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Diverse Sami Livelihoods

A Comparative Study of Livelihoods in Mountain-Reindeer Husbandry Communities in Swedish Sápmi 1860–1920

ABSTRACT Swedish state policy regarding the Sami from the late nineteenth century onward and studies on Sami history have tended to treat reindeer husbandry as much more important than other livelihoods practiced by Sami communities and families. By comparing livelihood diversity in southern and northern mountain-reindeer husbandry communities in Swedish Sápmi (the traditional land of the Sami people) during the period 1860–1920, this study challenges the notions of Sami *as* reindeer herders and mountain reindeer husbandry as a nomadic monoculture. The results shows that Sami communities and families exploited diverse natural resources, trades and means of subsistence. The study supports an understanding of historical Sami livelihoods, were reindeer husbandry as recognized as one of various Sami trades and means of subsistence, rather than as *the* Sami livelihood.

KEYWORDS livelihood diversity, reindeer husbandry, Sami history

Introduction

Indigenous land rights in current Swedish Sápmi (the traditional land of the Sami people) are tied to the practice of reindeer husbandry, in stark contrast to the situation in most other countries where indigenous land

rights are not restricted to a specific industry and livelihood. This is officially justified because reindeer husbandry is a traditional Sami livelihood that has important economic, cultural and social functions throughout Sápmi. Since 2011 the Swedish constitution has acknowledged the Sami as a people in their own right, and their right to practice reindeer husbandry (SFS 1974: 152). The reindeer herding right also includes rights to hunt and fish, to take firewood and timber for construction. However, to exercise their rights individuals require membership of a reindeer husbandry community (also named reindeer herding district in the literature), called a *sameby*.¹ In practice, this arrangement excludes most Sami in Swedish Sápmi from exercising indigenous land rights. Sameby unions, on the other hand, are not legally eligible to engage in businesses other than those connected to reindeer husbandry (Allard 2006; Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008).

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries state policy on *Sami issues* was formed, and the first reindeer grazing acts were passed (in 1886 and 1898). According to previous research, actions during this formative period were influenced by governmental intentions to *protect and save* the Sami, in combination with a state notion of Sami as a *reindeer herding people*. Mörkenstam (1999) and Lantto (2012) concluded that the Swedish authorities perceived mountain reindeer husbandry as a nomadic monoculture and the *ideal* Sami livelihood, which was incompatible with the agricultural farming of Swedish settlers. Mörkenstam and Lantto further suggest that this dichotomic notion became deeply embedded in the formulation of Sami policies, reindeer grazing laws and regulations (Mörkenstam 1999; Lantto 2012). There is an embedded critique in the cited literature of the state's notions, although the authors do not empirically challenge the idea of Sami *as* reindeer herders or the mountain reindeer husbandry ideal. However, other scholars have shown that Sami communities had diverse livelihoods and reindeer husbandry was far from a monoculture. In both contemporary and historical times, Sami communities engaged in various activities, such as fishing, hunting, trapping and farming, as parts of their livelihood (Manker 1947; Arell 1977; Beach 1981; Lundmark 1982; Kvist 1989; Korpijaakko-Labba 1994; Nordin 2002; Nordin 2007; Päiviö 2011). Nevertheless, there is confusion in these previous studies between *Sami* livelihood and *reindeer husbandry* livelihood, a confusion that I believe clouds our understanding of Sami history. This body of research also primarily focuses on conditions in the mid-nineteenth century history and northern areas of current Swedish Sápmi. Thus, most studies largely consider situations before the state policy on *Sami issues* was formed and draw conclusions largely from material concerning communities in the north, which were more reliant on reindeer products and

practiced more extensive and nomadic reindeer husbandry than communities in southern Sápmi.

Aim

In this study, I address the tendency of Swedish state policy regarding the Sami from the late nineteenth century onward and studies on Sami history, to treat reindeer husbandry as much more important than other livelihoods practiced by Sami communities and families. By comparing livelihood diversity in southern and northern mountain-reindeer husbandry communities in Swedish Sápmi during the period 1860–1920, I aim to challenge the notions of Sami as reindeer herders and mountain reindeer husbandry as a nomadic monoculture. The study is structured around the following questions: a) What were the characteristics of livelihoods in these communities? b) How did members of the communities consider livelihood diversity? c) How did notions of Sami livelihoods that prevailed in national level politics and administration resonate with livelihoods that local Sami communities practiced during the focal period?

In the concluding discussion I scrutinize the role of “subsidiary trades,” such as hunting, fishing and farming, in reindeer husbandry and discuss problems and political dimensions of either subordinating these trades to reindeer husbandry or integrating them with it.

Study Areas

The compared areas (Fig. 1) have been selected because in both historical sources and previous literature they are described as Sami ‘mountain-reindeer husbandry communities’ (in terms that could be applied to both communities *per se* and territories used by the communities). Thus, they represent communities where reindeer husbandry was a vital part of the livelihood and they had a high degree of nomadism. From a Swedish state perspective, they represent the ideal Sami communities that Sami policies, reindeer grazing laws and regulations concerned (Mörkenstam 1999; Lantto 2012). Thus, livelihood diversity within these communities would certainly challenge the notions of Sami as reindeer herders and mountain reindeer husbandry as a nomadic monoculture. The southern study area include the reindeer grazing districts Ran, Gran, Ubmeje tjeälddie, Vapsten, Vilhelmina norra and Vilhelmina södra. The northern study area includes the reindeer grazing districts Könkämä, Lainiovuoma, Saarivuoma, Talma, Gabna, Laevas, Girjas, Báste, and Unna tjerusj.²

Central Analytical Concepts

A key analytical concept applied in the study is livelihood diversity, based on an understanding built on previous research on reindeer husbandry,

