Sámi and Forest Rebellion Activism

Convergences and Divergences under an Environmental Justice Framework

Blockade against Sveaskog by Forest Rebellion in Juoksuvaara in April 2021. Image by Forest Rebellion (2021).

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Abstract

Our research investigates Sámi activists' and Forest Rebellion activists' understandings of deforestation and of their struggles against deforestation. Specifically, we explore how these understandings do or do not fit within an Environmental Justice Framework. We use Thematic Analysis to look at interviews with three participants who are Sámi and/or members of Forest Rebellion. Our analysis produced three key themes which are Conflict of Distribution, Heterogenous Goals and Multiple Strategies, and Local Knowledge Inclusion. We found that the themes of both groups generally align with our Environmental Justice Framework, suggesting that there is potential for the groups to work synergistically.

Key words: Sámi communities, social movements, forestry management, environmental justice

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1. Background

1.1 Introduction

In Sweden, 70% of land is covered in forest (Svenska Skogen, 2021). The largest forest owner group in Sweden is private persons with 48% of total forest area according to 2019 statistics. Private companies own 24% and state owned companies own 12%, only 8% is owned by the state (Skogsstyrelsen, 2021). The country's forests, particularly old-growth, Northern forests, are contested spaces and different interest groups conflict over how they should be treated and managed (Widmark, 2006). A current discussion in Sweden is about the perception of wood mass' renewability and forest usage as carbon sinks, combined with its conflict with using woodmass to replace fossil fuels to achieve climate goals. Opinions differ on what is the best forest management practice, whereas some argue for clear cutting due to its effectiveness and others for continuous forest management as a more sustainable practice. To the indigenous Sámi community, the forests are part of their ancestral lands and support the reindeer herding that is central to many Sámi communities. From a climate science and environmentalist perspective, the forest are important sites of carbon storage and biodiversity. Activist groups approach forests through focuses on both Sámi rights and ecological impacts. Logging, lumber, and construction industries see the forests as sites of renewable natural resources. Lastly, to the Swedish government the forests are a source of economic wealth for the country, but also spaces that they have, (in policy if not in practice,) deemed to be under the control of the Sámi population (Persson, Harnesk and Islar, 2017). A classic, wicked sustainability dilemma, forest management and rights in Sweden interweave questions of climate change and biodiversity, equity and indigenous rights, and economic well-being for present and future stakeholders.

1.2 Problem Formulation and Problem Statement

Two of the groups working against deforestation in Northern Sweden are the Sámi people and Forest Rebellion, an offshoot of the activist group Extinction Rebellion. While there is certainly overlap in the goals of the group, we do not know how their understandings of deforestation and of their struggles against it align or diverge. Various researchers have addressed conflicts over land and resources between the Sámi and state or private organizations, but there is little information on how the work of the Sámi and activist groups

such as Forest Rebellion relate to each other and to academic theories, such as Environmental Justice. We hope this work could provide a stepping-off point from which to explore potential synergies or discord between the strategies of the two groups and ways that they could more effectively influence forest management in Sweden.

1.3 Research question

In order to investigate the presented problem, our research question follows:

How do Sámi activists and Forest Rebellion understand deforestation and to what extent are strategies employed that fit within an Environmental Justice Framework?

1.4 Methodology and methods

As stated in the problem formulation, this issue includes high interrelations between economic, social, environmental and political dimensions, therefore, an interdisciplinary approach was implemented. We used semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data. Our interviews included both prepared questions and spontaneous conversation that occurred throughout the interactions. We spoke with three participants; Respondent A, a Sámi reindeer herder who lives in Norrbotten, Respondent B, a German member of the group Forest Rebellion, and Respondent C, a Sámi reindeer herder from Kiruna, who is also a member of Forest Rebellion. (See Appendix B for interview questions. Note, not every question was asked to every interviewee.) All interviews were conducted over Zoom and supplemented with conversations through other online messaging platforms (email, Facebook, etc.). Zoom conversations were recorded to allow us to review the data during our analysis. Members of the research team also attended two meetings of Forest Rebellion and one meeting held by the Sámi council, all of which took place online. However, it should be stated that the small number of people interviewed is a limitation of this paper. The statements made in the interviews do not represent the opinion of the collective.

