

LANDSCAPE AS MONUMENT: SÁMILAND AND ITS CONTESTED PATRIMONY

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Abstract. Monuments are typically seen as physical objects created by humans as focal points for unity based on common beliefs, for remembering significant events or individuals and/or as reminders of past glories. For some indigenous groups, including the Sámi, the landscape, or at least some parts of it, has the same or similar associations. For the dominant political forces in the nations that have taken over Sámi lands, however, including those Sámi who have changed and adapted their lives in favour of modern capitalist society, the landscape is less a monument and more an exploitable resource. This dilemma, between the Sámi that retain traditional values and perspectives and a mainstream more concerned with economics and ecology within a modern Eurocentric frame, may be resolvable through compromise, through a mutual recognition of the landscape as a monument on the one hand and modern realities on the other.

Keywords: Sámi, indigenous people, landscape, monument, postcolonialism

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3176/tr.2020.4.01>

1. Introduction

A number of terms may be used to summarily describe the Sámi, their culture and their history and these include unique, enigmatic, diverse and problematic. Justification for the applicability of such terms comes from being an indigenous people whose traditional lands traverse four modern nation states (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia), from having 11 different languages with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility and from a range of customs and means of livelihood within one broad cultural dimension. It also stems from having been colonised over the

centuries since the later middle ages, from having tenuous relationships with those who colonised, one of confrontation on the one hand and conciliation on the other, and from seeking a continuity of life and lifestyles (that includes the herding of reindeer) across borders imposed by external political interests.

The nature of the tenuous relationship the Sámi had with the colonising powers can be seen as the political dimensions of modernity took shape in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this period they were subjected to a range of policies and actions within the nation states they lived within that included being portrayed as sub-human, being subjected to assimilation policies and being separated in the public perception into one group that herded reindeer and another that existed more in the perceived mainstream of economic and social life. This latter group in particular was pressurised to assimilate within the dominant cultures of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia to accept the rights and responsibilities that came with citizenship of these nation states. However, from the middle of the 20th century, and particularly from the 1970s and 1980s, a counter narrative emerged, one that understood that assimilation on the terms offered represented the destruction of an indigenous culture. While this may have reawakened feelings of identity, of ‘otherness,’ it developed into a caricature of Sámi culture as it was presented in the mainstream of the nation states concerned. It was condensed into an unrepresentative homogeneity, one that made stereotypical assumptions about Sámi culture, reducing a myriad of aspects into a few points of reference (Baglo 2001: 23), such as items of clothing that became a traditional way of dressing and one way of singing that became a folk-music genre.

Such representations may have become acceptable to some Sámi, something that allowed them an identity within the mainstream, but to others it patronises and threatens that identity. Within the whole Sámi population, these points can be seen as representing a dichotomy between traditionalists and those who have largely assimilated within the nation states concerned, between those who accept the casting aside of all but a few artefacts of cultural heritage and those who wish to retain the substantial meanings inherent within traditional Sámi culture and identity. While the central purpose of this paper is not to dwell at length on the historic mistreatment of the Sámi, it is relevant to it that indications of that mistreatment and its continuance in the present era are, at this point, introduced. Sweden has consistently refused to ratify the ILO 169 convention concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries, which originally came into force in 1991. In criticising this position, the Equality Ombudsman of Sweden suggests that at best the Sámi are treated as a national minority rather than as an indigenous people, that current policies and structures are based on those of the colonising period and that, in some respects at least, these policies contravene the human rights of the Sámi (Equality Ombudsman 2010). Included within these breaches, and in conjunction with the government of Norway and agreements reached with it, is on-going encroachment on traditional Sámi lands that have always been used for reindeer grazing and other forms of husbandry. Such encroachments may, from the mainstream economic and social perspective, one that demands more power stations, ski lifts and holiday resorts, be seen as being rational, even if opposed by an indigenous population

whose traditional lifestyles and identity are disrupted. However, one very important aspect of this scenario in terms of Sámi identity, which has been sidestepped in the stereotyping of these indigenous people, that seems to fail to understand meanings intrinsic within a metaphysical realm of formed identities and associations, is the landscape as a monument and all this infers. Finding ways of accommodating this within a diversity of social constructs is the main aim of this paper, but in order that such ways may be proposed, it is necessary that a considerable part of it is devoted to an understanding of landscape as monument and related concepts from a Sámi perspective.

2. Monument and its limited connotation

The perception of monuments is of physical objects created by people that can be used as focal points for the remembrance of significant events, as representations of religious and other unifying beliefs and as reminders of past glories from the perspective of one social and/or national group. They can be found across the history of western and other civilisations as they have evolved and developed and can be seen in a number of other ways, including a representation of social identity that is “not isolated in time or space from the social and political lives of citizens” (Breglia 2009: 3).

