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Roots of the Labor-Environmental Conflict Over Old Growth Timber - Draft [Report]

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Ken Connolly
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Old Executive Office Building
Room 360
Washington, DC 20501

April 7, 1993

Dear Mr. Connolly:

I understand that your office is responsible for developing the Administration's old growth timber policy. I am currently completing a doctoral dissertation in planning at Cornell University about conflict and cooperation between the labor and environmental movements. I did much of my research in Washington state, and one of the cases I studied was the timber conflict. I am sending a draft of my analysis about the case, which I thought might be useful in your deliberations (this is only a first draft). Overall I applaud the Administration's effort to advance both environmental protection and stable communities. I believe that both of these goals can be achieved if the Administration is willing to make the necessary political decisions.

The fundamental question is how the benefits and costs will be distributed when the public asserts a value like protecting ancient forest ecosystems. Of course automation and overcutting also play a part in the loss of jobs. Like in so many cases, the costs are being born here by the weakest party: timber communities and workers. They have been the victims of both changes in the industry and environmental protection. The economic winners in this story are the big timber companies who own huge tracts of private land. They are only temporarily dependent on federal timber to make up for overcutting of their own forests. Once the small firms and unions disappear from the loss of the public timber supply, the large firms will benefit from the lack of competition and the higher price of timber. The timber debate has been distorted by the fact that no one wants to challenge the large companies. It is easier for environmentalists to win protections at the price of small firms and communities, and for labor and communities to try to preserve jobs at the price of the ecosystem.

I believe that the best solution to the existing controversy is based on the principle of an equal distribution of costs and benefits. The public does benefit from forest protection, and must be willing to pay something in the way of benefits to communities that will lose jobs. But also the

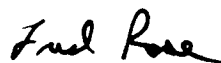
large timber companies will benefit from a shrinking timber supply and higher prices. These benefits should be redistributed to the small firms and workers effected. The best ways to do this would preserve as much of the logging lifestyle as possible as opposed to retraining and new kinds of development. Some private lands could be made available to supply small firms to compensate for loss of public supply. Any windfall profit could be taxed as well. A quota of logs could be made available for local mills.

The chapter from my dissertation which follows also emphasizes the cultural differences which are at the heart of the labor/environmental controversy. I believe that it is wrong to see this struggle as a simple conflict of interests. I argue that unions could see their interests as aligned with environmentalists and long-term sustainable timber supply. Environmentalists could see their interests tied to healthy local communities. My dissertation is about the reasons why these groups see their interests as opposed rather than common.

I am very interested in this issue and its political ramifications for bridging the gap between economic interests and environmental protection. If there is any way that I can be helpful in your deliberations, please let me know. While I was in Washington state I also sensed that a collaboration between local groups would be possible, although this has been complicated by the dominance of national organizations in the congressional debate and courts. I have experience organizing such coalitions, and I would be very interested in being of assistance if your office wants to go beyond policy to actually implementing a process of reconciliation.

Good luck with your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Rose".

Fred Rose

**ROOTS OF THE
LABOR-ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT
OVER OLD GROWTH TIMBER**

DRAFT

Excerpted from the doctoral dissertation of
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Timber Introduction

The conflict between environmentalists and labor unions in the timber industry exemplifies tensions between middle class and working class organizations. Unlike the other cases described in this study, cooperation has been minimal around timber issues. Open conflict accentuates disparities, and so this case provides an excellent opportunity to observe the differences central to this study. This will set the stage for the following cases documenting cooperation. I use this case to illustrate the barriers that must be overcome in inter-class coalition building.

The debate over cutting versus protecting old growth timber in the Pacific Northwest has focused national attention on the economic consequences of protecting our limited natural resources. At stake in the current controversy is the fate of the nation's remaining old growth forests - the giant redwoods, cedars, spruce, firs and hemlock that are 200 years or older. Also at stake is the future of logging communities and the way of life that has sustained them for the past century. In the resource dependent Northwest, this controversy exemplifies other emerging struggles over salmon, hydro-electric power, forest practices, off-shore oil drilling, farming practices and a host of other issues.

Communities and ecosystems have been the backdrop, however, for the formal question that has occupied the attention of the courts, federal agencies, Congress and scientific commissions: the legal obligations of the government to ensure the survival of the Northern Spotted Owl under the Endangered Species Act. After more than a decade, environmentalists have finally forced protection of the owl through the courts. This has reduced the supply of timber considerably. Yet despite court injunctions, the federal government was slow to develop a plan to protect the owl, while the political debate between environmentalists and logging interests continues to paralyze Congress. Job loss from protection has been the major stumbling block to a political solution.

In the rest of this introduction, I provide some background to the issues under debate. Following that is a chronology of events leading to the present impasse and various estimates of the economic consequences of old growth protections. With this context, we turn to statements

of the positions held by unionists and environmentalists given in their own words. Each group is cited at some length in order to illustrate the coherence of these contrary perspectives. The remainder of the chapter explores why each side takes the position it does. First I consider each side's own attempts to explain its interests in this conflict. An interest analysis fails on many counts, most significantly because it cannot explain how groups come to adopt specific interests out of the myriad possible ways to define their interests. Given the failure of these attempts, I incorporate a cultural dimension into the analysis, and I suggest the need to understand the relationship between interests and culture.

Timber Background Information¹

The Pacific Northwest has been a major source of timber since the industry migrated from the depleted forests of the Midwest around the turn of the century. In 1988 Washington, Oregon and Northern California supplied almost a third of the nation's timber. However rapid automation during the 1980s meant fewer jobs despite an increased harvest. Output increased almost 50% between 1980-87 while 9000 jobs were lost.²

The Northwest industry is divided between small companies which depend on public lands for their supply of timber, and the large corporations that own large tracts of land. The big companies; Weyerhaeuser, Simpson Timber, Boise Cascade, and Georgia Pacific; own a quarter of the timber available for cutting in Washington and Oregon. Of the 57% of total timberland in the public sector, three quarters belongs to the federal government. This includes 19 National Forests which encompass 15 million acres of timberland and 2.3 million acres administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). These lands are designated for multiple uses including

¹Sources include Northwest Forest Resource Council, "Spotted Owls, Old Growth and the Economy of the Northwest," May, 1989; H. Michael Anderson and Jeffrey Olson, Federal Forests and the Economic Base of the Pacific Northwest (Washington, DC: Wilderness Society, 1991); Karen Wendell, Daniel Oswald and Douglas Powell, Forest Statistics of the United States, 1987 (Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, 1989).

²Northwest Forest Resource Council, "Spotted Owls, Old Growth and the Economy of the Northwest," (Portland, OR: Northwest Forest Resource Council, 1989). p. 37.

recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, timber and water quality protection. Private logging companies contract to cut on public lands, which, prior to spotted owl set asides, supplied 5 to 6 billion board feet of timber per year. This is something on the order of 110,000 acres (170 square miles) of public land cut a year.

Private companies are far more dependent on public supply at the present time than the distribution of timberland suggests. Most of the reforested trees on private lands are now 20 to 30 years from harvest. Private land owners depend on national forests to supply wood until their crops reach maturity.

Of the possibly 30 million acres of original forest that existed in the Pacific Northwest prior to white settlement, estimates of remaining old growth vary from less than 10% to 25%.³ As many as 70,000 acres of old growth are presently cut a year.⁴ Virtually all of these 'ancient forests' are on public lands, with 94% owned by the federal government.⁵ These trees are the most valuable for timber both because of their size and the quality of their wood. A single old growth tree can be worth as much as \$_____ compared with a typical second growth tree worth \$_____.

Chronology of spotted owl debate

Research in the 1970s and '80s began to demonstrate the value of old growth forest for habitat and nutrient cycles. This altered earlier assumptions that second growth forests were ecologically equivalent to old growth. In 1982, the Forest Service chose the Northern Spotted Owl as an indicator species for the health of old growth forests in Washington and Oregon. It was in the early 1980s that scientists began to become concerned about the possible extinction of the Northern Spotted Owl.

³An article in the National Geographic Society cites a 10% figure in R. Findley, "Will We Save Our Own?" National Geographic, 178(13) September, 1990. p.128. An estimate of 13% was made in 1988 by the Wilderness Society. And the 25% figure is from a National Forest Service study in 1988. Cited in The Seattle Times and Post Intelligencer May 20, 1990. p.A12-13.

⁴Ted Crup, "Who Gives a Hoot?" Time, June 25, 1990. pp.56-65.

⁵Ibid. (Better source???)

The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund filed three suits starting in 1987 to protect the owl and its old growth habitat. The first suit was against the US Fish and Wildlife Service for failing to list the spotted owl as an endangered species. In 1988 the federal courts ordered Fish and Wildlife to reconsider its decision and allowed it until May, 1989 to act. Fish and Wildlife did propose to list the owl in 1989; and in June, 1990 the Northern Spotted Owl was designated a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

Fish and Wildlife's designation came only after a series of court injunctions that forced the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to protect the owl. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) sales are being blocked by Federal District Court Judge Helen Frye in Portland, who has repeatedly found that agency's efforts to protect the owl to be inadequate. In 1988 Judge Frye placed a temporary restraining order on the BLM halting timber sales in spotted owl habitat. She found that the Bureau had been 'arbitrary and capricious' in not considering the threat to the spotted owl in its management of timber. In 1991 she stopped BLM timber sales again, and in February 1992, Judge Frye placed a further injunction on the Bureau blocking all logging in old growth forests until it could prove that it had followed the National Environmental Protection Act when planning its sales.

The National Forest Service's practices have been similarly rejected by Federal District Judge William Dwyer in Seattle. Conservation groups brought suit against the Forest Service to challenge its 1988 guidelines that left 85% of spotted owl habitat open to logging. In March, 1989 he halted timber sales by the Forest Service until a full consideration of the owl protection case could be heard. Judge Dwyer issued an injunction against the National Forest Service on May 23, 1991 for failing to develop an adequate management program for the Northern Spotted Owl. He set aside 11.6 million acres of forest land for owl protection and ordered the National Forest Service to develop a permanent plan by March 5, 1992.

The federal government responded to the courts by assembling its Interagency Scientific Committee (ISC) to develop a conservation plan for the owl. This was lead by U.S. Forest Service biologist Jack Ward Thomas. The committee released its recommendations, "A Conservation Strategy for the Northern Spotted Owl," in May, 1990. It found that existing Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management policies would lead to the extinction of the owl

and proposed the creation of large habitat conservation areas in order to preserve the species. Their recommendations would protect about 50% of the remaining owl habitat.

