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Korea Society for Forests and Culture

Matti Palo

COEVOLUTION OF FORESTRY AND CULTURE IN FINLAND

Model of coevolution

Coevolution of forestry and culture has been a very specific Finnish outcome of the symbiotic evolution of forest sector (forestry and forest industries) and society. Ecological, socio-economic and political impacts appeared to both directions. Parallel coevolution of impacts can be traced in the various fields of arts.

Cultural sustainability has been lately globally included as a component in Sustainable Forest Management along with economic, social and environmental dimensions. Especially since the 1860s to the 1960s the forest industrialists invited also some of the foremost Finnish architects to design their pulp and paper mills, residencies, club houses, churches, schools and hospitals. Architecture is, however, excluded in this paper.

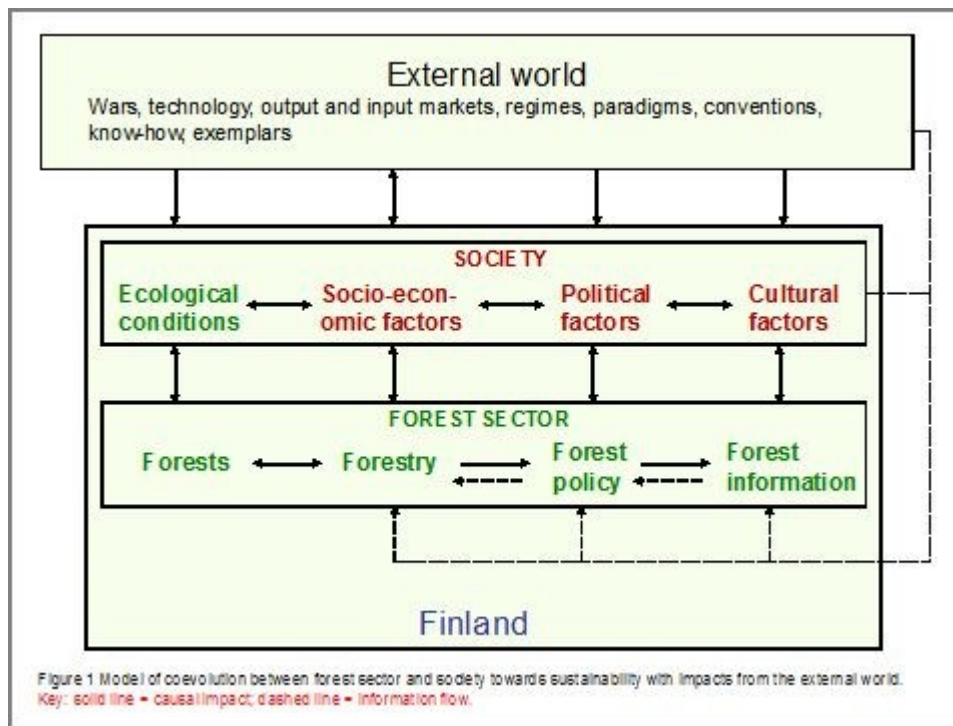
Coevolution has been defined as interactions between two systems with sufficient intensity and long duration to influence the fitness of both. I introduce here a causal model of coevolution of forest sector and society (Figure 1).

The model identifies ecological, socio-economic, political and cultural factors in coevolution between a forest sector and a society. Here I restrict my presentation on the interaction between the Finnish forest sector and culture.

Forest ecosystems have created multiple services for culture in Finland, such as esthetics of forest landscape, forest recreation, orienteering and other forest sports, research and education, spiritual heritage, forest history, forest archeology and various forest related arts. I further restrict my presentation to concern the coevolution of forest sector and the various arts. Literature will be first analyzed.

Impacts of forest sector on literature

When we fly across Finland in a clear day, it looks like the whole country is covered by forest. In fact, the forest cover is 74 % of the land area, which is highest in Europe and one of the highest in the whole world. This is the landscape of the classic Finnish novel. Its great tradition was based on forest.



Realism in literature penetrated among the authors in Europe in the 1850s. The authors were expected to write about contemporary events and their social problems. The rich humor in these novels differentiates them from naturalism. The big tradition of the Finnish literature starts from the forest and only gradually moves to the town.

The epic poem of the Kalevala was compiled from the Finnish and Karelian folklore and edited by Elias Lönnrot and first published in Finnish in 1836. It is internationally the best known literary work from Finland and translated already early into English and into numerous other languages. The poems had been maintained as oral culture over generations until the early 19th century, when Lönnrot walked around eastern Finland and Karelia to listen the singers of these poems. They referred to the mythology of the ancient Finns and reflected their living milieus.

A tall oak threatened the folks in Kalevala by gradually shadowing the whole sky. Finally, a tiny man was identified, who was skillful enough to save the people by cutting down this oak. Sampsa Pellervoinen prospected timber for Väinämöinen's boat. He discussed with aspen and pine, which convinced him of not being suitable for boat making. Then Sampsa came to an oak, which boasted with its qualities for boat making and volunteered to be cut. The Kalevala gave also description, how Sampsa sowed different tree species in their fitting sites. These are just a few samples, how forests are reflected in the mythology heritage of the Kalevala.

