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# European-wide conservation versus local well-being: the reception of the Natura 2000 Reserve Network in Karvia, SW-Finland

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## Abstract

I describe grassroots resistance that evolved in the rural municipality of Karvia in SW-Finland in response to the introduction and development of the EU-wide protected areas system known as Natura 2000 Reserve Network. I have two main aims in this paper. First, I explore the local forest economy, looking at how it works and how it is structured. This I do by focusing on the multilevel well-being of key actors and by exploring the motives lying behind the behaviours and decisions of people working within the forest economy, particularly forest owners. Second, I identify and describe the principles that can help uncover the conflicts and contradictions between forest economy and conservation planning and create a framework for innovative solutions to such contradictions on the local level.

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper, I describe processes of grassroots resistance that evolved in the rural municipality of Karvia in Southwestern-Finland in response to the introduction and development of the protected areas system known as Natura 2000. This is an extended, European-wide conservation network that is based on the Bird Protection Directive (1979) and the Habitat Directive (1992). The aim is to create a coherent network of different habitat types with a view to establishing a solid ecological foundation for sustainable development.

Every EU Member State is in principle responsible for the planning and implementation of its own network. In Finland, planning got under way in the mid-1990s, and the first proposal by the Ministry of the Environment and regional environment centres on

sites to be included was published in the spring of 1997. The proposal caused controversy (Hildén et al., 1997). The national environment authorities received almost 15,000 letters of complaint.

People in western Finland were also divided in their views, and the pattern of resistance was quite similar to the situation elsewhere in Finland. There was one exceptionally strong protest: in the municipality of Karvia. In the early autumn of 1997, four landowners from Karvia went on hunger strike in protest against the proposed Natura 2000 Network. There was also growing discontent and resistance elsewhere. Landowners angered by the Natura plans were preparing to mobilise support for the forest owners in Karvia lest their demands were not given due attention. The hunger strike got much public attention. A week-long strike ended after both the minister of agriculture and forestry and the minister of the environment visited the scene and nearly a half of the areas were withdrawn from the Natura proposal. Traditionally radical action and collective resistance

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have been associated with conservation activists, but this time the roles were reversed: in this dispute over nature conservation, the landowners were standing up in defence of their rights.

I have two main aims in this paper. First, I will explore the local forest economy of Karvia, looking at how it works and how it is structured. This I do by focusing on the multilevel well-being of key actors in the local forest economy and by exploring the motives and emotions behind the behaviours and decisions of people working within the forest economy, particularly forest owners. This calls for an *institutional analysis*. Second, my aim is to describe the *principles* that can help uncover the conflicts and contradictions between forest economy and conservation planning and create a framework for innovative solutions to these contradictions on the local level. Ultimately, my aim is to find out what needs to be done so that local and regional forest management planning could better take into account not only economic and ecological values but also historical, social, and ethical values.

## 2. Materials and methods

### 2.1. The area

Karvia is a rather small municipality in the inland in SW-Finland. Its natural environment is barren; almost 70% of its surface area consists of bog and marshland. Local landowners drained these lands for decades, up to the beginning of the 1990s. Nowadays all they do is restore old drains and ditches; the aim is to turn the bogs into forest. And environmental authorities have for long recognised the need for extended protection of bogs in a natural state.

My study focuses on two Natura sites in Karvia, Aunesluoma and Kuloneva, which were at the centre of most of the disagreements surrounding the Natura network in this area. Aunesluoma is a previously unprotected area that according to surveys is a locally significant site (Hakila, 1997). Kuloneva is a nationally significant conservation area that has long been part of a national park and is covered by a national wetlands protection programme. The Natura proposal would have increased the total protected area. It is worth noting that within the area covered by these two adjacent sites, there were more than 120 private prop-

erties (including those of the hunger strikers), some of which border on both sites. The sites differ from each other in terms of their natural histories, conservation histories as well as their ecological values.

### 2.2. Data

I interviewed three experts of the local forest economy and ten local forest owners in the spring of 1999. In every interviews much time and attention was devoted to the changes that had taken place in forestry practices over the past decades. To recruit my interviewees I contacted the manager of the local forest management association, who also gave me invaluable background information both on the local forest economy and on the conflicts surrounding the proposed Natura network.

