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Reindeer herders in Finland: Pulled to community-based entrepreneurship and pushed to individualistic firms

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This study of reindeer herding in Finland identifies important differences between Indigenous Sámi reindeer herding, and reindeer husbandry by persons from mainstream society. A central theme was that ethnic Finns simply viewed their entrepreneurship as a means to economic profit. In contrast, Sámi respondents attributed their herding to a "pull" toward cultural tradition, while a frequent finding was that Sámi respondents – especially women – were often "pushed" into other activities to supplement their otherwise inadequate income derived from community-based reindeer herding. Policy reform in the form of entrepreneurship in politics, e.g. the adoption of a Nordic Sámi Convention, may be required to encompass the revealed cultural values into sector legislation.

Keywords: Community entrepreneurship; Finland; Sámi; reindeer herding

Introduction

In Norway and Sweden, reindeer herding is, with minor exceptions, an exclusive right of the Sámi. In Finland, however, Sámi reindeer herders are but a minority. Evidence suggests that while Sámi reindeer herders are pulled to reindeer herding with its traditional cultural value, they are being pushed into finding profits. Their cultural identity is undermined by inequitable recognition, in comparison with neighbouring lands. Do Sámi herders in Finland need specific protection for

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performing their business in accordance with their cultural values? Would a Nordic Sámi Convention address this problem?

As Reynolds has noted, "entrepreneurship scholars have generally focused on either individual entrepreneurial behavior or the activity of entrepreneurial (new) firms". 1 Most studies have concentrated on entrepreneurs and have ignored the general population from which these entrepreneurs emerged,² perhaps because it was not felt that population of origin was central to the understanding of entrepreneurship.

An empirical study comparing entrepreneurs from Indigenous³ and non-Indigenous backgrounds concluded that the perception of opportunity for entrepreneurship is a function of culture.⁴ Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson have suggested that while the economic environment may explain some factors, it is also important to take account of the social and cultural aspects of entrepreneurial activity.⁵

In Finland – where the population includes Sámi⁶ and mainstream non-Indigenous people – reindeer herding represents a lifestyle and occupation for about 1000 families who rely on approximately 200,000 reindeer. The herders come from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. The reindeer husbandry area in Finland covers 114,000 km², which is 36% of the entire surface area of this republic.

The purpose of this article is to shed light on differences between reindeer herders of different ethnic origins in Finland, emphasizing that while non-Sámi entrepreneurs raise reindeer simply for economic motives, Sámi herders are pulled to culturally-valuable community-based herding, but pushed to individualistic firms to make ends meet. European Union regulations are impacting reindeer herding in Finland; participants in a recent study of Sámi reindeer herders in Finland⁸ expressed concern about the impact of such external pressures on reindeer herding. This article will consider communitybased entrepreneurship, as well as individual entrepreneurial behaviour, in the context of the culture of respective general populations (Indigenous and not) to which respondents belong. Participants were reindeer-herders who qualified as entrepreneurs, as defined by Ely and Hess as "the ultimate owners of business enterprises, those who make the final decision and assume risks in such decisions".9

In line with Morris' observation, "One of the most salient and yet under-researched issues affecting microenterprises and small businesses concerns the acquisition and application of resources,"10 our main research questions were:

- (1) How different is the acquisition and application of resources as practiced by Sámi and non-Sámi reindeer herders?
- (2) Is there a marked difference today, between the entrepreneurship of Sámi reindeer herders and that of non-Sámi reindeer herders in Finland?

¹Reynolds, "Sociology and Entrepreneurship," 48.

²Davidsson and Delmar, "Cultural Values and Entrepreneurship," 444–58.

³Following the tradition of Hindle and Lansdowne, this paper uses an upper case "I" to designate respect toward Indigenous peoples. See Hindle and Lansdowne, "Brave Spirits on New Paths." 131–42.

⁴Dana, "Entrepreneurship in a Remote Sub-Arctic Community," 55–72.

⁵Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson, "Mumpsimus and the Mything," 341–60. ⁶Sámi were formerly referred to in the literature as Lapps. This paper uses the term Sámi, except in quotations from authors who wrote otherwise.

⁷Hukkinen et al., *Development of Participatory Institutions*.

⁸Dana and Dana, "How Do Self-employed Sámi People Perceive the Impact?" 3–19.

⁹Ely and Hess, *Outline of Economics*, 95.

¹⁰Morris, "Critical Role of Resources," v.

