monopoly of the County Administration in running the conservation practices and policies in the area has been a case in point when it comes to the perpetuation of the colonial structures. They have come to question the present model of managing the area on the basis of its inherent "Swedishness." According to them, if international conventions like the Convention for Biological Diversity (again, paragraph 8j is the burning issue here) are to be taken seriously, and indigenous peoples need to be part of the management of their traditional lands, then the organization and structure of the previous system also have to be decolonized.

### Different "notions of nature?"

One of the representatives from the samebys told me of a meeting with an official from the County Administration. This official had prepared a draft that he presented at the meeting. The draft was (yet another) suggestion from the County Administration about how Laponia, as a World Heritage site, should be managed. This was after the three major local actors had once again, started collaboration after the summer of 2006. According to the sameby representative, the County Administration's official emphasized in this paper "the Swedish notion of nature," something that led the samebys' representative immediately to wonder where in the draft anything was mentioned about "the Sami notion of nature." The County Administration official then answered that there was no such thing as a "Sami notion of nature." The sameby representative persisted and told this official that there were things that he might not know much about, and especially matters that concerned Sami society. Just because he was not acquainted with something that could be called "a Sami notion of nature" did not mean that it did not exist. The argument was clearly heated, and the samebys' representative told me how angry she was at the time. She noted that she felt that she often had to educate both authority

officials and politicians in things that concerned Sami society and Sami history. But the argument between these two actors also shows how rigid the prevailing management system was at the time. To the County Administration officer there was only one way of conducting environmental protection, and that was undoubtedly according to a “Swedish” vision and perception. The mandate that he had to abide by stemmed from decisions taken in the Swedish Parliament, based on Swedish rules and legislation. The representative from the samebys, however, wanted to introduce an alternative to the existing environmental conservation norm in Sweden, even if it was quite unclear at this stage what that alternative norm would look like and how much it would differ from the prevailing one. What she did with her comment, however, was to pinpoint the normativity of Swedish environmental politics. Suggesting that there could be such a thing as a “Sami notion of nature” automatically defined the “Swedish notion of nature” as one possible approach to environmental issues, among many.

Even though the sameby representative above gave the impression that there would be another way, a Sami way, to conduct nature conservation, and even though (as described in Chapter 4) the coordinator hinted to the County Administration in the email correspondence that they were seeking alternative ways to manage the area, this is to some extent an exaggeration. In fact, in the Mijá Ednam plan no fundamentally different management practices are promoted. Although several forms for organizing a management structure are proposed (but all with the demand for a Sami majority on the board), no changes in the actual practicalities are suggested. However, many different projects and experimental work to develop and promote the interests of the samebys are proposed. The goals of these are for example to improve sustainable resource use in reindeer herding, develop the commercial activities for the samebys and its members, increase influence from the samebys in the inventories of predators, increase the samebys’ role in the management of small-game hunting, promote tourism enterprises in the samebys, promote selling of locally produced meat and handicraft, put an emphasis on the Sami language(s), document historical sites and traditional knowledge, give samebys the right to be informed of research carried out in the area, etc. (Mijá ednam 2000). These are some of the issues that the samebys’ representatives in the Mijá ednam group wanted to incorporate in the future management of Lapponia. What this means for the practical work of carrying out conservations management carried in the area is not specified. The Mijá ednam plan sees this as a task for the future board, and this will be done in collaboration with samebys, authorities, and other local interests (Mijá

ednam 2000:70). Nevertheless, there is a focus on the interest of reindeer herding, the future development of the samebys, and promoting Sami history and culture in the area. The focus of the plan is on sameby control and involvement, rather than on new policy documents or the practicalities surrounding management.

## Interpreting mandates and regulations

A large part of the Laponian area has been under protection for a long time. As mentioned, the first national parks were established as early as 1909. This means that the Government has a long tradition of having the jurisdiction to care for the environment here. It is fair to say that the long-standing control of the area has put the Government in a normative, not to say hegemonic, position when it comes to how environmental politics is “thought” and executed. The concept of *hegemony* was brought forward by Gramsci (1971) and further interpreted by other writers (see e.g. Laclau & Mouffe 1985; Slack 1996). Bourdieu (1977:164) calls this type of established worldview and cosmology, the undisputed, the unquestioned principles *doxa*.