The interviews were semi-structured: the aim was to have a guided conversation with the forest owners, covering themes set out in advance. The themes were as follows: (i) the interviewee's background and farm history, (ii) the attitude towards the Natura programme, (iii) what went wrong with Natura, (iv) what was good about Natura and (v) how should planning procedures be improved from the forest owner's point of view. All these themes were discussed within the metatheme of the changing national forest economy.

In addition to doing these interviews, I also studied maps and documents and interviewed older generation managers from SW-Finland who had started their active careers in the planning and implementation of forest management in the early-1950s. I also did what may be described as participant observation, living in Karvia for a few weeks in the spring of 1999. I was, however, quite familiar with sites and the local mentality even before I started: during my childhood I spent all my summers on my uncle's farm in the village of Kantti, which is close to Aunesluoma and Kuloneva.

### 2.3. Approach

My theoretical approach leans on institutional economics, which was born in the United States around the turn of the century (Morgan and Rutherford, 1999; Rutherford, 1994). Unlike mainstream economics, institutionalists emphasise the role of customs, social practices, and individual habits in individual and collective action. The unit of analysis for institutional

economics is a transaction. It refers not to the exchange of a commodity or service as such, but rather to the ecological, legal, social and economic conditions and circumstances within which legal or moral *right* to certain commodity, service or *practice* is transferred or retained (Commons, 1990, 1995; Ramstad, 1996). Since the economy is understood as an instituted process, the purpose of the institutionalist approach is to provide conditions for institutional reform, illuminate power relations, and to enable each individual self-creation within these economic structures and relations.

Institutionalists do not believe in a divide between the economy and policy process (Hiedanpää and Bromley, 2002). The planning of collective activities and the assessment of their results and consequences are central to institutional economics. From planning theories, the approach of transactive planning has been adopted into institutional economics (Friedmann, 1973, 1988). Transactive planning acknowledges the complexity of socio-economic structures, the heterogeneity of economic relations, and the constrained nature of individual fields of opportunity. It is based on teamwork of small groups at different levels, on close interaction among individual actors, and on social learning (on transactive planning in relation to other planning theories, e.g. see Camhis, 1979; Albrecht, 1985).

Social criticism, institutional reform, and social learning refer not only to institutional economics and transactive planning but also to a philosophical doctrine known as pragmatism. Pragmatists emphasise that all description, interpretation, and understanding are dependent upon perspectives adopted, that morality (the context of justification) is interwoven with the customs, social practices, and habits of thought, and that values are essentially a matter of lived experience. (Bernstein, 1983; Dickstein, 1998; Mirowski, 1990.)

### 3. Forest/economy, local well-being and the Natura 2000 Reserve Network in Karvia

#### 3.1. Material conditions

In every society, material conditions or structures of well-being are modified through administrative decisions. The Natura 2000 Network is an example. Administrative decisions affect the distribution of

well-being and in this way also change the working rules of collaboration in society. In so doing, they have a direct impact on the material conditions, that is, public, economic, and ecological conditions of regional and local life.

Let us consider ecological conditions first. Almost 70% of Karvia's surface area consists of bogs and marshland. This soil type is an ecological boundary condition for the people of Karvia. Drainage is the main reason why the bogs and marshlands in Karvia have diminished in area, and the authorities have for long recognised the need for extended protection. In Karvia, as indeed elsewhere in this part of Finland, the sites proposed for inclusion in the Natura 2000 Network consisted mainly of different types of bogs, the aim being to preserve this habitat type typical to the region.

According to Turner et al. (1995), the *primary* ecological value of bogs and marshland and forests lies in their evolutionary significance. Peat, berries, game and timber production are *secondary* ecological values. However, if we adopt the landowners' perspective, bogs in their natural state produce no material well-being (if we disregard peat production or the organisms that can be either hunted or gathered). For this reason, it has been an important priority for landowners who earn a living from agriculture and forestry to drain their bogs and plant trees. The distinction between primary and secondary natural values is by no means undisputed. From the perspective of agriculture and forestry, this relationship can easily be reversed: the primary value is what gives the local people a living, the secondary value is what satisfies national or local conservation needs. Whichever angle we take, however, the distinction does help to clarify the intentions of the authorities and their conservation plans and, on the other hand, the position of landowners.