Congress countered the court injunctions with its 1990 appropriations bill requiring the Forest Service to sell over a billion board feet of timber in Spotted Owl habitat. This was one in a series of riders attached to appropriations bills since 1986 that overruled judicial review of timber sales. The Bush Administration further reduced the level of protection from 11.6 million acres in 1991 to 2.8 million acres one year later. Bush delayed additional protection with his moratorium on new regulations that went into effect _____. The Administration along with industry have also promoted amending the Endangered Species Act to include consideration of economic factors. Forest Service sales, however, remain blocked by court injunctions. This issue has become more politically salient as the Endangered Species Act is considered for renewal in 199_.

The following table shows how timber sales have declined since 1988 when the Forest Service first anticipated action on the spotted owl.⁶ Current legislation being debated in the House would set cut levels between 1.1 and 1.9 billion board feet.⁷

Harvest Level from National Forest Lands
in Washington and Oregon

Year	Billion board feet harvested
1986	5.08
1987	4.87
1988	4.98
1989	4.45
1990	3.09
1991 ⁸	1.??

⁶ In 1988, the National Forest set aside 374,000 acres of land for owl habitat. Bill Dietrich, "The owl," The Seattle Times, May 1, 1989. p. A1.

⁷Phillip Davis, "Ancient Forest Protections Emerge from First Round," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report 150(19) May 9, 1992. pp.1242-43.

On March 5, 1992, keeping with Dwyer's deadline, the Forest Service released a plan following the ISC's report to set aside 5.9 million acres for owl habitat. The Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund said at that time that this brought its case to a close. It would study the plan and decide if it would take any further action.

The listing of the spotted owl as endangered renewed the debate over restricting log exports from public lands. With the reduced supply of timber, some argued that raw logs should be kept in this country to supply domestic mills. This contributed to the passage of restrictions on log exports in the Customs and Trade Act of 1990. A ban on exporting raw logs from federal lands has existed since 1968, but loopholes allowed substitutions of public logs for private exports. The 1990 Act strengthened the ban. State lands are similarly restricted except in Washington, which was allowed to continue to export as much as 25% of the harvest from its lands.⁹ Exports continue from private lands, and something on the order of 40% of the timber cut on private lands are exported as raw logs.¹⁰

Economic Consequences

There is significant controversy over estimates of the numbers of jobs at risk from spotted owl protections. Environmental groups estimate between 8,900 and 12,930 direct jobs or 31,600 to 45,900 total, direct and indirect jobs, are at risk in the next 20 years. But from 3 to 4 times as many jobs (33,600) could be lost, they claim, due to automation in the same period.¹¹ By contrast, the timber industry projects job losses due to owl protections will be

⁸Christopher Hanson, "Tide in timber fight turns towards environmentalists," Seattle Post-Intelligencer September 3, 1991. pp. A1,A3.

⁹U.S. Industrial Outlook-1991. p.6-1. (Add to bibliography also)

¹⁰I have compiled this estimate from data provided by the Northwest Forest Resource Council, Washington Contract Loggers Association and Associated Oregon Loggers. In 1989 the Northwest Forest Resource Council says that about 3.3 billion board feet of logs were exported from Washington and Oregon in 1989. See

¹¹H. Michael Anderson and Jeffrey Olson, Federal Forests and the Economic Base of the

much higher. They estimate that over 100,000 total jobs could be lost due to owl set-asides in addition to the 44,500 total jobs lost due to modernization over the next decade.¹² The federal government's Scientific Panel on Late Successional Forest Ecosystems released a report in 1991 estimating a loss of 30-56,000 jobs from moderate protection of the owl. Other estimates by the Washington's governor's office and Senator Gorton have been of 25,000 to 40,000 jobs lost in that state over 3 years.¹³ (See Appendix I for a more detailed review of these estimates.)

Timber case study - Labor perspective

Following is a union perspective on the issues surrounding old growth protection versus logging. This is a compilation of many voices excerpted from interviews and written material. Double quotations indicate direct quotes; single quotes surround material that is paraphrased.

"If I were to go back to around 1979 - 1980 in this area here, [unions] had a large portion of the industry - probably nigh 65% of it. Right now it's difficult to reach out and grab that number because there's been a fantastic downturn of the industry since then."

'One chief reason for the shrinkages is plant closures. Also automation has cost some jobs, but more in the mills than in the woods. A mill can now do with 20 people what it used to take 100 people to do. But automation was necessary in order to compete in the world market. Companies had to automate to make the logs cheaper and the mill work cheaper. It actually saved jobs, or all the jobs would have been lost.'

'Another big reason has been the set asides. There was something called the Olympic work circle set up by Congress in 19(40s??). All the trees from it were brought into Greys Harbor. It was originally 150,000 acres of forest, but now some of that area is in the Olympic National Park and wilderness areas. So that 150,000 acres is now down to 70,000.'

Pacific Northwest (Washington, DC: Wilderness Society, 1991)

¹²Brad Knickerbocker, "Oregon's Other Threatened Species: The Timber Worker: The Christian Science Monitor August 9, 1990 p.1. This figure was derived by a study team commissioned by the American Forest Resource Alliance to evaluate the job implications of the Jack Ward Thomas report.

¹³Louis Cannon, "Saw-Toothed Despair Leaves Mark on Northwestern Loggers," The Washington Post," Saturday July 27, 1991.

"There was a big shift down South [in the 1980s] that I think is nothing more than a temporary shift due to the overcutting that happened on private property here. It's like any other commodity or business, if the market is there, if the demand is there, you know, they're going to start squeezing aluminum out of rocks. When you look management in the eye and you say, 'If you didn't get so damn hungry in the last few years. . .,' and they kind of look straight down like a kid that's been caught, and they admit they did that."

"Trees are no different than potatoes or corn, other than that they seem to be not quite as rotational in terms of speed. People just have a difficult time recognizing the rotational nature of the timber business as a harvestable crop. It's managed intensively, but people can't see it. You don't see a tractor in the middle of it every day furrowing out the rows" "When I was a kid, there were some huge areas of trees knocked down in the big Columbus Day hurricane. It knocked down huge numbers of trees that had to be taken out pretty quickly to be marketable. Going back to that area that was completely cleared in the 60s, now it's a major forest. So I've seen trees go from clearcuts to forests in my life time."

"The choice is between letting things die naturally and not be of any use to people, or cutting them down before they die and making use of them. That's good for the economy and good for the forest. We have the potential in this area here on the Western side of the Peninsula of maintaining [on] a rotational crop basis, a resource that provides a whole lot of things - jobs for one. It provides wood fiber for everything from toilet paper to vanilla and all points in between." "And young forest is much better for wildlife. The good hunting is in the open forests where there's undergrowth, and that's not the old growth forests. And it provides clean air. If anybody's studied botany or dendrology and the mechanics of the photosynthetic process, they understand what green trees do as opposed to dead hemlock and White Fir and dead Doug Fir up in the Park."

"That's one thing that does bother me, because there's a whole lot of timber up there that's going to rot, and it will not regenerate itself as quickly as if it had a little help. And having a little help, on occasion, might mean taking an 80 acre chunk of it and replanting it. [That] takes out the old, dead wood and gives an opportunity for new things to grow. [When you] take a hands off position, it's going to rot. Then what have you got? It does nothing for the atmosphere. It

turns into bug food. . . but I guess that's natural and nice, too. A rotten forest is not a pretty sight. We've got a lot of them that haven't been touched. . . snaggle toothed, broken topped, bug infested. Of course that's a different ecology and a different system, I guess. I guess if the good Lord wanted it to rot and have bugs, ok, well, there it is."

"There's one hell of a big chunk of land in this state already set aside, and with good purpose and reason. And none of us will argue that the Olympic National Park should be opened to timber cutting. You know, we set that aside with good reasons many years ago, and Mt. Rainier the same way. They were set aside for us to remember and at least memorialize for posterity how this country did appear when people first touched it. The balance of it, I guess, in the National Forest system was set aside for multiple use. Not abuse, multiple use. And it can be multiply used and renewed."

"[Now] talk about setting aside 11 million acres [for the spotted owl], which I think is now being suggested downward around 8 or 7.5 million acres - that's a lot of ground. You remove that from the timber base, and you're talking about one whale of an effect on economies, geographies. . . cultures. Communities have really suffered from the halt in logging on federal lands. What we have seen from that point to now is total devastation in the community, total breakdowns in support services and emergency monies. Through bartering with the Salvation Army and outlying food banks, we have been able to partially survive one of the worst winters in our history. A large portion of the unemployed have exhausted their unemployment insurance benefits or had no benefits at all. A major portion of those without benefits are the 'ghost' labor force which consist mainly of independent contractors."¹⁴

'I have a brother who is 50 now who works in the woods. His idea had always been to work hard for years to pay off his equipment and save a bit of money on the side at the same time. He works 10-12 hours a day. He's been able to pay off his equipment. The idea was to be able to sell his equipment some day and retire on the money. But now the equipment is basically worthless. He was devastated by that; he's in shock. That was his whole life plan. His view has gotten more and more narrow over time. All he can see is that he's been deprived of this thing that he expected to do in his life.'

¹⁴Jim Coates, "General synopsis of testimony for Senate Subcommittee Hearings," February 25, 1991.

'What's worse, now we are being portrayed as rapists, killing off the forests and all kinds of species. We have always been productive members of society.' "I love the woods. That's my life. I don't think I'm doing anything wrong. Pretty soon I'll be ashamed of wearing my work clothes."¹⁵

'We've developed some legislation to try to get a more balanced approach called the Forests and Families Protection Act.' "This is one of the very few pieces of legislation that takes the entire scope of owls, timber supply, set asides, and people and puts it all into one hopper. It's pretty well balanced. And if it did nothing [else], it at least offered another choice that takes into consideration the effects on people and the society."

"Largely it's the International Woodworkers [promoting the legislation with help from] the Carpenters International." 'And industry has helped out some too. We went to industry and said, 'No one trusts you, and we want to work with you. But you need to understand the realities of old growth and change your views.' They didn't want to see any more protection of old growth, but we said they had to accept some or there would be no coalition. They had no choice. So we moved the industry to support this compromise idea.'¹⁶ "There was a formal labor/management committee established. They hired a pretty hot law firm back in DC, and they put [the Act] together. Let's face it, this is one of those issues where the industry and the force employed by them will go hand in hand to a large degree because they have very similar interests."