Folklore helps us to understand, how an ancient Finn lived in the subsistence economy and observed the immense forests around him and how forest images had impacts on him. Stories, fairy tales, beliefs, rituals, riddles, phrases, rhymed folk songs, magic formulas, lyrical and narrative poems interpret this mutual relationship each of them from somewhat different perspectives. Forest folklore can be divided into profane and sacred dimensions. Bear worshipping is an illustrative representative of the latter dimension.

In Johan Ludvig Runeberg's view towards the middle of the 19th century the landscape must be looked at in summer, it has to be viewed from top down, the landscape has forests, lakes, arable fields, perhaps a house, it is fixed to certain locality mentioned by name and it carries a specific lightning with some voices from the nature or from a village. This landscape is a linkage between

poetry and visual arts, where the panorama appeared simultaneously in Finland.

Runeberg has been promoted as a national poet in Finland. However, he wrote all his texts in Swedish, which is a minority language in Finland. He wrote in 1826 about sceneries and folks of central Finland, where he had served as a home tutor. Runeberg viewed nature and forest both as a friend and as an enemy. Runeberg pioneered in Finland in conceptualizing the Finnish landscape as a big panorama. This appeared specifically in his most famous poetry work "Second lieutenant Stål's stories", which was first published in 1860. This was just before Aleksis Kivi started his creative career.

Aleksis Kivi was the first author to publish major novels and plays in Finnish language from the 1860s until the 1870s. His novel "The seven brothers" was published in 1870. The seven brothers in the book had lost their parents but they were already mostly grown up youngsters. They became in disagreement with a parish clerk, who tried to teach them to learn reading. Also other conflicts with their neighbors appeared. Accordingly, the brothers decided to rent out their main farm and move into a wilderness with hunting and gathering as well as with shifting cultivation.

The novel describes realistically with humor the hard life in the wilderness. The father of the brothers had accepted in the Great Land Reform partly a fire burned forest site and in compensation he received seven times the regular forest area. The brothers moved to a most distant location in their farm a forest covered Impivaara hill with their horse, dog and guns. They built a cottage there, where they lived for ten years apart from the rest of the community. The book is among the all time best-sellers in Finland. It has been translated into several languages, also in English.

The forest is an ally and protector of the brothers against the community. Realism in the Seven Brothers appears at three levels: in speech, in the description of the characters and in the forest milieu. To some extent Kivi describes the forest milieu in a poetic way. In the book there are nine occasions, where the forest view is described as distant landscape view, which was perhaps imitated to some extent from his predecessor Johan Ludvig Runeberg. Kivi's book became an all times' success also as a drama.

Juhani Aho was one of the followers of Aleksis Kivi. He wrote his short stories and novels in Finnish a little later than Kivi, starting in the early 1880s. Forest is reflected in many of his works. "Forest trail" is in this respect a specific essay. It describes the beauties of forest what the trail has shown him. The trail is a magic living being with a social mind. Later on, Aho became a well known author of hunting and fishing, where he always described, not only the activities, but also their milieus, the forests and landscapes.

Onni Wetterhoff was a forester and an eager hunter, fisher and author of these hobbies. He wrote his novels and short stories in Swedish, a total of about 30 pieces during the later years of Aleksis Kivi and the early years of Juhani Aho. Wetterhoff describes hunting of bear, wolf and lynx mostly with the help of dogs. Most of the stories illustrate hunting and fishing as a hobby of his own and the members of the local hunting association in Hämeenlinna, 100 km north of Helsinki. In a few stories professional hunters are also described. A strong literary tradition of this kind has survived strong in Finland until today.

Later on, also Johannes Linnankoski, Joel Lehtonen, Ilmari Kianto, Pentti Haanpää before the World War II and others also afterwards were inspired by forests and forestry in their novels and short stories. Also loggers, timber floaters and workers of forest industries often became described by Finnish authors, such as Hella Wuolijoki, who directed some time a sawmill company, in her plays in the 1930s, Toivo Pekkanen in his novel "In the shadow of

a mill”, and Kalle Päätalo. Päätalo wrote 39 novels during 1960-1998. In most of them he described the milieus, lives and fates of loggers and log floaters mostly along the River Iijoki in Finland.

Runeberg was an author and a poet. Later on, a number of Finnish speaking poets appeared with their inspiration in forests, forestry and forest industries. Aaro Hellaakoski wrote a number of poems during 1916-1952. Among them a poem on “Wilderness” (Salomaa) appeared: “A wilderness has been created for no human inhabitation, in order that the God alone could live there.”

Paavo Haavikko passed away only in 2009. He published many collections of poems since the 1950s. “Trees, all of their green” (Puut kaikki heidän vihreytensä) with this statement “There exist many wise men, but on the other hand no dull tree.” Haavikko became invited as a member of poetry to the Finnish Academy some years back.

No doubt, forest related novels and poetry have been published in different parts of the world since the time immemorial. For example, Henry David Thoreau published his book “Walden; or life in the woods” in 1845 in the United States. His masterpiece novel was based on his experiment of living alone in a forest. Dalene Matthee’s novel “Circles in the forest” of 1984 described the life of loggers and wild elephants in the natural forests along the Indian Ocean in the East-south of South Africa during the latter half of the 19th century.