The public boundary conditions of well-being are set by legislation and administration and they exert an impact, from the outside of the local community, on the state of the economy and the ecological environment by changing the rights and duties of different actors. The public framework is, in principle, exactly the same in all municipalities across the country: there is at least the right to (land) ownership, everyman's right, the right to legal protection and unemployment security, the subsidies system in forestry and agriculture, and education. This framework differs from

ecological and economic boundary conditions in that it is forced in formal rules, i.e. laws and acts. The Natura 2000 Reserve Network was an initiated change in the public boundary conditions. The forestland inside the critical boundaries was to be included in the reservation area on which the economic exploitation was no more possible.

The farms in and around Aunesluoma and Kuloneva varied a lot as regards economic boundary conditions; factors such as their income structure, production structure, the amount of forest land owned, the maturity of forests, and job opportunities in forestry—just as they would anywhere else in the country. On the municipal level, well-being indices are of course different: attention is drawn to the production structure, employment, education level and so on. Karvia is a small municipality with 3100 inhabitants. Less than half or 41.6% have completed comprehensive school, 4.0% have a higher education. In a national comparison these are low figures: in the latter regard, for instance, Karvia ranks the 447th out of the 455 Finnish municipalities. However, this does not yet give the full picture. The number of farms in Karvia is the fifth-highest in the whole country, with the figure standing at 149 per 1000 inhabitants. In other words, Karvia is a genuine rural municipality where the economy relies heavily on primary production, chiefly dairy production and forestry. One-quarter or 24.7% of all households are self-employed, and 44.1% of those in wage employment are engaged in primary production.

The material conditions for well-being are there, concretely and objectively, but their meaning and significance to local actors varies, as do expected social and economic results and consequences of implementation of the Natura 2000 Reserve Network. In the course of everyday life, these material conditions for well-being are closely interwoven and develop together. The other dimension of well-being—social relations—provides useful clues.

### *3.2. Social Relations*

People belong to many different groups at one and the same time. On the basis of the interviews, I conducted in Karvia, forest owners in Karvia were involved in a whole web of organisations including the local confederation of agricultural employers, the

local forest management association, the forest centre for southwestern-Finland, the Western Finland Forest Owners' Association, and industrial corporations such as UPM-Kymmene, Finforest, and Stora-Enso, and two local sawmills. Even if forest owners have not joined these organisations as members, the economic network combined with the local and regional rules mean that this web has a major influence on the forest owners' opportunities to manage their forests as they themselves see fit.

Individual forest owners to an ever lesser extent can directly influence the decisions that actually shape their forests. The individual forest owner who is selling timber interacts closely with the local forest management association, which is responsible for providing the timber to industry. The interaction between the association and industry is equally close. Recently, it has also become more and more common for forest owners to deal directly with the forest industry, which has served to create closer links between them as well. There is a growing tendency for forest owners to sign felling agreements either with local forest management association or directly with forest industries. Forest owners will receive payment for their timber as specified in the agreement, but the actual felling will be done when it best suits the industry. Hence, the actual planning and decision-making is more distributed and becomes more like a property of productive and social interrelations.

The stronger the links of productive interaction become, the stronger the sense of we within the links also becomes. This is why well-functioning relations go at least some way towards understanding the strength and intensity of the collective resistance shown by the landowners in Karvia towards the Natura plans prepared and published by the environmental administration. The plans were regarded as a major interference in the local way of life: the interference from without productive social relations crucial to the local well-being. Due to a diversified forest-ownership, new technological innovations, landscape ecological planning and so forth, decision-making in private forest economy will become even more distributed (but not centralised) in the future than it is today, and this means that any (public) interference in local practices is bound to have repercussions. The consequences of these perturbations depend upon nature and strength of the social networks and relations,

and thus yet it is impossible to anticipate what will happen.

