Community viability and well-being in northernmost Europe: social change and cultural encounters, sustainable development and food security in Finland’s North

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Abstract: Northernmost Europe is characterised by diversity. Relations between indigenous (minority) and immigrant (majority) populations concern territorial claims, resource utilisation and human rights. Indigenous Sámi feel encapsulated in centralised states. Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians, historic immigrants, represent these states. The collapse of the Soviet Union effected cross-border relations. New structures have emerged stressing community viability. Developments have progressed in economic performance, human security, quality of life, education and health focusing of local activities such as reindeer herding. These conditions have an impact on transnational relations and community viability.

Keywords: community viability; socio-economic well-being; sustainable development; reindeer herding; food security; cultural encounters; northernmost Europe; Sámi; Finns.


Biographical notes: Ludger Müller-Wille (Dr. phil., Ethnology, Münster, Germany, 1971) has been professor of geography with McGill University (Montréal, Canada) since 1977. He has conducted research with Sámi and Finns in Finland and Inuit and Dene in Canada focusing on ethnic identity, socio-economic change, toponymy and geographical knowledge. In 1994–1996, he was director of the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi (Finland). He was recently engaged in projects looking at the utilisation of the mountain birch and the modernisation in reindeer herding in northernmost Europe.

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Introduction: The political and inter-ethnic context of the Barents Euro-arctic Region

The residents of northernmost Europe (the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and European Russia) have experienced rapid socio-economic and political changes since the late 1980s and early 1990s when the dividing line of the bipolar world between...
East and West gradually disappeared. These changes had been caused by the transition in
the former Soviet Union from a controlled and often rigidly closed system impeding
international and regional relations to a broadly open system guided by free-market
forces and less restrictive communications and exchanges within the state and across
political borders. After the firm establishment of the Soviet Regime in Northwest Russia
by 1920 and acerbated by the Cold War after 1948, northernmost Europe, i.e., Northern
Fenno-Scandia and the Russian European North, was divided factually into the Eastern
and Western regions with little contact between them for a period of 70 years

In the West, in post-war Fenno-Scandia, liberal democratic governments were
concerned with the reconstruction of their respective northern areas, except in Sweden,
in the aftermath of devastation inflicted by the armed forces of Nazi Germany in
1944–1945. The emerging Nordic model of the paramount welfare state stressed equal
opportunity and access to public services for all its citizens, wherever they might
reside within the national territory, across the Nordic countries under the Nordic Council
founded in 1952. For the northern areas, the perceived periphery of these Nordic states,
this also meant the maintaining and sustaining of an appropriate number of permanent
residents affording equal standards for socio-economic conditions and well-being,
including health and quality of life, set for the nation as a whole. In general, it can be
stated that the Fenno-Scandian states have achieved this goal, also for purposes of
asserting territorial sovereignty, through considerable subventions without incurring a
substantial decrease in the population base.

The Soviet Union, on her part, invested enormously in human and natural resources
to develop its northern areas to expand industrial extraction of resources, create an
umbrella of military protection and security and enhance the infrastructure for mainly
internal mobility and trade. These developments caused a large influx of people, for
example, into the region of Northwest Russia, which, in the mid-1990s, outnumbered
northern Fenno-Scandia with four against less than one million inhabitants (Granberg,
1998; Lausala and Valkonen, 1999; Seppänen, 1995), thus having the highest population
concentration and density in the circumpolar north in the metropolitan areas of
Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. By the early 21st century, this demographic trend has been
reversed due to increased emigration of residents to the South.

The regions of northernmost Europe are characterised by cultural and linguistic
diversity that has evolved over a long period of time. Long-term contacts across
cultural and linguistic lines have been established albeit not always without altercations
(World Commission on Culture and Development, 1994). The juxtaposition between
indigenous and immigrant populations and/or minorities and majorities are a fact of
everyday life and are still cause to major concerns over territorial claims, resource
utilisation and human (i.e., cultural and linguistic) rights. The aboriginal people in both
northern Fenno-Scandia and the Russian European North, for example the Sámi (Aikio
et al., 1994; Sámi Instituhtta, 1990) and Nenets (Tuisku, 1999), live in centralised states
in which they are encapsulated, often not having direct access to decision-making
processes. Norwegians, Swedes, Finns and Russians, the historic immigrants residing
in these northern tiers, are fully represented by their ‘nation-states’ whose role,
e.g., in the West as the Nordic welfare state, is questioned by these aboriginal peoples.
These circumstances have led to dynamic socio-economic and cultural processes that will
shape the future of local northern residents. This is not to say that there are no conflicts
within the national or majority societies as exemplified by the existing south–north
discrepancies, between centre and periphery, with respect to economic development and political power relations within Norway, Sweden, Finland or Russia.

The disappearance of the ‘iron curtain’ in northernmost Europe has had a profound effect on the network of inter-relationships among the different regions and their residents. To cope with and accommodate these changes, new structures facilitating and increasing exchange and cooperation have emerged by focusing on the inter-connectedness among all regions in northernmost Europe socio-economically, culturally and politically (cf. Bröms et al., 1995; Granberg, 1998; Käkönen, 1996; Stokke and Tunander, 1994). Examples of such new structures are the Barents Euro-arctic Regional Council, founded in 1993, creating a framework for inter-regional cooperation across international boundaries. Furthermore, the northern extension of the European Union into these areas through Finland’s and Sweden’s membership as of 1 January, 1995 has altered the conditions for socio-economic development and levels of well-being. Future expectations of local residents are quite often contradictory. In particular, there are many concerns about this critical phase of transition in Russia. In Europe, in particular within the European Union, future developments in industrial and environmental management are combined with expectations of progress in commercial and economic performance, thus increasing the demands for comprehensive security, e.g., food security, possibly leading to a better quality of life, be it through higher levels of income, education, health and food conditions (cf. Therborn, 1995).