Such a statement draws attention to an understanding that the literature concerning monuments is ‘scattered across disciplines’ (Auster 1997: 219). They can indeed be seen from sociological and anthropological perspectives but, particularly from one that is focused on western civilisations and on the actions of nation states since they became internationally recognised at the Treaty of Westphalia, they can also be seen as being instruments for promoting nations and nationalism (Forest and Johnson 2011: 270). Through such a political lens, monuments can be used, particularly when there is a perceived threat either internally or externally, to validate claims to power and to assist in promoting ‘visions of society’ (ibid). They can even be seen in terms of being instruments for ‘governmentality’ as described by Foucault – an aspect of the disciplines and norms imposed to maintain power, socialising people towards behaviour and beliefs expected by the state (Foucault 1975). A quite striking contemporary example of monuments being seen in this light is provided by Schonfeldt-Aultman (2006) with reference to the site of the Blood River Battle in South Africa. As well as the date being designated as a public holiday during the apartheid era, the monument constructed on the site consisted of bronze figures, including those of representative humans, who were all Afrikaans. While these are “assertions of particular identities within public space,” they are, also, “not only monuments to Afrikaans power and domination rather than to a specific battle, but also indicate ‘deep anxiety’ about justifying political and historical action” (2006: 217).

Many further examples could, of course, be provided, but one important underlying point is that under the pressures that come with nation statehood, monuments have

de facto been ascribed meanings that are particularly politically associated. It can be suggested that religious monuments do not fall into this category and this is acknowledged; however, with secularism and a declining religious influence in many Western nation states, including in Sweden and Norway, the importance of religious monuments has declined. A second important point is that monuments themselves, like the politics of nation states, and as noted above, are generally created in Western and some other civilisations by humans – they are distinct and separated from the environment in which they are placed. Such a Eurocentric perception of monuments may, as with other aspects of human life, have become a dominant one, at least in many of the richest and most economically powerful countries.

3. Landscape as monument

The creation of monuments by humans and the associating of them with meaningful events, with identities and even with control, is not meant to suggest that the essential essence of representation may be different from another cultural perspective but, rather, that something other than a structure that deliberately stands out as being different from its surroundings is not the only, or main, form that a monument can take. In describing an understanding of monument through a different lens, Breglia uses the word ‘ambivalence.’ In her work she points out that “the very notion of monumentality suggests – and perhaps even requires – the univocalization and ossification of meaning in material cultural icons,” it “necessarily effaces the subtle, personal, contingent practices, expressions, and claims enacted in negotiating both the meaning and content of the stuff of heritage,” it seeks to erase an ambivalence that exists, where “meaning in a landscape is not directly related to how obtrusively it has been marked in material, archaeologically detectable ways” (2009: 3). While Breglia (2009) uses the word ‘ambivalence,’ Auster prefers the term ‘allegory.’ The suitability of the word is stated as being because it is concerned with meaning and with certain complexities in meaning, with associating meanings other than any overt associations with the object (monument) itself (Auster 1997: 227). These can be across a spectrum of associations that include memories, ideas (abstract or concrete), they may be contingent, transcendent, temporal or spiritual, enduring or transient (*ibid*). It can also be used as a form of control, as previously described, but the image is of the monument standing alone, even isolated, from its surroundings. Drawing attention to the work of Breglia on the one hand and Auster on the other perhaps highlights that one cultural lens requires a created focal point to evoke and associate meanings (monuments in landscape), while another associates meanings and memories in the landscape itself (landscape as monument).

Seen in such a light, and despite a rather diffident view of landscape that has existed in some geographical quarters (Olwig 2003: 871), there are compelling reasons for seeing the landscape as the monument rather than as a less than important setting for the artificially constructed artefact that on the one hand draws allegorical meanings but on the other potentially limits them to one spectrum of associations (the

erasure of ambivalence?). As Olwig (2003: 873) contends, when seen through such a lens, “landscape ceases to be a hindrance to comprehension and instead provides a door to understanding how individuals and societies perceive their environs and how they behave toward them.”

It is important not to confuse the concept of landscape as monument being set out with one that sees conserved areas of natural significance being preserved as such monuments. These, it is argued, are monuments to one aspect of a landscape that has been selected because it is significant for its shape, for what grows on it or the species that inhabit it, rather than as a social, real and living dimension. Indeed, it may be proposed that an ecological understanding of landscapes and their preservation, prevalent in Northern Europe, (Scazzosi 2004: 337) reflects “conceptual and administrative divisions between issues about the ‘nature-ecology-environment’ and those about the ‘history-culture’ of places.”

