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3.3 "Dogs don't bite the hand that feeds them": managing distress in the changing rural landscape of South West Finland

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On a sunny afternoon on the island of Koppars I was discussing with a young farmer Peter, his father Bengt, and Christian, their neighbour, about the changes that have taken place since Finland joined the European Union in 1995. They were stating that Natura [(1)] has taken the land of the small farmers of the area, but not of the rich ones, and many of those on the "hitlist" took it even, cut down their forest, their security for leaner times. The tone of the conversation, the bitterness and frustration hidden behind the words is an ample indication of what is going on in the idyllic landscape bathing in the golden rays of the setting sun. This is a region of Finland where farms have traditionally been larger and wealthier than elsewhere in the country and the climatic conditions are the most suited for the cultivation of grains, vegetables, sugar beets and apples. This is not the first time that "land has been taken" in the history of the island. It is just that the previous appropriation, the so called "colonisation process", to accommodate refugee families [(2)] after the Winter and Continuation Wars was perhaps easier to comprehend, on a moral level. Here people are proud of their history and it is seen in the landscape in prim farmhouses, well-groomed gardens, healthy, green fields punctuated by islands of forests with the glittering sea just beyond the tree tops. This is a beautiful place by all accounts, a place where people have their roots firmly planted, their dreams and wishes invested in the fields and in the forests, now brutally wrested from them, because that undefined entity, Natura, wants it. It almost conjures up an image of a beast, an island dinosaur, greedily grazing on both saplings and majestic pine trees, like offerings given to the mighty god, the EU. This God is not content with scattered parcels of forest land, it also wants to safeguard the purity of the billowing fields. From its position in the skies its watching eye observes what its subjects do. It has the

sneaky suspicion that some of these subjects aren't filling out the documents, decreed in the royal regulations, in the appropriate way, that some are working in a way which damages the purity of the land. So it sends out its inspectors, with tape measures, scales, handbooks and testing equipment. They try to enter the prim farm houses, even hope for the typical gesture of local hospitality: a cup of coffee and a sandwich. These subjects have their own way of putting up a fight, of trying to hold onto to the land, plant their feet as deeply as they can into its fertile soil and not allow these outsiders, the 'foreign' into the sanctity of the what they cherish the most: the home. (Field diary 30.05.02)

Although this may sound like an account from a fairy tale book or some obscure rural legend, the main story line surfaced in conversations I had with farmers living in an idyllic corner of south west Finland. During a year long field work period I entered the lives of these individuals struggling to hold on to a way of life becoming ever more restricted in the "narrowing space" of what constitutes farming in Finland today. This fable truly has a moral undercurrent which can be fully grasped only if we look at the symbolic and historical texts that lie behind these statements of resistance and the expressions of distress that these squeezed life conditions give rise to. Finnish farmers have witnessed a decline of farming in Finland in the years following European Union membership characterised by rising production costs, plunging production prices and changes in the grant system making it increasingly difficult for small holder farmers to survive in a system based on a market-based model of profits and efficacy.

The sense of distress felt by farmers is born out of the disenfranchisement brought about through the process of "bureaucrats in Brussels" viewing rural landscapes as a de-spatialised cultural concept (Gray J. 2000, Creed G. - Ching B. 1997), as something "out there" to be controlled, rather than as a lived reality (Jackson M. 1996). To the farmers the meaning of the landscape comes from the practical engagement they have with it over generations and the deep-seated emotional stake they have in its maintenance. Farmers also express worry over their dependence on an agricultural grant system that they cannot control. It is a system based on a perception of productivity that is at odds with farmers' concept of "good farming practice" and one that reserves itself the right to place economic sanctions on individuals thought to misuse arable land. It appropriates land as a means of protecting the environment. Farmers are subject to the surveillance activities of the national and EU level inspectors (here I mean the anonymous people within the bureaucracy who are responsible for the development of the Common Agricultural Policy) represented both by

bureaucrats physically carrying out inspections on the farms and by EU-wide surveillance activities through satellite imaging [3]. Farmer's discourse about "the bureaucrats controlling their lives in Brussels" serves as a metaphorical framework for expressing feelings of uncertainty about the future and fears about losing their means of livelihood and, thus, also their homes.