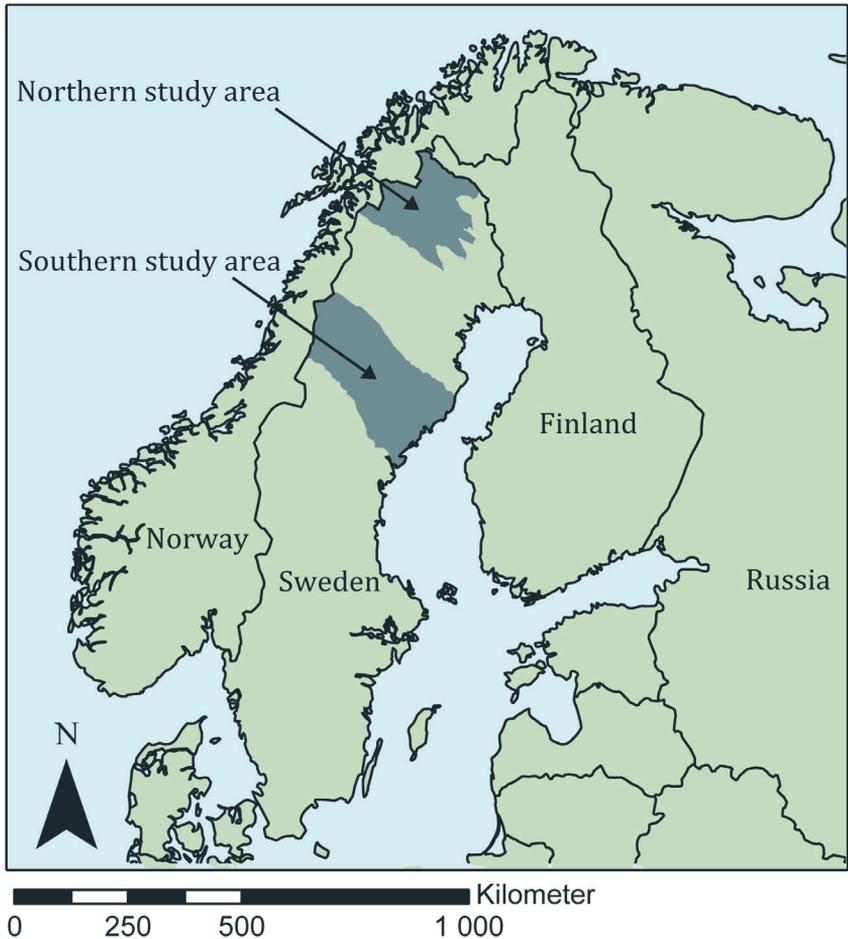


Fig. 1. Study areas. Map by the author.

especially studies by Nordin (2007) and Beach (1981).³ Nordin (2007) advocates an understanding of reindeer husbandry as a diverse and complex way of life, not a job or business. She shows that reindeer herders' understanding of their livelihood today encompasses far more than the reindeer and the spectrum of practices connected to the reindeer. She therefore suggests that subsidiary trades should be included in the economic structure of reindeer husbandry, as an integrated part of reindeer husbandry rather than as mere ancillary trades (Nordin 2007: 102–104). Using historical material, participating observations and conversations with herders from Tuorpon sameby, Beach (1981) demonstrates that hunting and fishing were significant economic aspects of reindeer husbandry during the 1970s (Beach 1981: 354). In addition, historical studies have shown that hunting,

fishing and farming were vital parts of reindeer herders' livelihoods during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Arell 1977: 144–180; Stoor 1991; Brännlund & Axelsson 2011). Here, I use the cited studies as points of departure and explore livelihood diversity period by examining fishing, hunting, trapping, herding and farming in the reindeer husbandry communities in the focal areas and time.

Methods and Sources

During the comparative analysis the paper is based upon I primarily focused on differences between the two study areas, although similarities were also considered (for a discussion of different comparative methods see: Van den Braembussche 1989). Semi-conventional and directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon 2005) were applied to examine aspects of livelihood diversity in the two areas. The combination of methods allowed distinct levels of liberty in readings and interpretations. Semi-conventional content analysis was first applied in examinations of reports regarding livelihoods, particularly in consideration of their socio-political contexts. The sources were subsequently reviewed again using directed content analysis, focusing on the preconception of livelihood diversity as including fishing, hunting, trapping, herding and farming. In this phase, particular attention was paid to discrepancies between notions of reindeer husbandry as a monoculture and reports of combined, multiple or complex land use and livelihoods. All the quotations and examples obtained from sources cited in the article illustrate general findings rather than isolated cases.

Source Materials and Their Historical Setting

This section summarizes all the materials subjected to the analytical procedure described above. From 1805 until the beginning of the twentieth century, the county governors in Sweden were obliged to present reports to the Crown every five years. These reports included information on their respective counties' characteristics, general condition, inhabitants and their livelihoods (BISOS H 1860-1905). The reports are brief, but contain useable, comparable information. All of the reports between 1860 and 1905 were examined.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Swedish government appointed Sami Bailiffs (*Lappfogdar*) in the three northernmost counties in Sweden. The positions soon became institutionalized as parts of the Swedish Sami administration, arranged under the County administration. The Sami bailiffs' archives include reports, protocols and correspondence dating back to the mid-nineteenth century. The bailiffs' yearly reports were thoroughly studied.

In the early twentieth century, Norway and Sweden negotiated terms

for transboundary reindeer husbandry. In this context, a committee was established in 1912 to investigate the conditions for reindeer husbandry on the Swedish side of the border.⁴ The committee report concerning the southern area was included in the study.⁵ The report is vast and contains information on reindeer husbandry, grazing lands, farming and combinations of livelihoods.

In 1919 a committee was appointed by the Swedish government to investigate *the Sami question* as a whole. The Committee's task was to examine the school system, the situation of non-reindeer herding Sami, poverty relief systems and reindeer husbandry (the committee's central concern). The committee conducted interviews throughout Swedish Sápmi with herders, settlers and supervisors within the Sami Bailiff administration. For the first time in Sweden, Sami representatives were included in the investigative work leading to the report. They were not appointed as members of the committee, but participated in working groups.⁶ However, their possibilities to direct and influence the work of the committee and the final report were limited (Lantto 2012: 145–146). The committee's archive includes details of hearings conducted with reindeer herders throughout Swedish Sápmi. The committee's list of questions clearly reveals an implicit notion that reindeer husbandry and settledness were incompatible.⁷

The leading questions, the implicit aim of the hearing and brevity of records from the northern districts have rendered analysis of the material derived from this area difficult.