We used Thematic Analysis to explore patterns of meaning (themes) within our data, this method is not aimed to showcase the entire empirical material but rather recurring themes. This process involved reviewing the recorded interviews separately, finding topics and ideas that recurred within each interview, and then exploring how these themes were similar or different across the interviews. Due to time constraints, we did not transcribe the interviews, but that may be useful for future research. Based on the themes that emerged, we compared the results to our Environmental Justice Framework. We combined inductive and

deductive approaches, letting the data drive some themes and using the Environmental Justice Framework normatively to uncover others. The interviews also generated empirical data that will help other researchers and activists understand specific strategies and experiences of the Sámi community and Forest Rebellion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Sámi People

The Sámi are a people indigenous to the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Reindeer herding has been part of Sámi lives from the very beginning, keeping small herds being the norm (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). However, in the last couple of centuries the Sámi transitioned to full scale nomadism, wherein they travel with their herds in groups of five to six families (ibid). As they travel they stay in kåtor, a form of tents, while providing for their dietary needs through hunting and fresh-water fishing (ibid). The majority of nomadic Sámi activities, however, have nowadays stopped (ibid). The herders that choose to maintain a nomadic lifestyle, nowadays tend to accompany their reindeer, while their families stay behind in permanent and modern housing (ibid). Today, Sámi tend to increasingly get income from farming, forestry, fishing or various forms of employment, be it private or governmental (ibid).

Sweden, a colonial state, has a long history of abuse against the Sámi population. The use of Sámi language in school or in public was forbidden, dressing in traditional Sámi clothing often resulted in discrimination (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020). Generally, the Sámi were perceived as less socially developed and less mentally apt (ibid). However, a change occurred in the second half of the 20th century. A substantial amount of attention was given to the problems of maintaining traditional Sámi society and culture (ibid). The Sámi people then started being taught in schools and pastures needed for reindeer herding got protected status (ibid). Even though a lot of progress has been made to allow the Sámi to live their lives in ways that they deem fit, the history of colonialism still impacts their lives. For example, large corporations seek to benefit from the land that is essential for Sámi livelihoods (ibid). This is often done without negotiations or genuine inquiry of the indigenous Sámi (ibid).

Reindeer herding is regulated under the Reindeer Herding Act "Rennäringslagen" (SFS 1971:437). The first paragraph states that those of Sámi heritage have the right to use the land and water for their herding and themselves. Sweden has moreover signed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples where land issues are regulated. Important here is the notion of The notion of Free, Prior and Informed Consent where Article 10 states that:

"Indigenous peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the indigenous peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return." (UN General Assembly, 2007)

2.2 Social Movements and Forest Rebellion

Social movements are purposeful and organized groups who pursue a common social goal to create social change (Killian, Smelser & Turner, 2020). The levels of social movements can happen on a local, regional, national and even global level. Based on what and how much a social movement wants to achieve, David Aberle classified social movements into four types: reform movements, revolutionary movements, redemptive movements and alternative movements. A social movement is characterized by an internal coordination and leader, and by having a specific identity (e.g. name, logo) (ibid.).

Environmental questions have become increasingly relevant in Nordic forest discussions. Impacts of climate change have become visible in everyday weather. Public awareness of degrading biodiversity and species extinction increases, and domestic nature appreciation as travel destinations has risen due to the ongoing pandemic. In addition, the yet unsolved land usage disputes between Sámi and the state are strongly present in the press (Dagens Nyheter, 2021b). As public interest, awareness, and activity around environmental issues and land-use disputes increase, so do social movements around these issues (Dagens Nyheter, 2021a).

Northern Finland offers various examples of forest usage disputes between social movements and forest owners, of the polarization between stakeholders' targets of nature conservation, and of economic factors at play in forest management and rights. Sarkki and Heikkinen (2010) describe three cases where citizens, together with environmental non-governmental organizations (ENGOs) or alone, successfully impacted the Finnish state

to delay or cease forest cutting. The authors addressed the cases by using the theory of translation from Actor-Network Theory (ANT) introducing successful strategies to impact forest cutting decisions. ANT considers any object as an actor, including non-humans like nature or technology, decreasing the division between human and nature. The relations between actors then create the world. Any actor's action can change another actor's action (ibid.). Some elements of successful movements that the authors found are: Heterogeneous arguments on behalf of preventing cutting forest, acquiring influential public spokesmen, learning from past experiences with the actors, wide publicity typically received by ENGOs and indigenous social movements, strong local resistance by various stakeholders and relying on existing values instead of future values (ibid.).

