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Presentations	Session 3.2	<i>Global Forest Bioeconomy: Continuity or a Pathway to Transformations? (Part 1)</i>

*Abstract Session 3.2 – Forest-based Bioeconomy in Finland: An Extractivist Principle and Practice?*

The bioeconomy is widely regarded as a concept with ‘interpretative flexibility’ in a way that actors can deploy it for various goals (Peltomaa, 2017). Not all its definitions are based on, or intended towards, growth-oriented, high-technologized and (probably) unequal or extractivist practices and society-nature relations – even though one could argue that way looking at the current hegemonic practice (D’Amato et al., 2017; Hausknost et al., 2017; Vivien et al., 2019). Bioeconomy is only seldomly discussed in connection with ‘extractivisms’ (Gudynas 2019) or even as relying on or promoting an extractivist ‘principle and practice’ (Willow, 2019). Only recently, with regard to the soy or sugar cane cultivation in South America authors argue for an emerging ‘extractivist bioeconomy’ (Boyer, 2019; Tittor 2020; Backhouse 2020). In relation to the forest-based bioeconomy or developments in the Global North, this point of view is rarely applied.

With the Äänekoski bioproduct mill in Central Finland as my case study, I will discuss a typical example for the currently hegemonic account of the bioeconomy – and unfold the argument that it might serve as a specific materialization of extractivist principles and practices. Based on empirical data from interviews conducted with diverse local stakeholders in 2019-2020, I aim to shed light on the latent social, political and ecological contradictions that unfold themselves locally. The Äänekoski bioproduct mill is prominently framed to be one of the striking forest bioeconomy megaprojects in Europe, serving as a global blueprint for industrialised, highly efficient, automated and CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral forest bioeconomy. Despite the discursive recognition of the multidimensional value of forests, the official endorsement of sustainability-aspects and innovative character of the project, it illustrates (and causes) contradictions and conflicts on multiple levels that are mostly swept under the rug.