Accordingly, this article will report findings obtained from interviews conducted with reindeer herders in Finland, some of whom reported their profession as being a herder, while others owned reindeer in addition to participating in another occupation.

General populations in northern Finland

Morris defined an ethnic group as "a distinct category of the population in a larger society whose culture is usually different from its own. The members of such a group are, or feel themselves, or are thought to be, bound together by common ties."11

In Finland, the Sámi are an important ethnic group, maintaining some ways distinct from mainstream society. Since 1996, Finland considers an individual to be Sámi if: (1) the person considers himself/herself to be Sámi and has learned Sámi as mothertongue; or (2) the person considers himself/herself to be Sámi and Sámi was the first language of at least one parent or grandparent; or (3) the parents or grandparents were recorded as a Lapp in 1932 or earlier.

Whitaker noticed "relations between the Lapps and [...] peasants [...] have deteriorated to some extent with the introduction of a money economy and the importation of a new set of values". 12 Dana and Remes 13 as well as Müller-Wille et al. 14 noted tensions between Sámi respondents and the majority in Finland. While both populations – mainstream Finns and Sámi people – have lived in Finland for many centuries. it is clear that each ethnic group had – and may continue to have – its respective values and distinctiveness. Today, self-employed reindeer herders in Finland include Sámi and non-Sámi persons. All are regulated by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. 15 through the Reindeer Herding Law. 16

Historical background

Lähteenmäki notes that "Finnish Lapland emerged in 1809 when Sweden lost its eastern part of Lapland to Russia after the Finnish War." The Indigenous people of Lapland were the Sámi, and they were referred to at the time as Lapps. During the nineteenth century, Clarke wrote, "The Laplanders, or Laps [...] constitute the only remaining branch of the ancient inhabitants of Finland."18

Traditional principles of Sámi entrepreneurship included the absence of land ownership and the absence of labour markets. The economic system was based on mutual exchange of services within the clan. The right of ownership was substituted by traditional usage rights to certain areas, often sequential. Clarke wrote of the Sámi, "in their dealings demand specie, refusing the paper-currency of the country whenever it is offered". 19

Whereas the *siida* was the traditional unit of Sámi reindeer herding, in 1898 the Russian state initiated significant structural changes in Finland. Reindeer owners,

¹¹Morris, "Ethnic Groups," 167.

¹²Whitaker, Social Relations, 103.

¹³Dana and Remes, "Ethnographic Study of Entrepreneurship," 189–200. ¹⁴Müller-Wille et al., "Community Viability," 331–53.

¹⁵Saarni, "State Subsidies to Reindeer Husbandry," 120–2.

¹⁶Myrvoll, "Finland," 99–110.

¹⁷Lähteenmäki, "From Reindeer Nomadism," 696.

¹⁸Clarke, Travels in Various Countries, 328–9.

¹⁹Ibid., 169.

be they Sámi or Finns, were required to establish geographically defined herding cooperative profit-making reindeer herding units. These will be discussed below.

The Sámi in Finland were victims of the Second World War (1939–45), in particular the Skolt Sámi who were resettled due to boundary changes between Finland and the Soviet Union.²⁰ During the immediate post-war years, Sámi still had a fully traditional use of resources.

In 1962, the Sámi of Utsjoki were the first in Finland to use snowmobiles in their herding. As noted by Pelto and Müller-Wille, "the use of reindeer sleds for any sort of transportation was almost completely obsolete by 1967, and even economically marginal households throughout northern Lapland found means to purchase machines during the late 60s". ²¹ Draught reindeer were completely replaced by snowmobiles.²² Lenstra observed, "reindeer herding has undergone over the past 10–15 years a change from a subsistence economy to an increasingly pronounced financial economy".²³ Pelto described such change as the de-localization of resources.²⁴ Herding activities became increasingly mechanical as the reindeer economy became a meat production business. Direct dependence on nature and on the traditional family business was reduced. Beach wrote, "Money economy is no longer simply an attractive alternative affording luxuries and new comforts, it is a vital need."25 Burgess found that although nobody lives exclusively from fishing, this provides a supplementary source of income and food.²⁶ Lee et al. reported on reindeer herding in Finland at the turn of the millennium, noting that of about 7000 reindeer owners in Finland, two-thirds owned fewer than 25, and 7% owned 100 or more, and that "Although many Saami herders have additional employment, reindeer herding is still regarded as being of high cultural importance."27

Heikkinen observed three categories of cultural adaptation models among reindeer herders of the twenty-first century: (1) traditional models of reindeer herding emphasizing variables such as the Indigenous; (2) economic models; and (3) adaptation avoidance models, such as the "opposition to change" and "profit or quit" models. As European Union regulations impacted reindeer herding in Finland, participants in a study of Sámi reindeer herders in Finland expressed concern about the impact of external pressures on reindeer herding. ²⁹

Community-based reindeer herding in the literature

Mason defined community as "a group of people who share a range of values, a way of life, identify with the group and its participants and recognize each other as members of that group". Much has been written about the community-based nature of reindeer herding among the Sámi.