Forest Rebellion (Skogsupproret) is a social movement that was created as a sub branch of Extinction Rebellion with the goal of altering the current management of Swedish forest. Their movement has three demands that guide their actions: 1) Stop the forest abuse, 2) Decolonize Sápmi and 3) Democratize our Forest (Forest Rebellion, 2021). To get their message through to decision makers they employ peaceful civil disobedience. Notably, in April 2021, they organized a blockade in Juoksuvaara to protest against clear cutting by the government owned forest company Sveaskog. While the action was unsuccessful in the short run, it did increase publicity for the movement and the group is still actively working against the cutting of Sweden's Northern forests (ibid.).

2.3 Forest Laws and Certifications

Forestry management in Sweden is regulated by several laws and commercial third-party certifications. Since the entrance into the EU, Sweden is moreover bound to follow their legislation. In Swedish legislation, forest management is regulated under the Forestry Act "Skogsvårdslagen" (SFS 1979:429) and under the Environmental Act "Miljöbalken" (SFS 1998:808). The Swedish government has investigated how to incorporate global biodiversity targets into Swedish forestry and this might result in changes in laws regarding the continuous forest belt close to mountains (fjäll) (Regeringskansliet, 2021).

In addition to national law, there is a commercial third party forest management quality system, forest certification. The primary forest certification programs are Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC). Forest certification is defined as "a process in which an independent third party assesses the quality of forest management and production against standards defined by a

certification organization, and the associated labeling informs consumers about products' source forest's sustainability" (FAO, n.d.).

FSC's principle on Indigenous peoples' rights provides indigenous people with a formal standing in FSC (FAO, n.d.). It recognizes grazing rights and requires forest companies to consult with reindeer herders in decision-making about forest operations, which could negatively impact the reindeer husbandry area. In contrast, PEFC requires only that companies adhere to the Reindeer Husbandry Act (University of British Columbia, 2021). However, as an external non-governmental organization, the concrete impacts of FSC's principle may be limited (Johansson, 2014).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Background of Environmental Justice

Environmental justice has its roots in the concept of environmental racism that emerged in the US in the late 1970s (Baehler, 2017). From there it developed into 'environmental equity' before settling into its current iteration, 'environmental justice.' As the original term indicates, the idea was spurred by racial discrimination (ibid.). Environmental justice moved beyond the antagonism between the environmental movement and social justice movement, arguing that oppressions are overlapping and tend to build up on the most vulnerable groups (ibid). In the US the concept tends to deal with place-based issues, such as the higher rates of pollution in areas that have high proportions of people of color (ibid).

In Sweden the environmental justice concept is still, at least in academia, relatively new (Bell, 2014). Though Sweden scores high on various environmental and equity scales, Karen Bell points out that Swedish environmental policies tend to focus on lower-income areas through recycling or tidiness initiatives despite the fact that when it comes to carbon emissions, the wealthiest 10% of Swedes emit three times the carbon of the poorest 10% (ibid). Additionally, she describes procedural inequity as lower income groups have less power to influence environmental decisions than higher income groups. Environmental justice is especially a concern in regards to the Sámi population in Sweden who, despite theoretically holding rights to their ancestral lands, in practice are often disregarded and

excluded when it comes to decisions about land use in Sweden (Persson, Harnesk and Islar, 2017).

3.2 Environmental Justice as an Analytical Framework

Our analysis is based on a framework which divides environmental justice into three distinct types of justice. First, *procedural justice* refers to organisational fairness in decision-making processes (Svarstad et al., 2011). According to Maise (2003), equal opportunity to participate in decision-making processes is a prerequisite for fair treatment in the process. A second dimension is described under the term *distributive justice*. In comparison to the more qualitative approach of procedural justice, distributive justice involves quantitative, normative measures (Svarstad et al., 2011). For instance, it focuses on the distribution of resources and land, as well as negatively associated attributes such as socio-ecological burdens. The third dimension, the *sense of justice*, resembles the individual perception of equal and just treatment. Here, trust towards political institutions and legitimacy play a crucial role for accepting distributive or procedural justice (ibid.).