As with most historical sources produced during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the material underlying the current study was not produced by local communities, but by people and institutions in positions of *power*. The sources depict Swedish state officials' and county administrators' understanding of Sami culture, livelihoods and practices. The sources have been read with these restrictions and implications in mind, situating the sources in the historical context and paying attention to discrepancies between ideals of mountain reindeer husbandry and reported examples of the practices.

The sources were created in an environment where Sami livelihoods and reindeer husbandry was understood as being more or less the same. The reports that do aim to describe activities besides herding or caring for reindeer are riddled with inconsistencies and difficult to summarize. This has encouraged a largely qualitative approach, focusing on inconsistencies in reports of reindeer husbandry livelihoods to highlight a diversity that is not discernible in official representations of reindeer husbandry. During the early nineteenth century, when there were no firm discourses of race or ethnicity, reindeer husbandry could surely signify a difference. Since reindeer herders were almost

exclusively Sami, the connection of Saminess to reindeer husbandry was not farfetched—at least not for people outside the local community. Without this in mind, there is a high risk of analysis of historical material emphasizing reindeer husbandry at the expense of other trades and livelihoods leading to reproduction of the notion of Sami as reindeer herders.

Background and Previous Research

At the turn of the twentieth century, Sami land rights became more prominent issues in policy and legislation in Sweden. The political process at this time had profound significance for the future development of Indigenous land rights in Sweden (Allard 2006; Lundmark 2006). The political discussions, formulated policies and the Sami issue, as it was framed, all centered on reindeer husbandry. Further narrowing the frames, reindeer husbandry was also understood as best practiced by full-time nomadic reindeer herders (Mörkenstam 1999; Lantto 2012).

Previous researchers have identified several factors that contributed to the increased focus on Sami rights during this period, and why they became intimately linked to reindeer husbandry. Mörkenstam proposed that notions of Sami people as a vanishing race, under pressure of a dominant civilization, became rooted in popular and political debate. In this framework, reindeer husbandry was seen as the most traditional and suitable livelihood for the Sami race, thus protection of reindeer husbandry was, by analogy, protection of the Sami people (Mörkenstam 1999). Lantto and Beach also found evidence of growing conflicts between settlers and herders, especially in the southern areas of Swedish Sápmi. Both herders and settlers had called for legislation that could help resolve these conflicts (Beach 1981: 78–79; Lantto 2012: 16). Finally, relations with Norway strongly influenced the development of acts governing reindeer grazing in Swedish Sápmi. This is because there were growing conflicts between settlers in northern Norway and reindeer herders from northern Sweden, who used traditional grazing areas on the Norwegian side of the border in summer. Tensions between the two states, and the following Swedish-Norwegian Act of 1883 concerning movement of reindeer between the two countries, prompted legislation regulating reindeer grazing on the Swedish side of the border (Cramér & Prawitz 1970; Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008). It was in this context that the Acts concerning reindeer husbandry and Sami land rights were formulated at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Reindeer Grazing Acts of 1886 and 1898 addressed the rights of reindeer herders, *not* Sami rights to traditional lands. Protection of the nomadic culture was the driver in the legislative process. Counter images of diverse

and dynamic Sami livelihoods were presented in political discussions, but they were not heeded in the resulting policy or legislation (Mörkenstam 1999: 79–114). The Reindeer Grazing Act of 1886 constituted a new legal, cultural and practical structure for reindeer husbandry in Swedish Sápmi. The act converted existing *tjiellde* areas (large tracts of land traditionally used by Sami communities) into administrative units, *reindeer grazing districts*, to be overseen by the state. In areas lacking traditional *tjiellde* areas, reindeer grazing districts were designated by the county administration. From then on reindeer husbandry was to be practiced, administered and economically handled jointly within each reindeer grazing district. The act limited people's rights to move between the districts. The county board was assigned authority to handle reindeer husbandry affairs and move people between districts, if the number of active herders in a district was deemed too high (Lantto 2000: 39–40).

The Reindeer Grazing Act of 1898 clarified the terms of the previous act. Every reindeer grazing district was obliged to establish regulations for conduct (Swedish *byaordningar*), specifying how the legislation was applied in the specific district.⁸ The Reindeer Grazing Act of 1898 prohibited resident non-Sami people in the counties of Västerbotten and Jämtland from owning reindeer and in 1917 a limitation was also introduced in the northern area of Norrbotten county (Nordin 2002: 87–88). The restriction was enforced despite protests from both Sami reindeer herders and Swedish settlers (Nordin 2002: 91–93). Nordin suggests that the probation was intended to “prevent the Sami from getting into contact with other residents, to avoid them being tempted to abandon the Sami way of life in favor of the Swedish” (Nordin 2002: 88).

Previous research on Sami livelihoods in the Swedish part of Sápmi has focused primarily on reindeer husbandry. Several studies have revealed a history of high flexibility, adaptability and diversity in the practices involved (Forbes *et al.* 2006; Lundmark 2007: 155; Oskal 2009; Brännlund & Axelsson 2011; Brännlund 2015). In addition, several variants have been commonly described, including “mountain,” “forest,” “intensive” and “extensive” husbandry and herding (Hultblad 1968; Arell 1977; Ingold 1980; Beach 1981; Lundmark 1982). Moreover, most reindeer husbandry studies have focused on practices in the northern part of Swedish Sápmi (see, for example, Drake 1918; Göthe 1929; Bylund 1956; Hultblad 1968; Arell 1977; Beach 1981; Lundmark 1982; Kvist 1989). Reindeer husbandry and Sami history in southern areas of Swedish Sápmi have received much less attention.⁹ In previous studies there was also a tendency to use terms such as *Sami*, *nomads* and *reindeer herders* interchangeably, making the texts difficult to interpret.