The discussions on doxa and hegemony help in understanding the strong position that the prevailing conservation management model of the national parks and nature reserves within Lapponia held, and explains the relative inflexibility on the County Administration’s part to recognize the arguments from the samebys. Over the years, policies and perspectives have no doubt changed in Swedish environmental politics. What has remained truly “doxic,” however is the notion that the area is a national concern and has the Government (through the SEPA and County Administration) as its sole custodian. This is quite well illustrated by the official from the County Administration officer in the example above. To him, there is only one way of thinking and acting in these matters, and that is in accordance with “the Swedish notion of nature.” Changes suggested by the local samebys were therefore seen with suspicion. It is also worth noting that because of its indisputability and “silence,” the very nature of a normative structure makes it virtually impossible for agents of that structure to recognize it as hegemonic. They embody it, and they practice it, but they do not see it, since alternative views are simply difficult to imagine.

As discussed, the samebys did not envision an entirely new concept for nature conservation management than the one already employed in the area. In their management proposal, Mijá ednam (2000), they too use much of the vocabulary commonly applied by most governmental envi-

ronmental agencies. What is norm breaking, however, is the fact that they here saw an opportunity to end the exclusivity of the mandate to manage that the County Administration held, as the regional governmental organization. In this respect, “the Sami notion of nature” should not be seen as an entirely different perspective epistemologically speaking, but rather as a shift in emphasis when it comes to the power structure between the samebys and the local authorities. That a counter-hegemonic movement was launched by the samebys with their aspirations concerning the actual way of conducting nature conservation management is therefore a considerable exaggeration. But when the samebys suggested that Laponia should be managed by a foundation or a board where the County Administration was to be represented, but with the Sami in the majority, this was certainly a new way of “thinking” nature conservation in Sweden. The shift in influence and control is the pivotal norm-breaking issue here, not the content of the actual conservation practicalities.

It has to be mentioned that the SEPA and the County Administration were of course knowledgeable about the many joint management schemes that other countries with indigenous populations had embarked upon as part of their conservation policies, and, as we have seen this was also emphasized by the Mijá ednam program. However, as noted earlier, the County Administration has stated with persistency throughout the process that it is not within its mandate to incorporate the samebys in the management. An argument against that could be that implementing the principle in paragraph 8j in the CBD *ought* to be part of its mandate. But different parts of a mandate are often contradictory, and ultimately it is a question of interpretation of these conflicting regulations, an interpretation that is made largely by the officials at these offices, by the agents of power. Representatives from the County Administration have told me that they are not personally against Sami influence, but a management based on Sami values and with the maintenance of reindeer herding in focus has been unthinkable on the grounds that it was inconsistent with the prevailing legislation. To the Sami representative, the efforts made by the County Administration to involve the local samebys have not been sufficient, as has been shown. Rather they are interpreted as a display of colonial rule, and the experience of the samebys’ representatives in the Laponian process fits very well into the collective memory and confirms the prevailing colonial narrative. To the samebys’ representatives in the process, the normative structure of the conservation control and management of the area has been the essence of colonialism. This is when the colonial structure, which can often be elusive and difficult to describe or grasp, becomes obvious and tangible.

However, with the support and blessing of the Government, an interpretation toward a Sami-oriented management of Lapponia became possible in the end (as will be further discussed in chapter 8). This opening in the way nature conservation is “thought” and conducted has been enthusiastically described to me by a man who has been engaged in Swedish environmental policy making, on many different levels and for a long time, as a *paradigm shift* in Swedish nature conservation management. It is important to stress that the changes that Lapponia have now been supported and applauded by many individuals in both local and national environmental agencies and beyond. They welcome the shift in power between not only between the Sami and the non-Sami communities, but also between local people and national authorities. However, for the involved samebys in the Lapponian process this is, after all, a shift in power and a start towards a more (in their words) decolonized relationship between the nature conservation authorities and the Sami community.

I once heard of an occasion that illustrates this shift in influence and control. During a meeting among the local actors, at a point in the Lapponian process when negotiations were taking place, there was a situation where the County Administration’s representatives wanted the meeting to reach a decision in a certain question. Apparently, according to my informant, the samebys’ representatives did not feel that they had the mandate from the rest of the sameby members to decide on the issue. They wanted to consult the others and come back to the question at the next meeting. One of the representatives from the County Administration had been frustrated and complained that this would certainly take too long. Time was short. According to my informant he had said something like “...go home to your samebys and tell them to...” This was when the sameby representative had interrupted him and told him that the times when he could sit there and tell them what to do or not to do was over. There were new times now. After all, time was on their side. They were in no hurry. They had nothing to lose.