In my interviews, it seemed that the men on the local farms emphasised strong ties of forest economy, women by contrast weak links on the margins of forest economy. This was by no means a very clear or straightforward difference, however. Strong relations of interaction were primarily associated with production, weak relations with reproduction. In any case, the power of resistance, the resilience and adaptability of local social relations is a matter of both dimensions.

The *resistance* of social networks and relations is related to their productive powers. Initially, one active forest owner brought forth the reaction against the planning of Natura 2000 Reserve Network in Karvia. The resistance, however, emerged from within the relations of few forest farms, the local confederation of agricultural employers and the local forest management association. Soon more forest owners joined in the resistance. The resistance was a struggle of “us, forest owners” against “them” who were environmental planners and administrators. The productive social ties were strong enough to produce social capital enough for a rupture to emerge. This was, of course, facilitated by numerous secondary groupings such as politico-ideological associations (Rotary), hunting clubs, village committees, and sport circles. These groups played an important role in terms of influencing and accelerating the forest owners’ negative feelings and attitudes towards the new trends in forest economy and environmental conservation in general and against Natura 2000 Reserve Network in particular.

If the power for resistance was brought forth from within the productive relations, where did the *resilience* of social network appear? The resilience refers to social systems’ capacity to repair its basic structure and functioning after the disturbance and it has been shown for some time ago that weak ties are of importance in creating the resilience (Granovetter, 1973; Levin, 1999). Taking the weak ties into account helps to understand why life and felling practices on some farms have remained fairly stable whereas on others (where there were no supporting families or where money was tight) the reactions and decisions that followed were much more disrupted. The difference is due to the ways organised forms of collective action operating alongside or in the shadow of productive practices of forest economy dealt with,

filtered and mediated relevant information. Active networks of secondary groupings were effective in cutting off the most disturbed edges of the resistance (see Cohen, 1999). Politically, the resistance and the hunger strike were credible, while, socially, the weak ties between primary and secondary associations kept the local communal life more or less buffered and resilient in the face of internal and outer disturbances.

In social systems, the habits of thought, practices and customs are mediated from generation to generation (Commons, 1990). The passing on the habits of thought, practices and customs is a two-fold *adaptive* process. On the one hand policy decisions and legislation exclude practices considered bad and harmful, while local productive groups and social networks actively select the good practices from the permitted ones. Herein lies the importance of the interface between public (forest/environmental) policy and local productive practices. Administrative and legislative apparatuses seek to shape and influence the public and economic boundary conditions of local living conditions by selecting practices that are *not* in line with the official principles of good forest management or otherwise with societal norms—and consequently prohibit them. And thus even if different cultural, economic and political groups produce the web of local and regional forest practices, they have only a partial control over the actual and potential social practices.

Environmental and economic administrative systems are organised as multiple layers, which obviously means that practices of forest and environmental management include both elements imposed from above and elements generated from within. The criteria for good forest economy are imposed from the outside, including instructions concerning biodiversity, sustainability and participation. In other words, features of local and regional forest institutions are largely determined on the national level. Although the basic rules, programmes and recommendations are roughly the same for all Finnish municipalities, the local practices, vary according to local living conditions and economic structures. The same applies to the relations of interaction between different groups and the weight they carry. In this regard, there are no two municipalities in Finland that are exactly similar. Each region or municipality has its own historical specificity; its own degrees of freedom.

It is clear that there is more variation in the forest management practices of individual farms than there is in the official ways of thinking about good forest management: that is, national rules and instructions. According to the interviews, even though the local ways of thinking and local customs in Karvia are quite similar to those prevailing in neighbouring municipalities, the felling practices on individual farms in Karvia and also the practices of other productive groups differ widely in terms of each individual farm's ecological and economic boundary conditions and in terms of the social, economic, political and cultural groups with which the people on the farm have identified themselves.

All this defines new challenges for planning in forest economy, nature conservation and regional land use. The question of networking and relations of interaction must be taken seriously. New ways of thinking are needed.