Another way of seeing the issue is in terms of social reality and an understanding that the physical world ‘exists’ through the eyes of those who see it and who interact with it. In this sense, and as pointed out by Christopher Tilley, space in itself is not a meaningful term, it only gains meaning in terms of being ‘socially produced’ and “different societies, groups and individuals act out their lives in different spaces” (Tilley 1994: 10). This essentially means a social reality that involves interactions between the physical world (landscape) and humans as creators of society that inhabits that landscape. This reality is one that stands in contrast to a rather flaccid view of the landscape as being a relatively unimportant setting in which non-natural structures (monuments) that have no substantial meaning in their own right are placed.

When landscape is seen as space that essentially exists and gains meaning through the ways that it is lived in, it becomes a part of the societies, part of the psyche, the memories, the actions, the changes that occur, it becomes a living, breathing space through those who live and breathe within it and through the thoughts, beliefs and aspirations of those who inhabit its space, it exists across both the metaphysical and physical realms of living. Space that is socially produced “combines the cognitive, the physical and the emotional into something that may be reproduced but is always open to transformation and change,” it is fluid and changing – in this dimension it is attached to and involved with human lives and how they are led and experienced (Tilley 1994: 11). From this it follows that spaces (landscape) are contextual, they create meanings based on the ways in which human life and societies have existed within them, which means that particular landscapes can only be understood in terms of meaning through the subjective interpretation of those with whom they have interacted and whose lives and histories they have been a part of. This again emphasises that the important dimension of landscape is not one that sees it as having a meaningful essence in and of itself but, rather, through its significance that has been created through its relationship with people – it “becomes detotalized by virtue of its relational construction and because, being differentially understood and produced by different individuals, collectivities and societies, it can have no universal essence” (ibid).

Such a phenomenological approach to landscape has been developing since the second half of the last century and it is noteworthy that one of the leading early proponents of it, Edward Relph, developed his interest from a sense of unease with traditional definitions of place and their philosophical simplicity (Seamon and Sowers 2008). In his influential book *Place and Placelessness*, and reflecting perhaps the spectrum of dimensions that space holds, Relph suggested that there are unlimited types of spatial experiences that can for example, be generalised as being cerebral, intangible and ideal, can be abstract or existential and are experienced at different levels of intensity (Relph 1976). This myriad of engagements with space does not mean to suggest that they are separated but, rather, are all part of a whole that represents spatial experience. Space and place in this sense become indivisible – sense is made of the former through inhabiting the latter (places). This leads to the notion of identity and place and a belief, expressed by Relph, that understanding the meaning of a place can only come from knowing the depth of feelings of lived intensity that come from those involved (ibid). This notion of identity was conceptualised by Relph as the extent to which feelings of *insiderness* are experienced. Insiderness is represented by feelings of being safe, being comfortable, being at ease, and the more these feelings are experienced, the greater the insiderness is. At the opposite end of a scale is *outsiderness*, where a person will not feel comfortable, may even feel threatened and that they are at a distance from the world as they know it (ibid). Relph classified the most extreme of each of these as being *existential insiderness* and *existential outsiderness* but the most important point is that different identities are taken on that have different meanings for individuals and groups – “through varying combinations and intensities of outsiderness and insiderness, different places take on different identities for different individuals and groups, and human experience takes on different qualities of feeling, meaning, ambience, and action” (Seamon and Sowers 2008: 45).

The work of Relph and, indeed, of Tilley and others, has been criticised on a number of grounds that can be generalised into three areas, which are that it is “essentialist; out of touch with what places really are today; and structured around simplistic dualisms that misrepresent and limit the range of place experience, particularly the possibility of a global sense of place” (ibid, 47). The first criticism, being essentialist, suggests that the phenomenological position ignores other aspects that influence human life, such as those that are social, specific to individuals, religious etc. However, such a criticism indicates a misunderstanding or misreading of the concept – it is inclusive of all aspects of human life; indeed, that is a necessary and important part of the whole argument. The second claim, that the approach is not relevant in terms of what places are today, effectively suggests an inappropriate generalisation in the work; however, it explicitly suggests a level of insiderness/outsiderness that is contingent, that is within an individual/group cognition of the importance of place. It is, furthermore, positioned within feelings that we can surely all recognise – to suggest that the world has changed is therefore to suggest that the human mind has changed to one that no longer has these recognisable senses, feelings and emotions. In this sense, the second and third criticisms fold on themselves,

effectively revealing a wish, based on a prevalent artificiality that is particularly recognisable in a modernist mindset, that intrinsic human instincts no longer exist.

Further criticisms can be found from the field of landscape archaeology, from where Fleming suggests that phenomenological approaches in fieldwork have produced “highly questionable results” (Fleming 2006: 267). Such results are described in terms of being more subjective than objective, where assumptions are made concerning the phenomenology of the distant past, effectively ascribing associations with places, landscapes etc. that are not so readily understood. It is, perhaps, right to be sceptical about the notion that the “re-creation of pre-Enlightenment mentalities, or the Otherness of past people, is best approached by attempting to re-create some kind of pre-Enlightenment form of investigative fieldwork” (ibid, 278); indeed, it may be suggested that such attempts contradict the very grounds on which a phenomenological approach is based – as Relph argued, it must be about knowing the depth of feelings of lived intensity that come from those involved. It is, therefore, fortunate that this work is about such lived intensity and identities that continue and that can be articulated.