"When we did finally announce to the world that hand holding was going on and made it public, our good friends from the environmental side of life got a little nervous because the joint labor/management coalition has a fair amount of influence. They lost some ground clearly after our lobbying effort in DC. They needed somebody to take a poke at and try to make the public and media [think] that this is nothing more than a whore house environment that the industry and the unions are involved in. The fact of the matter is, this is one of those issues where labor and management are going to stand at the same table; and we have. It does have its impact."

¹⁵Ibid. p.A1.

¹⁶Denny Scott, _____Carpenters_____, WSLC 1991 convention speech, Seattle, WA, Sept.____, 1991.

"That's not to say that we've gone to bed with them, because on one occasion I can recall literally testifying with one mogul of the industry, if you will, and about three days later [we] wanted to slit each other's throats across the bargaining table. Well, that's life; that's the adversarial relationship. Of course the environmental corp isn't privileged to the day to day relationships of the front line labor/management relationship, which is fine. A lot of the public does understand."

"I've worked with some top, top corporate people who are bastards to deal with, [but] who are straighter arrows to deal than some of the folks from the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund and some of the offshoots of other mainstream organizations. Anybody who is semi-familiar with the industry and some of the bargaining that's gone on in the last 10 years would kind of snicker when I say that I've had to work with some real animals. But at least Weyerhaeuser or Willamette Industries will walk up and say 'You know, it's my intent to take your shorts.' And then I guess if they say, 'Hey, I got em,' well great, more power to ya. Now *that* you can deal with; you know your shorts are on the line. But dealing with these folks is something else. Pretty soon you feel a tug from your backside you didn't expect. There's someone back there pulling on your shorts. 'Now wait a minute, what do you want?' 'I want your shorts.' 'Why didn't you say so?' That's the sense I get, and I've been in this business 20 years. I've got a fair sense for sitting at a table, a fair sense for what the format is, for what the goals are."

"The preservationist strategy is to divide the industry and unions over the log export question, which they did. It was a divide and conquer strategy on their part. They got the industry fighting among themselves so they could win some political fights." 'The other problem is, who do you get to represent the environmentalists that you can negotiate with? You might bring one group to the table and have an agreement with them, and then another group that wasn't there could sue you. There's such a broad spectrum of groups from more radical ones like Earth First to more conservative groups like the Wilderness Society. Given that, it's difficult to figure out how to negotiate with them.'

"There are a lot of good folks that belong to environmental groups. I've read some of their articles and I've looked at some of the research, and the work that is put out by some of those. . . is good." 'I've seen these people at hearings and listened to them, and I believe they are very

sincere about what they are doing. Their purpose is not to screw people's lives up, and they're sincere about the goals they've set for themselves. But because they make their livings somewhere else and not in the woods or in the areas that are economically impacted by the decisions they are promoting, they don't even have to think about those. '

"But the preservationist portion of the [environmental] movement has taken on fanatical, religious, if you will, zealous, dimensions . . . that stray from the mainstream of the charter of the Wilderness Society, Audubon, Sierra Club. These people are pilgrims, religious about environmental protection. With that kind of devotion, it's difficult to change people's minds. They're beyond reasoning. They are attempting to use the owl and some other species as launching pads to advance a philosophy that is outright frightening. [These groups,] specifically the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, have got a plan for the year 2015, or somewhere in there, to see to it that the Olympic Peninsula is precluded to human habitat. They've said that to me. They are going to save us in Washington state, despite us. And you look at 'em and say, 'Hmm. What about all the people that live on the Peninsula?' Then they look right through ya and say, 'Listen, on a global basis we move a half a million a day; what's another hundred and twenty thousand?' Pssht, next item. That coldly. Well, I live on the Olympic Peninsula, and I don't intend to go easy. A whole lot of us don't intend to go easy if that's the case."

'None of the environmental groups truly care about the communities [impacted by job loss]. They say that they care, but that's just public relations. Their only solutions or alternatives are to throw out ideas like tourism. Tourism doesn't provide the good jobs and the family wage jobs that the timber industry did. They know that their ideas won't go anywhere. They don't have any real alternatives, and it's just a public relations effort.'

'But the public believes what the environmentalists say.' "There are people on the Eastern seaboard right now who listen to the large metropolitan environmental push, who are convinced that there isn't one tree left in this state or Oregon.. . . naked, barren, all flat, gone. They have all those perceptions. People have been lied to, I mean seriously and obviously lied to. There's been some real warped propaganda. I've read some of it that's just fantastic. You'd almost laugh if you didn't realize, of course, that somebody's actually taking this for the truth - somewhere, someone believes that garbage."

"I hear the term 'environmentalist' and it does a couple things for me or not for me. I still think that [some] of the best environmentalists are all the people that live and work and play around here. When I hear, watch people, see people, listen to people literally on a soap box advocating total shut down of all woods[working] in the state of Washington and Oregon on the basis of sound environmental theory, it's offensive because I'm listening to someone that doesn't live here, wasn't born here, has no invested financial interest, doesn't feed his family here, probably won't die here either. That's offensive." 'These people are from the educational community. All they need to do is lobby the government to get enough money. They don't stand in bread lines and don't understand people who depend on industry for jobs.' "They tell you that they want to come visit. You can visit it - I guess you can visit the Olympics, you can visit Mt. Rainier, you can visit Mt. Baker, visit, visit, visit all you want. . . once in you're damn life. But I was born here and raised here. I raise a family here, I work at it, I play in it, and I'm probably going to be buried in it. And I've got a vested interest in this place, and that interest does not include wiping out or eradicating the resource."

"Now, the people that work in this business, who are logging, falling timber on a minute by minute basis, will make decisions not only about their productive work, but in terms of what [they're] going to do with the ground. They don't want to destroy it. You know this is a fallacy - that people out here who work at it or own this land are out to destroy it. That's bullshit. It doesn't make sense. Why would we destroy something that sustains us?"

'I consider myself an environmentalist. I don't want to screw over the world or to leave it worse than when I came here. But I don't live my life for protecting something, that just isn't my goal in life. In life you do have impacts. Human beings have always had impacts on the world, and civilization is always changing things. Species were going extinct before people came on the earth, and they're going to keep going extinct. You try to minimize your impacts, but your life isn't about protecting.'

"The upshot is that this thing is, sooner or later, going to be legislated to a conclusion. And I'm just hoping that they understand and have some compassion for the people that are going to be left behind. We don't want this to become another Appalachia. It doesn't have to be. It doesn't have to be because there are too many of us around here that understand wookworking."

Timber - Environmental View

Below the same issue of protection versus logging is described in the words of environmentalists. Again several interviews and written documents are combined to characterize the environmentalists' perspective.

"For the last 40 years, federally owned ancient forests in the Pacific Northwest have been systematically clearcut to supply . . . the forest products industry. By the late 1980s, it became evident that if logging on federal land continued unabated throughout the 1990s, the ancient forests would be severely fragmented and their . . . ecological values essentially destroyed."¹⁷

"Logging has greatly changed the region's ancient forests and reduced biological diversity. Only about 13 percent of the old-growth forests remain, and nearly half of that is available for logging. The ancient forests that still exist are extraordinarily rich in . . . ecological diversity and complexity. They support a vast array of species, ranging from birds and mammals to fungi and invertebrates. The owl is only an indicator, like the canary in the coal mine." 'This is an important ecosystem, and the owl shows that we are right on the edge of destroying it. Then we'd lose some very important things including the genetic diversity of the forests and the viability of the timber industry. Once it's gone, you won't see it again.'

"The majority of old growth should be set aside - not for aesthetics, but for its value for watershed preservation, fishing, wildlife, clean air." 'It's our responsibility to preserve all life forms, and the tree plantations . . . that replace ancient forests after logging provide far less hospitable habitat for many species.' 'We're now arguing about 10% of what the forest was.' "What [our representatives] and others need to understand is that there are no damn trees out there! Congress hired Thomas and others who showed that what Congress thought about available timber from Forest Service numbers isn't true. They cannot protect now and have cutting too." "We cannot just divide what's left [of the forests] because if we protect the owl habitat, there will be nothing left there for industry.' "There is no easy path because so much has been cut

¹⁷Adapted from Michael Anderson and Jeffrey Olson, Federal Forests and the Economic Base of the Pacific Northwest, (Washington, DC: The Wilderness Society, 1991). p.i.

already. There is a crisis now because there's no easy way out. There's been too much devastation to save some and cut some. That's why the devastating reduction in timber harvest levels."

"The political trouble we're seeing around environmental laws are caused because the laws are not followed. Industry controls the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife, so they've basically ignored the goal of protecting species. If the Forest Service had done its job to protect the owl, we wouldn't have this situation requiring draconian measures. You would not have jobs threatened now if there had been proper logging." "Old growth forests belong to the public, and they were set aside for multiple uses and not just for the timber industry."

'But jobs have been lost in the timber industry for the past two decades due to automation, not because of protection or set asides. As many as 15-20% of the workforce was laid off in the Northwest timber industry from the mid-'70s to the mid-'80s. At the same time there was mechanization and more log exports.' "In the mid-'80s there was a strong housing market and demand for lumber, and logging reached record highs in the national forests in 1987-88. Timber companies were making big profits on Japanese exports and domestic sales, but the number of mill employees didn't increase much." 'By the year 2000, loggers will be replaced by mechanization. This will be a hard time for communities.'

'[Furthermore,] timber companies don't care about Northwest workers. They are moving to the South and abandoning the Northwest. Southern production is faster, and there are few regulations. Weyerhaeuser reduced its capacity in Washington by 44% and increased it in the Southeast by 30+% in the 1980s. And Georgia Pacific and Champion left the Northwest and sold their mills to small entrepreneurs and moved to the Southeast.'

'At least Weyerhaeuser is here to stay, where ITT and others cut and left. Weyerhaeuser is the best and worst in that they are here to stay, but they also have a history of overcutting. They do have a 50 year rotation as a company policy, but that's holding wide and not basin by basin, which is needed. The 2% cut rate is international. That creates problems for local mills and for ecosystems. The industry doesn't want people to know how fast the forest is being cut. The state doesn't know the levels of cut area by area, just the overall numbers for the state.'

'So industry expected an outcry from all the damage to trees and all the loss of jobs. Industry said it needed a scapegoat to conceal what was happening in the industry - automation of

the mills, log exports, unsustainable cutting levels on private lands. Environmental people were the scapegoat. We were easy; environmental people don't come to the debate with a lot of sophistication economically. The industry wants to show how they need to make profits, but they don't want to show that they are going elsewhere to produce.'