Diversity of Reindeer Husbandry Livelihoods, 1860–1920

Historical studies on reindeer husbandry suggest that the importance of fishing, hunting and other means of subsistence continually decreased from the eighteenth century onwards in the Swedish part of the Sami area (Manker 1947; Hultblad 1968; Arell 1977; Lundmark 1982). Without questioning the conclusions drawn in previous research, the results of this study show that Sami livelihoods in mountain reindeer husbandry communities were still diverse during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In both the northern and southern study areas, families practiced various combined livelihoods, had supplementary incomes, and there were systems for trading goods and services within the community. In both areas a proportion of the herders reportedly did not live solely on income from reindeer, but rather made their living through a combination of reindeer husbandry, fishing, hunting and trapping, farming and trade.¹⁰

Livelihood Diversity in the Southern Area. Farming and Settlements

Previous research has revealed that reindeer husbandry in the southern area (Fig. 2) was characterized by an intensive form of husbandry, with long migrations between pastures, but close guarding and caring for smaller herds during summer (Manker 1947: 78–88; Ruong 1982: 64–70). Combining reindeer husbandry with agriculture and farming was an established practice in the southern area.¹¹ The extent of this combined livelihood is illustrated in a report from 1909–1910 showing that 35 families in the area lived on a combination of farming and reindeer herding, and 66 relied solely on products of their herd.¹² The farms and agricultural properties in the area ranged from small-scale farms with potato fields and a few goats to agricultural settlements with cows, horses and barns.¹³

The propriety of the combined livelihood was defended by herders in hearings of the Sami committee of 1919. Anders Wilks from Vilhelmina north reindeer grazing district explained to the committee that the combination of reindeer husbandry and farming was important as: “reindeer herders who combined the two were better off than others.”¹⁴ He also stated that a farm was a suitable capital investment and place to reside when “one gets too old” for herding activities.¹⁵ Wilks’ notions were supported by several other herders who attended the meeting with the committee.¹⁶ The idea that an agricultural farm was a good place to reside in later life is a recurrent theme in reports from the southern area.¹⁷

However, there seem to have been different opinions about the suitability of farms or agricultural settlements, depending on their size and location. The herders seemed to favor small-scale farms, owned by reindeer

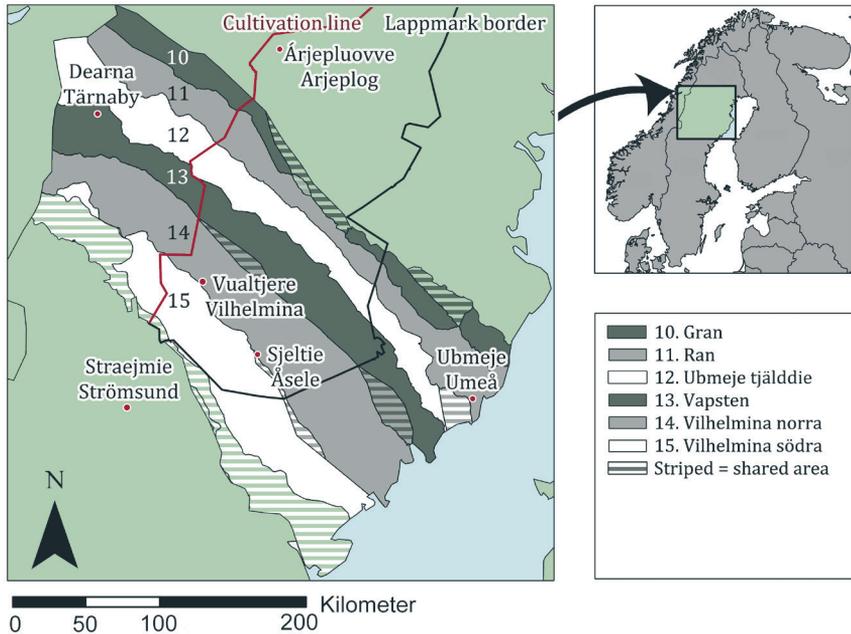


Fig. 2. Reindeer husbandry districts in the southern study area. Map by the author.

herding- or Sami families in the mountain region. Larger-scale settlements were seen as more suitable in the forest regions.¹⁸ Besides establishing a new settlement and farm, or building houses themselves, reindeer herders sometimes bought established settlements that were interfering with reindeer husbandry or at times when settlers were harassing the reindeer.¹⁹

As well as farming, fishing reportedly made important contributions to households' incomes. Indeed, despite the many accounts of combined reindeer husbandry and farming, in 1903 the Bailiff of the southern area stated that:

[F]ishing is as good as the only supplementary trade that the county's mountain Sami practice. And this they do, as soon as the opportunity arises, and it is in most cases their only means of subsistence when they have lost their reindeer and fallen into poverty.²⁰

The importance of fishing and hunting was also raised by local herders from Ran and Gran districts, in a written statement to the County governor of Västerbotten in 1901: "The settled people are mostly poor and have to intrude on our hunting and fishing grounds in order to make a living for themselves."²¹

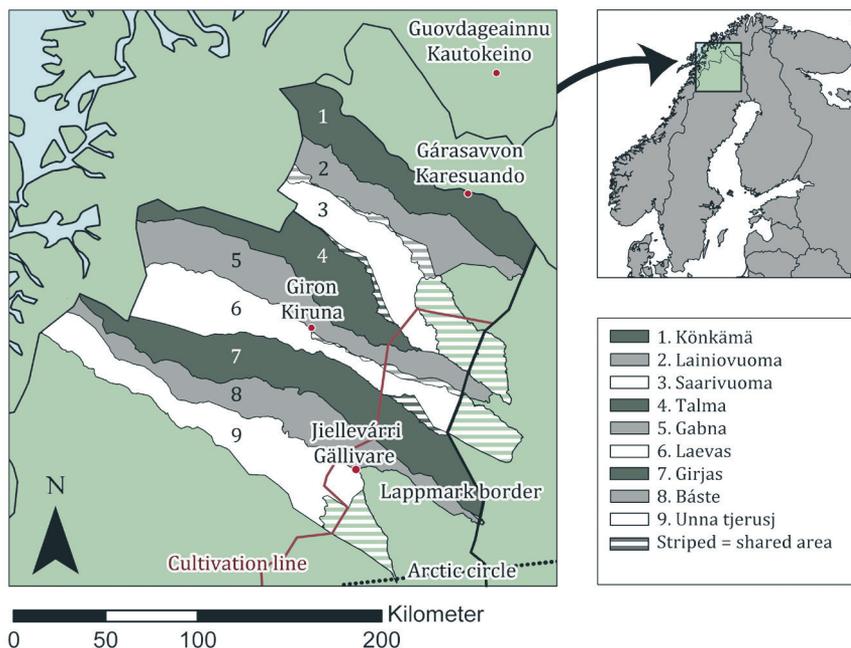


Fig. 3. Reindeer husbandry districts in the northern study area. Map by the author.