The arrows in Figure 1 illustrate the connections between the different dimensions: Procedural justice can be understood as a "starting point", a prerequisite for further processes. This first dimension is the prerequisite for further fair distribution (distributive justice) and a basis for legitimacy (sense of justice). At the same time, the level of fair distribution influences the sense of justice.
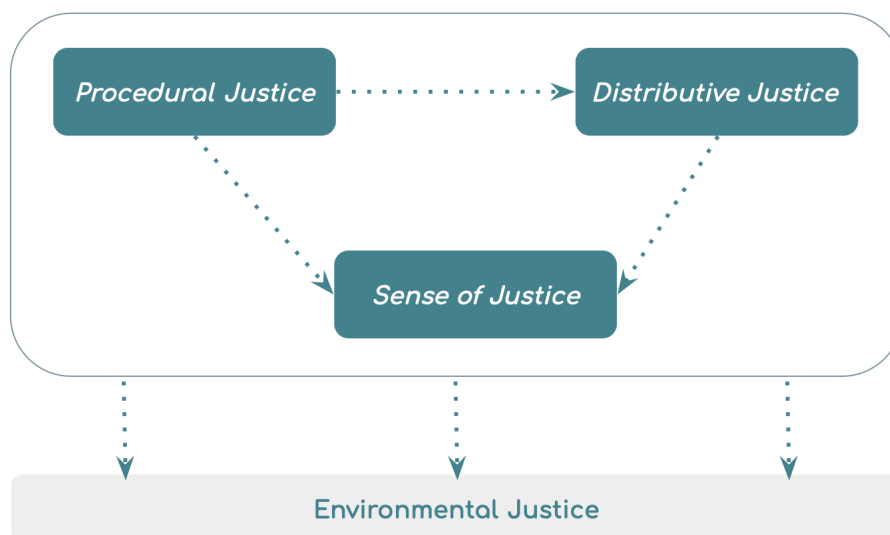

Figure 1: Three-dimensional environmental justice framework based on Svarstad et al. (2011)

3.3 Typology of Local Participation

To further analyze procedural justice in a Sápmi context we are looking at local participation. Pretty (1995) has developed seven levels of typology for local participation in development projects. These are described below in Table 1.

Table 1: Typologies for local participation. Adapted by the authors from Pretty (1995)

Typology	Characteristics
1.Manipulative participation	Pretend participation. People in official rooms but they are unelected without power.
2. Passive participation	Participation where the people are being informed on made decisions. Unilateral announcements without listening to the people's responses.
3.Participation by consultation	People are consulted but that does not concede influence on decision making.
4. Participation for material incentives	People participate in providing resources but are not involved in developing or the learning process.
5. Functional participation	Involvement is interactive. They have a share in decision making that, however, tends to be arised after major decisions have been made externally.
6. Interactive participation	People participate in joint decision making. Participation is seen as a right and interdisciplinary methodologies are involved.
7. Self-mobilization	Participation by taking initiatives independent of external agents. Can spread if enabled by governments and NGOs.

4. Results

We have identified three themes in our empirical material by using a thematic analysis. The themes are: Conflict of Distribution, Heterogenous Goals and Multiple Strategies, and Local Knowledge Inclusion.

4.1 Theme 1 - Conflict of Distribution

The first theme to be discussed is the conflict of distribution. As the population dense Southern Sweden requires more energy and resources, the majority of extraction efforts are

being implemented up in the scarcely populated areas of Northern Sweden. However, it is important to note, that even though the human density may be low, the lands are also used for Sámi reindeer herding. This point is often overlooked and hence oftentimes produces a post-colonial context. Resources are taken from the North of Sweden for the benefit of the South, thus inflicting damage without reasonable compensation (Respondent B). Respondent A also brings up the notion that new projects being developed up North, more specifically the new battery factory and the supposedly 'green' steel factory, will require substantial energy inputs. As a result, wind and hydro power projects are being built to enable renewable energy supplies to those projects (Respondent A). As such, land which is essential for Sámi reindeer herding is being taken away, which results in Sámi exploitation (Respondent A).

When asked about deforestation, Respondent C, had a slightly different view. They pointed out that Sámi are not inherently against the forestry industry and wind power. Instead Sámi are against inconsiderate, invasive and ill-thought of infrastructure being developed in delicate lands which are essential for their livelihoods. More specifically, the respondent brought up the issue of lichen destruction- a key winter food source for reindeer. When singular and isolated trees are harvested, the damaging effects are minimal, yet with clearcutting, the lichen may take upwards of 120 years to regrow to harvestable levels (Respondent C). Moreover, Respondent C, believes that energy production infrastructure should be developed closer to the areas where it is needed, as Northern Sweden has enough supply and hence are not likely to get any benefits from the developments. When asked about benefits of forest certification Respondent A said that the FSC rules are broken continuously. However, reprisals are often absent and forest companies can still keep their certificates. Thus the forest certification does not function according to its purpose and may deliver the wrong impression to consumers of the wood products.