'A similar thing happened back in the 1970s with debates over wilderness designations in national forests. At least in Oregon, wilderness designations never seriously impacted timber supply. The forests being protected were not generally commercially valuable anyhow because of their elevation or for other reasons. But there were instances of massive overcutting on private lands and then mills just closing down. To cover up the real causes, environmentalists were scapegoated as the common enemy of companies and workers. Timber companies had some success getting organized labor to support their opposition to wilderness set asides because they would supposedly translate into loss of jobs. We would hear stories about the timber companies pinning comment post cards on employee's paychecks. There is now again an uneasy alliance between labor and industry.'

"Labor has been duped. People tell me these timber workers aren't dumb, but they have fallen for a line here." 'This century started with union busting activities by industry which has continued.' "What industry promised to labor to get them on with them is a mystery to me, especially after the 1980s with industry busting unions all over the place." "I've asked the unions where they were when industry was cutting jobs by mechanizing; they couldn't say."

"At a meeting recently someone said, I heard your goal is to shut down all cutting on the Olympic Peninsula.' I said, 'That's a lie.' But if you believe that we're devils with a selfish and limited agenda, then you don't have to believe the facts [about forest devastation] - it's easier that way." 'Environmentalists realize there will be an impact on jobs and the economy, but the claims of the timber industry are exaggerated. That's basically how the environmental community has dealt with the issue, trying to counter the claims of industry. They say that 50-100,000 jobs will be lost, and we question those calculations. The timber companies are saying that the spotted owl would effect private lands too, which is false. We're doing our best to counter industry claims of economic disaster. The industry is doing its best to exaggerate and dramatize to politicians the dire impacts of allowing law suits to go on and of protecting the

spotted owl to the extent that scientists believe necessary.'

'Industry isn't looking for solutions; it's in industry's interest to put forward a crisis and extend it. The bigger companies are playing 'divide and conquer.' They want to get rid of the small companies and the unions by exporting logs and protections on federal lands. They want to promote a shake out of the industry and bankruptcy of the small mills.' "[And they want] to destroy NEPA [National Environmental Policy Act], the Endangered Species Act, etc." 'Industry is pushing the negative image in the press. The Seattle papers present only negative information about what's happening in the timber communities - about suicides, about people who say they will 'either cut trees or beat wives.' The papers make it seem that these are the only two choices. That media hurts the ability of towns to get money to invest in new development.'

"The most unfortunate thing is that this comes across as the owl versus jobs, and that's not the issue. The media is not getting across that by doing nothing about the owl, you only have a few years left of cutting old growth - you either stop now or in a short while. Unfortunately that doesn't make good TV footage like environmentalists yelling at loggers." "The timber industry is in a period of transition. They've overbuilt their capacity, [and we're running out of big trees.] There's a shake out going on in the industry, [and we've got an inevitable transition taking place in these communities.] The spotted owl is just accelerating that."¹⁸ "One hundred percent of the blame should fall on Congress, and now they're yelling at environmentalists for being the bearers of bad news."¹⁹

'But industry was there with a plan, and we weren't. Our job is to present an alternative plan, and we have not done that well.' "The timber workers, the people in the communities, labor, all need to understand that [the legislation we introduced] is their best hope. There isn't any question that the cut level is going to go way down. So who is going to take care of their interests, rather than posturing behind phony demagogic bills that people like [Senator] Slade Gorton have introduced? He couldn't care less about communities and workers; he's just making hay on the issue and supporting bills that have no realistic chance of passing. Workers and

¹⁸Lansing Scott, "Ancient Forests' 11th Hour," Seattle Community Catalyst, September, 1991. p.13.

¹⁹Ibid. p.14.

communities should be marching hand in hand with environmentalists."²⁰

'But there are two parts to the gap with labor. They are afraid about personal and immediate risk. We're afraid for forests, but [the job loss] is more remote than immediate to us.' "The other major gulf is [that] they don't honestly believe in the difference between old growth and second growth forests. I used to collect facts about old growth, but now I use pictures; they're more dramatic. (Brings out pictures of old growth and second growth forests. The second growth is barren on the ground; the old growth forest picture shows undergrowth.) If you hunt, you don't necessarily see that difference as significant. We say we're running out of forest, and they say we're not running out of trees. They do not understand the ecosystem. They desire to hunt and fish, but it's not necessary to understand the ecosystem for that. They work from ignorance."

"Our job is to teach labor differently, that they are wrong. We need to provide information to labor that there are not as many trees there [as they think]; that timber is losing. We know the facts. Audubon has gone back to document facts, mapping old growth forests." 'Audubon has a very active program with 125 people in the field in 6 locations taking the 1980 Forest Service supply survey and overlaying clearcuts and damage since then. Their maps were used by Jack Thomas and his team of scientists, albeit secretly.'

"We assume that we're right, and if we pound away at it, people will understand that. That's politically naive." 'Our message is complex, and we pride ourselves in making connections between effects from one place to another; but that's hard to communicate to the public.' "We're constantly vindicated and validated as being in the right: the economics are not as bad as they say; it's automation and exports doing far more damage to jobs than the spotted owl, which Fish and Wildlife finally owned up to; and the biology as we've portrayed it is absolutely true. While we win before every judge and while we win in every scientific committee, while these things are always on our side, we continually see the politics, including liberal Democrats, go the other way. We're winning in the courts because the court standard is obeying the law. But Congress is political and labor and industry's efforts work there."

"But surveys show that [most] people call themselves environmentalists, so we've had some

²⁰Ibid. p.13.

impact." "What we hear from congresspeople and senators who really do care about the environment is that the Northwest delegation is not hearing from the populace of these states. They're hearing primarily from the special interests, such as the mills that give their employees a day off of work to be at a rally."²¹

'We've come a long way in our efforts, but the communities haven't. Helping communities hasn't become accepted in forestry, in the steel industry etc. Their issues haven't gained in Congress or in public opinion.' "We're in power. Environmentalists have played the game and are inside the beltway and got legislation passed. People in the communities are out of power, and they are crying for solutions. We are looking for solutions because we're in power."

'About a year ago, we began to get bills introduced into Congress that were to be long-term solutions - the ancient forest protection bill, Northwest delegation bills, and a labor/industry bill introduced into the Senate. What environmentalists want is permanent congressional protection of ancient forests. But we do have the courts to fall back on if legislation doesn't work. That makes a good bargaining position in Congress. But labor's involvement on that bill slowed the environmentalists' momentum a lot. About 20-40 of the 120 original co-sponsors of the ancient forest bill left due to pressure and requests from labor, including some liberal Democrats.'

'The environmental community is *dedicated* to having a worker plan in their bills.' "Some environmentalists are so irate about the lies of the timber industry, and so they have little energy to devote to social issues. But Audubon has a central concern [with the well-being of communities.]" 'Ten years ago Audubon did a press release with ten alternatives that would deal with this community transition such as value added, alder wood production. Now the governor and industry and unions are saying these same things. Environmentalists didn't do the grass roots connections, but put ideas out first.'

"We don't want to just bail out communities, and the communities don't want to just get bailed out; but we need to reinvest in those communities. They are hard working people who want to work. They can produce value added goods, which is better than a low paid service economy. The first step is to educate them about forests and then reinvest in communities." 'We are promoting forest management that would dampen the boom and bust cycles, [produce]

²¹Ibid. p.13.

sustainability. We're promoting work in the forests other than with dead trees, such as closing roads in the forests, restoring watersheds and other environmental work. That's in the long-term best interests of communities. That kind of work could put loggers to work and could ally labor and environmental groups around watershed restoration. That's needed work. But people in the communities are holding onto the past and the old way of life. It makes them nervous and suspicious to talk about changes, and the industry has exploited that.'

'There's been lots of discussion about how to improve relationships with unions. We've thought about whether there are other, non-timber unions we could align with. But the AFL-CIO has endorsed the union bill, and so it's hard for affiliated unions to take opposing positions. On state legislation in Washington, there was some cooperation between environmentalists and communities on timber town assistance programs. The state gave \$30 million per year for two years to help with job retraining, unemployment benefits, assistance with converting mills and economic diversification.'

"I look for opportunities to talk with labor leaders, but I don't see them. And I [generally] have my time filled with projects, and we don't have the time to devote to talk with labor or communities." 'However, the Northwest Area Foundation in Minneapolis offered the Wilderness Society money if it would help develop a program to build consensus on the forest issue. They started working closely with a few high profile timber communities to see if they could find a constructive role in helping non-timber economic development. That was met with a lot of scepticism, especially in Aberdeen. It seemed doubtful that that could get anywhere from those meetings. So they contracted out most of the project to a firm in Oregon that specializes in community involvement and land use issues. They set up community meetings in two towns to look at economic diversification. The communities said they would like to look at ways to enhance tourism, so the consultants have worked with the tourist industry and not with timber workers or mill people.'

'I think the environmental groups have learned a lot from the spotted owl issue.' "The alliance [between industry and labor] was put in place while we were asleep. We were looking at the 'truth,' at forest ecology and not at the community issues and social issues. We didn't take advantage of the commonalities with labor and the communities, which are substantial. If we

were to do this again, we would look at the social issues up front." "In the final analysis, the growth and vigor of the Pacific Northwest's economy and the environmental concern of the region's residents, provide the key to achieving the dual goals of economic and ecological well-being. The opportunity exists for the transition that is taking place in the Northwest. . . to result in a reconciliation of environmental and economic values."²²

²²Anderson and Olson. p.93.

Interest analysis

Many observers seek to explain the conflict between timber workers and environmentalists in terms of diverging material interests. To evaluate such an explanation in the spotted owl debate, I will first summarize the way each side perceives its own interests. In chapter __, we saw that interest arguments incorporate three dimensions: claims of specific interests, rational arguments supporting why those interests should take precedence and definition of a social geography of allies and enemies. I will then review the many limitations of these self perceived motivations. They selectively ignore important factual information and fail to mention significant organizational and political purposes. Each side's position further depends on demeaning the other and fails to address the legitimate concerns the other side brings to the debate. These explanations provide insights into the motivations of political groups, yet they are silent about the most significant question: how do groups come to identify their interests as they do? Given the limitations of these interest arguments, I examine the role of cultural background in determining how each group defines its interests and in structuring the conflict between labor and environmental groups.

Unions - Unions and union members generally believe their interests would served by limiting environmental protections and allowing stable cut levels on federal lands. While jobs have diminished throughout the industry for a variety of reaons, they see the greatest immediate threat to jobs as the reduced timber supply in the national forests. As the AFL-CIO states, "The issue is. . .preserving the jobs and communities that depend on the continued harvesting of timber on public lands in the region."²³ Hence unions have taken the position that their interests will be served by defeating legislation that would set aside old growth forests and by having Congress override judicial barriers to cutting.