²⁰Ingold, *Skolt Lapps Today*; Pelto, *Individualism in Skolt Lapp Society*. ²¹Pelto and Müller-Wille, "Reindeer Herding and Snowmobiles," 119.

²²Hukkinen et al., "Dismantling the Barriers," 705–27; Müller-Wille and Pelto, "Technological Change and Its Impact," 142–8; Pelto, *Individualism in Skolt Lapp Society*.

²³Lenstra, "Natural, Economic and Administrative Factors," 43.

²⁴Pelto, "Ecology, De-localization and Social Change," 29–36.

²⁵Beach, Year in Lapland, 25.

²⁶Burgess, *Human Environmental Interactions*.

²⁷Lee et al., "Regional Effects of Climate Change," 103.

²⁸Heikkinen, "Neo-Entrepreneurship as an Adaptation Model," 187–208.

²⁹Dana and Dana, "How Do Self-employed Sámi People Perceive the Impact?" 3–19. ³⁰Mason, *Community, Solidarity and Belonging*, 21.

Unlike individualistic entrepreneurship that exists in scenarios where the entrepreneur is independent, Sámi reindeer herders have always owned their reindeer individually, but herding has traditionally taken place within a siida, which informally unites entrepreneurs into a working community. The siida (plural = siidat) does not claim to be democratic; rather, solutions are reached by consensus and for this reason cooperation is essential. Whitaker explained, "The natural basic unit of Lappish society is the elementary family." He described the siida as

the herding unit. It is basically a group of reindeer owners who cooperate for the purposes of maintaining their herds together as a single working entity and dividing the work of herding among themselves, but the term is also used to connote the tents and persons as well as their herd.³²

Whitaker elaborated, "that the individuals retain all property rights over their reindeer, and their right to leave the unit at any time [...] The basis of the sii'dâ is a network of kinship ties."

Riseth listed the regulatory principles of Sámi herding society: (1) the autonomy of the husbander, in "that all husbanders are their own masters";³⁴ (2) the social bonds of the extensive kinship system, resulting in "a network of mutual obligations through genetic and social safety net";³⁵ (3) partnership and siida solidarity; (4) dialogue and consensus; and (5) responsibility toward the land and the spirits. Unlike entrepreneurs who compete against one another in other cultural contexts, the success of each Sámi reindeer herder has traditionally been dependent on the mutual cooperation of reindeer herders. The community-based siida continues to be central to reindeer herding.³⁶

While the siida continues to be the folk model of reindeer herding in Finland, reindeer husbandry units each called *paliskunta* (plural = *paliskunnat*) are the only legally representative organizations of reindeer herding in this country.³⁷ A *paliskunta* is actually a cooperative of reindeer herdsmen administering a defined herding area, within a system of associational management among self-employed reindeer owners. Heikkinen explained that "Reindeer herding in Finland has developed rather differently than in its Scandinavian counterparts [...] reindeer herding is based on the '*paliskunta*' system rather than that of Sámi villages [...] the majority of herders are Finnish."³⁸

The *paliskunta* system [...] was established in the areas of small-scale reindeer herding and influential peasant culture, because the communally organised *paliskunta* system was developed initially to take care of multiple, but small reindeer herds of permanently settled population with a complex livelihood structure. The cooperative *paliskunta* system confronted prolonged resistance mainly in the areas of nomad Sámi culture, which were organised with their own reindeer village (*Siida*) system that, for example, emphasised kin organisations and year-round tending of reindeer.³⁹

³¹Whitaker, Social Relations, 37.

³²Ibid., 54.

³³Ibid., 54–7.

³⁴Riseth, *Modernization and Pasture Degradation*, 128.

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶See Dana, "Community-based Entrepreneurship," 77–92, on cooperation within the Sámi siida in Norway.

³⁷Heikkinen, "Neo-Entrepreneurship as an Adaptation Model," 187–208.

³⁸Ibid., 187.