Livelihood Diversity in the Northern Area. Fishing and Hunting

In contrast to the conditions in the southern area (see Fig. 3), Sami language and culture still dominated in the northern area. Spanning the Tornedalen area, the northern part of Swedish Sápmi had also long been influenced by Finnic Meänkieli and Kven language and culture (Elenius 2001). However, following colonization by settlers and migration of workers to mining communities in the areas of Girjas, Báste and Unna tjerusj in Gällivare parish, the conditions steadily changed and Swedish gradually became a more dominant language in the region (Warg 2002: 88–91).²² During the period reindeer husbandry practices also changed, as new forms that were initially adopted in the north spread to the south. This involved more extensive herding with big herds, long migrations between pasture areas and, especially in summer, less close guarding of the animals.

The importance of agriculture and farming within the frames of a reindeer husbandry livelihood seems to have differed between the northern and southern areas. In 1908, the bailiff in the northern area wrote in his yearly report that the herders in this area did not want to settle and that “own houses and new settlements will inevitably lead to loss of grazing lands they require, leading in a short time to their extinction as nomads.”²³ In a hearing of the 1919 committee, herders from the northern area simply stated that they did

not combine farming with reindeer husbandry. Herders who owned agricultural properties had leased them out to a farmer. Furthermore, it was stated that “year-round settlement in reindeer grazing lands was not occurring”; apparently only two people from the reindeer grazing districts in question had summer settlements in the mountain area, in order to fish during spring, summer or autumn. It is not clear how the committee or informants conceptualized and understood farm or farming. How the question was formulated in front of the audience is not clear either, since the protocol from the hearing is very brief.²⁴ In contrast with the 1919 committee’s protocols, other reports tell of summer settlements with both cows and goats in the northern area.²⁵ In 1916, the Bailiff of the northern districts expressed concern about the way reindeer husbandry was practiced in some of the reindeer grazing districts during summer. He tells that herders in the districts Talma, Gabna, Laevas, Girjas and Bäste had the custom of settling down by a fishing lake during summer and only occasionally engaging with herding of the reindeer:

In some of the districts, for example Laevas, this has already gotten to the point where no Sami go up to the reindeer [during summer] but instead stay in the lodge, harvest hay, build gohti [turf cots] and goat houses, milk goats etc. etc.²⁶

This practice reflects the extensive reindeer herding method, in which several families or even a whole community kept their reindeers together in one big herd during summer. As caring for the reindeer did not require the attention of everyone in the community, some members could engage in fishing and small-scale farming during the summer months.

In the northern area, reindeer grazing lands were also reportedly valued in terms of fishing opportunities and quality.²⁷ The Bailiff in the north also judged fishing to be the most appropriate practice to combine with reindeer husbandry, as it could be done “on the road” without competing with the husbandry.²⁸ Hunting and trapping were also practiced by herders in these communities. The Bailiff in the northern area was concerned in 1920 because:

a significant group of Sami in the districts cannot support themselves solely on products from reindeer herding, [and] they must seek supplementary income from other activities, the most common being fishing, trapping white grouse and hunting.²⁹

Competing Land Uses and Prerequisites for Farming

The previous two sections show that the trend to settle and engage in farming was stronger in the southern than in the northern area. There are several factors that could help explain this difference. During the focal period, Swedish-speaking settlers had changed the cultural and physical landscape in the southern area (Göthe 1929; Pettersson 1982*a*; Pettersson 1982*b*). Colonization created competition for natural resources, but also opportunities for acculturation between the groups, with exchange of knowledge, trades and customs. During the nineteenth century the state transformed the land-use structure in Swedish Sápmi by dismantling the taxation land system (in which land was held and used by Sami families, and taxed). The system played a major role in Sami communities' land use in the southern area (Korpijaakko-Labba 1994; Lundmark 2006; Päiviö 2011). Thus, I suggest that the combination of settlers and dismantling of the taxation land system created competition for natural resources in the area and left Sami families with farming as the only officially recognized pathway to individual title over land.³⁰

The northern area is located in inner parts of Swedish Sápmi, above the Arctic Circle, it thus provided less suitable conditions for agricultural farming than the southern area, and colonization by settlers had been less intense in these parts than in the southern region. Furthermore, as shown by Korpijaakko-Labba and Päiviö, reindeer husbandry communities in the northern area had a strong tradition of *siida*-³¹ and *tjiellde*-based land-use structures, which fitted the extensive form of reindeer husbandry practiced in the region. Thus, Sami families did not have the same tradition of individual- or family-based land use or ownership (Korpijaakko-Labba 1994; Päiviö 2011). These factors might explain why families in the northern area sought individual ownership of farmlands less frequently than families in the southern area.

The Reindeer Tending System. Livelihood Diversity

Communities in both the northern and southern areas commonly engaged in complex reindeer tending arrangements. Frequently, reindeer herders looked after reindeer owned by others in exchange for goods or other services. The owner could be anyone that the herding family sought good relationships with, regardless of ethnic affiliation. The arrangement could be of mutual benefit for both the herder and owner, and created a structure enabling diversity of livelihoods within the extended families, Sami communities and local communities (Nordin 2002). In the following text, tended reindeer refer to reindeer owned by someone other than the herder (who cared for and tended them).

The sources include several accounts of reindeer tending systems, in both the southern and northern areas. However, inconsistencies in the sources prohibit a longitudinal study of proportions of reindeers that were not tended by their owners. Some administrators' constant uncertainty about (and fixation with) ethnicity, together with their perception of Sami ethnicity's rigid link with nomadism, prevents determination of exact trends in proportions of such reindeer over time, or differences in proportions of tending arrangements between the two areas. The sources do provide some numerical indications of the practice and differences in its extent between districts, as shown in Table 1. However, due to the complex spectrum of reindeer husbandry systems, as discussed above, the presented numbers should be solely viewed as rough, illustrative indications.