2 Research problematic: community viability and socio-economic change

These emerging changes and their future challenges are the focus of this paper bringing together results from various individual projects, which focused on formal and informal aspects of socio-economic development, well-being, food security and cultural contact on the regional and local levels in the Barents Euro-arctic Region (cf. Müller-Wille, 1998). Besides the prevalent forces of the economic markets, environmental, cultural and linguistic aspects of human conditions in northern regions were considered to be very important and crucial elements in these studies. The underlying principal research questions were as follows:

- How do small northern communities and their members manage to continue to be functional culturally, socio-economically and politically in their own regions through internal and external relations and structures?

- How do these communities either react to, refute or integrate external forces and pressures of any type that reach into their societies and regions causing socio-economic, cultural and political changes and adaptations?

The individual case studies were conducted mainly on the community level in northern Finland and were designed to complement each other in their scope and questioning. In this way, the studies aimed to arrive at a comprehensive level of understanding of the possibilities and opportunities local communities have in their own familiar environments despite increasing external pressures of globalisation. The case studies were carried in northernmost Finland within the Province of Lapland and, partly, within Sápmi, the Sámi Home Region (SHR). The first two studies concern the social and cultural aspects of local conditions drawing from general statistics to discuss indicators of changes
(Granberg, Helander and Müller-Wille – Section 3) and from personal interviews delving into the intricate social and economic relations between Sámi and Finns within a specific situation of culture contact (Länsman – Section 4). The following three studies centred on the political and environmental issues around modern Sámi reindeer herding (Heikkilä – Section 5.1), the conditions for local food security in a small Finnish reindeer herding community outside the SHR (Tuisku – Section 5.2), and the interface between reindeer herding and other land use practices including protected areas (Berrouard and Müller-Wille – Section 5.3). These studies are introduced and discussed by focusing on well-being, inter-ethnic relations, sustainability and community viability using reindeer herding as one element to show emerging changes, which are presented in the concluding synthesis.

3 Socio-economic well-being in Sápmi: Finland’s Sámi Home Region

The aim of this section is to present a well-founded interpretation of the current conditions for socio-economic development and well-being in the SHR in northernmost Finland in order to be able to discuss the related issue of culture contact and food security touched upon in the following sections. By focusing on a specific region with rich cultural traditions based on the utilisation of local resources and shaped by the developments during the post-modern phase of Nordic societies, it is possible to add some relevance to the pressing issues, which are prevalent today.

Generally, there are no easy ways of measuring levels of socio-economic and cultural well-being, because well-being is an expression of a complex state of affairs with seemingly objective factors such as economic prosperity, combined with subjective feelings and attitudes (Allardt, 1973; Allardt and Uusitalo, 1972). The strategy used in this analysis is to combine various macro-level indicators collected from official statistics with interpretations of socio-economic processes on the national level and with materials obtained from research conducted in local northern communities (for an earlier discussion in the Finnish context cf. Nurmio, 1989, 1991; Tuomi, 1989).

3.1 The Sámi home region: Sápmi on the Finnish side

The SHR in Finland is made up of the three northernmost municipalities in Finland, Eanođat-Enontekiö, Aanaar-Inari and Ohecejohka-Utsjoki, and the Vuohču-Vuotso area in the southeast, part of the municipality of Sodankylä (Figure 1). The Vuohču-Vuotso area is excluded here from the discussion for technical reasons, because statistics are kept as per municipality and specific areas cannot be separated below that level. The total population figures without reference to ethnicity for 2002 (1998) were 2097 (2300) inhabitants in Eanođat-Enontekiö, 7241 (7555) in Aanaar-Inari and 1421 (1460) in Ohecejohka-Utsjoki, a total for the three municipalities of 10,759 (11,315), a decrease of almost 5% within two years only. This confirms a noticeable downward trend in population throughout the Province of Lapland (Lappi) that has been noticed since the mid-1990s (Population Register Centre, 2002).

The Sámi population in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia was estimated from 70,000 to 100,000 in the mid-1990s (Markelin, 1998). In Finland in the late 1990s, there were around 7000 Sámi (i.e., North Sámi, Aanaar-Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi) registered in the Electoral List of the Sámi Parliament in Finland, of which 4000 lived in the SHR,
2000 in other parts of Finland and about 1000 in foreign countries, mainly in Norway and Sweden (Pohjois-Suomen katsaus, 1997–1999, p.31). Ohcejohka-Utsjoki is still the only municipality in Finland with a Sámi majority although recent figures indicate that the Sámi represent just barely 50% of the population or some 750 residents (Aikio, 2002a, 2002b). The Sámi, recognised in Finland’s constitution, since 1995, and by the European Union as the only aboriginal people in Europe, thus are in the minority (35%) vs. the Finnish majority population (65%) in the SHR. These figures only include permanent residents in this region (Pohjois–Suomen katsaus, 1997–1999).

Figure 1  Province of Lapland (Lappi) and Sápmi (Sámi home region) in Finland (Cartography: Ragnar Müller-Wille 2007)

The permanent Finnish population in the SHR does also include, next to more recent immigrants, descendants of both early Finnish agricultural settlers (as far back as the 17th century) and aboriginal Sámi. Since the mid-1990s, some of these descendants who have voiced their concerns and claims over ethnically based, i.e., Sámi rights to land and
resource utilisation in this region. They have put forward claims to Sámi ethnicity and rights based on biological descent. This situation gives an indication of some of the unresolved issues of ethnicity and the identification of people with ethnic groups and boundaries as Barth (1969) discussed these concepts. In the communities themselves, there does not seem to exist confusion over ethnic affiliation since belonging to one or the other ‘group’ is a given and known fact in contact situations (Aikio, 2002a, 2002b on Sámi; cf. also discussion by Ruotsala (2002, p.373ff) on Finnish reindeer herders, Grönfors (1999) on the Rom, and Westerholm (1999) on the Finland Swedes).