This paper explores the sense of uncertainty and distress felt by farmers through their discourse on the control over farming practices enacted by the European Union. I ask what are the central values of farming life that are under threat. What is going on between the main actors; the farmers and the "controlling bureaucrats"? How is the moral clash regarding "good farming practice" connected to these symbols? I argue that farmer's experiences of surveillance and control of farming, which has followed in the wake of Finland joining the European Union, and their sense of distress, are directly linked to changing perceptions of agricultural production. As rural landscapes become de-spatialised, emptied of the meanings connected to life-as-lived, farmers increasingly feel that their knowledge and practices are not respected. Despite the pressures they face in the present situation, farmers remain in place. By enduring and silently living through these difficulties, they create their own forms of resistance that incorporate uncertainty into the web of their lives in a manner that makes it possible for them to cope with their changing situation in life.

I begin by briefly describing the social context of farming in Finland from the post-war years until the present day situation, tracing the historical background of the development of the Finnish welfare state and the rapid urbanisation process that unfolded alongside it. Second I define the central concepts used in this paper; distress, risk, and uncertainty. This is followed by a presentation of ethnographic data in the form of interview excerpts used to illustrate farmers' views of surveillance, control and bureaucracy.

The Social and Historical Context of Farming

When I asked my informants when they felt the village was most "alive" they remembered the 1950's when local farms expanded and the mechanisation of farming was at its peak. People had not yet started moving to the cities and basic services were available like shops, schools, post offices, black smiths and tailors. The years following the Winter and Continuation Wars (1944 and onwards) were a time of reconstruction, hope and enthusi-

asm over the common project of re-building the nation. The settlement and land reform activities of post-war rural Finland were extremely significant milestones in Finnish recent history. A tenth of the Finnish population had to be resettled on land either donated by the government or colonised from large land owners, which turned Finnish agriculture into a mode of livelihood primarily based on small holdings (4). Finland was the only OECD member state where small holding farming was practiced on a large scale (ALESTALO M. 1980: 117). The most common form of agriculture was dairy farming combined with forestry, the exception being southern Finland where grains and sugar beet production was more predominant. Small holdings consisted of both arable and forest land (GRANBERG L. 1992: 53-54). Forest ownership, in the context of Finland is an integral part of farming in Finland and is seen as an important form of investment, a kind of farm-based savings account to be used in leaner times for vital investments connected to the maintenance of the farm. Forestry activities shaped the structure of Finnish agriculture at a time when Finnish export in wood was a significant source of income for a government burdened with war payments (5). In the west and south of the country most forests are privately owned and many forest owners today live in the urban centres but retain country cottages.

The 1950's was also a time period characterised by major structural changes in farming and forestry due to mechanisation; use of fertilisers, pesticides and new, more effective species that increased yields; industrialisation, and; the construction of the welfare state which offered educational opportunities and service sector jobs. At this time over a third of the labour force worked within agriculture and forestry, a situation that the other Nordic countries experienced in 1930 (GRANBERG L. 1992: 58). Prior to the Winter and Continuation wars Finland was a 'peasant state' and the welfare state project made a late breakthrough from the 40's onward as a result (GRANBERG L. 1999: 315). A shift in focus has occurred in agricultural policy making since the 50s and onwards. The policy climate has moved from settlement activities to income policy. When the old peasant society dissolved a new dependence on governmental activities was created. The impact of agrarian interests encouraged the development of universal coverage of social insurance to include entrepreneurs and farmers who were not wage earners in the technical sense (GRANBERG L. 1999: 313). In the second half of the 1960s a migration wave from the rural areas to the growth centres of the south and industries in Sweden cajoled the youth to leave the countryside and join the ranks of the wage earners. Many women left to educate themselves and men joined the rapidly growing construction

sector. During this same time period and continuing into the 1970's the government started curtailing agricultural production, removing the heavy subsidising of small holdings, "packaging of fields" (6) and also integrating farmers into the national income structure. The number of farms decreased with a third between the years 1964 and 1980. The change in policy climate has been drastic and rapid. In a period of twenty years the welfare state went from supporting small holders to stringent regulatory measures to force them out of production and to expand the scale and production capacity of Finnish farms (*ibidem*: 57).

The development of new forms of livelihood in the rural areas and specialisation of production has been characteristic from the 1980's onward as well as the tendency for farmers to turn to part-time farming and supplement their income through especially women's off-farm wage labour. Public sector jobs, also in the rural areas, were created as a result of the growth of the welfare state (*ibidem*: 59). Rigorous policies to curb agricultural production were in continuous use in the 1990s which weakened farmers' financial security and increased their sense of vulnerability, deepening further in 1995 when Finland joined the European Union. The situation has been particularly grave in the southern parts of the country where production prices dropped drastically. The number of farms in the municipalities under study has decreased by 25-35% since 1995 (MELA 2004).