### 3.3. Self-creation

It is largely in and through the complex processes described above that people build up conditions of opportunity for being what they are, self-realisation and for what they want to become, self-creation. The foundation for all interaction among people and groups is constituted by material well-being and the maintenance of that well-being. Together, this material foundation and relations of interaction between organised (groups) and unorganised (customs and practices) activity give rise to institutions.

Institutions are relatively stable forms of collective action, which help to stabilise the expectations of actors. They both constrain and expand each individual's scope for action. Institutions determine what people *can* do, what they *may* do, what they *have to* do and what they *must not* do in certain situations (Commons, 1990; Bromley, 1989).

Formal rules and recommendations determine what is prohibited in forest economy, and it is within these confines that forest owners have to carry out their own business. If they violate the rules, the state authorities will punish them. Various economic instruments (such as subsidies, etc.) are applied to persuade forest owners to exercise a certain type of forest management rather than some other. These instruments help to encourage socially desirable forms of forest econ-

omy. Consider the administrative actions taken in the planning of Natura 2000 Reserve Network.

Not all of these rules are formal and based on legislation. There are also informal rules that are based on social customs and practices (on formal and informal constraints see North, 1990). In this case, violation does not lead to legal sanctions but rather to moral and economic reprimands and punishments imposed by the social or moral community. Some writers have argued that the latter mechanism has the primary role in the construction of individual identity. This is based on the simple fact that laws and other formal rules are usually imposed from the outside of the local community, whereas norms of behaviour, practices and customs evolve out of local relations of interaction (Foucault, 1980). Consider the networking of local groups in economic and social practices.

The relations of interaction between different groups—within the ecological, economic, and public boundary conditions—provide for individual forest owners (and indeed for other actors) their fields of opportunity. Within these fields people can express themselves as human beings and exercise self-improvement (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Biddle, 1990). Consider the hunger strike and other voluntary activities that grew in response to the planning of Natura 2000 Reserve Network.

Freedom is freedom *in* something, not so much freedom *to* something (positive) or freedom *from* something (negative) (Commons, 1995; Dumm, 1996; Macpherson, 1973). Viewed from this angle, the distinction between positive and negative freedom is not particularly interesting; what does seem interesting is the idea that human freedom consists of the ability to understand, to define and shape those fields of opportunity on which one is experientially dependent. In practice this means the ability to see what one is doing and what others are doing, to recognise what ways of thinking and what kinds of practices determine these doings at each point in time. As well as understanding the difference between actual and potential actions, the person may also understand what kinds of acts might be possible if only the circumstances were slightly different.

What happened in Karvia was to me an expression of *creative freedom*. This creative freedom consists in the recognition and redefinition of one's space of opportunities.

The Natura proposal put forward by the environmental authorities was thought to threaten traditional and normal ways of thinking about landowners' rights and freedoms. Forest owners insisted that the authorities do not have the right to suggest what they did, and they certainly do not have the right to do it in the manner they did. Forest owners in Karvia called into question both the substantive issues and the procedures of Natura planning.

The forest owners in Karvia felt that their fields of opportunity had been constrained. They were deeply annoyed when in the summer of 1997 they were asked what they thought about the sites proposed for inclusion in the Natura plan. To ask their opinion was little more than an insult. What they would have wanted and what they proceeded to demand was a genuine opportunity to take part in the planning process. Rather than the authorities wanting to know what they thought, they felt they should have had the opportunity to *complain*. According to the forest owners I interviewed, opinions do not call in question, but complaints do.

If the awakening or uprising in Karvia was caused by the environmental authorities' choice of words, then we have to conclude that a single word can make a tremendous difference. Reactions may be particularly strong in situations where the material (ecological, economic and public) conditions set a very strict and in many ways a very negative framework for local development. This is no doubt true of the situation for people involved in agriculture and forestry in Karvia. The local network of relations has become sensitised to any external interference that threatens to undermine the viability of local groups and the well-being of local people.

Living systems have an inherent tendency of self-preservation. In these efforts collective activity sometimes verges on the prohibited, perhaps even crosses into this territory. The purpose of the action is to change the formal institutional arrangements. In this the people of Karvia were successful: almost half of the sites proposed for inclusion in the Natura network were eventually dropped from the final proposal. The outcome of creative freedom and the new forms of collective activity was really quite surprising. The Supreme Administrative Court will decide on the lawfulness of the actions taken in Karvia by the environmental authorities. The decision may have repercussions not only for formal programmes,

but also for legislation and the interpretation of the law.