3.2 Dimensions of regional well-being

It is crucial that a difference is made in socio-economic analysis between ‘being well’ and having preconditions to obtain acceptable levels of well-being. The former aspect is the main focus of this section even if nowadays much more attention is paid to the latter aspect within the context of debates over developing regions, their networks and social capital. To reach levels of well-being, a region’s population has to have a solid knowledge base as well as relations and networks by which knowledge is obtained and applied to local situations. Furthermore, actors are needed who understand to take advantage of opportunities to develop the region’s potential. One major topic in these debates concerns the role of social capital (cf. Therborn, 1995; Maskell, 2000). Also, the adaptation of suitable technologies is of paramount importance to reach, attain and sustain appropriate levels of well-being.

The socio-economic analysis needs to begin with the definition of the perceived levels of well-being. The heuristic guideline is the method applied in the survey on living conditions in Nordic countries that was conducted by Allardt (1975) in the early 1970s. In his study, Allardt conceptualised ‘well-being’ in terms of ‘having, loving and being’. The reason for the development of such concepts was the need to operationalise values. Why then, one could ask, is this needed at all? Allardt started by arguing with the age-old problem, which is that the operationalisation of welfare conditions is

“usually based on measurements of the level of living, and by level of living is meant people’s actual living conditions in relation to what they need. The problem lies in the difficulty of determining what the needs of people are.”

(Allardt, 1975, p.10).

What emerges from classical sociological analyses is that “needs are socially defined (which) also implies that they, or rather certain states of satisfaction of needs, reflect values”, and further “in order to make values practically applicable they have to be operationalised; that is, procedures have to be found for measurement and assessment of the values,” (Allardt, 1975, pp.10, 11).

In his seminal work on Nordic societies, Allardt (1975, pp.12, 15) defines these concepts in the following way:

*Having* is related to individual resources and, with some qualifications, to people’s own physical needs and thus strongly connected with income and employment as well as with health and physical well-being.

*Loving* is the crucial feature by which a person is related to other individuals and to the group she or he cares for. Thus a person is socially anchored and not without social roots. Satisfaction then derives from the value giving to ‘loving’ as opposite to anomie.
To operationalise ‘loving’ presents difficulties but, according to Allardt, to obtain insights into people’s thinking processes this problem can be approached through intensive and detailed personal interviews. The same is valid, in our opinion, for various other field research strategies as well.

Being as a value is related to the concept of personal growth, its levels of satisfaction and self-actualisation (which is opposite to alienation). To measure this dimension, one must ask what a person represents in her or his relation with others in society. To be irreplaceable or to have no substitution is an attribute of self-actualisation. According to Allardt, education might indicate such a condition. On the other hand, also practical knowledge may have similar effects, for example, a professional reindeer herder might be as irreplaceable in the local community as a professor of sociology in academic circles.

These three concepts are applied using limited statistical indicators that still can be meaningful for the interpretations on the local community level, i.e., the municipality in Finland.

### 3.3 Statistical indicators of well-being in the Sámi home region

In the following paragraphs, indicators are presented and discussed, which concern the macro-level of socio-economic well-being in the SHR. These indicators do not include subjective evaluations by individuals about their well-being, but are based on statistical data easily obtained from Statistics Finland’s data banks for the municipal level.

‘Having’. The Gross National Product (GNP) gives a general measure for the level of material wealth in a region. Concerning the Sámi population, the question of land ownership and the control over and the distribution of local resources is an extremely important issue, which touches upon, among other aspects, reindeer herding, land use practices generally and rights to other local natural resources. Consequently, for example, rights to herd, fish and hunt have an impact on food supplies and their security for the local population who maintains extensive knowledge of the surrounding environment.

The GNP is established and recognised as an objective indicator of the material standard of living and wealth and is generally quite useful regardless of its disadvantages for detailed micro-analysis. Here, the GNP index figures are used for one 10-year period, the 1990s, for the three municipalities and are compared with the rest of province and Finland (with Finland providing the reference index with a value of 100) (Table 1).

The indications are that the Province of Lapland is ‘a poorer province’ than the rest of the country and, furthermore, that the SHR is even ‘poorer’ than the Province of Lapland.

The regional differences are clearly noticeable in the labour market. Employment statistics are based on registers kept by the Ministry of Labour for each municipality. There is a substantial problem with these statistics related to the grey economy that is not easy to capture in figures. The growth of the grey economy nationally, on the one hand, and a substantial amount of work being performed in reindeer herding, fishing, and berry picking, on the other hand, have been seen as a considerable contribution to the family’s own consumption and to the job market during formal unemployment periods. In addition, the opportunities offered by the Norwegian labour market is a further pull factor in northernmost Finland since Norway has experienced and continues to experience a lack of labour force in its northern regions related to the oil boom since the 1990s (Brôms et al., 1995).
Table 1  Selected indicators of well-being in the Sami Home Region, province of Lapland and Finland in the 1990s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Having</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed (of work force)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(annual average 1990–1998)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average income per person (Finmark = FIM)</td>
<td>72,442</td>
<td>77,682</td>
<td>87,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(State taxation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(annual average 1990–1999)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of persons in overcrowded dwellings (annual average 1990–1999)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Loving