To accomplish their goals unions must redirect political attention away from environmental protection and toward the social and economic costs of preservation. The unions,

²³Statement by the AFL-CIO Executive Council on "Timber Harvesting on Public Lands," February 19, 1991, Bal Harbor, Florida.

for instance, have pushed hard to incorporate economic considerations into the Endangered Species Act. Over and over they argue, 'You need to think about the economic impacts of protecting species;' 'look at the human side of the equation.'

Given the national political concern about environmental protection, timber workers have an interest in claiming that they are properly protecting the forests already. They argue that they are the real environmentalists who care about the forests in their day to day work and decisions. They love the outdoors, but nature is not something sacred to be left to its own processes. Humans can improve on nature in a way that serves society's needs. They therefore claim that it is possible to preserve the forests and the owl while sustaining harvest levels. They argue that sufficient land has already been protected for environmental purposes. Preservationists have exaggerated the environmental problem to serve their own motives: not just to save owl habitat, but to depopulate the Olympic Peninsula.

This view also identifies a social geography, a set of allies and enemies. Labor clearly identify with industry, which they claim has a shared interest in preserving the harvest level. These companies may have made mistakes in the past, but the unions trust that they are now oriented towards sustainable yields. While unions have many conflicts with timber companies, they are portrayed as honorable and explicit about their intentions. Companies are not to blame when they fight hard for their interests, for they are forced to do so by competition. Yet companies have gotten greedy in the past and overcut the resource. Unions present themselves as the voice for reason in opposition to corporate overcutting, always seeking a balance between cutting and preserving the resource.

On the other hand, environmentalists are seen as the enemies. They have different interests and do not care about communities or workers. They are presented as manipulative, not to be trusted, dishonorable, fanatical and misguided. Their desire for protection is irrational; it is religious. Environmentalists do not understand the timber industry, and they react to clearcuts without appreciating the nature of timber as a managed crop that regenerates itself. Environmentalists fail to see that cutting improves natural processes by maintaining a youthful and vigorous forest and salvaging useful wood instead of allowing it to rot or burn.

The boundaries of friend and foe are drawn in other ways as well. Geographically,

environmentalists are seen as largely East coasters who have destroyed their land and are imposing their problems on the West. Environmentalists are generally believed to be urban residents who want to protect vacation lands at the expense of rural communities. There is also an occupational, if not class division, between people who work for the government and those who make a living in the private sector.

Environmentalists - Environmentalists perceive their interests as protecting the spotted owl from extinction by preserving old growth forests and, more broadly, in maintaining sustainable ecosystems. They want to protect the biodiversity of ancient forests. They are therefore working to have the court injunctions upheld in Congress and to win final protection for the remaining old growth forests by legislative action. In order to accomplish their goal, timber supply from federal lands would need to be dramatically reduced and jobs lost. The environmentalists have an interest in seeing these displaced workers reemployed or otherwise compensated so that they don't complicate the debate over protection. One avenue to increase local jobs in the long run is to decrease raw log exports to counter the loss in supply from federal lands.

Environmentalists make the case that dramatic new protection is necessary immediately. With 90% of the ancient forests gone, they argue that we must act now to protect what's left or the ecosystem will be destroyed. The choice is not between protection or stable levels of supply, but between reduced supply now or later. If we wait, the resource will be depleted and jobs lost anyway, but at the added cost of the extinction of many species and entire ecosystems. Job loss is not the fault of environmentalists, but the result of mismanagement by the Forest Service which has allied itself with timber companies to favor cutting over wildlife habitat protection.

Environmentalists have an interest in appearing sensitive to the social and economic costs of protection given the recession and broad concern about protecting jobs. They argue that they are the real advocates for the long-term interests of workers who have mistakenly allied themselves with industry. Industry doesn't care about jobs and workers, but is using labor to fight its battles in exchange for some possible short-term job gains. The real job loss has come mostly from the industry automating and overcutting. With the resource depleted, these communities have to begin to look for economic alternatives. Our society doesn't guarantee jobs,

and people are often displaced by restructuring in the economy. But still it is important to try to offset these economic hardships with worker retraining, economic adjustment assistance and economic development programs in the communities. Environmentalists support all of these.

In the environmentalists' view, the major social division is between themselves and the timber industry and National Forest Service which has become dominated by industry. Environmentalists claim broad support across the country, thus they are representing the national interest against the special interest of the timber industry. They sometimes present the controversy as a struggle between localized, special interests versus a national interest, where they are defending the public interest against government that has become dominated by big industry. The timber industry is perceived as wholly self-interested, protecting its bottom line only. It lies to the public and government, mismanages the resource, is callous about the human costs of its policies, and manipulates government agencies behind the scenes. It would destroy our natural heritage for short-term profits. The unions have been duped into allying themselves with industry, but they are seen as potential allies. They are presented as misguided, ignorant of the science of forest ecosystems, short sighted, unsophisticated and simplistic in their concerns, and destroyers of nature. Loggers are also perceived as a group caught in an outdated past facing the inevitable demise of their industry.

Limitations of Interest Analysis

These subjective perceptions fail to explain many aspects of each group's positions and motivations. First each side's interpretation of its interests denies basic facts that are central to the other side. The union view of environmentalists' interests is based on an unwillingness to admit that the forests are as devastated as the environmentalists say. This continues despite the fact that these environmental claims were largely vindicated by the Thomas Commission. The unions need to deny these findings in order to sustain their belief that the environmentalists are really plotting something more reprehensible than spotted owl protection. They can then label environmentalists as extremists who want to close all National Forests to logging.

Environmentalists, similarly, refuse to accept that the timber communities will be

devastated by ancient forest set asides, despite the report of the federal government's Interagency Economic Effects Team.²⁴ Instead they attribute most of the future job loss to automation, that is to industry actions. This projection is based on past trends, which may well not apply in the near future. (See appendix I for a more detailed critique of these projections projections.) Environmentalists need to deny that protection causes hardships to sustain their argument that the corporations are the real villains and communities and labor should join in opposing them. To accept that they are harming communities along with the industry would detract from their claim to follow a higher moral standard than corporate managers.

Second, each group's perception is based on demeaning the other side in some fundamental way. Environmentalists argue that unions are misguided about their own interests. They claim the unions have been duped into aligning with industry while their real long-term interests are being advanced by environmentalists. They are shortsighted, tying themselves to industry which will make short-term profits and then abandon them. Management has proven that it is willing to destroy the unions and abandon the workforce. Labor should see through the propaganda of industry which is blaming environmentalists for its own doing. It is industry that has diminished the resource and is now making it necessary to drastically reduce harvest levels. Labor has been tricked and bribed into working with industry.

On the other hand, union members believe that environmentalists are lying about their real interests and underhanded in their political actions. They claim environmentalists aren't really motivated by CO₂ levels and global warming or endangered species, and their arguments for these are erroneous. These preservationists don't see their interests in the same way as normal people who want to make a living and enjoy life. They are fanatical about this one idea of preserving nature. These are urban Easterners who have destroyed their own forests and natural areas. They want natural places to visit, but they want others to pay the price of protection. Their unspoken goal is to ruin the timber industry in the Northwest. To achieve this, they have sought to divide industry and unions, to get them fighting among themselves. And

²⁴This study was conducted as part of the Interagency Task Force's report, to evaluate the economic impacts of implementing its recommendations. See Jack Ward Thomas et. al. "A Conservation Strategy for the Spotted Owl," (Portland, Oregon: United States Department of Agriculture, 1990).

they want to remove decision-making from the local communities where people experience the issue first hand, to the halls of Congress where they can manipulate voters. They want to force others to live according to their view of what is right. Thus they are not only dishonest, but politically devious as well.

Third, neither side presents a coherent view that accounts for the needs or concerns of the other. One observer explains, "It isn't the environmentalists goal to take jobs away, nor is it industry's or labor's goal to destroy ecosystems. They're by-products of their primary agendas, which is the problem of single issue politics; you're not responsible for the by-products of your agenda. It's someone else's problem. The industry [says], 'We're not in the ecosystem business. You want to make ecosystems? Buy 'em from us.' That's what they say. Environmentalists [say], 'Job losses? We're not in the economics business; we're in the ecosystem business. If you have an ecosystem, come to us. If you want to protect jobs - sorry, we can't help you.'" This political onesidedness persists despite the fact that each side claims to present a balanced view that accounts for the concerns of the other. Environmentalists claim to be looking out for the best interests of workers and communities, and workers claim to be protecting the environment.

Fourth, each group has organizational interests that it does not state publicly. In both the environmental and labor situations, popular, grass root sentiments are being expressed in the political system through interest groups. These environmental and labor organizations benefit by servicing their members, increasing funding and building their political influence. Thus each makes strategic calculations about how to advance its organization while arguing its case on principles in public. For example one observer argues confidentially that 'Labor knows that it can't trust industry to look out for it; they fight with these guys all the time. They know that industry overcut the resource; they were writing reports in the '70s predicting timber shortages in the 90s if harvest levels didn't change. The same guy who wrote those reports is lobbying for the labor and industry bill now. But who was going to look out for the communities and labor? No one. The environmentalists weren't doing it. Labor had to hook up with someone or they'd never be heard. So it made good sense for them to work with industry; at least they got a hearing. The unions are desperate; they only have a few years left. They were looking for any

way to save some union jobs. It really wasn't until they started to attack the Endangered Species Act that they got any attention. Before that, the enviros were ignoring them; they didn't care. But when they started talking about amending Endangered Species, that got them looking. It was a good tactic for labor.'

'On the other hand,' this observer continues, 'the environmentalists are tacitly cooperating with big industry despite the fact that they are presented as the enemy. Environmentalists have agreed to restrict their efforts for protection to public lands. This leaves the large, private timber owners free to cut on their lands, and able to profit from the higher prices that will result from the reduced supply.' He describes "[I've had environmental lobbyists tell me] that they have nothing to gain from working with the small mills and labor who are dependent on public lands. The deal they cut was with Weyerhaeuser, because Weyerhaeuser says, 'You can deal with public lands, just stay the hell away from us.' These are the big guys; they're the ones with the money and the clout. And the problem is nobody believes they can win against them. They'd rather take their chance just fighting with the communities rather than taking on what they see as a bigger enemy."