### 3.4. *Emotions, actions, resistance*

It is easy to see how this same problem might also come to affect participatory planning at the provincial level. Traditionally, the people responsible for planning and evaluation of the impacts of new plans have simply informed the people concerned about their plans and any possible adverse or positive effects. However, the illusions are largely the same as in the Natura case. According to my results, this kind of communication strategy grossly underestimates the people affected because it offers no genuine opportunity to influence the planning process: to offer alternatives, to weigh the impacts, to take decisions.

Since the focus here is on individuals, it is necessary to take a somewhat closer look on the nature of human action. Human existence does not of course consist simply in an active yearning for freedom or in different forms of self-realisation. A far more important characteristic of human existence is to follow different established practices and routines. It is somewhat misleading to assume that people observe habits, or that they have habits; in actual fact *people are their habits* (Dewey, 1988; Hodgson, 1997; Camic, 1986).

Why, then, are habits and customs significant in this context of forest economy and nature conservation planning? When an old habit or custom is ruled out through external interference, when actions no longer produce a familiar response or outcome, emotions as well as deliberation and possibly strategic (or intentional) action come into play. Dewey (1988, p. 54) had this to say about the process: "Emotion is a perturbation from clash or failure of habit, and reflection, roughly speaking, is the painful effort of disturbed habits to readjust themselves."

It would seem that any disruption occurring in the material conditions of well-being and in relations of collectivity appeals to aesthetic, moral and cognitive habits, inclinations and beliefs of individuals and in so doing raises a number of emotions. This is what seems to have happened in Karvia. The key thing here with regard to environmental planning is that emotions are of course individual, but since the response is essentially an historical habit based on prior experience, relations of interaction and material living

conditions are of immediate significance to the kind of emotions that the disruption will generate in each case, and particularly to what kind of activity it will lead to. Emotional outbursts are not a force disrupting rational decision-making (as is so often assumed), but on the contrary an internal condition that makes possible a rational decision (Damasio, 2000; Dewey, 1988; Elster, 1998).

Social emotions engendered by interference or disruption may be either negative or positive. Negative social emotions reduce the well-being experienced by the individual, positive social emotions add to it. In Karvia, there were plenty of examples of both, and in many cases positive and negative feelings became intertwined. Some forest owners felt a deep sense of hatred towards the planning authorities whom they accused of trying to “nationalise” their land. Others felt a deep sense of resentment against society that accepts this form of exploitation. Others still felt disappointed that they did not find enough support for their opinions or actions. Some regretted that they had not felled their forests before these had been marked out for inclusion in the Natura network. Many were concerned that something similar could soon happen again. There were also quite widespread feelings of contempt and aversion towards environmental authorities. Some forest owners also felt envious and angry towards other owners with similar forests that had not been set aside for conservation.

There were of course many positive feelings in Karvia as well. Some forest owners felt pride in their timely decision to clear-fell their forests before the Natura proposals were published, others took pride in their decision quietly to sell their beautiful spot of land for a good cause, some felt an enormous admiration for their own land that had been recognised for its outstanding natural beauty and other natural values. And of course there were also those who felt triumphant, having just got all their trees cut down before the publication of the Natura sites. There was also widespread hope that in the future, planning processes would be more democratic than this one had been.

*Resistance* unfolds out of an interesting relationship of tension between habit, emotion and action. It seems that the more and the stronger the individual's ties within interaction and the more stable the material conditions, the longer the resistance between disruption, emotion and action will last. And accordingly,

the fewer and the weaker the relations of interaction, the faster the resistance will be dissolved. If there is a scarcity of relations of interaction, actions caused by external disruptions will not be thought-out in the same way as in situations where there are more relations of interaction with different groups and their members. The multitude of moral perspectives involved in the situation inevitably prolongs the taking to action. It is also clear that the longer the period of contemplation and the broader and stronger the network of interaction relations, the more debate there will be about the interference or disruption.