4.2 Theme 2 - Heterogenous Goals and Multiple Strategies

A second theme we have identified is the heterogeneous goals of organizations and strategies that vary. All respondents mentioned that Forest Rebellion is not the only actor working with these issues. Other organizations such as Greenpeace and Fältbiologerna are also involved, as are local people. Respondent A suggested that some parts of the goals may vary, for example in regards to how various groups and individuals view the question of predators, but on the whole they are in agreement. Respondent B elaborated on the fact that there is fluidity within the community and that people may be a part of multiple organizations

and movements against deforestation: "If you look at it at an individual level it becomes messy" (Respondent B). This is in line with Respondent C who recently joined Forest Rebellion but also is involved in Sámi politics and church matters regarding the issue.

Respondent C stated that the strength of Forest Rebellion is their broad focus compared to organizations such as Greenpeace with a sole environmental focus. In that sense, Forest Rebellion has a better chance of stopping forestry as they take action for a wider range of reasons as Greenpeace has a more bureaucratic foundation and needs a focused cause such as preserving red listed species.

Communication and sharing of knowledge between different organizations, movements and other indigenous groups around the world is furthermore beneficial for the improvement of the implementation of the unanimous goal. All respondents mentioned a blockade against clearcutting by Sveaskog in Juoksuvaara. Multiple organizations were present but it was arranged by Forest Rebellion. Respondent C, who is Sámi and a reindeer herder, is however somewhat critical of the action and more specifically the choice of location. "(...) it was not a good area to choose because the Indigenous rights are lower in the Concession area than it is in the rest of the reindeer herder area" (Respondent C). This indicates possible contrasting opinions on what is the best strategy, even though the end goal is the same.

4.3 Theme 3 - Local knowledge inclusion

In each of the three interviews conducted, the rights of the Sámi community and the importance of understanding their culture were highlighted, therefore the inclusion of local knowledge was identified as the third theme. The colonisation of the Sámi community led to the oppression of this group, resulting in prohibitions by the Swedish state of expressing their own identity. The ban on teaching the Sámi language in the Swedish education system represents a concrete example (Grant & Lei, 2001). To this day, Sámi culture is only partially integrated into Swedish education, leading to an educational gap and a lack of awareness of the country's indigenous society (Respondent C).

Respondent C argues that spreading knowledge about the Sámi and their way of life is one of the most important strategies for understanding and recognising the importance of forests for reindeer herding practices. Lichen-rich areas are particularly important during the winter season, as animals seek these plants under the snow for food. By clear-cutting entire forests, this source of food is lost, along with an important pillar of the traditional indigenous

Sámi culture. The felling of individual trees, on the other hand, would not cause any significant lasting damage; commercial forest companies would be able to obtain less timber, while at the same time there would still be enough fodder available for the Sámi's reindeer (Respondent C).

Moreover, the inclusion of local knowledge was brought by Respondent A and Respondent C into a wider, global context. Respondent A stressed how the highly industrialised world exploits an excess of natural resources without thinking about future generations, whereas indigenous people have lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years. Respondent A affirmed that Sámi have lived in harmony with nature without causing lasting damage to their environment, as they have only claimed as much natural resources as needed and did not excessively exploit them.

Respondent B as a non-Sámi activist, highlighted the value of listening to individual, emotional stories of the Sámi people, who were forced to move for logging activities. Talking about one Sámi woman in particular they said:

"She is sharing her stories about this place that's being logged, so this is incredibly valuable for us. (….) it makes it a story, an emotional dimension when you share about your own personal history, about your family, your culture." (Respondent B)

5. Analysis

5.1 Procedural Justice and the inclusion of local knowledge

When looking at environmental issues, procedural justice tends to be presented within the scope of participation (Svartstad et al., 2011). Pretty (1995) has presented seven levels of local participation in regards to conservation. This lens is beneficial in our analysis regarding conservation of Sápmi and the forest. As presented in the results, the inclusion of local knowledge, or local participation, was emphasized by all of the interviewees.

The connection between procedural justice and local participation is illustrated in particular by the sixth typology according to Pretty (1995): interactive participation. The above-mentioned strategies of the Sámi and Forest Rebellion are primarily aimed at creating awareness and giving the Sámi a democratic voice to make decisions regarding land use. The prerequisite for this is a corresponding democratic organisation, which is not yet fully

developed. The interviewees' statements have shown that the current situation is more likely to fall into the typology of 2) passive participation and 3) participation by consultation.

Passive participation means a rather one-sided participation in decision-making processes (Pretty, 1995). Accordingly, the "passive participants" are presented with a fait accompli. Respondent C argues that Sámi are often only involved in the last phase of planning a forest project, at which point it is difficult to implement changes. It would be better to involve those with local knowledge from the beginning to find a common solution through interactive participation.