Farming is in a vicious cycle of subsidies which it is hard to break out of. The cost of land is constantly rising, making it ever more difficult for young farmers to inherit. Farmers try to increase their income by increasing their yields through the use of more fertilisers, leading to a growing environmental problem and, with it, a growing need for subsidies and regulations to protect the environment (GRANBERG L. 1992: 61). With its peripheral location, on a European scale, and harsh climatic conditions affecting the size of yields, it is impossible for Finland to compete with the cheap, mass produced agricultural products of South and Central Europe. It is little wonder that Finnish farmers are concerned about their future and embittered over the control regimes they have been placed under and the lack of political leverage they feel they have in influencing the outcome of EU level negotiations. Farmers feel that the government, including the agrarian party, has betrayed them by supporting European Union membership, nor do they defend farmers' right to produce in a morally acceptable way. Recent changes in the grant system of the Common agricultural Policy (CAP) has meant that farmers are no longer compensated for their work input through the price of the product, but, rather through the number of hectares under cultivation or let to lie fallow to protect the environment (7).

One cannot judge the outcomes of negotiations between the government of Finland and the EU commission, nor how long the decided upon regulations will apply.

Dealing with Distress

Farmers are presently faced with a form of unpredictability different from what characterises farming in general – that of the whims of the climatic conditions – because it is controlled by decision makers beyond the boundaries of the Finnish nation and by national decision makers that, farmers feel, have betrayed them and their way of life. Not knowing the future, causes distress, which locally is expressed as worry, anxiety, sorrow and enduring silently. Bearing suffering is what I understand as an idiom of distress. It is a culturally and socially constructed way of expressing, explaining and identifying discomfort or anxiety, a way of understanding and being in the world (NICHTER M. 1981, PARSONS C. D. F. 1984, PARSONS C. D. F. - WAKELEY P. 1991). It is intimately connected to what Arthur Kleinman (has termed local moral worlds, in other words, what matters most and that which threatens the things that are at stake for individuals. What matters most points to what is dangerous because different social constructions of the human condition make people's life worlds change The infrapolitics of everyday social life is affected by political, social and cultural transformation happening beyond the local sphere, but it is at the micro level that the moral engages and inspires people to act (KLEINMAN A. 1999: 29). To Kleinman, suffering is social in a number of senses; firstly in the interindividual mode by having an effect on social relationships; secondly, as a collective experience as a triangulation of cultural meanings, collective behaviour and subjective responses; and lastly, by being reduced and objectified by professional discourses into bureaucratic categories (*ibidem*: 32-33).

Farmers seldom express their suffering verbally other than as criticism directed towards the European Union and talk on the central values of farming life. I heard many discussions around country house kitchen tables about the memories of hard labour involved in building drainage pipes, clearing the forest or harvesting work carried out around the clock. Farmers have been socialised into working hard since childhood and they expect an equally high working morale from their own children. So, how do they deal with this uncertainty of an unforeseen inspection or financial insecurity? I posit that distress is not only an issue of passively being in the world, but also of adjusting to life conditions that make it burdensome and

challenging to live. To me it can also be understood as an adjustment style (Radley A. 1989, 1994, Bury M. 1991), a life pattern that is intertwined with the personal biography. As such, it is about social performance, actively engaging with the surrounding world, producing on the land and maintaining the land. The ethos of production is part of a farmer's backbone, a habitual stance towards life. It is the meaning of life, especially in a culture characterised by a "cult of work" (Apo S. - Ehrnrooth J. 1996) and it is about the historical memory of the necessity of food security in the post-war years. Individuals tend to devise ways of making sense of the unexpected in many different contexts and localities from the witchcraft practices of the Azande (Evans-Pritchard E. E. 1937) to the Ugandan farmers studied by Susan Reynolds Whyte (Whyte S. 1997). They have a pragmatic stance towards life and seek to deal with uncertainty, to create some form of safety net to protect them from a 'precarious and perilous' world, rather than helplessly accept the facts (Dewey J. 1957 [1922], Jackson M. 1989: 15).

The idea of risk is, according to Mary Douglas, a central construct of our times (1986). We are obsessed with managing the threat of the unexpected. In an increasingly secularised world control of the unforeseen has shifted into the hands of individual actors, which is particularly prominent in medical discourse. Unexpected events are seen as risk-producing and as something normatively negative (Lock M. 1998, Gifford S. 1986 , Frankenberg R. 1993, Kaufert P. - O'Neil J. 1993, Martinez R. G. - Chavez L. R. - Hubbel F. A. 1997) or disordering (Becker G. 1997). Associating risk with disorder, danger and threats distances it from an engagement with the things that are at stake (Vail J. - Wheelock J. - Hill M. 1999).