Debates concerning landscape, where one side propounds a phenomenological perspective while another sees it as having “little or no value” (Olwig 2003: 871) are of great relevance to this paper, but there are other dimensions that are relevant and also contentious. In work that is concerned with heritage and culture and dissimilarities in approaches to each (despite them having many common aspects), David Lowenthal traces the history of attitudes towards each, making the point that in order for nature and antiquity to be held in terms of their importance, “they had first to be recognised as realms apart from the everyday present” (Lowenthal 2005: 82). As this recognition evolved, some similarities are found in the ways in which nature and culture together were viewed, as “inheritances to be held in trust for future generations” (ibid, 84), with such arguments usually being made by people with similar backgrounds (middle class in terms of status and background and well educated to the extent that they may be seen in terms of sharing the same *habitus* as described by Bourdieu (1977), and therefore as holding the same world view of how problems should be tackled). However, posits Lowenthal, there are distinct differences in how culture and nature are dealt with at local and national levels – while local and national governments tend to go to great lengths to protect and retain artefacts of antiquity, economic and other forces tend to mitigate against nature. The result is a focus for natural conservation in terms of areas set aside or on specific species – essentially the one is preserved for its intrinsic meaning locally, while the other is preserved for what it represents from an external perspective, one that is formed from within the *habitus* described.

Lowenthal contrasts an essentially ‘mainstream’ view of nature, one based in western civilisation and its history, with that of some indigenous groups – “nature seems essentially other than us; we may yearn to feel at one with its life-supporting fabric, but unlike certain aboriginal and tribal peoples we seldom put ourselves in nature’s place or project ourselves into non-human lives” (Lowenthal 2005: 86). The potential consequences of such differing mindsets, with one that is dominant and

overwhelmingly influential, can perhaps be seen through the lens of post-colonialism and tourism. Tourism, according to Michael Hall and Hazel Tucker, “both reinforces and is embedded in postcolonial relationships” (Hall and Tucker 2004: 2). Post-colonialism or neo-colonialism can be seen in a number of ways, such as representing “intervention and control from a foreign state”, the exercising of influence by ‘core powers’ over the “post-colonial periphery, including ‘spatial dimensions’ and the on-going construction and representation of specific spaces and experiences” (ibid). As well as referring to external influence, it can also be “applied to internal spatial and social peripheries, including minorities that are dominated by a metropolitan core” (ibid). Such relations, argue Hall and Tucker, are strengthened and deepened by tourism. One of many potential examples is provided by John Akama in reference to wildlife safari tourism in Kenya. This stemmed from the structures of colonial rule and a mindset that saw big-game hunting as representing the dominance of Europeans not only over the societies where colonialism was undertaken but also over the natural landscape of the places involved. The later establishment of wildlife parks was, it may be suggested, undertaken from a Western perspective, protecting them in ways that would be appealing to people (tourists) whose perceptions and beliefs were within that mindset. National wildlife parks were created “without due consideration of the existing social and ecological processes in the places where the parks were located” of “socio-economic factors as they relate to indigenous African communities” and were set within a view that indigenous methods were not only harmful to wildlife but were also “incompatible with the development of wildlife safari tourism activities” (Akama 2004: 144).

The disparities that exist between those whose perspectives are nuanced by colonial roots on the one hand and colonised roots on the other can be discussed in a number of ways and one area of discussion is noted by Jennifer Beningfield who (citing Raymond Williams, 1988) identifies a division between positive and negative uses of the word ‘native.’ Defined as portraying “a sense of naturalness, innateness and belonging to the place in which one was born (‘native’ land, ‘native’ country), the split depends on whether the ‘native’ society being referred to is “a superior (invariably European) group” or “an inferior (invariably non-European) group” (Beningfield 2004: 510). Perhaps rooted in the foundational roots of nation statehood, positive uses of the word imply something that is dynamic, evolving, with a strong sense of purpose and national identity, while negative uses imply something that is “restrictive and binding, frozen in time, basic and primitive” (ibid).