## Agency in the margins

In this thesis I have argued that there were two different tendencies to marginalize the Sami involved. They were too different and they stood too far outside the majority society in order to be knowledgeable enough to be responsible for the management of Lapponia. The statements from one of the municipality politicians referred to earlier is one example of this. But a tendency to exclude or marginalize the Sami in the negotia-

tions because of their perceived “similarity” with the other actors has also been detectable. Appearing as too subsumed in the majority society and too much alike the rest of the local population made the position of the samebys difficult at times for the others to accept. This was a difficulty that the samebys had to deal with especially in the beginning of the Laponian process. However, whether perceived of as “too similar” or “too different,” it was still an outside characteristic ascribed to the samebys and the samebys’ representatives. What this chapter has shown is that by emphasizing colonial history and interpreting the experiences they made in regards to the Laponian negotiations as part of their collective memory, the samebys’ representatives employed a certain degree of “self-ascribed” marginalization.” This should be seen as a part of the accentuating of difference that they articulated in order to reach the position that they felt mirrored the status they thought they ought to have in the process.

As many authors have shown, the margin, whether self-ascribed or externally defined, is a socially constructed space and not a powerless, “out-of-the-way place.” Neither is it a fixed, uncontested space, but rather one that is highly relational, contingent, and shifting (cf. Tsing 1993, 1994, 1999; Li 1999, 2001a, 2001b; Clifford 2001:482). Tsing defines the margins as a:

...conceptual site from which to explore the imaginative quality and the specificity of local/global cultural formation. Margins here are not a geographical, descriptive location. Nor do I refer to margins as the sites of deviance from social norms. Instead, I use the term to indicate an analytic placement that makes evident both the constraining, oppressive quality of cultural exclusion and the creative potential of rearticulating, enlivening, and rearranging the very social categories that peripheralize a group’s existence. (Tsing 1994:279)

Tsing’s perspective on marginality as a space not only for plain descriptive difference, but also for re-articulation and creativity, points to the fact that the margin is also a space for agency. The samebys’ representatives deployed a certain amount of self-ascribed marginalization by highlighting the significance of the past and by arguing that they were still being ignored and not listened to by the authorities. Li (1999:11) has argued that when it comes to externally ascribed marginalization, it is not only a question of simply defining or describing the social world, but it necessarily implies a discourse of power. This is true. But is also true that when the “weaker” define their own marginality, they too deploy power. Self-ascribed marginalization can thus be understood in this respect as a part of the accentuating of the cultural and historical differentiation of the

involved Sami. To be different is not the same thing as being marginalized, but a certain amount of self-ascribed marginalization adds to the defining of who “we” are in relation to “them”. It is the actual self-marginalization of the Sami as an indigenous people, subjects of colonization and repression through history, that formed the basis in the articulation process and that provided them with some “room for maneuver” (Tsing 1999:167).

From his field studies in the Pacific, James Clifford emphasizes the need to distinguish and to connect the concepts of “indigenism” and “diasporism.” Like Tsing, Clifford focuses on the social constructedness and relational aspects of indigenism as a kind of marginalization. He argues that indigenism from this perspective must be seen as an expression, an articulation, a positioning that entails many different perspectives, metaphors, stories and aspirations (Clifford 2001:482-483). It is both rooted and cosmopolitan, and the thought of “pure blood” and autochthonous land “denies the messy, pragmatic politics of articulation” (Clifford 2001:483). He argues:

What is at stake is the articulation, the cobbling together, of “big enough” worlds: concrete lives led in specific circuits *between* the global and the local. We cannot lose sight of ordinary people sustaining relational communities and cosmologies: composite “worlds” that share the planet with others, overlapping and translating. (Clifford 2001: 482)

To Clifford then, “indigenism” is far from the “blood and soil” indigenism that Kuper outlines. Rather, Clifford points us in the direction of understanding indigenism as a highly constructed space, an articulation that is formed by and a response to local and global histories, relations, and resource-based struggles. It should not be seen as a peripheral marginality, but rather a space beside the majority spheres, different but equal in power. Here difference becomes a source of power and agency, rather than vulnerability and weakness.