Impulsive actions are not necessarily any more morally dubious than actions taken upon careful consideration. Impulsive actions are not habits, but reactions that have no target. Intensive felling in sites earmarked for inclusion in the Natura network were a sad example of consequences that this kind of impulsive action can have. There were of course destructive feelings even after fairly long periods of contemplation. The important thing, however, is that a diverse group of moral communities collectively sets up a movement of resistance that assumes various forms and that is capable of serious discussion and contemplation. Even in this case, of course, the consequences of actions related to forest economy (and nature conservation) may be harmful to other actors, because even a long period of contemplation does not necessarily eliminate the adverse effects of actions aimed at others. However, such deliberation may help to reduce the number of unintentional consequences.

#### 4. Towards transactive planning

The challenge is to create a policy process and a planning practice that acknowledge the multiple levels of well-being, the requirements of reasonableness and the ubiquity of social emotions. Institutional economics, transactive planning, and pragmatism can offer a tool for this task: an approach, which operates within the local and regional economic structures, which is sensitive to economic, social and ethical relations between the groupings and which also provides the best possible conditions for individual self-creation.

The new approach should clearly differ from the current strategy in which important interest groups are

invited to a meeting to discuss the plan and its probable consequences, and then have the results of these discussions communicated to interested landowners and citizens. This kind of one-way communication is not enough: according to my studies, landowners (and other actors) will want to be actively involved in the planning process itself. In one-way communication, people are told by representatives of organisations what has happened and how representatives want things to happen. However, rather than having their views charted in an opinion poll, people want assurances that their views will actually be listened to. This means that communication needs to be at least a two-way process. The public has to be given a genuine opportunity to express their own views on the aims of planning, the alternatives available and on the impacts. They must have a real opportunity to participate according to their desires, needs and abilities (Dewey, 1954).

Given the inherent complexity of the web of social and economic interactions that constitutes forest economy in SW-Finland, a sustainable approach to forest and environmental management calls for a planning process which emulates the structure and dynamics of local and regional social and economic systems, just as modern methods of forest management have to emulate the structure and dynamics of forests. Planning and the planning context have to be embedded in one another. As Camhis (1979, p. 77) observed: “Organisational arrangements are only meaningful when they are related to actual conditions of life.” The more naturally planning arrangements emulate local and regional conditions, i.e. the better they fit in with the three levels of well-being—material conditions, social and economic relations, and possibilities for self-creation—the better are the prospects for successful planning of the forest economy; the more coherent understanding on structures and constraints, groupings and their purposes, and individual actors with their interests, ends-in-view, and ideals.

The difficult question is: How to emulate structure and dynamics of a given environmental planning and decision-making situation? In transactive planning, *working groups* will normally be set up, with a *collective assemblage* appointed to guide and follow the proceedings of the work of working groups. Each working group is different not only because they have different problems to solve, but also different inter-

nal structures and different problem-solving methods. This is to say that as the environmental authorities or the planning body introduces conservation sites to be included in the provincial plan, each working group may have a different response to the proposal, to the alternatives suggested and possible impacts of alternatives. The planning process of Natura 2000 showed that the local habits of thought and practices in forest economy and nature conservation will be laid bare when local relations of interaction are disturbed and interfered with.

On a national scale, the area of new conservation sites may be tiny, but the mere proposal of a new conservation site may locally, however, constitute a very serious disruption. The purpose of working groups is to examine these sensitivities within the economic locality; within its structures and dynamics. Its working principle is a peaceful and articulated interference and disruption that are employed in an attempt to find out what kind of habits of thought and practices help to maintain the stability of local groups and communities and what kind of interference is most likely to throw them sideways.