Margaret Lock reminds us that «The break with divinatory practices prevalent before the development of modern science is not complete, because the idea of risk retains not only uncertainty about the future, but also permits the creation of a moral discourse» (Lock M. 1998: 10). In order to understand how people deal with moral discourses beyond simply that of health risks to include the totality of social experience and moral worlds that people live in, we need to consider the socially mediated, shared cultural meanings that shape people's actions. In the case of farmers of south west Finland the idea of uncertainty is a deeply moral one because at its core lies the clash between "good" farming and "regulation adapted" farming. Their resistance to the new regulations imposed by the EU is about continuing to act, to produce because abandoning the land implies more uncertainty than remaining on it. Leaving is a contingent act because it is a moral breach against the legacy left to them by their ancestors - land requires continuity. For most farmers it is the only job they know how to do

and for those near retirement age (50 years and older) the options are restricted in terms of finding other employment. "Good" farming makes sense because it respects the knowledge of past generations and it is embedded in local micro environments. Leaving fields to lie fallow and following other environmental measures, being forced to fill out complicated grant application forms and being subjected to inspection of their work is senseless, according to farmers.

What lies at the core of this clash is differing concepts of knowledge and land use. The practice of de-spatialisation of rural landscapes, which is part of the process of bureaucratic control, makes the forests and the fields of the south west into objects of spectator knowledge (DEWEY J. 1957 [1922]). They become phenomena to be viewed, as objects of distanced reflexive knowledge, rather than places moulded through purposive action and lived realities (JACKSON M. 1996). The absurd regulations of the EU and the burdensome bureaucracy involved will eventually cause the system to fall apart by itself, farmers reason. This is their hope for the future and their belief in the possibility of improvement. Spectator knowledge is based on being and understanding reality from the stand point of given truths. Practice based knowledge, on the other hand, deals with the changing, the particular, the contingent, the unexpected (DEWEY J. 1957 [1922]). Although most farmers in the south west are educated as either agronomists or agrologists (8), much of the knowledge they base their farming practices on is of a practical nature. It is a matter of combining knowledge on the suitability of crops for the type of land you have, knowing when to sow and harvest, engaging in preventive practices to minimise the spread of weeds and plant pests, predicting what types of crops are most likely to fetch a high price on the market. It is a complicated web of taking chances, using available resources, making investments and pure luck. The practice of living with uncertainty is a form of knowledge one can only get from experience and from oral information passed down from one generation to the next. Land to a producer is invested with so much more that just financial means. It contains the memories and knowledge of past generations, memories of the own labour put into it, love, caring and concern, skills that are particular to the locality of the land. To a "controlling bureaucrat" the land is viewed as a production unit meant to produce maximum yields and to be cultivated according to general, EU wide regulations and concepts of rurality.

The Common Agricultural Policy created a morally charged image of rurality linking material production and moral reproduction. John Gray explains that in the era of rural fundamentalism within the Common Agri-

cultural policy «Family farming sustains not just rural society, but society as whole characterised by the ideal of stability, justice and equality» (GRAY J. 2000: 60). Specific mechanisms for preserving rural localities were implemented such as the problem of overproduction leading to decreasing the number of people engaged in farming, counter acting low income levels in the farming sector, price support schemes and providing improvement and development grants. The result of the agricultural policies of the 1990s has lead to rurality being separated from agriculture. A shift occurs from agricultural to rural development policy where rural space no longer is primarily for agricultural production, but a location for consumption and, thus, the importance of farming has become marginalised in rural regions (GRAY J. 2000: 61-68).

Enduring Injustice

I will start with an interview excerpt of Christian, a man in his early forties whose father was a small holder farmer and left him with a farm of 50 hectares (arable and forest land). He talks about the appropriation of his forest which was on the "hitlist" and his reasoning about how local people deal with the moral dilemma of being dependent on an entity far removed from the context of their every day life, the European Union. He explains to me what he thinks of the EU administered environmental protection programme Natura 2000. He answers in a neutral tone, punctuated, at times, by a tone of incredulity:

> «The idea is good and one should protect nature. It's not an issue of that. There is a lot of good with it, but they could have done it differently. First they should have gone to the landowners and told them that this is what you have that is valuable, a few years earlier and tell them they are interested in buying that area of land and then start discussing how this will be done. Instead of the way it happened now. It came to the municipality. [...] It went via the municipality or was put up on the bulletin board there that my forest would be taken. It didn't even come to me at my home. [...] They should have discxussed with the land and forest owners. Now they (the landowners) became afraid of what this was all about. Then they took it even. They cut down their forest, most of them or many who had anything to cut. [...] I think the main thing for Natura was to get the hectares. There came demands from the EU to the government of Finland that the total areas of Finland were to be certain percentages. And then the most important was that they got the hectares. Now it's like this that the government has very many hectares of its own forest. They should have started picking from there first, that which is worth saving, that they own themselves. And then they would have gone out and picked from private people and done it in a neater way. None of this bureaucrat business, this authority business» (Christian 05.06.02).