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion mental disorders of all diseases (Entitling to invalidity pension) (annual average 1988–1999)</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proportion (%) mental disorders (psychosis) of population 1988–1999 (Gets compensation for medicine)</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Killings 1988–1999/100,000 persons</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>2.77</td>
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<tr>
<th>Attempts to kill 1988–1999/100,000 persons</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>5.69</td>
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</table>

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<tr>
<th>Number of children /1000 taken into public care (Age 0–17) (annual average 1991–1999)</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
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<tr>
<th>Divorces/1000 married women 1990–1999</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
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Being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of invalidity pensioners per 100 people in work force 1990–1998</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>11.7</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suicides/10,000 people 1988–1999 (Crime statistics)</th>
<th>SHR</th>
<th>Lapland</th>
<th>Finland</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.15</td>
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Unemployment. Yearly average percentage. Calculated on employment figures that are based on registers. The proportion of persons in overcrowded housing is calculated by norm 4: >1/room, kitchen excluded. This figure is calculated by a yearly average percentage. The proportion of mental disorders is calculated with the use of an yearly average. The figure is based on those who have got invalidity pension. The proportion getting compensation for medicine is calculated on total numbers, not yearly averages. The proportion of killings and attempts to kill is calculated with the total sum, not with yearly averages. Homicides include categories: murder, man-slaughter, etc. The proportion of population was calculated with the total (sum) population during the period, all years added.

Source: Statistics Finland (2007)

Leaving any speculation based on these figures aside, one can remark that Ohcejohka-Utsjoki (with a bare Sámi majority) has the lowest unemployment rate
among the three municipalities, but even there the percentage of unemployed in the work force has been continuously quite high. During each year of the 1990s, Eano-đat-Enontekiö experienced structural unemployment of over 30%. In reindeer herding, work periods are limited to specific seasons and herdsmen are often unemployed during a number of periods during the year. Although local residents voiced their concern by saying that ‘these are people for whom the employment authorities cannot do anything’, the local unemployment offices have realised the problem and have been able to pay unemployed reindeer herdsmen benefits despite seasonal changes (cf. Heikkinen, 2002).

‘Loving’. This dimension of well-being is extremely difficult to operationalise in terms of objective measurements. The original framework developed by Allardt referred to positive social relations under the category of ‘loving’. Indicators used were levels of social relations in the neighbourhood, local community, family unit and friendship. On the other hand, some indicators of anomie can be found as well such as criminality, suicide, divorce, family violence and child abuse, which are recorded in statistics.

The population of the SHR is characterised by intense culture contact resulting in both cooperation and conflict between two cultures, Sámi and Finns. Both are distinct in their social organisation and cultural behaviour. The Sámi have traditionally developed and relied on a functioning system of social and economic networks based strongly on kinship and location. Today’s Finnish population in the region is strongly connected with the national network of the majority population throughout Finland and shows a strong identification with this overarching framework (cf. Paasi, 1996). Some variations are noticeable, still differences are slight when looking particularly at mental disorders (higher), violence (lower) and children in public care and divorces (lower).

‘Being’. The concept of ‘being’ can be analysed at the level of education (measured by special indicators). In the SHR, it is on the average rather high among the rural municipalities in the Province of Lapland and somewhat higher than the average for rural municipalities in the rest of Finland (Pohjois-Suomen katsaus, 1997–1999, pp.69–71). Even in this case, a negative value can be found in the statistics by looking at suicide rate that indicates a low score on the scale of ‘being’.

At this level, the most important conclusion is that, although these statistical figures exist, they do not provide a detailed picture of the overall socio-economic situation. Furthermore, because figures are not available based on ethnicity, variations between Sámi and Finns cannot be assessed except for language, which is a category included in the general census. Therefore, the available figures have to be looked at carefully when interpreting living conditions in northern communities with considerable cultural diversity.

4 Cultural encounters between Sámi and Finns in Sápmi

The focus of this section is specifically the encounters between Finnish male tourists and Sámi men in Sápmi after the World War II. These encounters happen within the context of established ‘guest–host relations’ (in Sámi verddevuohda) between Finnish tourists and Sámi. The concept of the verdde relation has its origins in the traditional Sámi guest/host institution based on social and economic needs and demands internally within Sámi society. Through the verdde institution the Sámi, relating to different resources and
livelihoods, have practiced mutual social and economic exchange systems. There have also been mutual exchange systems between Sámi and non-Sámi groups within this verdde institution. Nowadays, the original Sámi verdde institution has more or less lost its significance with the emergence and processes of modernisation, the welfare system and the influence of modern free-market forces such as tourism. However, some Sámi people refer even today to her or his tourist contacts and acquaintances using the term verdde (Länsman, 2004).

What then constitutes today the modern verdde relations in the contacts between Finnish tourists and the Sámi in Sápmi if compared with the traditional one? Is it still a mutual and equal exchange relationship? Are there other ways of conceptualising the encounters between tourists and local Sámi in the Fenno-Scandian North? And why does alcohol seem to play a crucial role in this relationship?

In answering these questions, it is important to understand the social and cultural meanings of these encounters because the two parties use the same natural resources and spaces within the context of rapidly expanding northern tourism based on sports fishing and hunting, recreation and nature experiences. One can argue that there is continued spatial, political and socio-economic competition between the commercial and subsistence use of natural resources in the circumpolar north in general and more specifically in northern Fenno-Scandia and thus Sápmi.

The material that is used for the analysis of this verdde relation is twofold. It consists, first, of a specific genre in Finnish literature, the widely produced and read travel fiction written by sports hunters and fishers, all Finnish tourists and males and, second, of intensive personal interviews, which were conducted with both local Sámi and Finnish tourists, mainly with men, but also some women.