The data, derived from an official report on the conditions for reindeer husbandry in Västerbotten between 1912 and 1916, are riddled with uncertainties and complications, as discussed in the following text. However, they display interesting variations. As shown in the table, the report stated that reindeer herding families in the districts tended 75,091 reindeer³², of which 12,364 belonged to non-reindeer herding families and Norwegian citizens. This suggests that 17 per cent of the reindeers they tended were owned by someone else. In addition, the report states that 609 reindeer (included in Table 1) owned by "Sami people in the districts" (it is unclear whether or not these people were reindeer herders) were tended in Jämtland or Norrbotten.³³

District	No. reindeer herders own reindeer*	No. reindeer belonging to others**	Total number of reindeer in district	Percentage of reindeer owned by other than the herder
Vilhelmina södra	10,152	1,040	11,192	9%
Vilhelmina norra	16,076	1,629	17,705	9%
Vapsten	4,966	1,111	6,077	18%
Ubmeje tjeälddie	14,335	1,361	15,696	9%
Ran	7,650	5,281	12,931	41%
Gran	8,308	1,799	10,107	18%
The whole area	61,487	12,221	73,708	17%

N: 75,091. Percentage is rounded to nearest whole percent.

1,240 reindeer in the districts was 'unmarked' or had 'unknown owners.' These are not included in the table.

Source: Utredningar ang. lappförhållanden p. 43 table II.

*: Explicitly including herders, herders with farms and/or settlements and 'feeble' former herders.

**: Explicitly including Sami, Non-Sami and Norwegian citizens.

Table 1. Example of proportions of reindeer tended by their owners and other people in the southern area, year 1909–1910.

The table also shows substantial differences in proportions of tended reindeer among the districts, ranging from 9 to over 40 per cent.³⁴ The proportion was highest in Ran, where the report stated that 5,270 reindeer belonged to people who were not active herders. The report, other data sources and previous studies I have examined provide no comments on or explanations for the high proportion in Ran.

As already mentioned, the information in the report is riddled with complications. For example, scattered comments indicate that the reindeer numbers presented in the table were drawn from official reindeer counts and information about occupation and ethnicity from official population registers, together with information from Sami people themselves. However, details of the methodology used to acquire the data, and the numbers themselves, are poorly described. A further complication is that the Reindeer Grazing Act of 1898 prohibited resident people of Swedish nationality from owning reindeer in the southern reindeer grazing districts. This clause of the law was opposed by the herders, as noted by the Bailiff: “In spite of the clear prohibition by §27 in the Reindeer grazing law, some Sami still tend for reindeer belonging to residents of Swedish nationality,” a tendency that he said was not reflected in the official reindeer statistics.³⁵ In addition, terms related to identity and occupation used in the report (such as herder, Sami and farmer) are used inconsistently. This greatly hinders attempts to analyze reindeer husbandry in isolation from Sami livelihoods in general, or study Sami livelihood in isolation from the livelihoods of other settled people. Furthermore, the report presents inaccurate information, for example about traditional reindeer grazing lands, raising questions about the general quality of information it contains. However, the complexities in the report are interesting in their own right, showing the difficulties that administrators faced with comprehending and representing a dynamic and complex livelihood.

Information from the archives of the Sami Bailiff in the northernmost district of Norrbotten from 1907 to 1908 provided comparative data for the information in the report from the southern area. Ideally, I would have compared two reports derived from the same source, covering the same time, but no such source was found. Reports from the northern area suggest that proportions of tended reindeer were lower than in the southern districts (Table 2).

The Bailiff in the northern area reported reindeer numbers and proportions of tended reindeer on a parish level, hindering more detailed analysis of reported numbers. The report states that the herders of these districts tended 84,376 reindeer, of which 5,209 belonged to non-herders and 1,452 to Norwegian citizens, suggesting that herders of the area were acting as care-takers for 8 per cent of the total reindeer (Table 2). However, this per-

Parish	Districts	No. reindeer herders own reindeer*	No. reindeer belonging to others**	Total number of reindeer in district	Percentage of reindeer owned by other than the herder
Karesuando	Karesuando Lainivuoma	29,531	973	30,504	3%
Juckasjärvi	Saarivuoma Talma Gabna Laevas	25,826	1,642	27,468	6%
Gellivare	Girjas Bäste Unna tjerusj	22,358	4,046	26,404	15%
The whole area		77,715	6,661	84,376	8%

N: 84,367. Percentage is rounded to nearest whole per cent.
Source: Årsberättelsen Lappfogden Norrbottens län 1907–1908 (p. 487).
*: In the source it says “Normadic and forest reindees.” Intertext analysis suggests that these numbers are equivalent to ‘Reindees herders own reindeer.’
**: In the source it says “Reindeer belonging to non reindeer herders and Norwegian citizens.” Intertext analysis suggests that these numbers are equivalent to “Reindeer belonging to others.”

Table 2. Example of proportions of reindeer tended by their owners and other people in the northern area, year 1908.

centage varied substantially among parishes within the area, and the most northerly had smaller percentages than the most southerly parishes.³⁶ The same tendencies were also evident in the later part of the period. Although the Bailiff in the north did not express general concern about the reindeer tending system, he did not seem to like too much variation among the districts. In 1916 he complained about the high proportion of these reindeer in Unna tjerusj.³⁷ He regarded it as a sign of the herders lacking the drive to prosper and develop their livelihood. In contemplations about the reason for this he suggested that it was: “their custom of trusting the resident people’s reindeer that has made them passive.”³⁸

In conclusion, the reports show substantial variation among districts, indicating that in this case a south-north comparison might be less relevant than a detailed comparison of the districts. However, in accordance with the confusing reports of the administrators, the study shows that the distinction between active reindeer herder and passive reindeer owner was loose and dynamic in the historic reindeer husbandry context.³⁹ Owners’ engagement in looking after the reindeer and associated activities ranged from part-time to none at all. In addition, the personal connections between the herders and owners ranged from close family relationships to links through the Sami bailiff.⁴⁰ This suggests that the reindeer tending system both bonded people in the area more closely and bridged ethnic and social boundaries.

The Nomadic Reindeer Husbandry Ideal

Previous research has shown that in national politics, governmental reports and within the developing Sami administration, reindeer husbandry was singled out as *the* Sami livelihood during the focal period. Other forms of subsistence, trades and ways of life were not regarded *as* Sami, nor appropriate *for* Sami (Mörkenstam 1999; Lantto 2012). These notions are reflected in the material this study is based upon, primarily in discussions about settledness among Sami.