But while labor and environmental movements act like an interest group in the political process, they represent much broader public mobilizations. Though the environmental movement has powerful lobbying and legal organizations, efforts to protect the spotted owl predate the involvement of major environmental organizations by as much as two decades. Scientists researching the owl at universities and government agencies first appealed to the BLM about protection in 1971. In 1985, Haida Indians in Canada brought world attention to the issue of logging old growth when they physically blocked logging trucks.²⁵ Dozens of local organizations have joined the cause using everything from direct action to lobbying. Earth First's 'monkeywrenching' has included pouring sand in gas tanks of bulldozers, chopping down billboards, chaining themselves to machinery and spiking trees. Other grassroots efforts include the Western Ancient Forest Campaign, and the campaign to pass California's "Forests Forever" initiative.²⁶ To see spotted owl protection simply as the agenda of a self-interested

²⁵"Old Growth Forests," Sierra, 72(4) July 1, 1987. pp.39-45.

²⁶Seth Zuckerman, "A View From the First and a Half World," Forest Watch January/February, 1992. pp.16-21.

group of national organizations also ignores the broad national support for protection. Polls show that _____% of the population supports protection of old growth forests.

Unions are more than interest groups as well. They are the major voice for timber communities that have no other organized political voice. The anger and resentment against environmentalists is widespread in the timber towns. There have been several large rallies against the "greenies," with over 500 logging trucks and 3500 participants from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and California.²⁷ Signs saying, "This Family Supported by Timber Dollars" are seen throughout the region. People sport bumper stickers saying 'Save a logger, kill an owl,' and 'I love spotted owls. . . barbecued, fricaseed, baked, stir-fried.' The outpouring of protest against old growth set asides was not orchestrated by the unions, which provided the organizational resources for this protest. In these communities dependent on the logging industry, maintaining the timber supply represents a broad public interest.

Furthermore, each movement has unstated interests beyond their strategic organizational calculations which derive from distinct class positions in society. In the spotted owl controversy, the working class must defend itself against both middle class and owning class efforts to benefit at their expense. The unions lost considerable ground against management in the '80s, losing wages and benefits, representation and overall jobs. Corporate strategies to rid themselves of unions altogether and to realize a complacent workforce continue. By shifting production overseas and to the unorganized South, replacing labor with machines, contracting out to non-union loggers, and replacing production with profitable exports, management has increased its power relative to the unions and working people in general. Since many of the remaining organized workers are in the small and medium mills that depend on public lands, the big corporations would be glad to see these small firms go out of business. This would reduce competition and destroy the unions at the same time.

Middle class environmentalists introduce a third class interest in the above equation. Their interests are tied to a service based economy against those of both workers and management in the industrial sectors.²⁸ The core of the environmental movement and the

²⁷Don Duncan and Joni Balter, "A rally against the 'greenies,'" The Seattle Times and Post-Intelligencer May 20, 1990. p.1. and William Gough, "Hundreds of trucks in rally for loggers," Seattle Times September 30, 1990. p.A1, A6.

people who staff environmental organizations are professional lawyers, lobbyists, academics, teachers, health professionals and so on. Their power as a class derives from controlling knowledge and information, not from material production. They remain relatively unaffected by the declining manufacturing base of the economy. Their incomes derive from local, state and federal taxes and provision of necessary or legally required services; thus they are also relatively unaffected by recessions. They tend to live in the suburbs, away from the problems of urban decay and the environmental consequences of rural resource use.

The middle class has attained a level of economic prosperity so that the quality of their environment is a prominent interest. Lester Thurow describes, "If you look at the countries that are interested in environmentalism or at the individuals who support environmentalism within each country, one is struck by the extent to which environmentalism is an interest of the upper middle class. Poor countries and poor individuals simply aren't interested. If you reflect on this phenomenon, it is not surprising. As our incomes rise, each of us shifts our focus of demand for more goods and services. Initially, we are only interested in physiological survival. Suppose now that a family has reached an economic level where they can afford food, fine housing, vacations, consumer durables, all of those goods and services that represent the American dream. What is there left that could mar their economic happiness? Up to this point each of them could individually buy a rising real standard of living. But now they run into environmental pollution. . . they cannot achieve a higher real standard of living unless something can be done about environmental conditions. Environmentalism is a demand for more goods and services. . . that does not differ from other consumption demands except that it can only be achieved collectively."²⁹

From a class perspective, labor and rural communities are the weakest and most vulnerable segments of society. They are therefore the easiest victims of both middle and owning class political activities. Middle class environmentalists and labor could have worked

²⁸This interpretation is proposed by Robert Lee in "Social and Cultural Implications of Implementing 'A Conservation Strategy for the Northern Spotted Owl,'" June 21, 1990. Mimeo. pp.22-23. Professor Lee has since reassessed his emphasis on class conflict for a more cultural interpretation.

²⁹Lester Thurow, Zero Sum Society (New York: Basic Books, Inc, 1980). pp. 104-105.

together to find another compromise by "phasing down the amount of cutting and phasing down the amount of exports [at the same time]. But no one seems interested in that. [One problem is] that the environmentalists don't believe that the ecosystem could take [that]. But the biggest problem is political. They would both have to take on the force of the log export lobby, which is bigger than the environmentalists, bigger than the small and medium sized mills that depend on public logs, [and bigger than labor]."³⁰ Neither side thinks it can win such a fight, and so they avoid it. "The guys the environmentalists have creamed - they ran right over the small mills and the labor people because it's easy. I mean, big industry screwed them in the '80s, the environmentalists will screw them in the '90s. Anybody can screw them; they're available. The environmentalists [say] 'No thank you, please, I can screw them myself. Why do I need to take on these big guys that could probably beat me?'"³¹

The class perspective has an important kernel of truth to it, yet it is also clearly limited. First, management and labor are cooperating not as a class, but as an industrial sector. The usual class conflict has been eclipsed despite the fact that employees and employers have divergent interests in many aspects of the protection issue. The big companies are making big profits on the reduced timber supply on public lands, while the workforce in general and especially the unionized segments suffer. Labor as a whole would benefit from log export limitations, while the large firms profit from these. Labor would also benefit from programs to retrain displaced loggers or invest in well paid value added work, which are not in the interests of timber companies. This would reduce the pool of cheap labor and decrease community dependence on the large timber firms. Therefore, labor and management could well have opposed each other on the spotted owl issue based on class interests.

Secondly, class interests do not adequately explain the motivations of environmentalists. If they really only want recreation opportunities, they have sufficient choices in the parks and wilderness areas. Their devotion to the issue cannot be explained by material gains. Indeed, many may lose materially from the increased price of lumber and home construction. Such a class interpretation ignores the passion and conviction expressed by environmentalists about

³⁰Quoted from an anonymous participant in the timber controversy.

³¹Ibid.

preserving old growth and saving species from extinction. One could see these as delusions, yet they are the battle cry to which environmentalists and the public across the country have responded.

As the above discussion indicates, the most serious limitation of the interest analysis is that there are many other plausible ways that each side could have identified its interests. In important ways, both unions and environmentalists identified their interests in ways that were harmful to their basic goals in significant ways. For example, environmentalists lost considerable congressional support for the Ancient Forests Protection Act by failing to address the social and economic consequences of their bill. Failure to involve workers and communities in decisions about resource use has fed the anti-protectionist "Wise use" movement, which seeks to limit environmental regulations in the name of property rights. It would have been at least strategically beneficial for environmentalists to perceive sustained employment and community involvement as in their interest. One could say that their failure to do so is due to the fact that interest groups are short-sighted. Yet the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund sustained law suits against the National Forest Service for over four years, and the campaign to protect old growth forests can be dated back at least to 1917 when the Save-The-Redwoods League was founded. Something else besides short-sightedness must explain how the environmental organizations selected interests to pursue.

A similar argument holds for labor unions. As an interest group they failed to oppose a host of industrial changes that have harmed them - from automation to the "gyppo" logging system of small, independent contractors outside corporate employment. They have adequate reasons to identify their interests in opposition to the timber industry, as described above. More than interest politics is needed to explain their selective pursuit of interests as well.

On the other hand mutually beneficial alternatives would be possible if labor and environmentalists perceived their interests as shared. One possibility would be to protect old growth on public lands and redistribute the gains and losses more evenly through political means. If the big companies are to gain large profits, some of this windfall could be redistributed to the small and medium mills and workers who will lose. This could be done in a variety of ways; for example, smaller companies could be given access to some private lands to replace public set asides. A second approach would be to reduce log exports and ensure that

more of the logs from private lands are available to the smaller mills. Both these options would help to preserve jobs and the way of life in timber communities. Another approach that would alter the existing social order more would be some form of tax that would be redistributed through programs for retraining and economic adjustment. Since the public would be a beneficiary of protection, the public could agree to pay some of the costs of adjustment that timber communities and workers would bear. For environmentalists the advantage of protection along with redistribution is that it would reduce the backlash that would come from protection at the expense of the workforce. For communities and working people, redistribution would mean that they would not feel the brunt of change as severely. While the timber companies would oppose such an effort, they are already supporting anti-environmental lobbying. They need the public backlash if they are to gain public support for their policies.

Given the many limitations of an interest analysis, the critical question is how groups come to perceive their interests as they do. Out of the many conceivable interests, why do people perceive certain interests over others? Why would one focus on present interests within the existing political economic system versus interests in some possible, altered system? And when possible interests are proposed, why are certain changes in the system considered the basis for identifying interests rather than others?

To answer these questions requires a deeper study of the way that people come to perceive their interests. To elucidate the process of interest formation, we turn to the broader cultural context in which these interests emerged. We will see that there are strong cultural determinants for the way that each group defines its interests.

Logging Culture

Logging in the Pacific Northwest was originally a nomadic life lead by independent minded men who moved from logging camp to logging camp as they pleased. As much as half the workforce was foreign born in the beginning of this century, from Britain, Germany and Scandinavia. The camps were originally shacks in the woods and evolved into car camps or semi-permanent villages on railroad cars for easy movement to the next timber stand. Loggers

moved often if they became dissatisfied with the conditions or food in a camp or just to assert their independence. As a result, the turnover rate in camps was as high as 55% a month in 1917.³² Up to 90% of loggers were unmarried and were not tied to any permanent settlement.

As roads made logging operations more accessible, loggers abandoned the camps for towns and cities. The federal government supported this process through policies to ensure a stable supply of timber for communities to harvest. Yet despite these efforts at stability, the timber industry remains largely seasonal work with regular, cyclical downturns. Thus loggers periodically experience unemployment and the need to move from job to job.