## 8 The end of one process is the beginning of the next

This thesis starts with an account of a meeting I had with one of the sameby representatives in August 2006, and I will let our meeting that day also conclude it. When talking to my informant I was surprised to hear that progress in the Laponian process had come about so quickly. After all, positions had been locked for so long, and none of the actors seemed to even attempt anymore to resolve the issue. Below I will describe the events that led up to the new phase of cooperation that since then has signified the work of creating a holistic management plan for Laponia. From that outlook I will then give a conclusion to the key argument brought up in this thesis.

### A milestone reached - the real work begins

As we were having our coffee, chatting and discussing Laponia, my informant filled me in on the latest developments and reminded me of some of the details that had eventually led to the decision to form a delegation and start the work to create a management structure that allowed a strong Sami bias. She said that in the summer of 2005, the samebys were called to a meeting by the county governor to discuss the future of Laponia. When a new governor had been appointed in 2003 and had immediately targeted the situation with Laponia's unsettled management as a key topic to resolve. When he called to the meeting in 2005, the samebys position was that they would attend the meeting only if the management question and a Sami majority representation on a future board were to be put at the top of the agenda. They were promised this, if they also agreed to discuss the possibilities of building a visitor's centre (*naturum*) with information about the area. Even though the *naturum* idea had been debated among the local actors for a long time, with disagreements on where it should be built and what it should contain, no decisions had been taken on the matter and the County Administration was eager to start

making this idea a reality. The samebys agreed to discuss the future of a *naturum*, and talks among the three local actors were resumed. The talks resulted in a joint proposition on how to go forward with the plans, and this proposition was presented to the Government (County Administration of Norrbotten 2006, reg. no. 11523-2006). In the proposition to the Government the local actors states that:

This letter expresses the mutual aspiration of the parties and expresses our ambition to proceed in a process where new pathways for the management of the World Heritage site is tested, new pathways where the different responsibilities of the parties are respected and the foundation is built upon a locally grounded management of the World Heritage site. (County Administration of Norrbotten 2006:2, reg. no. 11523-2006, my translation)

When the Government had been called upon earlier in the process, they had remanded the issue back, claiming that this was a matter that had to be resolved locally. This time, however, the Government agreed that the time had come to put local management, with a Sami majority, into practice. Instead of just referring to the issue as a local discussion, they now recognized the importance of giving the County Administration an official mandate to allow a management with a strong Sami control to be put into action. The Government instructed the County Administration to set up a working committee that would produce an organizational structure according to the intentions in the proposition (Ministry of Environment 2006, reg. no. M2006/5999/A).

The new Laponia delegation were given three years to produce a management organization (which will be launched in January 2010), and the Government agreed to contribute 3 million Swedish crowns for each of these years. Some of the money would pay for a full-time position for a representative for the samebys. Otherwise it would be difficult for the samebys to be able to put an equal amount of time into the project. As mentioned earlier, the financial inequalities between the samebys and the other local actors had always been seen as a true sign of the colonial structure of society. This was now being changed, and the coordinator was appointed to this position and is today the driving force behind designing the new management structure.

On the official Laponian website, this new wave of cooperation is declared. It is stated that the actors, through the new cooperation agree:

- To have shared “basic values” (*värdegrund*)
- To have joint “aspirations” (*viljeinriktning*) concerning a number of inputs

- To establish an interim Lapponia delegation
- To prepare for the launching of a World Heritage management with a Sami majority on the Board of management.<sup>146</sup>

The shared “basic values” will guide the work of structuring this new management plan and the new management policy. It here says that:

The World Heritage of Lapland, Lapponia, must be seen from a holistic perspective where the relationship between humankind and their surroundings are in focus. This holistic site is an indispensable heritage that will be handed over to the next generation. The Sami culture will continue and reindeer herding will use the landscape at the same time as new Sami occupations are carried out in accordance with the natural and cultural values that are forming the foundation for the justification of the World Heritage appointment.