Why Finnish literary tradition is different from other countries, that perhaps nowhere else such a sizeable share of literature has been devoted to forest sector. The Finns have lived, and still live in the forests, even the towns are often in the forests, the welfare of the Finns was traditionally forest-based and recreation in forests has always been popular – today Finland has more hunters than any other member country of the European Union. And Finland’s population is only five million.

Forest sector provided just themes and milieus for the authors and poets, while in the visual arts strong sponsorships appeared by the forest industrialists. The coevolution of forest sector and the visual arts is therefore of particular interest to be introduced next.

Impacts of forest sector on visual arts

The prevailing socio-economic-environmental importance of forests, forestry and forest industries in Finland since the late 19th century has had many cultural impacts also via visual arts. A clear reflection on visual arts can be traced also from the forest-based literature.

Werner Holmberg was pioneering in painting forest and his pictures may have had an impact on Aleksis Kivi’s descriptions of forest panoramas. Holmberg painted his “Finnish coniferous forest” in 1858 in Düsseldorf, Germany, where he was then studying painting. Pine was Holmberg’s favorite tree. Hjalmar Munsterhjelm, Bernd Lindholm and Victor Westerholm continued the tradition of painting forest images. Lindholm wanted to paint especially spruces, as we can see in his “The interior of forest” of 1878. Westerholm painted mostly birches.

The national romantics appeared in visual arts in Finland in the 1890s. A large scale industrial logging had continued then for a couple of decades. Many artists opposed “killing of trees” and they wanted to travel far enough to find and experience real wilderness. The foremost Finnish artists travelled around 1900 in the vast forests and wildernesses especially in Karelia, the cradle of the Kalevala. They created a number of still famous paintings in Finland.

The Kalevala has inspired a number of artists. Akseli Gallén-Kallela (1865-1931) was clearly the foremost one among them. He has been identified as the best illustrator of

“The Kalevala” and also of “The Seven brothers”. He painted many pictures with forest wilderness as a milieu, e. g. “A sheppard boy” (Paimenpoika Paanajärveltä), “Hunting of lynx” (Ilveksen metsästys). Gallén-Kallela had one atelier at Tarvaspää on a beautiful island in Helsinki, but he also established another

atelier “Kallela” in a wilderness at Ruovesi, 60 km north of Tampere. Paper industrialist G. A. Serlachius supported financially Gallén-Kallela in various ways.

Eero Järnefelt travelled in 1892 from Helsinki to Lapinlahti, next to Iisalmi, 600 km north of Helsinki to paint a shifting cultivating family in action (Photo 1). We can see in this painting a wide open forest site of shifting cultivation. A family is working hard to roll on the lying burning tree trunks to an area, where no fire existed. We know by name each member of the family. In the foreground a 13-year old girl is also working hard. In the real painting at Ateneum National Art Gallery in Helsinki we can see how her eyes are tired. The painting looks very realistically to describe those days still rather common shifting cultivation.

Photo 1 (in a separate message)

Pekka Halonen became the leading forest painter in the 1910s and 1920s. He innovated painting of snow covered trees and forests. His “Pine seedlings in snow” (Lumisia männyntaimia) of 1899 provides a good sample of this trend. “Wilderness” (Erämaa) by Halonen also in 1899 became one of the foremost symbols in defence against Russian imperialism. Halonen may have had some inspiration for his style from the Japanese art of wood painting and also of the photos of I. K. Inha, who published his photo album in 1895 with a number of photos of forests in winter.

Juho Rissanen (1873-1950) was one of the first visual artists, who grew up from the Finnish working class and was able to educate himself as a painter. “The log floaters” by him is a big glass painting at the Headquarters of the Bank of Finland. Also other artists made several paintings inspired by forestry works or forest nature. Log floating and logging were frequently painted by those early artists.

Aimo Kanerva was active in painting numerous varieties of spruces and spruce stands from the 1930s to the 1980s. Veikko Vionoja painted after the World War II traditional log houses in Pohjanmaa/Ostrobothnia with sun and shadows in various settings and seasons. He liked also to paint the interiors of these buildings.

The forest industry companies were sponsoring these artists by ordering paintings of their families, e. g. Serlachius family by Gallén-Kallela and mills, e.g. Läskelä paper mill by Eero Järnefelt of 1921, Voikkaa paper mill by Santeri Salokivi of 1937, Sunila pulp mill by Hugo Backmansson of 1938. Accordingly, not only Serlachius, but also United Paper Mills and some other companies have nice galleries of their forest-related visual arts.

Forest symbolism was represented already in 1863, when the first notes of the Finnish markka were printed. The 100 markka note was decorated with a branch of a pine. Eliel Saarinen designed new notes in 1909 and again in 1922 with pine and spruce motives. The domestic coins have since the independence been decorated with pines and spruces until the end of the Finnish markka in 1998, when Finland joined the euro – the joint currency of the European Union.

A statue of a logger in peeling pulpwood (Photo2) was designed and carved by Kalervo Kallio. It was erected in 1955 in Rovaniemi by the Artic Circle. Kalervo Kallio was then one of the foremost sculptors in Finland. He had created also an international reputation by making by

invitation the busts of a number of heads of states, prominent cabinet ministers and scientists.