³⁹Ibid., 189.

Methodology

Entrepreneurship research has traditionally been quantitative in nature, and dominated by the logical empiricist paradigm, assuming absolute knowledge, independent of cultural, social and political factors; findings which are not directly linked to the predetermined hypotheses are often ignored. However, hypotheses may have a cultural bias, and cultural variables are open to interpretation. 40 Crozier and Friedberg suggested that to understand the role of culture and the general population from which entrepreneurs emerge, a more effective research strategy should involve an inductive approach with qualitative interpretation. 41 This paper is based on interviews, with no predetermined hypotheses.

A big herd provided people with security, but actual numbers were not discussed with strangers. In fact, asking a Sámi person how many reindeer they have may be perceived as culturally insensitive. To avoid uncomfortable situations, potential participants were consulted during the creation of the survey instrument used in this study. The specialized questionnaire, as recommended by Bherer et al..⁴² was then sent for approval by local leaders with expertise on cultural sensitivity.

With the objective to learn about entrepreneurship conducted by individuals for mutual gain, 43 approved questions related to community-based reindeer-herding and other business activities conducted by reindeer owners. Viewing entrepreneurship as a societal phenomenon rather than as a purely economic activity, 44 questions inquired about non-economic causal variables as well as economic goals. Actual participants were selected by means of snowball sampling. 45 For the purposes of this study, Sámi identity was based on self-identification. Triangulation was used to cross-validate. 46

Heikkinen et al. conducted semi-structured interviews in 17 enterprises run by both Sámi and Finnish reindeer herders. 47 Accepting that entrepreneurship is embedded in a social context, 48 this paper is likewise based on semi-structured interviews with entrepreneurs from the mainstream Finnish population as well as with Sámi entrepreneurs in the same sector.

Participants in this study signed a release form and were assured anonymity. For this reason, no names are provided below. The oldest participant was born in 1939. The youngest was 12 years old. All interviewees were self-employed reindeer-herders, but some also had some unrelated expertise; formal education levels ranged from "almost nothing because I learn from parents" to "I am a qualified engineer." Some had experience as employees, e.g., "I worked two months when I was 16." One Sámi respondent claimed he had always been a subsistence hunter and fisherman, with minimal activity in the formal economy.

⁴²Bherer, Gagnon and Roberge, *Wampoum et lettres patentes*.

⁴⁰Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*; Geertz, *Local Knowledge*.

⁴¹Crozier and Friedberg, *L'acteur et le système*.

⁴³See Bull and Winter, "Community Differences," 29–43; Johannisson and Nilsson, "Community Entrepreneurship," 1–19; Light and Karageorgis, "Ethnic Economy;" Lyons, "Building Social Capital for Rural Enterprise Development," 193–217; Selsky and Smith, "Community Entrepreneurship," 277–96; Spear, "Social Entrepreneurship," 399–410.

⁴⁴Steyaert, "'Entrepreneuring' as a Conceptual Attractor?" 453–77.

⁴⁵Goodman, "Snowball Sampling," 148–70; Müller-Wille and Hukkinen, "Human Environmental Interactions," 43–61.

⁴⁶Patton, "Qualitative Methods and Approaches," 3–16; Patton, How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation; Patton, Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods.

⁴⁷Heikkinen, Lakomäki, and Baldridge, "Dimensions of Sustainability," 25–42. ⁴⁸Aldrich and Zimmer, "Entrepreneurship through Social Networks," 3–23.

Findings

Participants were asked various questions in order to identify the causal variables of their self-employment. In most cases – Sámi and non-Sámi alike – there was mention of a family member or other mentor. However, most Sámi reindeer herders in the sample also added something related to ethnicity and/or being pulled by cultural traditions. Answers provided by Sámi interviewees included: "Every Sámi should have reindeer;" "I come from a prominent tradition of reindeer herders;" "I married a Sámi so I had to become a herder too, to be accepted;" "Tradition;" "It is in our culture;" "I follow the footsteps of my father;" "We learn this as children;" and "It makes me proud to be like my ancestors, especially if I have a large herd." Sámi respondents often referred to social capital, e.g., "The family is set up for this." Reference was also made to human capital, e.g., "This is what I learned when I was infant doing this." Cultural capital was evident, e.g., "This is my interest since ever." All of the Sámi interviewees declared that they had relatives who owned reindeer; this was not the case among non-Sámi respondents.