Christian did not bother to protest although the government five years back took 14 hectares of his land because "there were some protected flowers in the forest". Nor did he resort to any drastic measures. He removed a few trees that were overgrown and left the rest because they were too small to fell. When I ask him if he considered protesting against the decision he replies in a matter-of-fact voice that it is pointless to start processing against the government because they will take the forest from him anyway and, in the meantime, he can do nothing with it. I ask if he later received any explanation as to why the landowners on the "hitlist" did not receive any information personally from the government, to their own homes about the appropriation decision. To this Christian laconically comments that;

> «The government does not need to explain why. The government is a person who does not need to apologise. At that time there were many debates in the paper. Now it's silent. Now it's not that important. They have not done anything with the forests. Actually the government couldn't give a damn about the forests, but just wanted to show the EU that they could amass the hectares. They are like little kids looking up to those that decide and want to please them, but this is no new thing. This was taking place already at the time of the Swedish colonisation» (Field diary 05.09.03).

Christian confirms the idea that local farmers have a tendency to accept without protest. He does not think farmers want to organise themselves to oppose the regulations;

> «Because it is so easy to buy people and this is what EU is doing now all the time. Why would you oppose something that you get paid for? Nor does the dog bite the hand that feeds it. It is EU that is now feeding the farmers».

Buying people is facilitated by the carelessness and indifference, a kind of apathy that has affected farmers who have struggled through a multitude of policy changes within a short span of recent history (see section below). The loathing of authority has its roots in an age-old lauding of the self-sufficient and free farmer, which is now constantly in the line of fire as Finnish agriculture has entered the EU era. In Finland a strong work ethic is central to people's notion of self and people are measured against the quality and quantity of the work they do (Roberts F. 1982, 1989, Silvasti T. 2001). It is not uncommon for farmers to feel that they do not want to be dependent on the state, like the unemployed or social welfare receivers in the cities. But they are undeniably caught in a moral dilemma; they do not want to be dependent on a system beyond their control, but cannot survive on the income they make in farming, not even with the aid of subsidies. Controlling bureaucrats used to live close to the producers. They were national decision makers and negotiators who presently cooperate with bu-

reaucrats and decision makers governing at both a geographical and moral distance from the Finnish farmer.

Christian's consternation over the government's need to please and obey the European Union, can, as he himself mentions, be traced back to a history of conquest. (please refer to the section below) An array of themes emerge in the sarcastically bitter story of Christian, but the main point is the conflict caused by a difference in interests and, above all, experience of acting with the landscape and differing concepts of land use and nature protection. These land and forest owners are the landscape that they are being demanded to give up. So, in effect, giving up land is giving up part of yourself and your history.

Non-Recognition of Practice Based Knowledge

Christian calls for an open discussion between landowners and the government as opposed to the impersonal and, he deems, underhanded way the information was communicated to him. The government was going to chop off a piece of his home, his inheritance and could not even tell it to him face-to-face. The manner of communication increased the sense of distance between those in control and those forced to subjugate themselves to the will of the EU. The whole issue of inspections, of the distant gaze of the bureaucrats is about the invasion of the home and also an invasion of bodies through the work conducted in the home, cultivating land, tending to forests.

So, why this reference to the value of the land in the interview excerpt? Landowners want recognition of the work and care they have put into maintaining the forest and the landscape, in general. The forests and the fields look the way they do because they have been moulded into that shape by the actions of landowners and it is a constant process of care. The landscape has to be maintained and nurtured to prevent Nature from encroaching on it. This value is also inscribed with the work of generations past and, as such, represents an important ancestral heritage. Forests are called reserve banks, pruned and tidied to last for generations, as a legacy for your children and as a source of income if one should need to invest to improve the productivity of the farm. In the past, forest income enabled farmers to mechanise agriculture. In the current situation of rising production costs and falling product prices, as well as a rising price of land, income generation gains an increasingly important role. Financial security is vital in a situation of growing uncertainty about the future. Forests pro-

vide local people with many other goods like fire wood, construction materials, berries, mushrooms and meat from hunting as well as a production site for home made vodka. These gathering activities are tied to both a cultural heritage of being "forest people" who view the forest as a source of safety, peace and sacredness [9] and to the idea of self-sufficiency [10].