This interpretation of these encounters relies strongly on discourse analysis. The starting point is the presumption that language not only reflects on but also constructs social reality. Accordingly, the concrete study objects are the discourses through which Finnish tourists and the Sámi men interpret their mutual encounters. The term discourse refers here to conventional, normally unquestioned ways of thinking, reading and writing concentrated on particular objects. In discourse analysis, the user or speaker of the language is not regarded as an informant telling the ‘truth’ and showing her or his ‘real’ attitudes. Instead, the various ways the actors describe certain phenomena and name them are the objects of the research (cf. Fairlough, 1992).

The social construction of reality, in this case the encounter between Finnish tourists and Sámi, is explained through the linguistic practice. However, it is not a question only about the linguistic analysis because discourses, the ways we, for example, define objects, have consequences in social practices.

Analysing the material, the point of departure is that texts – written or spoken – do not only construct an image of certain objects, but they also construct different identities both for the producer and the receiver of the text. The identities formulated in texts in turn direct social practices and legitimate them and thus construct social reality. In this case, the ethnic groups and their boundaries are clearly defined (cf. Barth, 1969). Who is a Finn and who is a Sámi is explicitly expressed through the interviews.

Thus what kind of identities are then constructed by the texts for the Sámi, on the one hand, and for the Finnish tourists, on the other hand, and finally what kind of social practices do they construct and convey through their encounters? The analysis of the interviews identified three major discourses for each group concerning their encounters and the construction of each other’s identities.
Finnish tourists talked about their relation with Sápmi and the Sámi in terms as follows.

- their ‘Lapland’ is solely available to them alone for sports hunting and fishing
- their discourse is full of strong neo-romantic ideals
- they are the extreme users or consumers of the ‘wilderness’ as they perceive and define ‘wilderness’.

Correspondingly, the Sámi ways of speaking in the interviews stressed the following aspects and characteristics.

- The continuing value of the traditional verdde institution.
- The image of the suspicious and/or ambivalent Finnish tourist.
- A new and rising discourse about client relationship in which the tourists are seen as ‘clients’ and not anymore as ‘verdde’. This is a recent development in which the socio-economic relations are more and more directed by money as the facilitator in the client relationship.

As examples, the following phrases represent very well the content of the above-mentioned discourses. The discourse of the sports hunters and fishermen ‘Lapland’ is by its nature a masculine or male-constructed phenomenon. Occasionally, the Finnish tourists outline the cultural encounter with Sámi through the narrative of alcohol use. The subject of the narratives is then, usually, a fishing trip to Lapland. In these stories, the ‘liquor bottle’ is, in fact, equated with ‘alcohol as bait’ when Finnish hunting and fishing tourists and Sámi men meet at the sites of action in the ‘wilderness’. The local Sámi, the ‘host’, is lured into interaction with the help of alcoholic beverages and, under the influence of alcohol, is induced to reveal his expert knowledge of fishing and hunting grounds to the ‘guest’. In this discourse, the Finnish tourist is identified as the ‘predator’ and the local Sámi as the ‘prey’. It is obvious that this is not an equal relationship between the host and guest as is understood by the Sámi verdde institution.

This is just an example of the various ways of speaking of the encounters. The interviews made visible the spectrum of cultural structures behind these discourses in a broader and encompassing context and allow thus the evaluation of the actual conditions of the encounters and their ensuing consequences. These consequences have resulted and still do result in gains for the Finns – access to information and locations – and in loss to the Sámi – surrendering of knowledge and local control. In this way, the various aspects of these encounters are made intelligible but also reveal and question the possible discourses that produce and maintain uneven and subjugating relations between Finns and Sámi, particularly within the realm of increased tourism of any kind. Modern tourism is a pervasive encounter across cultural borders that have an enormous impact on aboriginal people throughout the circumpolar north and in other areas of the globe.

5 Reindeer herding: sustainability and modernity in the global context

Reindeer herding and its current conditions and predicaments as well as its future developments within the circumpolar north have received particular attention regionally
and globally since the 1990s (global circumpolar north: Association of World Reindeer Herders, 2002; Jernsletten and Klokov, 2002; and specifically in Finland: Heikkinen, 2002; Hukkinen et al., 2002, 2003; Laakso, 2002; as well as in both Finland and Russia: Ruotsala, 2002; Forbes et al., 2006). This attention has emerged due to a number of issues and concerns that were raised around the sustainability and modernity of reindeer herding as a viable economic livelihood based in northern cultural practices within specific ecosystems. Furthermore, the ‘overgrazing’ and thus depletion of vegetation cover of reindeer pastures have been identified as the threat to environmental integrity and biodiversity. This has triggered external political and administrative decisions to reduce not only herd size, but also to lower the number of active herders in the Nordic countries. As a reaction to these emerging pressures on and threats to reindeer herding and management, herders founded the Association of World Reindeer Herders (WRH) in 1997 representing herders from all herding regions in the northern circumpolar world. This international organisation promotes a ‘circumpolar model’ for reindeer management that will take into account regional variations and cultural diversity.

The following section focuses on some specific situations of both Sámi and Finnish reindeer herding in northernmost Finland (cf. Aikio, 2002a, 2002b; Särkelä, 2002). In Finland, the reindeer herding areas stretching from 64° 30′ to 70° N is divided into 57 districts (2002). In 2002, most of the 5682 reindeer owners (with 185,731 reindeer that year) in these districts were Finns except within the SHR with its 13 districts and its close to 1351 owners (24,592 animals) most of the herders are Sámi with a small number of Finns in some of the districts (Poromies, 2002, p.18).