Every Sámi respondent mentioned his or her siida, and it was clearly explained that reindeer-related knowledge is part of the vocational culture in a siida; reindeer herding expertise is stored in the cohesive group. Among Sámi participants, the siida continues to be the common vehicle of community-based entrepreneurship. In contrast, content analysis of interviews with non-Sámi entrepreneurs who are equally involved in the reindeer sector suggests they use the word *paliskunta* much more frequently than their Sámi counterparts who focused on the siida.

When asked about employees, most respondents said that, other than family members, they had "only occasional" or "seasonal" employees if any, and intended to have the same after five years. When asked about technology, elder participants expressed concern about "a double-edged sword" that "creates needs and expenses". Sámi participants emphasized the importance of reciprocity within the siida. "Within a siida one sees an exchange of services and obligations rather than exchange of money," explained one Sámi interviewee; given that the social network can enforce sanctions, reciprocity is ensured – with no free rider problem.

All participants, regardless of ethnicity, expressed that they enjoyed reindeer herding. Several said they would have liked for their herds to be bigger, regardless of whether this would enhance their material well-being. None stated that they were pushed into the sector. With regards to their views on government, views were mixed. These ranged from "The government does not do enough to help us," to "There are too many regulations." There did not seem to be any relationship between ethnic background and views about government.

When asked about propensity for risk, one Sámi respondent explained, "Being an employee has more risk because you can get fired." A non-Sámi participant responded, "The greatest risk is if we get a loan so we stay away from that." Another Sámi interviewee stated, "Risk is not desirable but it is inevitable, so we do another business too and that reduces risk."

Several respondents, mostly women, explained that supplementary income was required, "especially when the price of meat is low". This was obtained from diversification into other activities, in addition to reindeer herding. These included: carving, exporting reindeer hides, felt-making, fishing to supplement the sale of reindeer meat, handicrafts, jewellery, real estate investment, retailing, teaching, and tourism-related activities. In some cases, the secondary enterprise involved a high degree of internationalization. One Sámi had a strate gy of vertical integration, selling reindeer-related

handicrafts and exporting reindeer antlers to Asian markets. Several respondents mentioned that "exports depend on the Internet".

Participants were asked where they saw themselves five years into the future. There were some interviewees who liked the status quo. A Sámi herder stated, "This is not business that we change. This is our way of life. I will herd even if reindeer bring no money." Another Sámi herder said, "No change hopefully, but we are worried if they replace our activity by large-scale reindeer ranching." A non-Sámi interviewee stated "exactly as now, provided the money is good". Across cultural groups there was also mention of diversification: a Sámi participant replied, "Not all the eggs in same basket. I will follow opportunities, in addition to reindeer." A non-Sámi respondent said he wanted to diversify into tourism, in addition to running his carpentry business and part-time herding. Other non-Sámi participants were willing to "give up reindeer altogether" or "do only what makes the most money". For these, profitability seemed more important than owning reindeer. One Sámi participant who was a part-time reindeer herder stated that he relied on his hotel to provide most of his income. Although he had been "pushed" into the hotel business because traditional reindeer herding did not provide the cash necessary to maintain the standard of living that he chose for himself, his goal for the future was to become a full-time reindeer herder. Among elder interviewees, several expected to be retired in five years. In contrast to Sámi respondents who said things along the lines of "I will give the business to the children," non-Sámi participants used the phrase "sell the business".

Discussion

Penrose commented that

the fact that businessmen, though interested in profits, have a variety of other ambitions as well, some of which seem to influence (or distort) their judgment about the "best" way of making money, has often been discussed primarily in connection with the controversial subject of "profit maximization" [...] it will be useful to distinguish two broad types of entrepreneurial ambition [...] some entrepreneurs [...] seem to be primarily interested in the profitability and growth of their firm [...] Another type of entrepreneur, whom we might call the "empire builder", is of a different order. 49

The present study likewise found two sets of ambitions. The analysis of findings indicates the existence of non-Sámi husbandry entrepreneurs who indicated their goal as maximizing profits, whether in the reindeer business or any other; as well, there are Sámi participants who are reindeer herders more for the reindeer aspect than for economic profit maximization. This is consistent with the findings of Jernsletten and Klokov who stated that for some people, "reindeer husbandry forms a 'way-of-life' more than a 'way of production'". ⁵⁰ Indeed, subsistence resource harvesting has a traditional value that is not measured in currency.

In the words of Ingold, "whereas pastoralism recommends a man to slaughter only the minimum of deer needed to maintain his family, stock-rearing requires him to leave alive only the minimum needed to maintain his herd". 51 However.