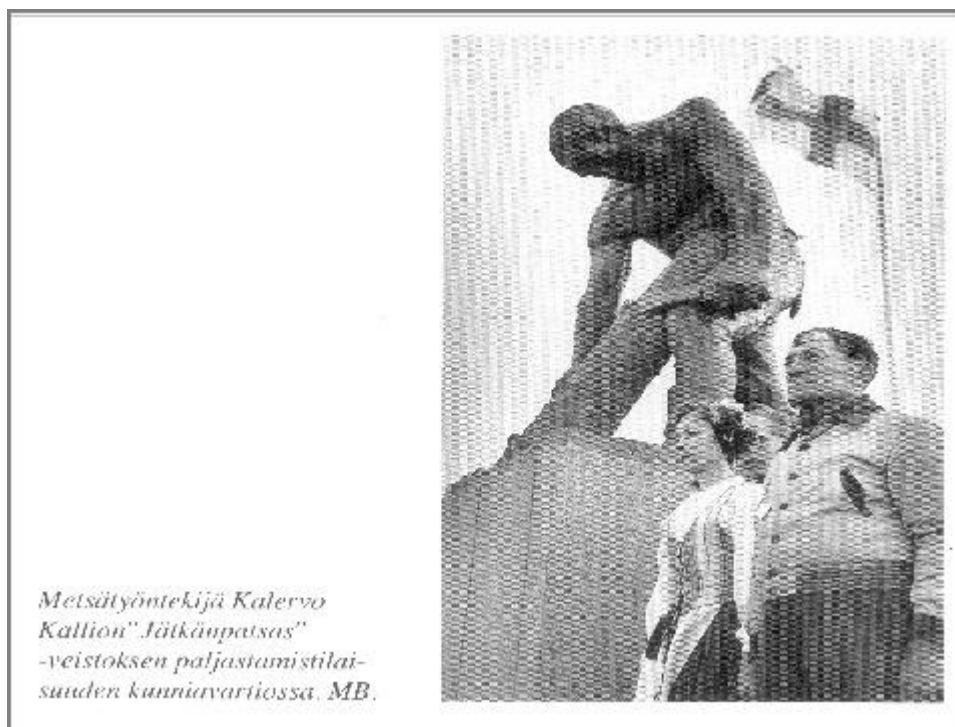


Photo 2. The inauguration in 1955 of a statue of a logger in Rovaniemi. Sculptured by Kalervo Kallio. The national flag of Finland at the background (white and blue).

Tampere was located by major rapids between two lakes. It became early twentieth century the most industrialized town in Finland. A couple of paper companies operated there among firms in textiles, shoes and metal manufacturing. A competition appeared among the various companies in sponsoring culture. In 1928 Rafael Haarla, a paper producer, donated a large amount of funding to decorate the new bridge across the rapids. Väinö Aaltonen, a most well-known sculptor then in Finland, was invited to create four major sculptures of local medieval hunters on the railings of the bridge.

It is exciting to realize that forests and forestry have also left strong traces in music in Finland. Similarly to the visual arts music had impacts not only directly from the forest sector but also via forest-related literature and poetry.

Impacts of forest sector on music

In the analysis of musical compositions and forest three categories have been identified: symbolic use, music and text. The first category has been described as follows: "Although the Finnish symphonic compositions are not programmatic, many works have been persistently interpreted as expressions of the mythical past of the Finnish people expressions of the depths of forest, of primal obscurity." Musical symbolism tells more about the composer than about the composition. In forest related compositions there is usually a positive voice to be detected.

Jean Sibelius (1865-1957), the greatest composer in Finland, once around 1900 travelled with his piano for inspiration to Koli, remote forested mountain accessible only by boat across the Lake Pielinen, 90 km north of Joensuu in eastern Finland.

Jean Sibelius composed a series of piano music with such names as "Mountain ash", "Pine", "Spruce", "Birch", and "Aspen". Many other compositions by him were also inspired by forests,

such as “Fairy tale” and Tapiola. Fairy tale (Satu in Finnish) is considered to imply the heart of forest. Tapiola is the name of the mythological forest, which was the realm of Tapio, the king of Tapiola. This music is thought to be associated with forest rather than to describe forest or as Olin Downes, of USA said in 1945 that the immense lungs of forest breath in this music.

A great deal of forest music is based on the text. Sibelius also composed “A song of a forest wanderer” (Metsämiehen laulu) by Aleksis Kivi. The role of forest to the singer himself is provided by the text: I would like to be the son of the forest, a hero of a noble spruce stand, on the grounds of Tapiola I wrest with a bear, and I shall forget the world. In other words, when a man wants to be alone he will go to the forest.

The librettos of the Finnish one hundred operas often deal with forest motives. The first one “The hunting of the King Karl” (Kung Karls jakt) had its premiere in 1852 in Helsinki. Zachris Topelius, a Swedish speaking “Uncle of fairy tales”, had created the libretto and Fredrik Pacius, born in Hamburg, Germany, but immigrated earlier to Finland, had composed it. Another opera “Juha” was composed by Aarre Merikanto in 1922 but its premiere was not before 1958. The libretto was edited by Aino Ackté, an opera singer, based on the novel of Juhani Aho. A family drama takes place largely in a forest milieu in Karelia.