Use of the term ‘landscape’ and the meaning associated with the term importantly sets it aside from other words that may be used, such as ‘environment;’ however, in making such separations of meaning, by appropriately separating landscape from environment by defining it as “any landscape that has been changed and formed by man (intentionally or unintentionally)” (Ermischer 2004: 371), a further issue arises and this is that by introducing a ‘human element’ the potential for contestation is also introduced. As Kōiva et al. (2020) encapsulate, to mark out a place, or in our context landscape, as something sacred, to distinguish it to its surrounding non-sacred environment, is significantly important to signal a belonging between man and

landscape, in a world of competing truths (cf. Kõiva et al. 2020: 132). Fundamentally, if meaning for a landscape comes from a phenomenological approach, “different experiences, interests or agendas make the same landscape evolve with different meanings”; therefore, “a landscape at a particular time/space intersection may be conceived of as discontinuous or multiple in its appearance” (Bjerkli 2010: 221). Claims of occupation and resistance to that occupation and use change the context to one of politics and contestation – it becomes landscape that is “locally contested with multiple meanings” (ibid).

4. The Sámi context

The complexities involved in understanding landscape, the relationship between it and the Sámi and how research, even when it is best intentioned, can effectively perpetuate and confirm “established relations of dominance” (Lehtinen 2012: 105) are considered by Ari Lehtinen. One salient point made is that the Sámi have for centuries been forced to adopt the languages and lingual norms of the mainstream, effectively necessitating a multi-linguality that promotes confusion and a trend towards adopting norms and values that are promoted through language, so that “the cultural practices related to understanding the environment and naming the landscape now largely follow state rather than Indigenous logic” (ibid). The scholarly discourse has been increasingly influenced by trends in globalisation that generally require the use of English as a standardising norm and this, in turn, has further distanced the debate from its important and localised roots and towards one that has “effectively Anglophonized Nordic research, particularly in terms of wilderness and landscape concepts” (ibid, 107). The points being made are exemplified by Lehtinen through a case study from Finland. It notes that, influenced by action taken by the US in the 1960s to designate ‘wilderness areas’, pressure built in Finland through the 1980s and, in 1991 the Wilderness Act was passed by the Finnish government. While it may have been well intentioned and had been the subject of considerable research before being passed, the Act not only ignored important aspects of Sámi cultural traditions but also failed to pay attention to a fundamental aspect of their livelihoods – traditional herding practices were only given priority away from forest heartlands, where logging and forestry could take place. These areas are seasonally vital for reindeer herds in terms of access to vegetation in winter and spring months. Incredibly, an important reason for the designations was mistranslations of Sámi words that had different meanings and inferences to those assumed by researchers (ibid).

Lehtinen makes further reference to language and difficulties in understanding the depth of meanings and their intrinsic representations, with one example cited being that the closest association with the Swedish term *landskap* is *siida* (both of which are somewhat removed from the Anglophone landscape concept). For the Sámi, *siida* is a social and political as well as territorial concept, effectively an “independent and self-regulating socio-economic system embedded within

cultural traditions, with its own lands, rules and practices, and carrying with it a sense of belonging or collectivity among its members” (ibid, 115). It includes an understanding that winter villages held forums for making agreements, for trading and for social cohesion. However, landscape (*siida*) also implies an understanding of a ‘horizontal orientation’, a ‘symmetry, balance and reciprocity between people, animals and land’ as well as a place that contains ‘heritage and memory’; these are ‘magical landscapes’ that are “connected to shamanistic rituals and places of sacrifice, burial grounds, and offering stones” (ibid, 116). Thus, *siida*, unlike both its Swedish and English counterparts, encapsulates *landscape as monument*.

Although there is some inference of cultural dominance in the scholarly work of Mulk and Bayliss-Smith, any temptation to criticise it may be tempered by noting that it seeks to understand religious meanings in Sámi cultural landscapes that pre-date AD 1600, (Mulk and Bayliss-Smith 2007: 96) and therefore pre-date the colonisation of the Sámi and their lands. On the other hand, it may be suggested that if the meanings cannot be gained from the Sámi in the contemporary era, they have either been lost or replaced. Nevertheless, discussions and findings related to Sámi religious beliefs, alongside an understanding that such beliefs endure within Sámi culture despite the overwhelming influence of Christianity, provide some relevant insights. The point is made that far from being the exception, a notion that features of landscapes have special spiritual powers, of a ‘sacred landscape’, is “justified, except perhaps in western/urban/industrial societies” (ibid, 97). Based on their research, Mulk and Bayliss-Smith reconstruct a Sámi religious world view. This divides their world into three areas, an upper world associated with warmth, mountains and river headwaters etc., where the deities live, a middle world where humans live, where the rivers flow and the pine trees reach towards the upper world and a lower world where there is the sea, coldness, the mouths of rivers and death. The middle (human) world connects those that are underneath and above, and it contains sacred sites and holy springs where the upper world may be communicated with and through which souls of the returning dead may pass. In further reference to religion, the Sámi and sacred places, Bergman, Ostland, Zackrisson and Liedgren point out that before enforced Christianisation from the 17th century, there were numerous religious (sacrificial) sites across Sámi lands that were represented by wooden objects. Despite being effectively forced into becoming a ‘secret’ religion, “elements of indigenous religious space, as indicated by place names and oral traditions” can be identified (Bergman et al. 2008: 1)