The cultural landscape, the national parks and the nature reserves will be protected and cared for in such a way that their values remain intact, and so that they can become an example in the nature and culture conservation institutions and a help for the development in municipalities involved. The experiences of the visitors’ are to be reinforced by suitable information and other efforts.<sup>147</sup>

After the Government gave its blessing to a Sami-biased management structure of Lapponia, the local actors, together with the SEPA began their assignment. A new Lapponia delegation was established as well as a committee that would work with the outline of the future management structure. Different work groups were formed, each with a specific responsibility to resolve and develop. It was decided that the decisions in the Lapponia delegation would be taken by acclamation. After three years a more permanent board would be established, with a Sami majority. The samebys will elect the Sami representatives on this board, but from what I understand from my informants, they will not necessarily be sameby members. The samebys today talk about the importance of involving the broader local interest, which is not necessarily Sami, into the process more. All local people must be heard. One person involved in the work of creating a new management plan for Lapponia has said that for instance, even if most tourist guides will come from the samebys, local residents will be offered to stay in the tourist huts in the mountain at half the cost.

Why this sudden change in attitude toward a board with a Sami majority representation came about at this particular moment in time has no

<sup>146</sup> [http://www.lapponia.nu/default.asp?ID=100&menu\\_item=100](http://www.lapponia.nu/default.asp?ID=100&menu_item=100), my translation

<sup>147</sup> <http://www.bd.lst.se/skyddad/default.aspx?propID=10009172>, my translation

simple explanation. The sameby representative I was talking to was also a bit puzzled by the recent development and said that she had been thinking about it, but had no definite explanation herself. The main reason in her mind could possibly be that the Laponia issue had become increasingly embarrassing for the Swedish Government and that there might have been international pressure on Sweden to meet the demands of their indigenous population. After all, from an international perspective some sort of joint management solution in these kinds of situations is more or less the rule. But these probable discussions and attempts at persuasion had not been directly communicated to the Sami representatives. One important factor that can not be overlooked is also, to this representative's mind, that new people had come into the process. Old locked positions could thereby be broken.

I agree with her analysis of why the longstanding problems in the negotiations were resolved at this particular point in time. The new persons coming into the process, not least the new governor, meant a positive influence. Some of the old personal grievances came to a natural halt and new people came in with new energy and determination to push the process forward. I think the time factor is important here too. For ten years the national authorities had been aware of, although not involved in, the local difficulties to create a cohesive management plan for the World Heritage site. Representatives from the Sami Parliament had repeatedly brought the issue up in their talks with the Government and with the minister for Sami affairs. Also, UNESCO had been notified about the difficulties in collaborating, and the absence of a management plan for the area. For the Swedish national authorities, at this point, the issues must have been seen as at least a minor embarrassment. Further, internationally, the "local participation in conservation management discourse" continued to gain support and significance in environmental circles. And this started to have an increased importance on the environmental policies of many nation states, among them Sweden.

Another important factor is the relative unity among different Sami interest groups and political parties on the issue of Laponia. This is not to say that there were not various different aspirations and expectations among the representatives from the samebys, because there were. Opinions differed not only among individuals but could also vary among samebys or reindeer herding families. However, in the discussions with the other actors, they were perceived of as a unified group with one objective, rather than many contradictory wills and expectations. And this was also a conscious strategy on their behalf.

When I talked to the sameby representative in August 2006, she confirmed many of the things that we had talked about before, and many of the things that I had noted as significant in the ten years time that the on-and-off negotiation had been going on. She talked, for instance, about the support from the surrounding Sami community. She said that this support had indeed been strong during the whole process. Now, when the local samebys had achieved most of their goals, many Sami politicians and others representing different Sami organizations had come up to her and congratulated her. They had told her how much they admired the work of the Mijá edman association, and that the way they had conducted “the struggle” was remarkable. As mentioned many times before in my conversations with sameby representatives, the importance of a strong sameby control in the management of Lapponia was seen as a steppingstone towards a stronger Sami position in general on conservation-related issues throughout Sápmi. And even as a springboard for pressuring the Government to ratify ILO 169. The sameby representatives involved in the Lapponian process were all along of the opinion that their work was part of a larger ethno-political struggle. For them, the way the Lapponian-process developed and the difficulties in communicating with the other local actors were a display of the colonial structure still at work in society, and still in the minds and manners of the representatives of the authorities.