5.1 Sámi reindeer herding: environmental management and food security

The concept of food security is associated with the historical development and gradual expansion of environmentalist ideas and practices in the Western world. Sustainable development of the ecosystem is the key concept summing up the environmentalist epoch. Having been primary natural scientific, the environmentalist discourse is now vigorously extending the scope to the human dimension. Food security, as a theoretical framework, is one example of the inter-dependence of ecological development and human society. The content of the concept of food security assumes specific accents in particular connections. It has to be regarded with the contextual link of the actual living surroundings and living spheres of the people involved.

In the case of reindeer herding societies, food security is essentially bound to principles and practices of the local land use and the management of natural resources (cf. Beach, 1981; Ingold, 1981; Paine, 1994). Sámi reindeer herding is typically a highly space-extensive means of livelihood with a vast pastoral range and long migrating routes. The Sámi way of life has traditionally consisted of a multi-faceted economy in which the emphasis on herding, fishing, hunting and gathering have varied by seasons depending on natural conditions and social circumstances (Kalstad, 1997).

There are two factors, in particular, which have effected the pastoral patterns of reindeer herding radically in northern Fennoscandia and, in particular, in northernmost Finland over the last centuries (Heikkilä, 2006).
- population growth due to immigration of people from the south and the internal demographic shifts in the Sámi population who moves from one country to the other
- the unilateral closing of the Finnish national borders with Norway and Sweden by the then ruling Czarist Russian regime in 1852 and 1889.

These factors have challenged the characteristically flexible, adaptive and innovative Sámi way of life that had been well developed to the prevailing environmental conditions. Resilience of the Sámi herding communities was not really challenged seriously until the World War II. Still problems and disputes over land use were not unknown in earlier times either. On the contrary, the historical documents provide plenty of information of lawsuits on these topics. However, Sámi people as members of siida community organisation had a legal status to defend their land use rights in front of the court under Swedish rule until 1809 when Russia became the colonial power in Finland.

Since then, during the 20th century, the modernisation process of the Finnish society reached Sápmi and Sámi communities in large measures mainly after the 1940s, the choices in adaptation for the Sámi have decreased remarkably. Expanding modern agricultural colonisation and infrastructure, changing means of livelihoods and modern ways of living have caused an excessive pressure on the same land areas where reindeer used to graze freely. Until now, there is no calculation of how many square kilometres of land have been removed from the usage of reindeer herding in Finland by the construction of roads, settlement areas, hydro-electric developments, artificial lakes and power-lines, mines and tourist facilities and resorts.

Reindeer and their herders have to compete over the diminished so-called ‘wilderness’ areas with other local inhabitants, using also local resources for household income or as a hobby, growing tourist activities and economic interests of the national Finnish Forest and Park Service in commercial forestry. The latter is actively engaged in land use and natural resource management planning processes today. In modern environmental management, the aim is to reconcile the needs of the local land users with the national and international commercial interests and with ideologies and pressures of global environmental movements. Recently, a participatory approach has been introduced into the management planning process to alleviate existing conflicts among the various parties.

The environmental management process is of vital importance to reindeer herders and their livelihood, since the anticipated results will influence the immediate living conditions directly. The importance is accentuated in the context of scarce land resources. Because reindeer herding is the most important producer of food items in this area, i.e., meat, the results of environmental management policies clearly include references to the assurance of local food resources and thus their security.

In the discourse over how modern environmental management should be conducted, it is actually the competition over the right to define the reality that drives the agenda. According to the approach of social constructionism, reality is socially formulated and expressed. We acquire information, attain comprehension and convey our ideas of the material world through concepts that are socially constructed. Signifying practice takes place in the language. Reality is always presented as a particular kind. Who has the power to produce knowledge maintains the power to define how reality is produced, how situations are perceived and how the various actors are represented? Meanings are produced through a system of representation within certain discourses. Discourses are
vitally connected to the actual, material living conditions. Discourses have actual effects and consequences.

In modern environmental management in northern Finland, the Forest and Park Service dominates the public discourse. The preconceptions of planning, the fringe conditions for action and the character and proportion of actors are defined by the Forest and Park Service. The discourse by the Sámi reindeer herders remains frequently at the margin as a result of their minority position in the local society, converging the point of departure and preconceptions and different cultural communication patterns. The principle of multiple land use, propagated by the Forest and Park Service, tends to favour the interest of the majority, the State, whereas less attention is paid to the special needs of minorities.

The local planning process channelled by the Forest and Park Service exercises power by using the right to represent reindeer herding in the management plans. As recent examples in the natural resource management plan show, reindeer herding is represented as ecologically unsustainable. Also, the reliability and the sense of responsibility of the reindeer herders are questioned. The management discourse is converging with the discourse and argumentation used by scientific reindeer research and the national reindeer herding association in Finland, both are strongly involved in the development management policies and their implementation. Reindeer herding seems to be a curiosity, a relic, in modern society: a mixture of traditional cultural remnants and unprofitable business undertaking.

According to the reindeer herders’ arguments, however, if reindeer herding is required to acquire ecological sustainability, appropriate physical conditions should be granted. The natural check and balance system of reindeer herding can function, if proper conditions are provided. As a consequence, reindeer herding should be recognised as a primary land user in Sápmi. It has to be given more authority and self-determination. More attention needs to be paid to reindeer herders’ own standpoints towards modern environmental management. On the other hand, some limitations on land use types and the quantity of users need to be considered as well.

