

Interactions between indigenous rights and nature conservation

Camilla Sandström

Engaging local communities in nature conservation –
developing a toolbox.

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Project aim

To examine how culturally defined values and ideologies form the basis of indigenous rights and management models of protected areas in Sápmi.

Definition of indigenous peoples

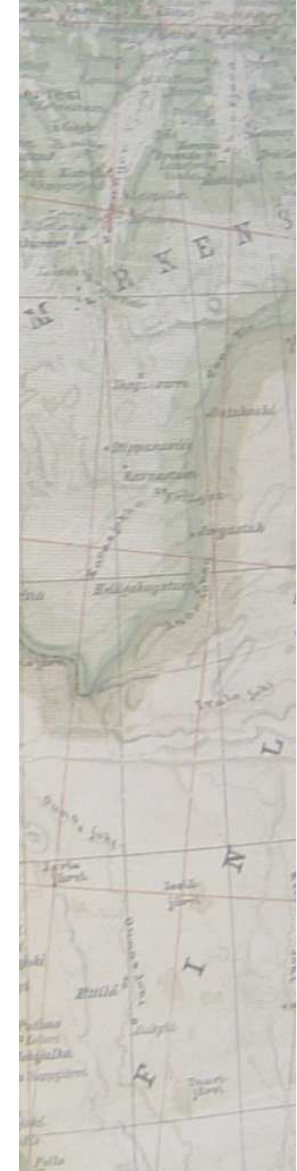
- Self-identification
- 370 millions in 70 countries
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources
- Distinct social, economic or political systems
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs
- Form non-dominant groups of society
- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities.

Political participation

Characteristics of (many) indigenous peoples:

- lack of political representation and participation,
- economic marginalization and poverty,
- lack of access to social services
- discrimination.

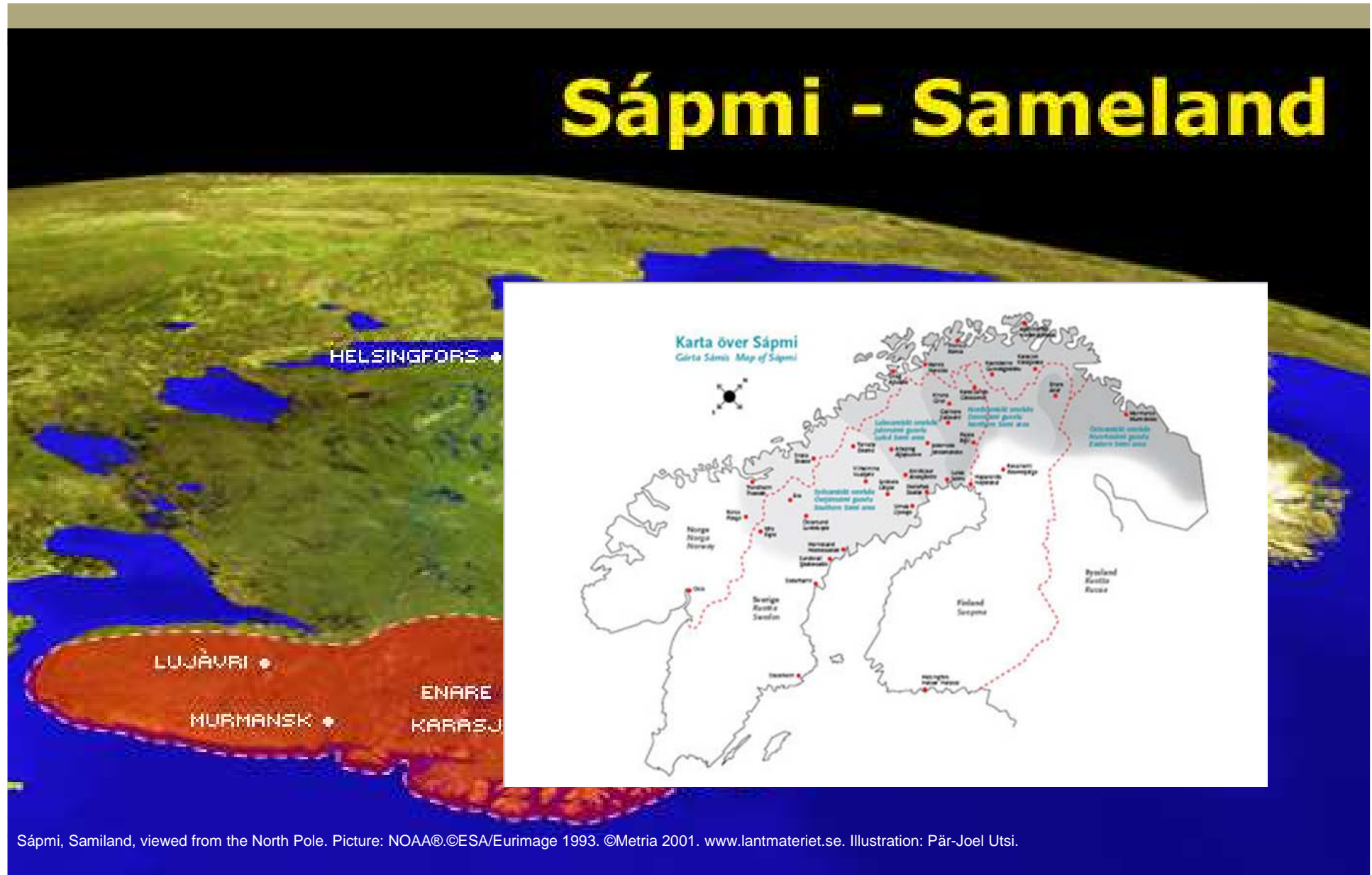
They strive for recognition of their identities, their ways of life and their **right to traditional lands, territories and natural resources**



Sápmi - Sameland



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No census – officially 70 000 but probably 200 000 or more

Reindeer herders – usufructuary rights to land

Long history of discrimination

Rights has gradually been strengthened over time – stronger rights in Norway

But conflicts concerning competing land use interests e.g. forestry, mining, tourism, wind power plants and **biodiversity protection**

A need to develop the participatory toolbox

Between nature and culture

Exploring space for indigenous agency in international nature conservation policy

by Elsa Reimerson

Colonial discourse:

Nature as separated from culture

Othering and subjugation of non-white, non-Western subjects

Failure to recognize indigenous land use and land rights – the wilderness



Convention on
Biological Diversity

Article 8(j):

“... knowledge, innovations and practices of **indigenous and local communities** embodying **traditional lifestyles relevant** for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity”

The CBD toolbox:

- A narrow recognition
- Conditioned by traditionality and relevance
- Colonial discourse apparent
- Limited space for agency

➔ CONFLICTS

Laponia – a UNESCO world heritage site

The EPA & the County of Norrbotten, 3 municipalities,
7 Reindeer herding communities

Instigated 1996 – inaugurated 2011

15 years of conflicts & negotiations

Nature vs culture

Laponiatjuottjudus based on
common "holistic" values



The Laponia toolbox

Fair representation

Reason

Power sharing

Accountability

Social learning

In the shadow of UNESCO

Thanks!

Sources:

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Hovik, S, Sandström, C. & Zachrisson, A. 2010) Management of Protected Areas in Norway and Sweden: Challenges in Combining Central Governance and Local Participation. Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning. 12(2): 159-177.

Reimerson, E. (forthcoming). Between nature and culture: Indigenous subject positions in nature conservation discourse. Environmental Politics (online Nov. 2012)