An articulation of societal goals and objectives (cultural values) is most likely to succeed in situations where the conventional habits of thought and practices of individuals or groups have been called into question in one way or another. In this situation both the planner and the landowner, for instance, will have to try and find articulations for their choices and preferences. In Karvia, for instance, planning for the Natura network gave rise to many different kinds of responses, emotions as well as impulsive and planned actions. After articulation, discussion and deliberation, the Natura recommendations were revised. In describing their annoyance and in explaining their feelings, the landowners referred to such ideals as equality, fairness, ownership, freedom of speech, human dignity, partnership, tradition, etc. These abstract societal goals obviously mean different things to different people, but the key thing is what kind of practical interpretation and action they take on in a disruptive planning situation. Working groups and a collective assemblage they form are valuable planning tools in a search for responses to questions such as: What are the hallmarks of an equitable planning process? What are the characteristics of a meeting for free discussion? Thus, in transactive planning, equality, trust

and free discussion cannot be taken as a starting-point for planning, since they may only appear as a consequence of active and truthful collaboration—as fruits of shared positive emotions. Problem-specific working groups are well suited to this purpose of directing critical attention both to possibilities, capacities, capabilities, positive social emotions and to actualities, vested interests, and negative social emotions.

The working groups also provide forum for discussions on primary and secondary ecological values, to compare and weigh. It is never possible to decide real value and significance of a given site solely on the basis of primary ecological values. One reason for this is that depending on the theoretical and methodological background, experts are bound to differ in their views concerning the assessment of ecological significance. Different experts tend to stress different aspects of a certain site in conservation terms. As a consequence, they will also give very different recommendations (Kangas et al., 1998). If experts with different theoretical commitments and ways of thinking are unable to reach agreement on the significance of, say, biodiversity at any given time, why should landowners be expected to take for granted all the existing ecological know-how and the ecological values drawn from that know-how. The choice of theory and methodology will always be influenced by the expert's world-view and priorities. And since in questions of forest economy and nature conservation experts are not making private but public and social decisions, their actions are always politically motivated, or at least their recommendations and instructions have political consequences. Ecology is not a socially or politically innocent discipline even though the planners and decision-makers often seem to believe that it is so (on this see Haila, 1998).

The working groups take no information on primary or secondary ecological values for granted. They sift through and select information, assessing the weight and significance of the information produced. They abduct the understanding of particular case out of contingent and dynamic ecological structures, relations, and purposes. What is more, each working group from their own vantage points approach social values with the same scrutiny. In practice this means that while solving problems working groups work under the constant condition of articulating the formal and informal societal rules and norms they

find themselves embedded in. By so doing, Marios Camhis' hope for social organizations and arrangements that imitate the actual living conditions of the people may become closer to realization. In other words, the only ideal of transactive planning is the hope on the possibility to combine the instrumental (*zweck*) and ethical (*wert*) use of reason. This ideal does not suggest that we should give up the exercise of rationality, it only flavours it with a requirement for reasonableness—that is, with ethical sensitivity and critical responsiveness (Connolly, 1999).

## 5. Conclusion

Things do not stand still on the bottom. It does not matter whether the bottom is our fundamental thoughts about the order of things or individual preferences and intentions, since everything is subjected to multiple disturbances and repercussions. Ecological and economic structures, laws, norms, moralities, the fields of opportunity are contingent facts that constraint, liberate, and expand activities practised by groupings and individuals, but these structures do change spontaneously and perhaps even democratically when the forces from below, from the bottom are strong enough. This is the first lesson learned from the planning of the Natura 2000 Reserve Network in Finland in general and events in municipality Karvia in particular.

The second lesson is that the administrative environmental actions disturb localities in intended good ways, but also in many unintended and surprising ways. Local people may consider these changes harmful and immoral. One reason is that the forest/economy is a complex, heterogeneous, and multilevel network, which cannot be put under total control or management. The other reason is that the public purpose and the local livelihood operate on the different levels.

In intertwining these aspects, from the existing planning approaches transactive planning is perhaps the most useful tool to tackle multiple environmental disturbances, problem definitions, and emergent conflicts that spring out from the actual and potential redistribution of economic or social advantage. Transactive planning operates within local structures and interrelations from where morals, purposes of various groupings, and individual intentions emerge. Working groups used in transactive planning could easily be

an anticipatory safety net within the complex system of forest/economy and provide a platform on which the ecological and institutional health, the viability of populations and the well-being of individual actors can be meaningfully addressed.

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