Uncertainty about the future and the vulnerability caused by government control causes fear and fear, in turn, causes distress. Some locals on the "hitlist" decided to take to drastic measures and destroy what they had built up. It was their only way of protesting against a system they felt was unjust. The irony of the whole situation is that senseless and inexplicable demonstrations of power and control caused destruction instead of protection. Some landowners destroyed nature because it was wrested from them. They felt that their concept of nature protection was neither recognised nor respected [11]. Local people also question how long the appropriated land will remain as protected areas or what the government will actually do with the areas. They suspect that before long the project will be abandoned and perhaps the land will be sold off to strangers or investors who lack an emotional engagement with the land.

Christian's demands for neatness in the manner of appropriation points to a need for respecting what is private and part of the home. The farmers I interviewed see the home in terms of a totality, an unbroken whole or wholeness consisting of the buildings, garden, fields and forests of a farm. It is both a place to live, to live out social relations and a place of work [12].

Bureaucracy and Control

The freedom and autonomy of the Finnish farmer is part of an ancient cultural script of managing on your own, of being self-sufficient, of practicing self-control and of the cult of work [13] (Apo S. - Ehrnrooth J. 1996: 31). The most commonly mentioned positive feature of farming as a profession is freedom. Another local farmer, Rikard, who has 150 hectares under cultivation (100 hectares rented land and 50 of his own land) talks about the loss of this freedom because of increased control and demands of compliance;

> «What has driven us even more into the ground has been since EU membership. Now we no longer are independent. We are totally dependent on our subsidies. Half of my income comes through subsidies. It is not motivating to produce any more. The ones who are effective and try to produce more and of better quality do not gain anything from it. You often just have higher costs. We are reaching a limit where so called pseudo-farming is entering

> the system. One is not as exact any more, people are careless and do not invest an input in the same way (as before) [...] Many farmers make their cultivation plans based on what they get subsidies for and not on what they can produce of high quality. That is what makes it less interesting to be a farmer today. We are constantly watched, we constantly have to write what we are doing all the time and there are lots of regulations. I find that we somehow have the same system you had in Russia before.(How does it feel to be watched all the time?) It feels unpleasant. You find it is strange that you can't work freely and care for your farm in the best possible way without constantly submitting reports on what you are doing. Dependence on a subsidy is not motivating. [...] You have to accept the system if you want to be a farmer. If you don't accept it you have to stop immediately. There are no choices. [...] We are members of EU and totally dependent on them. It is Brussels that governs us» (Rikard 08.11.02).

His worry about carelessness due to a lack of motivation, previously based on the desire to produce a lot (of grains, produce) and of high quality, relates back to the idea of untidiness. A tidy landscape communicates to viewers a vision of a moral order and bears witness to the fact that the individuals who work the land are decent and hard working. A tidy landscape is invested with emotional value and the memory of physical labour.

Rikard's comment on how the regulated system of farming today reminds him of the Kolchos system of the Sovjet era indicates a fear of the eastern threat. The territory of Finland has been invaded and its people subjugated to the regulations and decrees of invading powers (14). This has happened in very recent history at the time of the Winter and Continuation Wars when the Sovjetunion threatened to, once again, take over Finland. A small country fought a giant and won. It is a moral master narrative that Finns seldom forget. This also implies that we are a people used to bearing suffering, to endure in silence. But these sacrifices have produced something of great value – the national home, the independent state of Finland.

Some farmers simply just get on with work although they lack motivation due to the new regulations. Silja believes farmers should get their pay from the work they conduct on their land;

> Silja:«[...] Then there is this thing that they say that it makes no difference what you sow any more…you do not get any money from the fields. Whats the point of doing anything? It is a big thing for Finland that we go and do a thing like this. You should get that salary there from fields and not from a counter [in the welfare office]. The whole idea of it is lost! But it still has to be cared for according to good practice»
>
> Interviewer: «What does it mean?»
>
> Silja: «The same as before. That's what its based on»

> Interviewer: «But if there isn't anything that gives you motivation then where should it come from?»
>
> Silja: «But you have to work anyways. Care for it in the same way as before. According to good practice» (Silja 28.07.03).

Another local couple, Maija and Lasse, who own a large farm of around 100 hectares of arable land explain to me why farmers find farm inspections and the filling out of grant application to be burdensome. Built into the system is a practice which contradicts their moral perception of "good farming practice" and according to which the goal of inspections is to find 'guilty' farmers.