In a speech in Kiruna in December 2007, during a seminar on the possibility of establishing more national parks in Sweden (some of them in reindeer herding areas) the former chair of the Sami Parliament, Lars-Anders Baer, confirmed the stance that there are still certain intrinsic colonial remnants in Swedish environmental policy. During his presentation he asserted that the State has not really dealt with the colonial history of the Swedish nature conservation authorities in the Sami area. He brought up the fact that there are many examples from other countries, like Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US, where indigenous peoples are involved in, or even responsible for, the management of national parks. He pointed out that the Sami society in general was not against national parks as such. There is an acceptance in the Sami society of having national parks and protecting the environment and securing biological diversity. According to him, this is all in line with the traditional Sami approach to nature and to the environment. Here, he also said that the work that is currently being done by the SEPA, the County Administration of Norrbotten, the relevant municipalities and samebys in Lapponia can be a part of the beginning of a decolonization process of the Swedish environmental policies in Sápmi (NSD December 28, 2007). Statements like this confirm and justify the significance that the representatives from the

samebys have given the Laponian process all along. It was an important tool in the decolonization of the State and the authorities and potentially a powerful symbol for increased Sami self-governance.

As we were sitting there, chatting and pondering upon the development of the Laponian process so far, my informant said with a little laugh that she has never been able to understand why the other local actors have been so inflexible and so persistent in rejecting the claims made by the samebys during these years. The samebys never really asked for new laws to be enacted. And rumors sometimes spread in the community – that if they had the majority on the management board, the samebys would throw everybody else out of the mountain area – she found absurd. They have never really been after an entirely alternative way of conducting the practicalities of managing the area, only to have influence and control of it. They have never, she said, been advocating an exclusive right to manage Laponia. On the contrary, it should be done in cooperation with the other actors.

During our conversation she remembered how, many times, the other actors had been frustrated by the stubbornness of the samebys. The County Administration and the municipalities were eager to move on and get some tangible results from the World Heritage appointment. The way the samebys acted slowed down the process. But time was on their side, she noted. They had nothing to lose and everything to gain. As she looked back on the years as admittedly one of the most uncompromising representatives from the samebys, she confessed that it has been a difficult and challenging experience. To get to where they were now had been tough, but in her mind, it is an important milestone that has been reached, important for the entire Sami community in Sweden. At the end of our conversation she told me that she was beginning to realize just how much effort will have to be put into this process in the future. It is now, she said, that the real work begins.

## Concluding remarks

In this thesis I have described the negotiation process for management and control of Laponia that occurred as a result of the World Heritage appointment. In the very beginning after the appointment the local samebys' position must be described as quite weak compared to that of the other local actors, predominantly consisting of the County Administration and the two municipalities closest to the Laponian area, Jokkmokk and Gällivare. I have argued that the samebys were marginalized in the nego-

tiations with the other local actors on the basis of two different assumptions. On the one hand, the local sameby members were often perceived of as being so much part of the majority society that they could very well be represented by the municipalities in regards to Laponian issues, just like other local citizens. The samebys' own aspiration to be an equal partner to the municipalities and the County Administration was not always understood. On the other hand, a tendency to marginalize the Sami involved because of their "difference" is also discernable. On occasion the viewpoint that the Sami would be too uneducated and incapable of understanding the structure of society and its administrative system has been heard. For the involved samebys' representatives, finding a position in the middle of these two assumptions was necessary.

I have relied on the concept of *articulation* in order to understand and explain how the involved Sami positioned themselves. The articulation concept allows us to understand ethnic mobilization as a contingent and flexible phenomenon. It is the expression of the combined variables inherent in the mobilization, for instance, the relational aspects among actors, the significance of contextual historical, economic and social factors, the dominant political and ideological perspectives in the surrounding world, and so forth. The articulation concept explains how the elements displayed or the rhetoric used in a mobilization act is not "natural" or predestined, but neither is it taken out of thin air. Articulations inevitably contain both "new" and "old" (and reinterpreted) elements and expressions. They are both part of a historical continuum *and* responses to new situations. Articulations therefore constantly change over time.

In the case of the Sami articulation in Lapponia, it came to revolve around indigenous peoples' right to (co)manage their traditional lands. In their own proposal for how Lapponia should be managed (the Mijá ednam plan), the samebys point to the fact that they are an indigenous people and come from a different cultural and historical background than the other actors. They take up examples of how other indigenous groups are involved in different kinds of joint management schemes in their countries. Conventions and international declarations that Sweden has ratified bring up the importance of letting indigenous peoples take part in the management of their traditional lands. This is actually also a predicament for UNESCO, and lies in line with the intentions of the World Heritage Convention. In the Mijá Ednam plan a holistic view of nature conservation is brought up, and the special Sami relation to nature, in accordance with other indigenous groups, is argued for.