⁵¹Ingold, Skolt Lapps Today, 121.

⁴⁹Penrose, *Theory of the Growth of the Firm*, 39.

⁵⁰Jernsletten and Klokov, Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry, 21.

of particular note is the ever-increasing integration of reindeer pastoralism with the cash economy and the wider network of marketing that it entails. The application of cost/profit concepts to herding results in pressure to "rationalize" what is now often considered the "herding industry".52

The same is true today; Sámi herders expressed to the authors a pride related to having a large herd, regardless of impact on profitability. Again, the present study suggests support for Jernsletten and Klokov who indicated "that the self-esteem and self-respect of the people involved in reindeer husbandry is strong, even increasing". 53 From the present study it could be generalized that – in contrast to ethnic-Finnish entrepreneurs who wished to maximize profits in the reindeer meat industry – Sámi respondents expressed interest in non-monetary factors as well as economic profit.

Nevertheless, Sámi participants in this study acknowledged the importance of profit, and many were pushed to enterprise in other sectors, in order to supplement profits from reindeer herding. This supports findings of Lee et al., who observed, "Reindeer herding is an important source of income for the Sámi, bringing in between half and three-quarters of their gross earnings. However, this income has to be supplemented by agricultural and forestry work, as well as cash-earning jobs."54 The findings are also in line with Labba and Jernsletten, who wrote:

When the price of reindeer meat decreases, this does not automatically mean that the reindeer owner will sell a larger amount to compensate for the economic losses caused by the price decrease. Rather the opposite: the reindeer owner sells a smaller amount and compensates with money earned from other income sources.⁵⁵

Likewise, Bosted found that reindeer herders in Sweden had backward bending supply curves; in a quantitative study only 37% of the reindeer herders would increase their slaughtering at increasing prices; ⁵⁶ whereas others found that Sámi herders in Finnmark. Norway, would not change their economic strategies to achieve governmental subsidies. Similarly, Labba and Riseth, in a quantitative study, found that Sámi reindeer herders in Sweden and Norway had varied economic strategies depending on contextual variables, ⁵⁷ but there definitely had to be other factors than economic profitability that made Sámi herders stay in a low-profit business.⁵⁸ Nordin, in a followup qualitative study, concluded that traditional values and ideological motivation are more important for Sámi herder households than mere economic profitability.⁵⁹

Sámi participants in this study commented how recruitment and training for reindeer-herding in their communities was unlike meat production among non-Sámi who might employ non-family members. This supports the findings of Helander, who explored how Sámi reindeer herders were trained on the job; 60 and also Ruotsala, who explained, "often an important factor is that this is a profession passed down from generation to the next, primarily from father to son, which is carried on in the same place as the previous generation".61

⁵²Beach, "Comparative Systems of Reindeer Herding," 258–61.

⁵³Jernsletten and Klokov, Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry, 21.

⁵⁴Lee et al., "Regional Effects of Climate Change," 101. 55Labba and Jernsletten, "Sweden," 136. 56Bosted, "Pastoralist Economic Behavior," 381–96.

⁵⁷Labba and Riseth, "Analys av den samiska renskötselns ekonomiska tillpassning," 57–70.

⁵⁸Riseth, "Sámi Reindeer Herd Managers," 541–59.

⁵⁹Nordin, "Renskötseln är mitt liv."

⁶⁰Helander, "Traditional Sámi Knowledge," 25-7.

⁶¹Ruotsala, "Reindeer Herder's Environment," 43.

Traditionally, Saami cultural arrangements had taken care of recruitment into pastoral society [...] Children learned how to take care of their animals and were thus socialised into the world of reindeer pastoralism. When the time came to marry, both spouses were in possession of knowledge and enough animals - together with the animals given to them as wedding gifts – to make it possible to establish themselves as their own husbandry and perhaps herding unit. 62

Winsa focused on the social capital among Sámi people. 63 Rønning stressed the distinction between "business-related and civil society-related social capital". 64 In contrast to non-Sámi respondents who mentioned financial concerns, Sámi participants in this study made reference to issues specific to their Indigenous background.