The composers liked especially national romantic poetry. In patriotic songs the connotation of forest images depends on the type of forest. Coniferous forests and trees are used to symbolize something wild and non-cultural, while non-coniferous forests and trees are symbols of civilization and culture. The true forest of patriotic songs is, however, coniferous one, which symbolizes the archetypal sense of being a Finn.

Also in light music we may have hundreds of forestry, timber floating and forests inspired pieces. Often they have been composed for movies of such milieus. A major collection of singing tradition among loggers and timber floaters was compiled in the 1990s. The aim was to identify both forest-related songs and melodies used in meetings and festivities of loggers, floaters and other forestry staff. A total of nearly one thousand songs were recorded. A number of songs of highest quality, the words, notes with a few verbal introductions and numerous photos were published in this book.

“Forestry broadcasting” (“Metsäradio”) has been a specific, perhaps unique in the world, cultural appearance since 1946. The Finnish governmental and national broadcasting corporation YLE mobilized one hour weekly program with news and know-how on forestry, as well as entertainment for loggers in numerous faraway logging camps of those early days. During the first postwar decade the number of loggers was at its all time heights. Light forestry-related songs wished by the listeners have had a pronounced position in this program, which for long time was started with a song “All the time the pines are sighing...” (“Vielä niitä honkia humisee...”). This program continues its success still today.

Last but not least interesting is to find out the impacts of forestry and log floating on Finnish movies.

Impacts of forest sector on movies

The National Forest Museum Lusto has about 500 forest-based Finnish films in its archives. They are both documents and narratives. This richness of forest-related films is specific character of Finnish film production. Hardly any other country has so high share of the total film production dedicated to forest motives.

“The bride of a floater” (Koskenlaskijan morsian) was among the first movies made in Finland. It was produced in 1923 and was a silent film. It was directed by Erkki Karu, who also made the

script based on a novel by Väinö Kataja in 1914. Suomi Filmi Oy was the producing company. It became a success in the 1920s. In 1937 Valentin Vaala directed another version but with sound of the same theme.

Teuvo Pakkala wrote in 1899 a play “Along the river of logs” (Tukkijoella), which described the life of the loggers floating logs down a river. It became not only an evergreen play, but also an evergreen movie in Finland. In fact, the first film out of it was done in 1928, the second one in 1937 and the third one in 1951. About a hundred of narrative films must have been produced in Finland until 1960 with major inspiration from forestry and floating of timber.

Later on a number of forest-related films were based primarily on music and songs. In the 1950s some number of forest movies came out without any specific theme but full of songs in varying forest milieus. The forest related films can be identified as specific to Finland as the Western films have been for the identity of the United States of America.

Impacts of the arts on forest sector

I have reviewed here the coevolution of forestry and culture as follows: impacts of the forest sector on literature, visual arts, music, and on movies. So far I have mostly described the impacts of the forest sector on the arts. We may also ask what were the impacts of the arts on the forest sector in Finland?

The visual arts were in intimate interaction with forest-related literature and poetry. Both of them played a strong role in raising the Finnish national identity in the late 19th century and early 20th century. The paintings were widely introduced in the schools and other educational institutions in raising the national identity but also the important role of the forests and the forest sector in the national economy. The coevolution operated by sponsoring of the visual artists and in response by strengthening the image of forest sector among the politicians and the citizens.

“Those forest concepts and images, which were created towards the end of the 19th century, are embodied into the present day through among other things patriotic songs sung at schools. They tell about the national “original time” of Finland, they create a mythical and sacred atmosphere for forest images.”

A number of forest-related paintings, such as “A Great Black Woodpecker” (“Palokärki”) by Akseli Gallén-Kallela and “Osara has spoken” (“Osara on puhunut”) a century later, have certainly modified the values and attitudes of the Finns favorable for forest conservation and for expanding the national parks.

Pentti Haanpää and a number of other authors described the poor life conditions of loggers and peasants extracting logs with their horses during the first decades of the 20th century. Their novels must have had impacts on the government and the parliament in improving the social conditions of the employees in forestry, e. g. the first law on housing of loggers in 1927 and the mobilization of the follow-up of the wages of loggers in 1933.

The high epoch for this coevolution of the forest sector and the arts was during 1860-1965. That was a period when forestry played a most important role in the economic development of Finland.

Forest industry firms were then mostly family-owned. The industrial families competed with each other about the prestige what the sponsoring of the various arts could bring to the families and their firms. The situation in Finland resembled the epoch of the renaissance among the numerous principalities in Italy during the 15th century! The globalized contemporary Finnish forest industry corporations have no more such hobbies.

Reference:

Palo, Matti and Lehto Erkki 2011. Private or socialistic forestry? Forest transition in Finland vs deforestation in the tropics. Springer/World Forests X. Dordrecht et al. 442 p.