Such an understanding of Sámi religious beliefs indicates that some parts of the landscape (as monument) will be considered as being far more significant than others, both contemporarily and historically. A further such indication is brought to attention by Cogos, Roue and Roturier in terms of place names, who discuss the results of qualitative research conducted among a community of mountain-based reindeer herding Sámi. The point is made that although maps are increasingly used by the Sámi in reference to places alongside an oral tradition, they “are unable to express the continual renewal of Sami place names and the land features that are meaningful to the Sami, and thus fail to convey toponymic knowledge” (Cogos et al. 2017:

43). This toponymic knowledge indicates specific landmarks, important information concerning particular places, directions, routes and itineraries that are within the landscape and which indicate an intimacy with it. Transmitting the cultural context of places as well as their relative importance in these terms is not possible by the use of traditional maps; therefore, suggest Cogos et al. (2017), a means should be found, perhaps through the use of digital technology, whereby the acknowledged importance of maps is maintained, while “a decolonization of cartographic traditions” also takes place, (ibid, 50) effectively whereby aspects of the landscape as monument can be identified from a Sami cultural perspective.

From this part of the paper a context may be envisaged where ways of maintaining landscape in terms of traditional Sámi culture and livelihoods can be found, one that effectively begins from the dynamic of lives that are lived within the indigenous region and acknowledges landscape as a monument to those lives. However, it can be recalled from a previous discussion that landscape can be, and commonly is, a contested space – landscapes evolve with multiple meanings and associations. Seen in this light, the imposition of a perspective of landscape as monument that was prioritised only towards traditional livelihoods and aspects of the past could not only be seen as being somewhat antiquarian but also as being a new colonisation, a reversal of the previous one that took place since the 17th century. Of course, it could be legitimately argued that as the Sámi have occupied the lands in question for millennia, as they are undisputedly indigenous to those lands, and as the incursion into them were forceful and unwelcomed, such a reversal of the colonisation process is valid; however, such an approach may not pay sufficient attention to the fact that only about 10 per cent of the Sámi are involved in reindeer herding and that apart from the segment of the population that makes its living in other parts of the economy, both within and without of Sámi traditional lands, significant numbers are occupied in agriculture, fishing and in other forms of occupation associated with uncultivated land (Josefsen 2010: 5).

5. A contested landscape

It is relevant to emphasise the political setting of the contested landscape under discussion and the unique position (plight) that the Sámi were and are positioned within it. The land of the Sámi (Sápmi) was divided between four nation states (Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia) and, although each may have followed broad prevailing political and social trends, in each case these were nuanced in particular directions. Thus, for example, policies of assimilation were followed during the period prior to and following World War Two, with Sweden following a path of segregation for reindeer herding Sámi alongside one of assimilation for the rest of the Sámi population; Norway followed a policy of assimilation for all Sámi, while Finland also followed an assimilation for all path, but one that was less explicit than that of Norway (ibid, 9).

Following the establishment of international organisations following World War

Two and a change in mindsets that were more accommodating towards minority and indigenous rights, some aspects of international law and conventions concerning human rights have been adopted by the four nation states concerned; Finland, for example, has recognised the rights of the Sámi as an indigenous people and some linguistic and cultural autonomy has been established in the Finnish part of Sápmi. Sweden has not formalised the status of the Sámi in law, but its adoption of the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights does commit it to certain relevant articles (*ibid*, 8); however, Sweden, unlike Norway but along with Finland and Russia, has not ratified, as previously noted, ILO Convention No. 169, which provides important provisions concerned with land rights, consultation and the respecting of indigenous customs (*ibid*). Norway also has a Sámi Act, whose purpose is to “enable the Sámi people in Norway to safeguard and develop their language, culture and way of life.” Russia has also adopted the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as a provision in its constitution that “guarantees the rights of small indigenous peoples in accordance with the generally accepted principles and standards of international law and international treaties endorsed by the Russian Federation” (*ibid*, 10).

Sámi parliaments have been established in Norway, Sweden and Finland and there are also opportunities for representation in national parliaments. However, the extent to which influence can be exerted at these levels is limited and even if it may have some strength in certain aspects it *de facto* cannot be exerted over the whole of Sápmi. Perhaps the main dimensions for influence are at local and municipal levels and it is against this background that specific cases can be outlined. One is set out in the work of Bjerkli and is concerned with a fjord district in the north of Norway that has been the subject of dispute between local inhabitants and the state for more than 100 years. Most of the land in question had been formally owned by the Norwegian state since 1885, when it was bought from a private estate, with other (cultivated) parts of it being bought by farmers who had previously been tenants. Transferred along with the sale of the uncultivated land was a continuing dispute concerning an assumption of the right to use the land as a common, a right that was not legally acceptable. The dispute over ownership and use finally came before the Norwegian courts in 1993 when the state took action against freeholders and those who asserted a common use right over the land. Several rulings were made, including one in 1999 which found the state had ownership but that local people had usufruct (the right to use land owned by another party) rights over some parts of it. The case was finally settled in 2001, when the Supreme Court of Norway gave ownership rights to local people (Bjerkli 2010: 235).