The third level "participation by consultation" suggests that there is conversation with local communities but that it does not equal them having any real say in the decision making process. Respondent A exemplified how the struggles of the Sámi community cohere with Pretty's (1995) level "participation by consultation". They mentioned that the involvement in meetings was symbolic in its nature and did not improve their influence on decision making. Now the Sámi communities have shifted strategies and instead practice justice on the highest formal level by taking it to court.

Our analysis of the empirical material through an Environmental Justices framework suggests that procedural justice is not currently present in regards to commercial forestry on indigenous land. However, the strategies used by Forest Rebellion and Sámi are aiming at achieving more inclusion of local knowledge and democratic participation.

5.2 Distributive Justice and the Conflict of Distribution

The realization of distributive justice includes three principles: equal distribution of goods and burdens, distribution according to positivity or negativity of contributions, and distribution according to basic needs (Svarstad et al., 2011).

Equal distribution of goods and burdens is absent in the global supply of natural resources, and secondly, in the production of new green technologies. For example, the planned green steel and battery factories would serve the global market but would require additional energy from rivers and windmills and harm the local land users, i.e., reindeer herders. Those who gain from increased energy production are in Southern Sweden, whereas the utilized ecosystems are in Northern Sweden, which echoes the colonial patterns. The same example violates the second principle of distribution; the new production would benefit the corporations, their shareholders, and employees and harm the ecosystem and its users, the reindeer herding. Encroachment on the third principle of basic needs is visible in the

ever-continuing destruction of the environment. According to Respondent A, it must stop immediately to give future generations a chance to thrive.

The legal and commercial practice frameworks, including certification, direct forestry management and land ownership relations, support the power imbalance. The imbalance implies deeply embedded inequality in the legal and economic systems including certification working against distributive justice. The forest certification functions as a controlling process allowing the forest users to report overruns in forest management activities. However, according to Respondent A, the forestry companies violate the certification rules designed to ensure sustainable forest management. Despite the violation, the companies keep their certificates. A strategy that has been successfully deployed is to take legal action on resource usage disputes; the Sámi community exercises procedural justice to achieve distributive justice. Forest Rebellion's strategy to arrange blockades on forest cutting sites also aims for distributive justice by using the media visibility to share knowledge of the injustices. In addition, Respondent B reports that they converse with the government representatives (näringsminister); this could be seen as impacting the law making, indirectly leading to distributive justice.

The traditional indigenous livelihoods depend on natural resources, and the interviews have shown that distributive justice is not currently attained by the Sámi. However, the strategies used by FR and the Sámi can contribute to improvements.

5.3 Sense of Justice

When discussing a sense of justice, the main aspect which needs to be looked at is how the people, who are being affected by the changes, perceive and evaluate those changes (Svarstad et al., 2011). It is also important to note that sense of justice is both strongly related to, and the outcome of, distributive and procedural justices. The aforementioned elements have key roles in the formation of sense of justice, whereby the failing of one of those elements leads to notions of maltreatment (Svarstad et al., 2011). Moreover, it should be noted that sense of justice is paralleled by justice of recognition. It primarily addresses the fact that local identities of indigenous people must be valued, respected and acknowledged, and where necessary, differences should be accommodated to allow for fair inclusion in decision making (Peters, 2015).

In discussions, Respondent C argued that all stakeholders should be involved in the decision making process right from the start. However, frequently this is not the case when it

comes to the involvement of Sámi (Respondent C). Respondent C continued by saying that project planning is frequently close to completion by the time Sámi are given a say on the matter. This leads to mutual rigidity whereby the Sámi do not feel that they have been given a chance to voice their opinions and concerns, while the involved company does not want to alter plans due to financial reasons. Furthermore, there have been a number of disguised attempts at Sámi inclusion in decision making processes. Respondent A shared stories of how companies wishing to start projects first met with the local non-Sámi communities and advertised the potential economic gains which could be felt in the region if the project were to be implemented. Once the local communities had been informed and had gotten excited about the development prospects, only then were the Sámi communities informed about the project. However, these projects, for example mining operations, often entail the destruction of large areas of Sámi reindeer grazing lands which leads to opposition from the Sámi community. As a result, the Sámi end up being portrayed as being against economic development in rural areas and end up in conflict with local communities (Respondent A). A more preferable scenario, as proposed by Respondent A, is that Sámi people would have veto power over projects being initiated on key areas of land. This would ensure that projects could not be carried out without genuine recognition of the Sámi people's concerns.