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COEVOLUTION OF FORESTRY AND CULTURE IN FINLAND IN 1860-1960

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OUTLINE

1. INTRODUCTION

2. MODEL OF COEVOLUTION

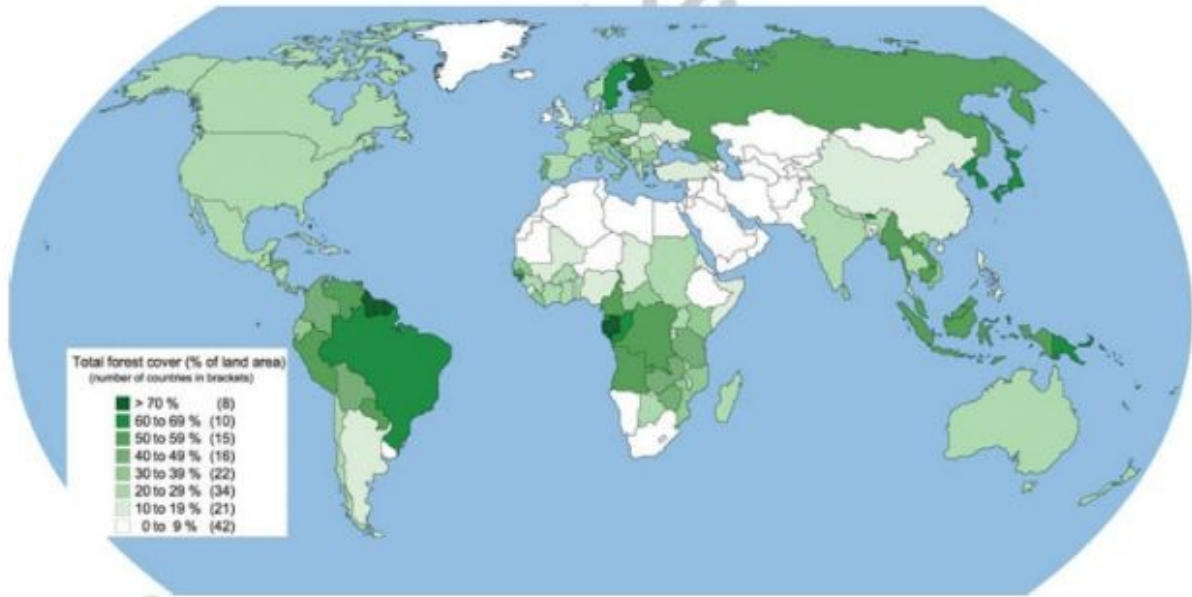
3. LITERATURE AND POETRY

4 . MUSIC

5. PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

6. MOVIES

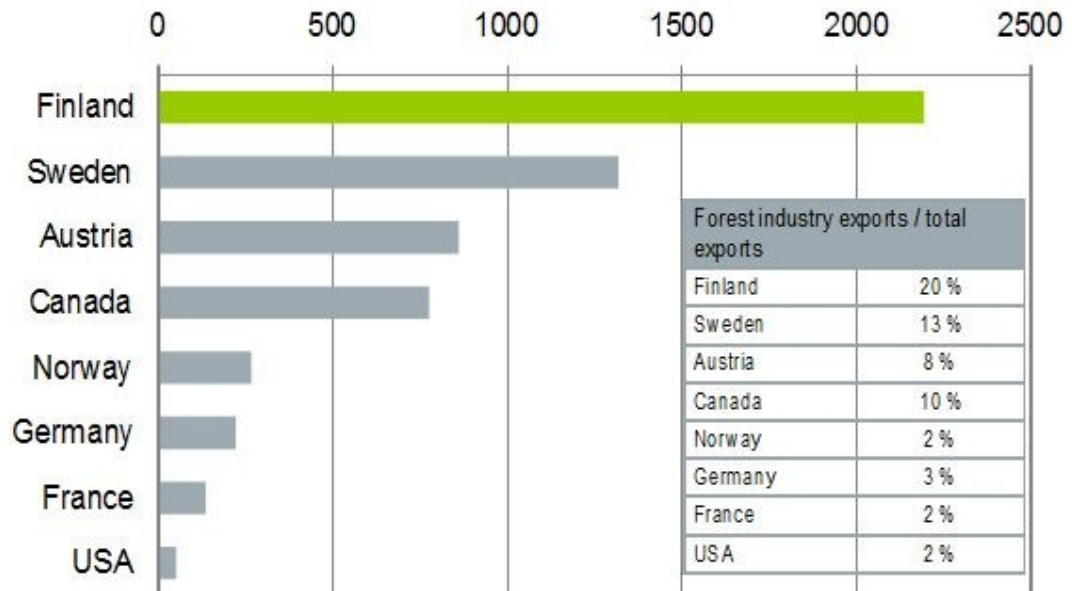
7. DISCUSSION



Map 5.4 A global sphere: total forest cover as a percentage of total land area in 168 countries in 2000 (by Erkki Lehto; Data source: FAO (2005))

Understanding the magnitude of the forest industry in Finland compared to some other countries

Value (€) of forest industry exports per capita and its share of total exports



WHY FORESTRY AND CULTURE HAVE BEEN INTERLINKED IN FINLAND?

- WHICH ARE THE RELEVANT FIELDS?
- HOW ARTS HAVE BENEFITTED FROM FORESTRY?
- HOW FORESTRY HAS BENEFITTED FROM ARTS?
- HOW NATIONAL WELLBEING HAS BENEFITTED?