> Lasse: «[…] filling out the forms, bureaucracy […] this is something I shouldn't be dealing with as a farmer. I should be on my field or in the barn working. Whether I have filled in [the forms] in the right way and whether it follows what I have done outside [on the fields] and additionally it should follow the regulations».
>
> Maija: «And then there is this that even though you haven't done anything consciously in another way than what is required in the regulations you are punished for it. This is a heavy thing«
>
> Interviewer: «What about the inspections?»
>
> Lasse: «It depends a bit on the grant type, but its about five or ten percent of farms that are inspected. [...] If you have a farm that has done some kind of mistake a year ago then you are blacklisted. Then you are inspected, inspected, inspected».
>
> Maija: «Then it is so cunning this thing about making mistake or doing it in the right way. Here nearby there is a farm that had filled in the papers in such a way that it benefited the EU, but still it wasn't the right way so it had to be corrected and first then you got the grant when he corrected it. These are such small things and so unnecessary. It does not impact positively nor negatively on the end result, but you can be punished and that is very negative, but for the EU it is of no consequence».
>
> Lasse: «The whole system is built up in such a way that in the EU they say that five percent of the farms make some mistakes and if they do not find them [the mistakes] they have done their job poorly. Then the EU comes and inspects our national inspectors. Then they get in trouble and they have to find five percent of mistake makers among our farmers, because that amount is statistically found there in continental Europe. If many mistakes are found there then just as many should be found here in Finland».
>
> Maija: «The Finnish morale is so high»
>
> Lasse: «extremely few [farmers] really try to act irresponsibly. Mistakes happen because this system is so complicated» (Maija and Lasse 25.06.02).

The control system does to make a differentiation between those producers who have misreported with intent and those who have done it by mistake. Honesty is a deeply ingrained virtue in Finnish society and being indirectly accused of cheating is experienced as an insult.

Coping Through Politics

Some farmers develop political means of dealing with the dire conditions of farming today. Roy tells me that because he actively engages in a producers' organisation, which brings him knowledge and the opportunity to meet producers from both Finland and abroad, he has hope for the future and the strength to continue farming (15). He believes that the bad aspects of the system, such as the senseless regulations, will be gradually removed. The opportunity to express opinions, and in this way influence agricultural policy, also is a form of insurance for the future:

> «What helps me is that [...] if some thing is bad you don't have to wait for a very long time for a change to come [...] In many things you can have an idea that it will not last in the long run so I will put up with it as long as it lasts because I know it will be better then [...] It gives me strength to move on. No matter what I stand it a bit better because [I am active in a producers organisation] and in this way I am closer to decision making. What I say carries a bit further» (Roy 23.07.02).

Christian, Rikard, Roy, Silja, Lasse and Maija demonstrate a pragmatic stance towards life in their opinions on the control regime they have been subjected to since European Union membership. They know a country cannot survive without producing its own food and they believe in the solidarity of the Finnish consumer. Finns want to eat pure food produced in Finland, they reason.

Engaging Uncertainty

Many producers complain about the binding nature of their work. They seldom have holidays or visit their relatives and friends. Although many of them find their work is senseless, due to the low economic compensation they receive for it, they stay in place (16). As one of the ethnographic examples shows, farmers in the area of my field study do not actively protest against the appropriation and surveillance activities. They live with the constant risk of being inspected or having their land taken, but stay on the land. This idea of enduring distress and the anxiety caused by an uncertain future is something that I want to link directly with what I term as purposive suffering, "good" suffering. By patiently enduring difficult times in life farmers' produce continuity. They have through the ages suffered in their own way and seen this suffering as part of their life. Life in harsh weather conditions, where large parts of the arable land has been cleared from the forest has required many sacrifices that have produced concrete results. It has also required certain forms of risk management in the form

of investments and savings. For farmers it is natural to think that the importance of producing food makes their suffering meaningful, valuable and honourable. It is a form of suffering the produces a "good" landscape, as opposed to a de-spatialised, objectified landscape characteristic of the EU perspective. The production of "good farming practice" is mainly about social performance. It is not theorised or even discussed that much. It is just done through engaged practice and it is communicated among farmers through action, a knowing-by-doing.

Concepts of risk assume that contingency is a threat to individual experience or social order, but if we broaden our scope to consider life as a whole, as a web of social relations and performances we will notice that individual actors and local communities engage contingency as a normatively neutral aspect of life, belonging to the idea of life as lived. Individuals engage with indeterminacies as a way of indicating their relation to others and the world (Whyte S. 1997, Malaby T. 2002). Similarly, enduring the uncertainties of farming life, the whims of nature, price fluctuations and, now the shifting agricultural grant policies of the European Union is embedded in the web of life for farmers. Farmers devise their own ways of making sense of the unexpected by being actors that engage contingency as a part of the totality of life.