Having analysed the interviewees' answers from the perspective of sense of justice, it is quite clear that a significant amount of work still needs to be done to ensure that the Sámi people both are heard and feel heard. As was sensed from the interviews, the Sámi currently lack a sense of justice as they feel like their concerns are of no importance to companies looking to initiate projects on key Sámi reindeer grazing lands. Moreover, the Sámi do not feel like they are being genuinely recognised, with mainly dishonest and untimely attempts at communication being initiated by the companies. As such, reasons become clear for the Sámi opposition of large company operations and their willingness to join forces with social movements such as Forest Rebellion in the hopes of tangible and equitable policy change.

6. Discussion

6.1 Meaning and Significance of our Findings

Based on the analysis of our data we identified that there is significant overlap between Sámi activists and Forest Rebellion in regards to how they approach deforestation. Both generally align with Environmental Justice, especially in their focus on distributive

justice and the inclusion of local perspectives. This is especially significant because environmental social movements, including Greenpeace, have been criticized for neglecting social justice in their campaigns (Sarkki and Heikkinen, 2010). This reflects the historical tension between environmental and social justice advocates (Baehler, 2017). While the concept of environmental justice presents the movements as inextricable, a false dichotomy between the two foci still persists. Knowing that the Sámi activists and Forest Rebellion generally share ideology, suggests that the two groups could work together to be more effective.

In their article on social movement strategies used in forest disputes in Finland, Sarkki and Heikkinen (2010) came up with a few characteristics that tend to make movements successful. Two of these are particularly important for our study. Firstly they state, "the more heterogeneous an actor-network is, the better opportunities it has to influence forestry policies" (Sarkki and Heikkinen, 2010, 292). Secondly they claim, "ENGOs and indigenous social movements' coalitions tend to receive wide publicity, resulting in a forestry sector easily bound to environmental boycott campaigns" (Sarkki and Heikkinen, 2010, 294). These findings suggest that if Sámi and Forest Rebellion activists both focus on the same dispute, they will have a better chance of creating change than if they focus on separate conflicts.

One example of how a stronger alliance between the two groups may have led to a stronger impact was at the blockade organized by Forest Rebellion in April 2021 . Respondent C, who is a Sámi member of Forest Rebellion, suggested that the blockade did not occur in a good location. They argued that instead of focusing on Sameby concession land, it would have been better to do it on land on which the Sámi hold more rights.

6.2 Limitations of the Study and Next Steps

This study provided a brief examination of three respondents' perspectives on activism against deforestation in Northern Sweden. None of our respondents can speak for all of the Sámi community or for all of Forest Rebellion. Respondent B was careful to emphasize this point, repeatedly mentioning that they couldn't represent the whole of Forest Rebellion and also being quick to point out that as a non-Sámi person, they didn't speak for that community. Additionally, transcribing and coding the interviews was beyond the scope of this project and instead our results rely on subjective researcher interpretations.

The next step in this work would be broadening the sources of data and deepening the analysis to make the results more verifiable, for example by triangulating our data. This could include both increasing the number of interviewees and transcribing and coding the data. It would also be helpful to bring in other theoretical perspectives such as Actor Network Theory, social movement theories, and critical race or critical legal perspectives. Additionally, Dr. May-Britt Öhman, a Sámi researcher with Uppsala University, is looking into creating a curriculum to consolidate research and resources on the land-use conflicts faced by the Sámi community. While other researchers have explored this topic, none has yet focused on Forest Rebellion specifically.

7. Conclusion

It is clear that under current methods of operating, the Sámi people are not being treated in a fair and equitable manner. As a result, a number of social and environmental movements have focused their actions on regions of Northern Sweden where deforestation is most common and is oftentimes in areas of significant importance to the indigenous Sámi people. The underlying targets of the various organisations differ, however, the unifying goal is to prevent the action of destructive clearcutting. More specifically, Forest Rebellion furthers this target and also aims to work towards Sámi liberation and to fight for their rights to their land. The strategies Forest Rebellion employs to achieve this vary from media campaigns, to road blockades or court actions. The reasoning for the implementation of the strategies is because under current large company operating frameworks, the Sámi do not have environmental justice. When analysing the situation from a procedural justice lens, which encompasses different types of participation in the decision making process, it becomes clear that Sámi are not given the option for interactive participation which would enable democratic decision making. Instead they are positioned at passive participation and participation by consultation. These modes of participation instead lead to a generally one-sided decision making process and therefore do not allow for legitimate procedural justice. Moreover, the distributive lens yields similar results. In order to facilitate distributive justice, the gains and the losses need to be shared equitably within a society. However, this is not the case with Sámi. Projects being implemented on land essential to Sámi reindeer herding would predominantly benefit Southern Sweden, while causing long-term damage in Sámi grazing areas. This again leads to the conclusion that distributive justice is not achieved.