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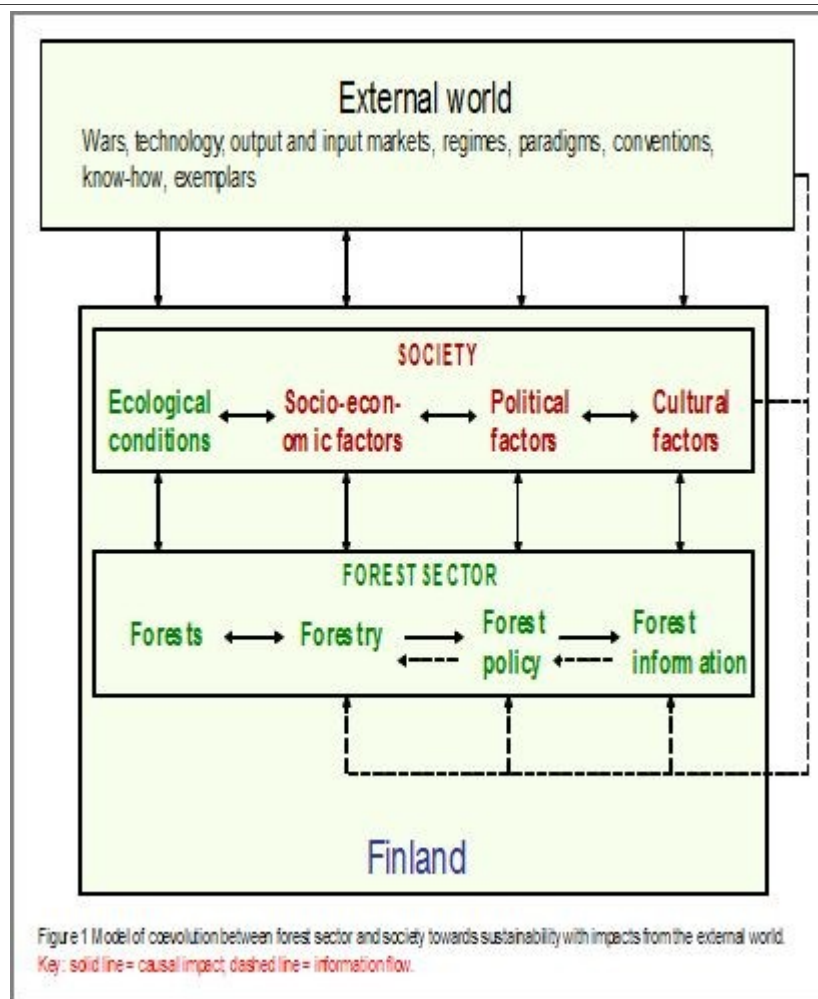
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COEVOLUTION HAS BEEN DEFINED AS
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LITERATURE AND POETRY

- 1836 KALEVALA BY ELIAS LÖNNROT
- 1850s FOREST LANDSCAPE BY J. L. RUNEBERG
- 1860s SEVEN BROTHERS BY ALEKSIS KIVI
- 1880s FOREST TRAIL BY JUHANI AHO
- 1880s HUNTING BY ONNI WETTERHOF
- LATER ON JOHANNES LINNANKOSKI ET AL.