Sámi reindeer herders, interviewed during this study, are concerned that community-based, pastoral self-employment may soon be phased out in favour of agricultural reindeer business

In the Soviet Union large-scale reindeer ranching already exists, but in Fennoscandia growth toward ranching can be painful for the Saami. They face a difficult dilemma: large market-oriented ranching businesses seem to promise the best economic return (especially in the light of state policies fostering this development), and, with a rapidly rising cost of living, increased profits are most attractive. At the same time, traditional Saami social relations, with private ownership of reindeer [...] do not support such a move. 65

Today, in Finland, reindeer are herded by part-time herders and by full-time herders. Although reindeer are individually owned, an individual cannot herd alone. Some herders identify themselves as being Sámi while others not. Sámi herders indicated to the authors that, unlike Western-style meat-production, their community-based reindeer herding involves more than the maximization of economic profit. They view herding as an expression of traditional cultural values and they value the communal activity revolving around the family. Interviews suggest that, with a preference for work within the natural portion of the value chain, selfemployed Sámi people have been pulled to community-based reindeer herding because of social conditioning including a close relationship with animals, but pushed into individualistic secondary enterprises, in order to make a living without leaving their traditional area. The importance of culturally-influenced preferences should not be neglected by policy-makers.

The relevance of this finding has been demonstrated by a severe conflict in Nellim, Ivalo Paliskunta. The essence of the conflict was that four Sámi members refused to fulfil their slaughter requirement set by the *paliskunta* as they had a lower production, having their animals on natural pasture and not using supplementary feeding as the non-Sámi herders. The conflict, being part of a larger conflict⁶⁶ including differences in economic adaptation between Sámi and Finnish herders, was resolved in early 2011

⁶²Bjørklund, "Saami Pastoral Society in Northern Norway," 133.

⁶³Winsa, "Social Capital of Indigenous and Autochthonous Ethnicities," 257–86.

⁶⁴Rønning, "Social Capital," 232.

⁶⁵Beach, "Comparative Systems of Reindeer Herding," 295–6.

⁶⁶The conflict was connected to a logging conflict with Finnish state forestry enterprise Metsähallitus, which was appealed to the UN Human Rights Council in 2005 and reconciled in 2009 and 2010; see Feodoroff and Lawrence, "Sápmi-Finland," 34-8, http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/ metsa/en/WhatsNew/Oldernewsreleases/NewsReleases2009/Sivut/metsahallitusandreindeerherdersreconciledatnellim.aspx; http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/metsa/en/WhatsNew/newsreleases2010/Sivut/MetsahallitusandInarireindeerherdingcooperativesagreeonreindeerpastures. aspx. See Raitio, "'You can't please everyone';" Feodoroff and Lawrence, "Sápmi-Finland."

by a verdict in the Supreme Administrative Court. The *paliskunta* won the case and can now implement forced slaughter of the reindeer of its Sámi members.⁶⁷

Policy implications and options

A discussion of policy options needs to be related to general possibilities and constraints of modern reindeer herding as well as the specific context of Finland. Modern, motorized and market-based reindeer herding basically face a double challenge: (1) a *rising subsistence minimum*, ⁶⁸ similar to the problem of the Agricultural Treadmill, ⁶⁹ i.e. a propensity that a herder household year by year needs an increasing number of reindeer to cover necessary costs; and (2) *shrinking lands*, in Finland and Sweden in particular caused by large scale forestry; the overall outcome becomes an economic squeeze that requires increased income/efficiency. This challenge can be met by different policies, and a comparison with neighbour countries can be useful.

Finland and Sweden have both been members of the European Union since 1995; membership requires subsidies to reindeer herding but the two governments have chosen different schemes. In Finland, full-time reindeer herders receive a per-head payment and a relatively low total level of support. The minimum number of animals to receive the payment is increasing. In Sweden the government provides a price support per slaughtered animal, which amounts to about 20% of the net income from reindeer meat. Both these countries and Norway, too, have compensations for loss of reindeer due to predators, traffic (trains and cars) and radioactive contamination.

A non-EU member country, Norway has an extensive scheme of subsidies including direct support divided into several arrangements. The support level is high but to be eligible for direct support, general conditions such as a minimum production and a herd size below a maximum quota have to be fulfilled. For some particular subsidies, general preconditions were included in the rules, for example to fulfil a so-called slaughter requirement equal to a calculated annual production. The subsidy scheme is based on a General Agreement for the Reindeer Industry (with explicit political objectives focusing on optimizing meat production and sustaining the natural resource base from 1976) between the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and Norgga Boazosápmelaččaid Riikasearvi (The Sámi Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway). Since 1977 the parties perform annual negotiations about levels and conditions for a scheme of subsidies.