As such, Sámi cannot have a sense of justice which presupposes that distributive and procedural justices have been achieved. In the end, it is clear that currently environmental justice is severely lacking in forestry operations being implemented in Northern Sweden. Tangible political efforts should be made to balance the situation and hence respond to the indigenous community's and the accompanying social movement's demands for fairness and justice in the Northern Swedish forestry industry.

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Appendix A

Paraphrased interview statements by each participant, categorized by problematizations, strategies/tactics and identified themes.

Topic of Conversation	Respondent A	Respondent B	Respondent C
Problematizations	・Sacrificing the land for industrialization ・employment of "green" steel and energy factories for job creation ・commercial forest companies rather not listen to indignous people ・Commercial forestry projects start with publishing their ideas including all benefits of the project (job creation & green energy); after that the Sámi people are involved; if the Sámi people then disagree with project, they look like the "bad guys"	・Sámi people should be empowered regarding the land they need for reindeer practices ・Post colonial way how southern Sweden benefits from resources in northern Sweden ・Wind parks in grazing areas and calving areas are a serious issue alongside deforestation ・high complex interrelations between environmental, economic, political and social dimensions and interests	・Almost no land left for reindeer herding practices ・Electricity should be produced in the south of Sweden where the demand is ・Sámi are being involved too late in planning processes of commercial forest companies; lading to difficulties of changing the plans afterwards ・ oftentimes the court rulings are in favour of companies, however, this is now changing due to a combination of all actions that have been taken ・A wish for system change - importantly that indigenous people are listened to by world leaders ・There is a legitimate lack of knowledge about Sámi in Sweden ・Sweden tells other countries to appreciate and listen to indigenous people, yet fail to do so themselves ・Sámi have never been against forestry, they don't mind trees being taken, but oppose clearcutting as its overly destructive ・One of the main biggest challenges is to have people understand why Sámi want to stop clearcutting - its not just about having space for reindeer herding, its about human being survival on a broader spectrum

Strategies and tactics	**Theme 1: Conflict of Distribution**	・Taking legal action at court	・XR have discussions with government's forest agency and minister of trade and industry ・Occupation of areas/forests that are planned to be clear-cutted ・More protected land and give the Samebyar more power regarding the decisions of the land	・Taking legal action at court
	Theme 2: Heterogeneous goals and multiple strategies	・Cooperation with many organizations such as Greenpeace, Fältbiologerna ・Predator question is not agreed between the Sámi and activists	・Collaboration between groups that might have different focus but the same main goal	・FR is more successful than Greenpeace, as FR has multiple objectives including environmental protection and promoting indigenous rights; whereas Greenpeace only focused on red listed species
	Theme 3: Inclusion of local knowledge	・The best strategy forward is giving the Sámi people veto regarding their land and how to use it. ・The forestry companies communicate with the Sámi communities and take up their time but it's more for show, they still don't take their concerns into account.	・Local people are getting involved ・Listening to actual stories of Sámi that were forced to relocate creates an emotional dimension and more awareness	・Build awareness about Sámi (doesn't have a strategy for communicating about Sámi, but generally takes every opportunity they have to discuss it in public situations) ・support other indigenous communities, with the hope that the same would be done for them when help is needed ・learn from other indigenous communities about how they are dealing with various struggles and then adapting it to their own situation if possible
Definition of Environmental Justice		"It means that our children will survive. The parents and grandparents have given change to us and we should give the chance for them."		"Environmental justice is about taking as much as you need, without excess."

The statements of the respondents were paraphrased analogously and summarized in bullet points.

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What are the goals of the movement which you are a part of?

2. What are your personal goals as a member of the movement?

3. Who makes up the movement (volunteers, organisations, members of the local community)?

4. What tactics do you (as an organisation or group of people) use to achieve your goals?

5. Do you work with forest rebellion?

6. Which ones have been successful/ which ones were not? Why?

7. What is your current perception of progress within your group/movement regarding forest protection (or other goal)?

8. What people and groups are the biggest opponents within that conflict and why?

9. To what extent has there been mutual communication regarding the conflict?

10. Do you collaborate with other activists that are aiming to achieve the same objective? If yes, which ones? What strategies could you learn from each other?

11. Are you addressing the issue on a formal/policy level whereby the government is being involved as well?

12. What do you foresee as a best case scenario for the future?