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JEAN

SIBELIUS

1863-1957



Jean Sibelius 1865-1957

FOREST MUSIC BY SIBELIUS

- MOUNTAIN ASH
- PINE
- SPRUCE
- BIRCH
- ASPEN
- FAIRY TALE
- TAPIOLA

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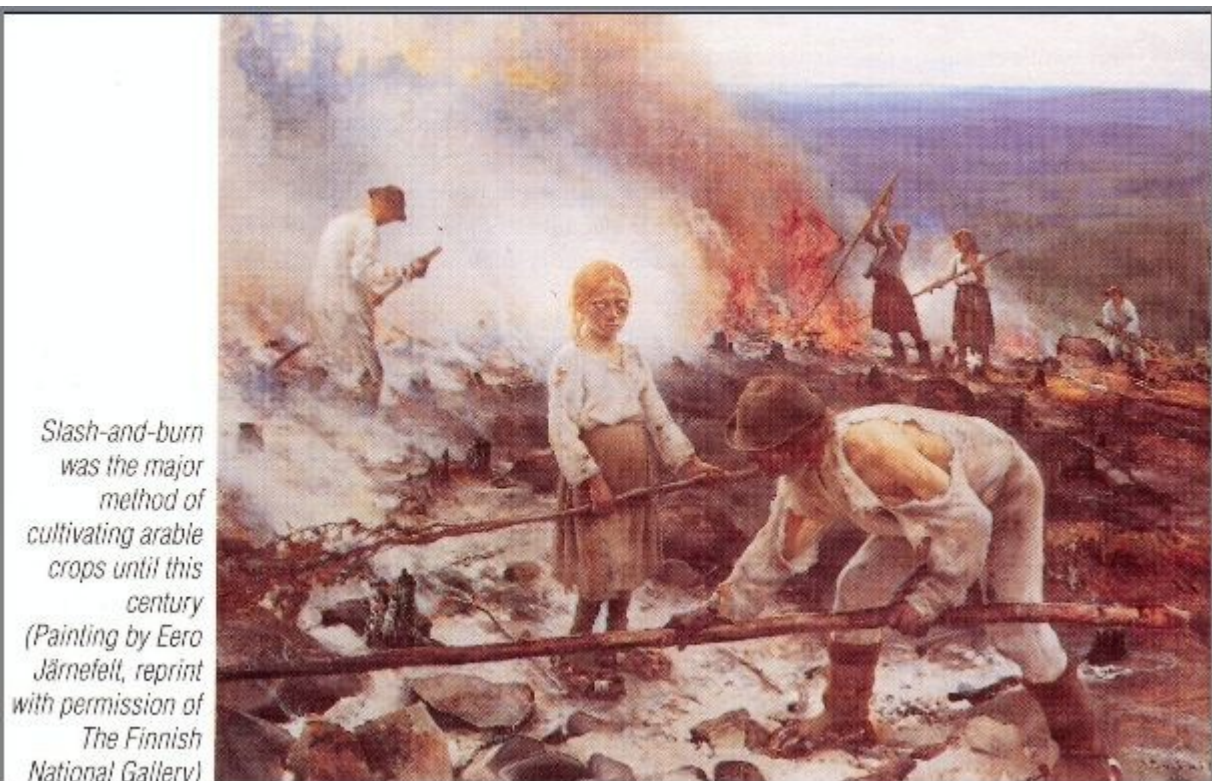
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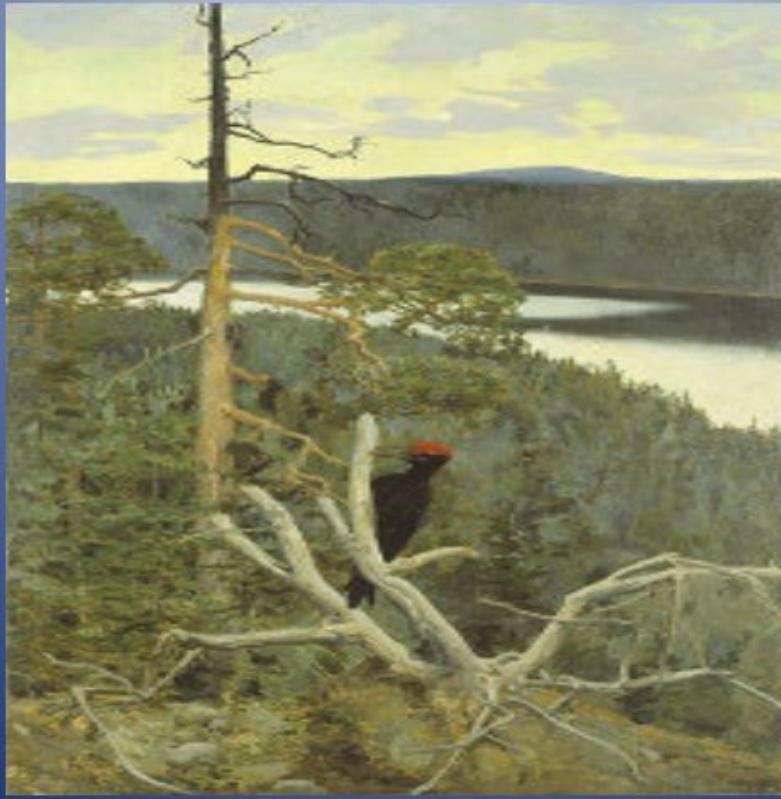
4 . MUSIC

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AXEL
GALLEN-
KALLELA
1910



HANNES
AUTERINEN





Tako/M-Real

Raf. Haarla/Väinö Aaltonen /4 Pirkkalaista eränkävijää



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PHOTOS REPRESENT AN ARTS ALSO WIDELY INSPIRED BY FORESTRY

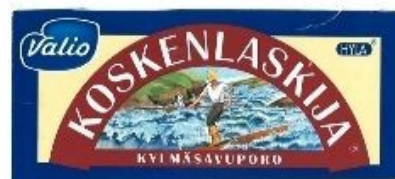


Uittokota Norvajoen rannalla vuonna 1923. Valok. Sakari Pälsi. MV. Sign. 1936:103.



PHOTOS AND PAINTINGS HAVE BEEN USED IN SUPPORT OF FOREST PROTECTION

This brand was designed by Veikko Eemeli Sipiläinen in 1933



Metso is another major business brand based on forest image

IMPACTS OF ARTS ON FOREST SECTOR?

- INCREASED VALUE FOR FORESTS
- PRESTIGE FOR FORESTRY AND FOREST INDUSTRIES
- INCREASED POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR FOREST SECTOR
- OPENING OF POWERFUL POLITICAL POSTS
- INCREASING FOREST PROTECTION
- LITERATURE AND POETRY INCREASED DEMAND FOR PAPER
- COMPETITION FOR SPONSORSHIP AMONG THE INDUSTRIAL FAMILIES

**KIITOKSET
MIELENKIINNOSTA!
THANKS FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

Matti Palo

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