In Finland, the herder cooperatives (*paliskunnat*) are represented by the umbrella organization Paliskuntain Yhdisthys (The Reindeer Herders' Association) which has this objective: "The role of the Reindeer Herders' Association is to direct reindeer

⁶⁸Beach, Reindeer-Herd Management in Transition; Riseth, Modernization and Pasture Degradation.

⁷⁰To increase calf slaughtering, the support per kilo is about 60% higher for calves than for adult animals. In addition, in years of difficult winter pasture conditions, the government pays a partial support of supplementary feeding expenses.

71 This is due to the fallout from the Chernobyl nuclear accident of 1986.

⁶⁷Ari Laakso, pers. comm.

⁶⁹Cochrane, Farm Prices.

⁷²Main types are: Production support, calf slaughter support, early slaughter support, operation support, spouse support, district support and freight support. However, it is important to note that reindeer management in Norway has not received direct price support since 1992. For more details, see Labba and Riseth, "Analys av den samiska renskötselns ekonomiska tillpassning." ⁷³It is implied that to get one's share, one is required to adapt to this rule.

⁷⁴Riseth, *Modernization and Pasture Degradation*.

husbandry, develop reindeer herding, promote research into it, and to handle reindeer husbandry relations with the rest of society."⁷⁵ Reindeer herders interviewed by Laakso felt that the association is "only a subordinate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry promoting the Ministry's organisational goal and controlling the herding cooperatives" and that "[t]he herders [...] expressed the need for an organisation for the individual herders that would be independent of the autocratic system of reindeer herding management". ⁷⁶ The herders stating this critique assert that the Ministry and Paliskuntain Yhdisthys have the goal to "centralize reindeer herding and make it a primary industry for fewer herders" via the subsidy system and the quota system.⁷⁷

Seen in comparison, there are clear indications that Finland is the one of the three Nordic countries that most clearly has chosen a policy that stimulates the continuation of the underlying tendencies of reducing the number of herders. Further, as Finland, with the clearest difference to Norway, constitutionally treats its Sámi citizens as a national linguistic minority rather than an Indigenous people, the Finnish Reindeer Herding Act does not acknowledge culturally-influenced preferences as goals for reindeer herding.⁷⁸ A draft Nordic Sámi Convention⁷⁹ which is under government treatment may change this, as its implementation requires that the position of reindeer herding as a Sámi source of livelihood and the basis of Sámi identity and culture will be strengthened in Finland. 80 However, critics⁸¹ assert that Finland practices double standards, maintaining an image of being a defender of Indigenous rights abroad while doing nothing to improve Sámi rights at home. We believe that a Nordic Convention can put a greater pressure on the Finnish government than other international instruments.⁸² However, at the time of writing in 2010, the matter was not yet resolved. Is Finland playing a game of delay?

Conclusion

We found that self-employed Sámi people have been *pulled* to community-based reindeer herding because of social conditioning, including a close relationship with animals, but *pushed* into individualistic secondary enterprises. Seeing this finding in the perspective of general herding policy suggests that Sámi herders in Finland face a double challenge. Firstly, Finland seems to be one of the Nordic countries where the pressure on herders to act profit-oriented is highest. Secondly, Sámi reindeer herders are a minority in Finland, while an overwhelming majority in Norway and Sweden. Accordingly, it seems that Sámi herders in Finland need specific protection for performing their business in accordance with their cultural values. We hold that the basic requirement for improved conditions for Sámi cultural values in reindeer herding would be recognition of Sámi cultural values in legislation. A possible adoption of the Nordic Sámi Convention can be the start of required reforms.

⁷⁶Laakso, "Anomalies of Contemporary Reindeer Herding Management," 88.

⁷⁸Feodoroff and Lawrence, "Sápmi-Finland."

⁸⁰Scheinin, "Rights of an Individual and a People," 40–51.

⁷⁵Paliskuntain Yhdistys, Organization of the Finnish Reindeer Husbandry, http://www. paliskunnat.fi/default.aspx?page=Yhdistys (accessed 4 April 2010).

⁷⁷Ibid., 90.

⁷⁹Proposed by an internordic expert group; for the text, see http://www.regjeringen.no/Upload/ AID/temadokumenter/sami/sami samekonv engelsk.pdf.

⁸¹ http://rauna.wordpress.com/2008/12/10/human-rights-policy-in-finland-delay-tactics-untilthe-problem-disappears/.

⁸²For example, the UN Declaration of on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (adopted by Finland as one of 142 countries).

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