Notes

(1) Natura 2000 is the environmental programme of the European Union whose main goal is to create the European ecological network (of special areas of conservation), and to integrate nature protection requirements into other EU policies such as agriculture, regional development and transport. It includes policies to prevent the destruction of natural habitats and landscapes. (European Commission 2004)

(2) After the Winter War (1939-1940) and the Continuation War (1941-1944) local families were required to give up land to the refugees. By making the land into a commercial venture landowners could avoid relinquishing land. Some of the first extensive apple orchards were established on the island as a result.

(3) The practice of satellite imaging and farm inspections was introduced in Finland as a result of European Union membership. Inspections were carried out on a minimal scale before when farmers' income was based on selling their produce (it was integrated into the price of the product). The compensation system changed with European Union membership shifting to grants being based on the number of hectares under cultivation and/or number of fields left to lie fallow for environmental reasons. The regulatory system of the EU stipulates that inspections are a prerequisite for receiving grants (European Commission regulation no. 3508/92 and no. 3887/92).

(4) Settlement activities have been practiced since the 1500's. After the civil war a law was passed to give crofters the right to buy the property they cultivated and a fund was set up to provide

them with loans. A total of 277000 hectares of arable land was lost after the Winter War and Continuation War and 460000 refugees needed land. 40% of this land was appropriated from large land owners. Settlement activities continued until the 60's. A total of 100 000 new small holder farms were established as a result of these resettlement activities (ALESTALO M. 1980: 117).

(5) Because Finland sided with the Germans in the last stages of WW II, as a means of regaining land lost to the Russians, they had to pay war payments to the Sovjetunion. According to a peace treaty signed in Paris 1947 between Finland and the U.S.S.R. 300 million gold dollars (amounting to an estimated $570 million in 1952) was to be paid by Finland to the Sovjet Union in reparations. The debt was paid off 1947-52 (JUTIKKALA E. - PIRINEN K. 2002).

(6) The law regarding the packing of fields, i.e. included compensation paid to farmers if they packaged their field either by not producing on it or by planting forest on the land or forced them to pay the government if they cleared field land from the forest.was introduced in 1969 (KORKIASAARI J. 2000: 140). During the 1980's additional regulatory measures were taken. A series of 15 laws and regulations were stipulated to curb production, this (*Raivausta on säännetty palkkioin ja rangaistuksin* 2000).

(7) The compensation system consist of many different types of grants; a national grant, the national component of the LFA grant (Less Favoured Nation) and a CAP grant (Common Agricultural Policy) (MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE 2004).

(8) On the island of Koppars an agricultural school was established in 1906 (SAGALUNDS MUSEUM 2004). Most local, Swedish-speaking farmers have received their basic education in agriculture from there and some have attended continued education at an agricultural college in the town of Turku.

(9) In pre-Christian times people worshipped sacred groves in the forest. The intimate relationship between people and trees in Finland is still strong (KOVALAINEN R. - SEPPO S. 1997).

(10) Following the First World War the food security dropped to 40% and there was hunger in Finland because grains could not be imported (*Raivausta on säännetty palkkioin ja rangaistuksin* 2000). Food scarcity was also a feature of the later wars years (1939-40 & 1941-44).

(11) The Natura 2000 network in Finland was criticised for a lack of transparency in the preparation stage. In the southwest of Finland the conflict between private landowners and the Government of Finland was the most visible because of the large percentage of private land in the area and the intensity of land use for cultivation. Also arable land was demanded by Natura. Landowners that did complain against the appropriation decisions feared that Natura would compromise agricultural activities in an already hardening competitive climate within agriculture (OKSANEN A. 2003).

(12) This has been confirmed by other recent studies conducted on Finnish farmers (SILVASTI T. 2001: 272).

(13) The rationality of the Finnish farmer was based on self-control, long-term planning and managing risks. The harsh climatic conditions and short growing season required farmers to have very broad-based knowledge of cultivation, food preservation and building (APO S. - EHRNROOTH J. 1996: 29-30).

(14) Swedish colonisation of Finnish territory began as early as 500 A.D. and around 800 A.D. it became an important trading route for the Vikings. The first crusades from Sweden to Finland took place in the 1100's. The Swedish control over Finland ended 1808 when Finland became part of the Russian empire until independence in 1917 (JUTIKKALA E. - PIRINEN K. 2002, ALLART E. - STARK C. 1981).

(15) Roy is also a board member of the municipal council.

(16) The income structure of farmers has lagged behind the general income development trend in Finland. The reduction of the grant amounts and the market and production cost situation does not promise any improvements in terms of the income level (MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTY 2003).

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