This emphasized their cultural and historical difference in relation to the other non-Sami actors, and this was the basis for their claim to be

responsible for the management of Lapponia. Since 1977 the Sami people have had the official status of an indigenous group in Sweden (the only one so far), and this is no doubt a matter of common knowledge in Sweden today. On a local level, however, in the everyday life in Jokkmokk and Gällivare, the international indigenous rhetoric has not been put into practice very much. Therefore, the sameby representatives' focus on indigeneity was thought of as both exaggerated and offensive to some of the other actors. For them, Sami ethno-political matters should not be confused with how the new World Heritage site should be managed. But for the samebys, the ethno-political dimension inherent in the appointment was evident from the start. After all, the local reindeer herding Sami culture, both in historical and present perspectives, formed the basis for the cultural criteria of the justification for inscription on the World Heritage List. And the reindeer herding was carried out on, and have, through thousands of years of herding, shaped, the natural landscape that forms the basis for the natural criteria of the appointment. Again, it is important to point out that the different representatives' from the samebys did not always agree on how to go forward in the process or what issues were important to emphasize. There were also differences in opinion among the samebys involved and among different families of reindeer herding groups. However, as discussed in the thesis, the importance of "speaking with one voice" when talking to the other actors or to the media was recognized. The discussions and differences in opinion remained internal matters. I have been told that there was even an oral agreement among the different political Sami parities not to make Lapponia into a weapon in the Sami-political discussion. And this agreement has been respected. This was one of the things that contributed to making the Lapponian process eventually successful for the involved samebys.

Emphasizing their indigeneity became one way of accentuating their difference without being viewed as the ignorant or uneducated Other. But equally important for them was to see the Lapponian process as a part of the historical relationship between the Sami community and the State and the majority population. For many of the sameby representatives the way that the Lapponian process unfolded proved the colonial character still entrenched in Swedish society vis-à-vis the Sami. Both the very structure of society, but also the behavior of the politicians and authority officials involved (the agents of power) was interpreted as merely the latest phase in colonial history. The significance of the very special relationship between indigenous peoples and nature conservation authorities must be taken into account here. The lands are the most tangible proof of the colonization. It is the land that was taken, and it is the land that today is

often under claim. The nature protection agencies, and their staff, are often seen as the symbols of colonial rule, not only in the Laponian area but also for many indigenous-environmental agency relations through out the world. The environmental agencies manage and make decisions over lands that indigenous peoples often count as their rightful property. In Laponia the reindeer herders have immemorial rights and can use the land for herding, but do not have ownership of it. Many times they find the jurisdiction of the authorities both annoying and offensive. To have a majority on the Laponian board would mean that, even if collaborating with the authorities and even if the management would have to be shaped according to current legislation, at least the local samebys would be in control of developments. In this way, there was hope among sameby members that the Laponian process would give them back some of the agency they felt that their people had lost through the course of history.

I have viewed the narratives of the colonial past as collective memories, where the importance might not be the absolute truth behind a story, but rather what it means in the present, how it makes meaning of present-day situations and encounters. Personal memories are often linked to the collective memory. The collective memory offers personal experiences an interpretative framework, and at the same time, personal memories confirm and regenerate colonial narratives. The way that the representatives from the samebys talk about their experience of the Laponian process demonstrates this clearly. Nevertheless, the Laponian process has, for them, not merely been treated as a display of colonial rule in the present, but has also been considered an opportunity to decolonize the structure of society and the relationship between the Sami community and the environmental agencies (the SEPA and County Administration). As I have pointed out, it is significant that only the samebys' representatives talked about the development of the Laponian process as being directly linked to a long-standing colonial structure. Representatives from both local and national authorities, on the contrary, were quite annoyed that the sameby representatives seemed unable to "dispose of the baggage" and stop talking colonialism and relations in the past. For the non-Sami actors, it would be better to start from scratch and not bring old grievances into the discussions. The representatives from the local authorities did not feel responsible for the injustices committed by the Swedish nation state in the past, even if they acknowledged them and regretted them. But neglecting to see the importance of the past, and the way the Laponian process fits into to colonial history, is also a display of the asymmetric power structure among the different actors. The forgetfulness or denial, of the colo-

nial past and its significance in the current situation can be seen as part of another colonial narrative, the narrative of those in power.