In spite of modernisation, reindeer herding still is the material and spiritual basis of Sámi culture in this region. Reindeer herding is the keystone issue of local food security. Only by providing sound and appropriate facilities to reindeer herding is the continuation of the Sámi culture and the tradition of local food security possible.

5.2 Household food security in a Finnish reindeer herding community

In August and September 2000, fieldwork was conducted in a village, called for the purposes of this discussion Kylä, located in the municipality of Savukoski in the eastern parts of the Province of Lapland. Kylä is a typical small Finnish rural village: remote with no school, no stores or other services. Kylä lies in the boreal forest north of the Arctic Circle. It is connected by road to the rest of the province. Reindeer herding, fishing, forestry, berry picking, temporary or permanent wage employment, unemployment benefits or pensions are the sources of income for the villagers. The inhabitants are descendants of both Sámi and Finns who have lived in this region for generations and whose traditions and heritage are fully expressed in the community with Finnish as the sole language spoken.

Villagers had invited the researcher to their community to look into aspects of food security. The village association, an unofficial voluntary organisation, helped in the study
and arranged access to the community and to individuals to conduct interview sessions. In 2000, the village had 80 inhabitants in 28 permanent households of which 24 were interviewed; one household refused and the remaining three could not be contacted. Interviews were based on a questionnaire, but often they continued informally. With respect to food items there were large differences in availability and use of different products seasonally or in different years. Fish is used more during summer and autumn, and meat during winter and spring, even though every household preserves fish, meat and berries in a freezer for the rest of the year.

The main questions concerning aspects of food security were as follows. What kind of food resource is locally available, which local food do people use for their household needs and which do they sell unprocessed or processed, what kind of imported store-bought food is used, and how is food they eat prepared?

For the villagers ‘local food’ is food that can be produced or extracted locally, such as meat, fish, potatoes and berries. Meat is mainly reindeer meat, which is used by every household no matter whether they own reindeer or not. Hunting moose, rabbits, fowl and waterfowl is not as important because of the low number of wild animals available. Fish is the second most important part of nutrition for villagers, and in some families even the most important. People fish with rods, nets and seines in rivers and lakes.

Wild berries (cloudberry, blueberry and lingonberry) are collected and used by every household. Every family has a garden where they grow potatoes, strawberries and black currants. Onions and root crops also grow locally, but not every family has them in their garden plots. There are some local resources that are not used on a large scale, like mushrooms and herbs. Dairy farming still exists; there is only one active dairy farm left in the village. This farming family uses its own milk, but others buy milk and dairy products from the nearest store as imported food. Until the 1960s, dairy farming was a common livelihood in the village.

Reindeer meat is used for home consumption; however, it is mainly sold to external markets on a large scale, as is also the case with wild berries. Locally, within the village or the municipality, people sell reindeer meat and fish. The local exchange or sharing of food such as reindeer meat, fish, berries and potatoes is very rare. It happens mostly within the families between the younger and older generations. One can also pay for some services, such as the leasing of hayfields or snow removal, with food such as meat and fish. Meat, fish, potatoes and berries form the basis for general nutritional requirements; however, some store-bought food has also a significant part in the diet, namely dairy products and bread. Milk is a common beverage and rye bread is the most popular bread. Most families consider home-made barley bread to be local food, even though barley is not grown any more around the village. Most villagers bake barley bread and the popular Finnish coffee sweet bread at home.

Generally, people do not buy very much pre-cooked or processed food. Grain products are used widely; for example, oatmeal is very popular. People use large quantities of margarine, butter and coffee. Villagers do not buy meat products from the store, except sausages and cold cuts. Vegetables are not popular, although cucumber and tomatoes are used almost in every household. Fruits are used on a very small scale, mostly during the wintertime.

The lack of a store in the village does not seem to cause problems because most villagers have a car and they go to the municipality centre quite often. A mobile store from an adjacent village delivers food products to the village’s households twice a week. Still for the villagers in all households, ‘real food’ is reindeer meat, fish, potatoes and
bread and the most preferred dish is reindeer meat soup. This situation clearly confirms the continued reliance on ‘country food’, i.e., food obtained from local renewable resources. Therefore, the continued access to these resources, in particular reindeer, is of paramount importance for the food security of such small rural communities that are still spread out over the wide expanse of northern Finland. It is the geographic closeness to the resource that guarantees its continued use. Modern amenities and services still seem to be limited in their availability in such communities.

5.3 Reindeer herding, institutions and multiple land use practices

The themes discussed in the previous sections are closely related to another multi-faceted study concentrating on the modernity of reindeer herding management supported by the European Union and carried out in northernmost Europe (Forbes et al., 2006). Through interviews and a series of workshops (Hukkinen et al., 2002, 2003) based on the principles of participatory action research, reindeer herders from a large number of reindeer herding districts have identified a number of problematic areas that are crucial in the development and successful continuation of reindeer herding in the future providing access to land (space) and resources (animals) and securing employment (livelihood) and food (meat). In having identified these problematic areas, reindeer herders in Finland, both Finns and Sámi, understand that their livelihood is a minute activity within the overall context of socio-economic development and changing and competing land use practices in the circumpolar north and on a global scale. However, the issue here is the continuation of locally based and well-adapted livelihoods in specific natural environment vs. the increasing interests of other land uses that clearly have created spatial and managerial constraints for reindeer herding.

It is also understood that there exist considerable conflicts and disagreements between reindeer herders and other users within the same such as farmers, entrepreneurs, extraction industries, public authorities, tourists and others. The situation is complex along socio-economic, political and, last but not the least, along cultural lines. Thus, conflict resolution is difficult to achieve particularly if, in most of the cases, the actors do not recognise each other in order to be able to negotiate a constructive compromise.