The sources reveal that within Swedish administrative bodies, farming and settledness were closely connected concepts, sometimes used interchangeably and connected to “Swedish” culture and ethnicity. Nomadism, in contrast, was used synonymously with reindeer herding and connected to Sami culture and ethnicity. This issue is most clear in matters concerning official registers. As ethnicity was not self-reported and administrative officials connected Sami ethnicity to reindeer husbandry, people who transferred to other ways of life were ethnically registered as Swedes in official records, see for example the Västerbotten Governor’s own discussion of this (BISOS H Västerbotten 1901–1905).

The reports of both Västerbotten and Norrbotten county governors reveal that they had adopted the ethnic settler-nomad distinction, but not without difficulty. Confusion about the terms settled and nomad was strong, and there are inconsistencies in their use throughout the records (BISOS H 1860–1905). The governor of the southern county was especially concerned about the declining number of nomadic Sami (BISOS H Västerbotten 1860–1905).

In the southern area the degrees of settledness were also especially dynamic. This caused problems for Swedish administrators in upholding an imaginary boundary between reindeer herder and settler. In some reports this is clearly expressed, but in most cases it is only discernible through inconsistencies in concepts and enumerations.

The notion that the true Sami was a reindeer herder and the true reindeer herder was a nomad were constant themes in the sources.⁴¹ However, it clearly conflicts with the complexity, diversity and dynamics of Sami livelihoods shown in this study.

Policy, legislation and administration of Sami issues during the focal period were strongly oriented towards reindeer husbandry, making it more uniform and Sami families more dependent on reindeer products. On the county administration level, strong voices opposed combining livelihoods within the family. The diversity was viewed as a token of the diminishment of traditional nomadic reindeer husbandry culture, a culture that the admin-

istrators set out to protect. Farming was especially seen as a potential hindrance to the continuation of reindeer husbandry (BISOS H Västerbotten 1860-1905).⁴² For example, at a hearing of the 1919 committee, the Assistant Bailiff in Västerbotten, Petrus Holmgren, and Sami supervisors, opposed the herders' notions of the appropriate combination of husbandry and farming. In stark contradiction, they stated that "there are no advantages" of combining farming and husbandry, that "it will have disappointing consequences," and that the reindeer herders will end up in "relief systems for the poor."⁴³ Similarly, in a report concerning the situation for Sami in Västerbotten County, conducted by prospective Bailiffs, the investigators concluded that:

Experience has shown that someone who tries to be both active reindeer herder and farmer cannot fully engage in either of the professions. Instead they are both usually done half-heartedly [...] such half-heartedness cannot be tolerated. A primary condition for practicing autonomous, active herding has therefore been set: that the prospective herder confines himself solely to reindeer herding, and if he previously owned a farm or practiced agriculture he completely stops any participation in the activity, and either sells his farm or leases it out to another person. Only those who accept these regulations can be considered as nomads. If they violate them their status will be changed, without further ado, and they will be counted as residents.⁴⁴

The reluctance to allow agriculture in reindeer husbandry contexts, as portrayed in the report, was not applied universally to all forms of farming activities. The administrators seemed happy to allow herders to have some goats, in mountain summer camps. They mentioned that goat keeping, in contrast to other forms of farming, "is something that is conducted very generally, for example by nomads as *pure* as the Jokkmokk Sami."⁴⁵ Here we see how the practices are valued in relation to their perception of *genuine* or *true* reindeer husbandry (and Sami culture), for which the herders in Jokkmokk apparently served as an ideal in this case.

Livelihood Diversity and Politics of Confinement. Concluding Discussion

The presented comparison of Sami livelihoods in southern and northern parts of Swedish Sápmi in the period 1860–1920 clearly challenges the notions of Sami as reindeer herders and mountain reindeer husbandry as a nomadic monoculture. The results reveal clear evidence of diversity in terms of livelihood means and degrees of nomadism and settlement within the communities defined as being *nomadic reindeer herders*. In both areas, livelihood

diversity was manifested in various combinations of herding, fishing, hunting and farming (although the farming tended to be small-scale and restricted to summer in the north). There are also several other aspects of livelihood diversity, relevant to the study, which were not documented in the archived material. For example, part-time jobs, forestry, handicrafts and trading, that certainly engaged various members of the communities at times.

The ideal of nomadism, eluded to in the study, was a notion that strongly guided the legislative and political processes leading to the first Reindeer Grazing Acts of 1886 and 1898. As Mörkenstam states:

The nomadic culture as a fundament for legislation has major effects on individual Samis' rights. The state does not recognize individual rights to land. [...] The rights that are recognized are founded on an interpretation of a traditional nomadic lifestyle where the livelihood is collective in nature. (Mörkenstam 1999: 94)

The legislation of 1886 and the acts that followed confined Sami land use to reindeer husbandry (with associated fishing and hunting rights), and hindered diversification of livelihoods (Cramér & Prawitz 1970; Mörkenstam 1999; Lantto 2012). The reindeer tending system that provided possibilities for farmers and settlers, regardless of ethnicity, to engage in reindeer husbandry and build interdependent relationships was successively restricted during the period. The policies promoted further segregation of farming and herding, the settled and the nomad, not livelihood diversity (Nordin 2002). As the results of this study show, reindeer herding families divided tasks and responsibilities in various ways. However, for Sami people who did not live mainly off reindeer husbandry, the laws and regulations during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries strongly hindered the exercise of land rights, including fishing, hunting, trapping and farming on their traditional lands. The Sami who were not reindeer herders came to be viewed in legislation as any other Swedish citizen (Mörkenstam 1999: 79–114).

The identified trends relate to two parallel state policies regarding the Sami people during this time period. One tried to assimilate non-reindeer herding Sami into Swedish society and the other strove to segregate reindeer herding Sami. These parallel processes have been discussed by previous researchers in relation to the schooling of Sami children, a prominent issue in Sami politics during this time (Mörkenstam 1999; Sjögren 2010). I understand the parallel processes of assimilation *and* segregation as politics of confinement, conflicting with the diversity of settlement, livelihood and social structures in Sami communities that this study has identified.