One might argue that by emphasizing the importance of the colonial past and present, the samebys' representatives are portraying themselves as victims and ascribing to themselves a marginal position. To a certain degree this is true. But self-ascribed marginality is very different from the externally ascribed marginality mentioned earlier. I see the self-ascribed marginality as part of the act of articulation, as one of the ways that they emphasized their cultural and historical distinctiveness. And, as has been discussed in this study, employing a self-ascribed marginality entails agency. Regardless of power position, all who define always deploy power in one way or the other. This self-ascribed marginality provided "room for maneuver" for the involved Sami.

Another matter that proved important, however, were the channels through which the samebys' representatives articulated their difference, and also the manner in which this was done. As Ardener (1975), Keesing (1989, 1992), and Saugestad (2001), among others, have pointed out any kind of subaltern struggle must be conducted within the frameworks of the normative system of the majority society in order to be heard and in order to be successful. The work with producing Mijá ednam and the way the samebys used both the channels and language of the Swedish authoritative system meant that they could by no means be ignored.

However, employing a discourse of indigeneity has for some indigenous groups proven to be a double-edged sword. There are cases where indigenous groups have allied with environmental organizations and too aggressively portrayed themselves, or been portrayed, as having a higher environmental moral than the depraved, capitalizing Western societies. It is a narrow path to walk. The demands on, especially, the reindeer herding Sami to be "natural conservationists" is strong. I have also shown how these perceptions in many ways are part of UNESCO's objective to support and preserve indigenous peoples' culture and knowledge. It is also, inherently, part of the motive behind the World Heritage Convention as such. The stereotypical picture of the anti-modern, nature-loving indigenous people, fits in many ways very well with the Convention's aim to preserve and conserve natural or cultural sites that are at risk of disappearing or being damaged by the actions of the global society. This makes the incorporation between the UNESCO and with the World Heritage Convention somewhat ambivalent. On the one hand, it risks reinforcing stereotypical characteristics of indigenous peoples' cultures as traditional and vulnerable, but, on the other hand, a World Heritage appointment can work as a "global eye" on the protected area and provide a direct link

between indigenous peoples and the international level. Lapponia illustrates this very well. With the World Heritage Convention coming in as a new player on the scene, the protection and conservation of the area was no longer merely a matter that concerned the national authorities and the local people. Having the status of being an indigenous people, it was easy for the involved Sami to draw on this direct link to bypass the national level and seek support for their claims at the international level, where the indigenous agenda is recognized and often supported.

World Heritage sites, when implemented, become arenas for communication between the different actors. Sometimes the realization of a site goes smoothly, but often, however, there seem to be discussions and different opinions that have to be resolved. In all conventions or declarations, the language used to describe the motives and aims is malleable and simplistic in order to attract as many ratifying nation states as possible and to have a wide applicability. The World Heritage Convention is no exception. This means that oftentimes different actors will have different interpretations of the convention and different expectations for the future of the site. The arena for communication can therefore develop into a setting for both collaboration and conflict. In the Lapponian case, after a very short period of collaboration, the World Heritage appointment became the target of a long and deep conflict among the local actors, where a clear polarization between the samebys and the local authorities was notable. Now, again, collaboration is characterizing the process, and all parties involved are eager to make Lapponia into a new management model that can inspire other protected areas in Sweden to go the same way. Both collaboration and conflict can be seen as communication, and one might argue that the appointment of Lapponia provided local actors a communicative arena where they had to deal with unresolved issues that were in desperate need to be ventilated. New improved relations between the local samebys and the authorities seem to be a direct result of the Lapponian process.

The position that the samebys' representatives wanted to reach was to be seen as equal partners in the negotiation with the other local actors. This has been expressed on many occasions to me, the wish to be seen as just as important as the other actors. But does equality for the Sami require difference? In this case I think it does, but without being different according to the stereotypical image of how a "natural conservationist" Sami (or indigenous person) ought to look and behave. Accentuating their cultural and historical distinctiveness, but articulating it through the frameworks of the normative structure became an effective way to achieve success for the samebys involved in the negotiations over how to shape

the management of Lapponia. They talked about their perceived cultural and historical difference compared to the other local actors, but with a language that was recognizable to all. My interpretation of the position-seeking and the way the Sami involved wanted to manifest their difference while demanding equality is that they wished to be understood as, not *an Other* actor in the Saidian sense of the word, but rather as *another* actor, equal but different and with incontestable right to be in control of the World Heritage site of Lapponia. After all, without the significance of the local reindeer herding culture, past and present, there would be no World Heritage area to manage in the first place.

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