These areas of concerns for the reindeer herders are here summarised by key sentences formulated by the reindeer herders themselves (Hukkinen et al., 2003). They clearly give the expressions of frustration and helplessness in a world that has become very complex from the local to global and vice versa:

- necessary reflections on the role of (aboriginal and national) societies in the resolution of problems in reindeer herding
- solutions to the conflicting demands between market economy and individual and community livelihood supported by cultural expressions (social relations, language)
- solutions for the conflicts and challenges in the relationship with other land use interests and practices
- clarification on what is the optimal number of reindeer herded in relation to pasture conditions and capacity
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- the question of subsidies and compensations for reindeer herders and herding measured and evaluated against subsidies and privileges given by public governments to other economic activities such as agriculture or tourism
- the establishment of an appropriate administrative and management regime for reindeer herding, either centralised or localised power
- the impact of umbrella institutions such as the European Union establishing and enforcing specific requirements, e.g., slaughterhouses and other directives influencing reindeer herding today
- questioning the role of external research (science) vs. local expertise (knowledge) in planning for the continued future of reindeer herding.

One particular example is that this interface between local reindeer herding and protected areas established by the central state rooted in conservation and environmental protection policies. A specific case is the spatial and socio-economic relationship between nature conservation, e.g., the Urho Kekkonen National Park, established in northeastern Finland in 1983, and the existing local land use practices such as reindeer herding. Here, the analysis focuses on the management practices by both parties and their success in alleviating conflicts derived from different philosophies, approaches, practices and goals. The ultimate issue is: can these interests co-exist in the same space and, how, in particular, is the continuation of reindeer herding assured to contribute to the food security of local communities (Berrouard, 2004).

6 Inter-ethnic relations, community viability and reindeer herding

The directions of socio-economic development and the level of well-being in northernmost Europe and, in particular, in Sápmi hinge on a number of factors, situations and circumstances (cf. Andersen and Poppel, 2002). The conducted research explained and expressed above points to three specific areas that seem to need considerable attention on the local and inter-regional levels in the future:

- conflict resolution in inter-ethnic relations within a multicultural and multinational setting
- social and cultural capacity and viability of small communities
- continuation of locally based resource utilisation, i.e., reindeer herding and its connected livelihoods.

All these areas fall under the umbrella of external influences driven by industrial, commercial and political interests as part of the general process of globalisation connecting the very local level with the global dimension in a multilateral way. These influences touch upon land rights, political control and general human and minority rights. In all the three areas mentioned above, discourses express the concerns over future developments that need to be negotiated resulting, usually, in compromises over who decides what for whom under what circumstance and premises.

In the first area given attention here, i.e., inter-ethnic relations, the aboriginal Sámi have experienced, on the one hand, a continuing erosion of their cultural base, language
and knowledge, on the other hand, also an increased legal protection of their culture that has far-reaching global implications under international conventions and national laws and constitutions whose practical usefulness to the local level is often debated and questioned. It is apparent from the studies that conflicts continue to exist on various levels that are connected by complex linkages. Still today, there is the reality that racial and cultural prejudices are rampant albeit in disguised form because existing laws do not condone their public expression. In that respect, it seems that few inroads have been made in education, public life and media discourse. For minorities or aboriginal peoples, it is a constant occupation to argue for their rights, identity, culture and language vs. the majority – a never-ending exposure to stress for the individual and the community at large.

The second area, capacity and viability of local communities, is a challenge not only to the communities themselves, who often are at the brink of losing these specific characteristics and distinctness, however, also to the central states and other regional administrations, which are faced with the need and demand of equal access to encompassing services and subventions. Quite often such actions are also based on claims to continued and even expanding sovereignty by the central states. The rapid centralisation of inhabitants in fewer and fewer settlements and regions will leave large areas in the north empty of people, without permanent residents as the keepers of the land. In this respect, it is crucial that human societies will be able to continue to live in these regions expressing their strong relationship with the land and its resources managed in an appropriate fashion supporting their own capacity and viability.

The third area, resource utilisation, i.e., reindeer herding, is a specific case that has received increased attention recently because of its precarious status with respect to available resources (e.g., pasturage) and of its questioned suitability as a viable industry, economy or livelihood in the modern age of rapid change. Despite the recognition that reindeer herding is an indispensable source for food, i.e., meat, modern societies with their administrative and political apparatus have a very difficult time to understand thought patterns that are not linked to profit and expansion, but rather to the maintenance of the resource and its utilisation as an expression of cultural and socio-economic values. It is fully understood by the reindeer herders themselves that modern reindeer herding in the global context is a minute industry with a small output in monetary value. This also holds true under highly developed and modern conditions in the Nordic countries.

In the juxtaposition between reindeer herding and other invasive land use practices, the issues centre on competition over space that has led to the reduction of pastures for herders’ management strategies. The result is the compartmentalisation of space by multiple purpose use. The question arises, is it possible to continue these land use practices so that they can co-exist next or with each other in the same space fully realising what the natural requirements are for the survival of species such as the reindeer, endogenous to the region. A preliminary answer is that efforts are under way to alleviate the spatial and managerial problems; however, that solutions are very difficult to attain to assure the viable continuation of reindeer herding (Forbes et al., 2006).

At the beginning of the third millennium, it seems that the ongoing processes are heading for a climax, at least in Finland, Norway and Sweden, at which junction decisions have to be made that will directly influence the viability of local northern communities and the survival of reindeer herding. Herders themselves realise these developments and related changes and are preparing themselves with arguments by
getting involved deeper and deeper into research that focuses on their own situation. It is in this realm that research can make a difference and a contribution to the resolution of conflicts.

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