A number of points of interest emerge from this case and one is that ILO Convention No. 169 was used to argue the case (ultimately won) for the local people (it is, however, relevant to restate that Norway is the only one of the four nation states concerned to have adopted this convention). Another is that the use of this convention and other aspects of international law projected this case towards a global setting, bringing what was essentially a local dispute over land rights “into the global realm of human rights processes” (*ibid*, 222). Perhaps of greatest significance is that

the finding did not have a derogatory effect on local people, including those who were not part of the Sámi population and those of that population who were engaged in occupations other than reindeer herding. Indeed, and as Bjerkli points out, not only did the Supreme Court ruling exclude any directives for the management of the land but also that management had, over the long period of dispute, *de facto* been determined by local people at the local level – use was locally characterised by “the notion of self-regulation both on individual and collective levels”; management is “implicit in people’s doings and people know themselves what to do and not to do” and “we have our unwritten laws and opinions as to who is in the position to use the forest and how it should be used. The atmosphere in the community tells us what can be done or not” (*ibid*).

However, if the final outcome of this case, the first that gave ownership rights to a group of people on the basis of them being ‘locals’, suggests a way forward in terms of resolving a contested landscape, and landscape as monument from a Sámi cultural perspective, it is also important to consider factors that may appear immutable without fundamental changes in approaches and attitudes across all of the nation states involved. In this regard, Bosse Sundin considers nature as heritage from a Swedish perspective and within the discussion draws attention to an area that is named ‘Laponia’ in the north of the country and which includes four national parks and two nature reserves. This area has “been populated by the Sámi since prehistoric times and is considered to be one of the best-preserved examples of nomadic rangeland in northern Scandinavia” (Sundin 2005: 18). Sundin cites a UNESCO description of the natural landscape of the region, one that specifically suggests that motor vehicles are a particularly dire threat to it, which leads to an apparently deeply meaningful question that asks “what Sámi people should be *allowed* in this world heritage?” Those who use modern equipment (motorised skis, motor bikes etc.) to herd their reindeer or those who use traditional technology (skis, sledges etc.)? (*ibid*, 19). A perhaps more pertinent question is how can anyone or any group external to the community come to believe that they should be allowed to make such a judgement?

The view implicit in the preceding discussion concerning what the Sámi should or should not be allowed to do in lands and across landscapes that have been their home since prehistoric times is depicted by Inga-Maria Mulk as a debate between Sámi leaders, some scholars and others concerned with northern heritage on one side and “the ‘wilderness assumptions’ of policy makers in the south, especially within the neo-liberal Swedish state” (Mulk 2009: 194) on the other. Dichotomies between the view that exists in Sweden and that of Norway, furthermore, can be seen in terms of one that, in Sweden, maintains “discriminatory attitudes of the past, but in a more restrained way” (*ibid*). Interestingly, Mulk seeks to demonstrate this restrained discrimination through the repatriation of Sámi artefacts, skeletal remains and sacred objects from national museums to those more local to the Sámi. The point is made that museums were a part of the institutionalised building and cementing of nation states, effectively monuments to these political institutions; thus, the return of artefacts may be seen as conciliatory, an acknowledgment of decolonisation. However, not only has the return of objects been a reluctant and relatively sparse undertaking in Sweden,

but has also effectively disregarded, or not properly understood, the importance of landscape as monument; indeed it seems to completely overlook this aspect. One example is of a siejdde-stone, which was removed from a sacred site in 1900 and transferred to a national museum in Stockholm. It was ultimately repatriated to a more local museum at Ájtte, along with some parts of the original sacred site, but although both the original transferral and restoration may be seen as having been satisfactory from a Swedish national perspective at the respective times of transfer, neither was at all satisfactory from a Sámi perspective (*ibid*) – only repatriation to the original landscape (as monument) setting would restore the intrinsic meaning.

A fundamental point reiterated through the work of Mulk (2009) is that in each of the four nations concerned it is the majority culture that determines how Sámi culture is viewed, preserved and respected, and each has a view that has been influenced and shaped by political and social constructs that are different; therefore, one that, for example, acknowledges a right to the self-management of culture and landscape only has meaning in one part of a single physical and (for the Sámi who follow a traditional path) cultural dimension. A further point concerns associations between artefacts and meaning and how these must necessarily be seen through a Sámi and landscape (as monument) perspective if they are to be properly understood. As Eva Silven (2014: 68) notes, such items – often confined to museums when identified through a mainstream lens – have important social cultural and even political meanings when positioned within their landscape.