In addition the work is strenuous, dangerous and demanding, requiring constant vigilance. If the trees do not fall as planned or the logs are not moved with care or the equipment not properly maintained, loggers suffer major injury or even death. A study of the hazards of the industry concludes "From 1970 through 1979, in California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. . . 1,372 timber industry deaths took place. The men were killed in routine fashion: they did not look, or jump, or get out of the way, or run fast enough. The grisly fact of their 1,372 deaths reinforces our statistical conclusion that logging is the most dangerous business of all and the most 'unforgiving' of carelessness; a job which requires a man to be alert constantly like a soldier in combat; a business where, on guard every moment, the logger had better be ready to run for his life."³³

Logging is a team effort with one goal: to get the logs to town. To achieve this requires coordination and cooperation. Loggers work in crews to accomplish their tasks. The fallers and buckers cut down the trees and chop them into small enough logs to move. A choker setter fastens cable around the logs so they can be "skidded" to the landing. One or more bulldozers, called "cats," move the logs to the landing. A landing chaser unhooks the chokers and trims extra branches. The loader operator then loads the logs on trucks.

Logging is a way of life that has been handed down from father to son. Teenagers used to enter the woods in their early teens, and still many young people do not finish high school before beginning work. Training is on the job, and a good logger must be competent at many skills. In a

³²Andrew Prouty, More Deadly Than War, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985).
p.45.

³³Ibid. p.169.

day he may be called upon to operate heavy equipment, set the choker cables, trim logs, or even repair equipment. A young logger begins at the bottom of the social hierarchy as a choker. Here he must prove himself to be quick and efficient. He may move up to become a landing chaser or, if he applies himself to learning to use equipment, to a cat operator or loader. Fallers and buckers have the highest status among occupations.³⁴

In the prime of one's life, woodworkers aspire to join the ranks of self-employed "gyppo" loggers. The high priority placed on independence and self-reliance reinforces the desire to be one's own boss. This requires assembling enough capital to purchase equipment, which one must maintain by one's own ingenuity and skill. Gyppo loggers are part of the broader entrepreneurial tradition. One observer describes them as "Reckless and daring gamblers, always ready to move on to the next stand of timber. [The] multitudes of gyppos were unique to the postwar era in the Douglas fir country. Opposed to labor unions and government regulations, they were a throwback to an earlier day of independent entrepreneurship."³⁵

As a tangible, task oriented activity, logging produces a culture that places particular value on getting things done. This is central to loggers' work life, where the emphasis is on accomplishing tasks under any circumstances. Logging requires considerable initiative and creativity when the work site is isolated far out in the woods. This attitude of getting things done is reflected in leisure activities as well. Hunting and fishing are both practical, goal oriented forms of leisure which also make use of the natural world to meet human needs and wants. In their political activities, timber workers also emphasize activity and results, and are impatient with abstract conversation.

People advance in their careers or locate work at a new location based on their reputation as a good and skilled worker.³⁶ There are no certificates to prove one's level of skill, but only reputation to recommend one for future work. The qualities that make a good reputation include

³⁴Mathew Carroll and Robert Lee, "Occupational Community and Identity Among Pacific Northwestern Loggers," in Robert Lee, Donald Field and William Burch, Jr, (eds.) Community and Forestry (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990). pp. 144-46.

³⁵William Robbins, Hard Times in Paradise (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988). p.110.

³⁶Robert Lee, "Social and Cultural Implications of Implementing 'A Conservation Strategy for the Northern Spotted Owl,'" June 21, 1990. p.13.

hard work, competence in diverse skills, inventiveness, independence, dependability and common sense.

The strong bond between loggers and their dependence on reputation combine to produce a strong sense of personal identity with their occupation. A person's sense of who they are is tied to being a good worker, being independent, having a good reputation, being skillful and innovative when the need arises. Carroll and Lee describe two consequences of this strong occupational identity. "One is to foster what is often a very intense attachment to the occupation; the other is to provide the individual with an identity and its accompanying sense of empowerment."³⁷

A person's sense of personal identity is also associated with social identity, that is how one defines who one is in relationship to other members of society. In timber communities, social identity is tied to the contribution of logging to the larger society. Loggers and timber communities have always felt that they are contributing to the welfare of society at large by providing a necessary raw material. In the Pacific Northwest, they could always be particularly proud of the quality of their product which is inherently related to the productivity of the unique Northwest forests. Timber workers, then, are the intermediaries between nature and society, the people whose work makes these magnificent woods useful for society.

As workers on nature, loggers have a very strong sense of affinity with and respect for the woods and the natural world they come to know so intimately. They learn to understand trees and their environment in a very tangible way - how and where they grow, their unique qualities, their mass and texture etc. Nature is something they touch every day. It is stubbornly solid and concrete. Nature is also something they actively change with their labor. It is not something separate from humans, but something to be shaped and used for survival, a resource to be understood and applied. The haphazard ways of natural processes can be enhanced by the skillful intervention of humans. Thus loggers not only save some of the bounty of the woods for human use, but also feel that they improve on nature's own designs by increasing its productivity.

³⁷Carroll and Lee. p.147.

The logger's experience of nature is also of regeneration and renewal. Since childhood they have seen the woods progress through its succession from clear cuts to brush to trees. This process is aided by clearing and planting, which are part of the logger's trade. They see around them forests in various stages of regrowth.

A logger's sense of nature is highly experiential, and they generally value direct experience as the basis for knowledge and the standard for truth. Since survival in the woods depends on one's wits and awareness, these people learn to trust themselves and their senses. Experience is also the way that people develop skills and become competent, capable woodsmen. For these reasons, people learn to trust the knowledge gained from experience over book learning and abstractions.

Loggers place considerable value on straight forward honesty - as they say, "looking someone in the eye." They recognize conflict as natural, as in the labor/management relationship. But to negotiate requires honesty about goals and what is at stake. Honesty is important on the job too, and is part of a good reputation. Honesty is expressed through one's integrity in standing up for what one believes is right. Within the union and in private conversation, people are expected to speak their minds. It is a point of honor to defend one's beliefs, with violence if need be.

Overall loggers interpret behavior in terms of self-interest. To gauge the legitimacy of what someone says, 'you ask him where he's from and what vested interest he has truly in what he's advocating.' (p. ___ above) With the owl set asides, they very clearly perceive their own tangible losses in terms of jobs and income. This is a direct question of their personal interests since they 'live and will probably die in the timber communities.' They see a shared interest with industry in this situation, which is the basis of their political alliance. Business too is seen as motivated by interests as it seeks to maintain profits in a competitive and uncertain economy. They bear no malice towards management in this, which they see as natural behavior.

Cultural and Interests in the Labor/Environment Conflict

The cultural context helps explain why timber workers have interpreted their interests

as they have in the present political situation. There is a strong cultural basis for timber workers to draw the social boundaries of insiders and outsiders as they do. Workers share much with their employers in contrast with environmentalists. Employers are known commodities with whom the unions have long experience and ongoing relationships. Employers and employees know what to expect from each other and have a clear idea of each other's motivations. They furthermore speak a common language in the industry and have a common set of reference points on the job site. They share a set of goals about producing and participate in a common pride about their product. Thus workers and employers have a broad context within which to build a political alliance.

The labor/management relationship is further reinforced by interdependence. Management has significant power over the lives of employees from work rules to quality of life on the job to the power to hire and fire. While these are modified in the presence of the union, they remain largely management decisions. But management depends on the quality of its workforce as well as its honesty and integrity on the job. The ability of a company to accomplish its tasks depends on the efforts of the people it hires. This sense of dependence of management on workers diminishes the farther removed management is from direct contact with employees. Interdependence provides a basis for workers and employers to cooperate politically as well, from a combination of respect and fear of retaliation on the job.

The historical interplay between culture and perceptions of interests produced the present relationship between labor and management. Jerry Lembcke and William Tattam trace how interests and culture reinforced each other in the development of timber unions in the Northwest. There was a conflict between craft and industrial unionism dating back to the first part of this century. Conservative craft unionism was strong in Oregon where the industry developed around small firms and mills amenable to organizing along craft lines. Oregon was also settled by conservative farmers largely from pre-industrial Germany. Thus the AFL found a receptive workforce both in terms of political outlook and the organization of industry in Oregon. In Washington the deep water ports of Puget Sound encouraged sizeable operations, and Weyerhaeuser capitalized large industrial mills. Significant waves of immigration came later than in Oregon, primarily from Britain and Scandinavia where there were strong socialist movements.³⁸ As a result Washington's settlers were more sympathetic to industrial unions,

and the industry was also organized more along industrial lines. Thus the different cultural traditions implanted in Oregon and Washington were reinforced by different institutional conditions which defined distinct interests. Conservative craft unionism thrived in Oregon, while more radical industrial unionism took root in Washington.

In 1937, the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) was founded as an industrial union within the CIO. The AFL did everything in its power to crush the new union as did the mill owners. Once established, it was the object of a concerted anti-communist campaign by federal and local government as well as the CIO itself. In 1941 the IWA voted to ban communists after a bitter factional campaign by the national CIO. In the 1950s another major struggle developed over CIO efforts to reorganize the union in a more hierarchical, centralized and undemocratic way. The result was "control of all levels of the union through appointment by the international office; an organizing program that put dollars ahead of principles; substitution of collective bargaining techniques for class struggle at the point of production; and a shifting of the locus of power from the local level."³⁹ These characterize the business unionism of the woodworkers today.

This business unionism reflects both cultural changes and interest calculations in an altered political climate. In an earlier period the radical, industrial unions fought for a set of objective possible interests that, if labor in the industry could organize as a class, they could assert against employers.⁴⁰ However the success of government and management in containing the union movement severely limited the present interests of workers. Attainable gains were restricted to a context dominated by management's interests. At the same time, union culture was diminished by the purge of radicals from the labor movement. Conservative craft union culture was both reinforced by the dominance of the AFL nationally, and imposed by the AFL's and later CIO's anti-radical purges. Therefore for both material and cultural reasons, labor unions began to identify more with the interests of management and the needs of the timber sector of the economy as opposed to the working class as a whole.

³⁸Lembcke and Tattam. Chapter 1 "Uneven Development."

³⁹Lembcke, Jerry and Tattam, William, One Union In Wood, (New York: International Publishers, 1984). p.153.