6. What represents a satisfactory compromise?

An important point, previously made, can be reiterated and this is that a complete reversal of the relative positions of the colonisers and the colonised to the point where colonisation began would not only be untenable but could also be seen as being re-colonisation, albeit that the Sámi were the original inhabitants (custodians) of the lands they call Sápmi. On the other hand, it can also be argued that movement towards a compromise position would require a much greater shift from the colonising nation states because they have, effectively, gained much more while the Sámi, in their lands at least, have relinquished the most.

It is held that any compromise would have to be established with a firm foundation, one that deals with a fundamental dilemma facing the Sámi and the four nation states that colonised Sápmi. The introduction to this paper briefly described the unique difficulties that have come from traditional lands that are seasonally traversed by the Sámi and this point was further highlighted in terms of different approaches and policies adopted for the Sámi and their lands by each of the states. While, for example, Norway has adopted ILO 169, the other three states have not; therefore, the use of this convention to guide a decision that granted the use of land to local Sámi in one district in Norway would be unlikely to be repeated in other parts of Sámi land. Even if ILO 169 were adopted by Sweden, Finland and Russia, furthermore, it may be interpreted differently in each jurisdiction. Article 14 of the convention,

for example, states that “the rights of ownership and possession of the peoples concerned over the lands which they traditionally occupy shall be recognised” and that “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” (General Conference 1989). How such rights are recognised, what measures should be taken and what are appropriate cases are moot points. It is likely, furthermore, that they would be interpreted from a nation state perspective, from one that neither understands nor seeks to understand the meaning of landscape in terms of traditional lives and livelihoods and as a monument to those lived lives.

Therefore, there is clearly a need for an international approach, through international organisations, which recognises the unique position of the Sámi and which interprets their rights of land use across the whole of Sápmi. If these rights were granted in terms of usufruct, it would not at all compromise the position of the nation states concerned, who would retain jurisdiction over the lands. This would not presume that one occupation and one land use would dominate at the cost of others and the case in Norway, presented by Bjerkli and discussed above, specifically notes that the finding of the Norwegian Supreme Court had no negative effects on local Sámi and non-Sámi following a range of occupations other than reindeer herding – local self-determination meant local self-regulation based on the knowledge of how the land should be used (Bjerkli 2010: 236).

Such a frame, where land use was determined locally, would not need to supersede the notion of designated wilderness areas; it would, however, remove the burden from distant parties with generalised notions and beliefs of having to decide what the Sámi and other local inhabitants should or should not be allowed to do. Indeed, they could rest assured that the management of the landscape would be in the hands of a population who have maintained and lived and breathed as part of it for millennia. Such a compromise would also be accommodating of tourism and facilities for tourists, but the terms under which it took place would be determined by the local communities. It would not be imposing and with a colonial implication, or with the aim of continuing mainstream-constructed caricatures of the Sámi and how they lived, it would no longer see municipalities seeking to build ski-lifts and wind power stations without even consulting the local Sámi, as was recently the case in Sweden. It would, rather, be based around Sámi traditions and authentic lives, including an oral tradition that could adequately articulate why certain areas of the landscape were of particular significance, the real meaning of landscape as monument.

7. Conclusion

Some considerable international attention has been given to indigenous people in recent years and decades and some significant and changes have been made in terms of land and other rights. However, perhaps because of their unique position (as an indigenous people within Europe rather than having been colonised from a distance

and as inhabiting traditional lands that are across four nation states), the Sámi have struggled to be seen in the same light and given the same level of attention. One core aspect in their struggle is landscape as monument, a cultural concept that does not position one representative and often artificial edifice and associate meaning to it but, rather, sees place and setting as intrinsic to lives that have been led and memories that have been gained. Failure to recognise and understand that the landscape and specific parts of it have deep cultural meanings leads to a wider dimension of misunderstanding, one that seeks to impose values associated with wilderness, with conservation, removing artefacts and placing them in museums, a concept that has meaning through a dominant cultural lens but not through a Sámi one. Alongside the misunderstanding has come exploitation of traditional lands, tourism with a colonial flavour, the building of ski lifts, wind farms and other uses that effectively desecrates Sámi land and landscape. Short of an unrealistic return to the status quo that existed before colonisation, a compromise is necessary, one that acknowledges change and that one significant part of the Sámi population have assimilated to mainstream economies and societies. Such a compromise has been set out in the paper and includes an international initiative that gives rights of land use to the Sámi without affecting nation state sovereignties, that trusts in local decisions concerning the economic interests of Sámi and others not concerned with reindeer herding and that allows local people to determine the nature of tourism and which parts of the landscape as monument are the most significant.

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