⁴⁰Objective possible interests are defined on page ____

Some have argued that the triumph of business unionism in the United States is a cultural phenomenon, reflecting the peculiarly anti-radical nature of this liberal society.⁴¹ Others argue that the power of the employing class combined with peculiar conditions such as nativism and racism defeated radical labor and forced conservative unionism on the working class.⁴² Either way, business unionism is now well established as part of the political culture of organized labor in the United States. It now greatly contributes to the way that unions define their interests. Furthermore given the distribution of power in the U.S., working people are rewarded for working within the system of business unionism and punished for opposing it. Thus by culture and calculation, we can explain adherence to business unionism.

The collective bargaining process further reinforces both the cultural sense and material reality of common interests. Subjectively, laborers have the experience of working together with management, even after violent conflicts. At some point in any conflict they are able to sit down and work out their differences 'like adult professionals.' Furthermore, objectively unions were able to make significant wage and benefit gains through the '60s and '70s via collective bargaining. Union workers still generally command higher wages than non-union, so they have reason to identify their interests with the gains attainable through collective bargaining.

These relationships between labor and management contrast with those with environmentalists, who are foreigners from 'back East' or from the cities. They work through anonymous, distant institutions of power and are rarely directly seen despite being felt. The only manifestations of these environmentalists that people meet are the hikers and tourists that tramp through, and the more militant anti-logging groups engaged in direct action protests in the woods. Every now and then environmentalists set up meetings with community leaders and possibly create a committee and go home. Their motives are far less clear and there is no ongoing relationship upon which to build an understanding of each other.

The environmentalists also bring a view of nature that is alien to that of woodworkers. They see nature as something to preserve in its present form, as sacred and beneficial in its

⁴¹This argument is developed by Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955) and, more recently, Seymour Martin Lipset, Continental Divide (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1990).

⁴²Mike Davis, Prisoners of the American Dream, (London: Verso, 1986);

pristine state. Timber workers experience that they can improve the work of nature through their labor. They see change and destruction as part of the natural process which goes on with or without humans. People cannot stop that process; thus they see the environmentalists' efforts to protect nature as unrealistic.

Furthermore, timber workers have long ago come to think in terms of sustainable yield forestry. That has been the stated goal of the Forest Service since its founding. Segments of private industry have been talking about sustainability almost as long. Loggers have seen (and seeing is believing) crop rotations on timberlands their whole lives. Thus they have come to expect that their logging practices already accomplish the goal set forward by environmentalists. Sustainability means different things to each group, and this difference contributes to labor's distrust of the actual purposes sought by environmentalists. They are cynical about the real goals of environmentalists because their stated goals don't seem to justify their actions.

Given their pride in their work and their sense of social identity, timber workers balk at being characterized as destroyers of nature. This runs directly counter to their own perception as improving nature through their work and also as contributors to the broad welfare of society. The popular perception of loggers has changed dramatically, and this rapid transformation has been very difficult for people to adapt to. Now "People who cut trees are seen as fat, beer drinking tree murderers, rapists of the land, and so on. So first the workers [were doing what was] the right thing to do, producing commodities that people are seen as having a demand for, and then they are blamed and rejected for having done that. And there is very little extension of sympathy for any suffering that results from that sudden moral exclusion."⁴³ To accept the new characterization would require demeaning the purpose around which people and communities have organized their lives.

Economic change doesn't just mean changing jobs for loggers, but entails interrupting their life cycle and life expectations with only uncertainty as a replacement. As a specialist in occupational trauma describes, "It's not just a job. . . It's the loss of an entire way of life. It

⁴³Robert Lee quoted in Fred Moody, "The Vanquished," Seattle Weekly, February 12, 1992. p.22.

takes a whole different level of 'recovery,' if you will. It's a complete dislocation - a major assault on your world view."⁴⁴ While the timber industry suggests that the way of life that workers have become accustomed to can be retained, environmentalists say that change is not only inevitable but desirable. Even the most generous programs of job retraining and adjustment assistance do not begin to address the loss of investment in logging equipment, experience or reputation. They do not replace the status and social positions attained through the ordered process of advancement within timber communities. Economic adjustment programs tagged onto environmental bills don't address the broad range of social costs incurred by altering the economic base of community life.

Environmentalists also propose a very different set of standards for knowledge than the direct experience trusted by timber workers. They claim that direct experience of the woods is deceptive, and that people need to rely instead on scientific studies. These are performed by distant people in universities or government agencies who have no particular care about the lives of people in effected communities. Timber workers, especially the more educated, do quote scientific studies at times to support a point, but these are secondary to claims based on experience in the woods as loggers, hunters, children or members of a timber community.

Furthermore environmentalists propose a different set of criteria for action, which are moral as opposed to economic. Workers and communities claim that their needs and interests as a community should take precedence. In a broader sense, they argue for the primacy of human well being as determined by economics. Against this, environmentalists make a moral claim which underlies their scientific arguments: that protecting a species like the owl or ancient forests represents a moral imperative. Secondarily they make an economic argument about the long-term value of old growth forests in providing as yet undiscovered benefits to society, such as the recent discovery that Taxol from yew trees is useful in fighting ovarian cancer. But even if there were no such possible benefits, the moral arguments sufficiently motivate the environmental movement.

Unionists do recognize that environmentalists seem to be acting by some other set of principles than self interest. They don't live in the timber communities, so they don't seem to

⁴⁴Billie Lawson, associate director of social work at Harborview Medical Center, quoted in *ibid.* p.21.

have direct personal interests at heart. Labor people attempt to attribute interests to the environmentalists, such as trying to protect land in the West after destroying the land in the East. But more, environmentalists seem incomprehensible and fanatical. They call them religious, which implies the opposite of what timber workers value in themselves. Religion is not practical, not reasonable or negotiable, not interest focused. What is clear is that they do not follow the same principles and standards as loggers.

Environmentalists also work through different political processes than those that timber workers are accustomed to. The collective bargaining process is one in which conflicts are brought directly to the source without any intervening institutions. Only if direct negotiations or confrontations fail, is a mediator or arbitrator possibly called in. To carry on the battle over timber and harvest levels in the distant forum of Congress without face to face negotiations is seen as underhanded and not to be trusted.

Conclusions

The conflict between timber workers and environmentalists cannot be explained solely on the basis of conflicting interests. Each side's perceptions of its interests is based on the denial of the validity of the other's basic claims. Each side furthermore sustains its point of view by demeaning the other in some unjustifiable way. The scope of each side's ideas is narrow since as issue focused organizations, they have no need to address the problems that motivate the other side. Also each side has organizational and class interests which it does not articulate. They present their arguments in the most noble terms while their actions are also motivated by pragmatic political calculations as well as largely unconscious class interests and biases. Finally, given the myriad ways that these groups could have identified their interests, the critical question remains: how they came to perceive their interests as they do?

Interests and culture are impossible to separate. Both develop through historical experiences as they shape each other over time. There is a congruence between these two that demands further explanation, and will be considered in a later chapter. A cultural analysis contributes to an understanding of how definitions of interests form. Through it we recognize

the breadth and depth of issues at stake in the conflict over owl protection. All groups have well established patterns of political action that have become part of the political culture of these organizations, involving clear expectations about each other's behavior. As noted in many ways above, environmentalists and environmental organizations come from different geographical places, different lifestyles, different occupations, different classes and different political organizations than timber workers. Not discussed above are the gender, educational and age or generational differences that also play an important role in shaping the conflict. All these result in the perception of divergent interests as described previously.

It is difficult for groups to change these patterns both because of the institutional and political resources devoted to them, and because of the personal convictions developed by staff and members. People's perceived interests were formed through their experiences in a political process that has lead to the present impasse. And objectively, given the rigid positions of the other actors, there is continual pressure to maintain an uncompromising posture for fear of losing political ground in the present stand off. Thus cultural patterns reinforce the status quo as well as people's perceptions of present interests.

This suggests the magnitude of the differences that must be reconciled if unions and environmentalists were to cooperate. This would require much more than the committees and legislative add ons which have been tried so far. Environmentalists and timber workers would need to create ongoing relationships through which they could begin to understand each other's motivations and realities. They would have to grapple with their different understandings of nature and the human place in the natural world. Discrepancies about facts and information would need to be reconciled, beginning with some recognition of the validity of different standards for evaluating information. Respect would need to be established for the very different contributions that both environmentalists and timber workers make to society, and for the important roles that each of their occupations play in their lives. Since timber workers are being asked to make significant changes in their life styles and standard of living, a coalition would need to also address the psychological and emotional processes of adjustment in timber communities. It would need to reconcile different values and priorities about human versus natural costs. The question of how these costs should be distributed is critical. And finally it would need to establish a process for political decision-making that both sides would feel is

legitimate.

While the demands of cultural reconciliation are substantial, discrepancies in interests are intertwined with the cultural dimension. The power dynamics between unions, environmentalists and industry cause divisions which would need to be overcome to make cooperation possible. Environmentalists have built considerable power through public support and well funded interest groups. They have won some significant court battles that has placed them in a strong bargaining position. Workers and unions have most to lose personally in this situation, and they are the most vulnerable group politically. They also have the fewest resources, and the labor movement as a whole has lost considerable power and public support in recent decades. Big industry is most powerful and would like to use its clout in a long-term effort to defeat environmental regulations as well as the organized strength of the labor movement.

We have seen that more equitable resolutions to the timber controversy are possible, but they depend upon building a powerful enough political alliance to promote them. If we are to protect the owl and ensure the well being of workers and communities, this alliance would have to include the unions and workers, timber communities and environmentalists. These groups would have to promote a comprehensive solution to the issue of spotted owl protection which incorporates economic, social and environmental dimensions. This would require a broader analysis of the distribution of costs and benefits of new environmental policies. The alliance would have to lay claim to some of the benefits that would accrue to the big companies and the public from protection, and redistribute these to the groups that would suffer the most. This would require different perceptions of interests by environmentalists and workers. The above criticism of each side's present perception of interests suggests that such a redefinition is possible, but the cultural analysis informs us of the magnitude of this task.

Cultural differences, divergent interests and power disparities within the existing system - these are the barriers that must be overcome for cooperation to be possible. Yet these barriers cannot be understood in isolation but are part of the order of the existing society. All these group - employers, workers and middle class environmentalists - are linked in one social system. How do we understand the relationships between these groups? What role do their

intentions play in these relationships, and how do we understand the unintended consequences of their actions? Furthermore, what is the relationship between objective and subjective interests and culture? How do we understand the convergence of culture and interests and the process through which these change? To address these questions we must examine class and political culture in the organization of society as a whole. Following that discussion we will review examples of coalitions that have successfully overcome these barriers to cooperation.