The results of the study show that the notion of Sami as reindeer herd-

ers and the idealization of nomadic reindeer husbandry, held and reinforced by policy-makers and legislators during this time, was not anchored in the practice or ideal of local Sami communities. The study shows that although the notion may have been more consistent with practices in the northern area, there was also substantial diversity of Sami livelihoods across the northern area, which conflicted considerably with policy aims and the beliefs that engendered them. The importance of hunting, fishing and small-scale farming for Sami families has been expressed in previous studies (Arell 1977; Beach 1981; Nordin 2007; Brännlund 2015). However, in contrast to these previous studies, the current study has not focused on livelihood diversity of *reindeer husbandry*, but the livelihood diversity of Sami communities labelled as *mountain reindeer husbandry communities*: an important distinction.

If we place all trades and livelihoods practiced by people with some connection to reindeer husbandry (listed as part of a reindeer grazing district or *tjiellde* community, for example) *within* the frames of reindeer husbandry, or as Nordin (2007: 101–104) advocates, as an *integrated* part of reindeer husbandry—what Sami livelihoods are not then reindeer husbandry? This construct risks expunging non-reindeer herding Sami experiences and livelihoods from history, and reinforcing the notion of Sami as reindeer herders. Regarding reindeer husbandry as much more important than other livelihoods practiced by Sami communities and families (and more distinctly *Sami*) may also have political effects, especially for non-reindeer herding Sami striving for indigenous land rights.

NOTES

- ¹ An administrative and financial union tied to an extensive area of land along an annual reindeer migration route.
- ² The reindeer husbandry communities were under the authority of different county administrations and “Sami administrations.” The northern area was under the jurisdiction of Norrbotten County and the Norrbotten’s Sami Bailiff’s office (from 1916 Norrbotten’s north Sami bailiff’s office). In the historical records the reindeer husbandry communities are named as follows: Gabna: Rautasvuoma, Laevas: Kaalasvuoma, Girjas: Norrkaitum, Bäste: Mellanbyn and Unna tjerusj: Sörkaitum. The southern area was under the jurisdiction of Västerbotten’s County and Västerbotten’s Sami Bailiff’s office. Ubmeje tjeiddie is named Umbyn in the historical records.
- ³ It might be objected that the reference points for the work of Nordin (and to some extent Beach) are contemporary reindeer husbandry practices, thus the conceptions of livelihood diversity and social networks derived from their work might not be suitable for analysis of historical reindeer husbandry. However, as discussed above, the framing of the concepts applied here resonates with more historical studies on reindeer husbandry. Furthermore, as guiding concepts they have been open for reticulations and paired by semi-conventional content analysis, while the methodology as a whole has retained possibilities to detect and acknowledge possible divergence between contemporary and historical practices.
- ⁴ See also Lantto 2012: 141–142, on this matter.
- ⁵ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II. [‘Inquiry of Sami issues in Västerbotten County’]/ HLA/ Lappfogdens i Västerbottens län arkiv/ Vol: Ö Utredningar ang. Lappförhållanden
- ⁶ Lappkommittén 1919 [‘Sami committee of 1919’]. RA/(YK 193) Vol: I.
- ⁷ The questions addressed included: Whether it is suitable “for a reindeer herding Sami to also have a farm” and whether a nomadic Sami should have the right “to build a cabin in a reindeer grazing area.” Examples of follow-up questions that the committee raised were: “could building a cottage tempt the herder to stay in that place, then start to cultivate the land more extensively and pull him from his true livelihood towards a settled life?”
- ⁸ They included regulations regarding migration routes, numbers of guards and (in the southern areas) taxation lands.
- ⁹ Gustav Göthe compiled a vast thesis on the colonization of Umeå lappmark, but the focus was on the settler perspective and it concerned the period from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century (Göthe 1929). Sigrid Drake contributed an ethnographic study on southern Sami livelihoods during the first part of the nineteenth century. However, her thesis (published in 1918) is in the form of a lexicon on customs and tools used in daily work, and it does not relate to the questions posed in this paper (Drake 1918). Christer Westerdahl, an archeologist by schooling, recorded the diversity of Sami land use in the southern area of Swedish Sápmi. The work briefly describes conditions at the turn of the twentieth century, but naturally the study focused on older times, particularly archeological aspects and folklore (Westerdahl 2008).
- ¹⁰ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II; Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelser 1890–1924 [Sami Bailiff in Norrbottens Northern District]. HLA/ Lappfogdens i Norr-

- bottens norra district/ Vol: BIII:1; Handlingar angående renskötsel 1908–1917 [‘Records of Reindeer Husbandry 1908–1917’]. HLA/ Lappfogdens i Västerbottens län arkiv/ Vol: F XIV:1.; Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I.
- ¹¹ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II; Lappfogden i Västerbottens län. Årsberättelse 1898. 1899. 17/2, nr 30. [‘Sami bailiff in Västerbotten yearly report of 1898’]. RA/Civildepartementet I/Vol: EI. Konseljakter.
 - ¹² Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 15, 39. No comparative reports for the northern area have been found, but there are also indications of multiple and diverse means of livelihoods among reindeer herding families in this area.
 - ¹³ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I: 1–4 [book spread 17–20], 2–3 [book spread 4–5].
 - ¹⁴ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I: 2 [book spread 4].
 - ¹⁵ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I: 2 [book spread 4].
 - ¹⁶ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I: 2 [book spread 4].
 - ¹⁷ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 75.
 - ¹⁸ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I: 1–4 [book spread 17–20], 2–3 [book spread 4–5].
 - ¹⁹ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 66–67.
 - ²⁰ Lappfogden i Västerbottens län. Årsberättelse 1902. 1903. 30/1. [Sami Bailiff in Västerbotten Yearly Report of 1902]. RA/Civildepartementet I/Vol: EI. Konseljakter.
 - ²¹ Handlingar angående renskötsel 1908–1917: 190.
 - ²² Colonisation in this area had, however, a long history predating migration to mining communities. See, for example, Bylund 1956: 64–66.
 - ²³ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1908: 493
 - ²⁴ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I
 - ²⁵ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelser 1890–1924; See also: Hultblad 1968: 129–130; Beach 1981: 45
 - ²⁶ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1916: 565
 - ²⁷ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1896: 161
 - ²⁸ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1916: 601.
 - ²⁹ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1920: 707
 - ³⁰ Furthermore, previous research has shown that herders often chose their former taxation lands as sites for establishing a new farm (Bylund 1956: 210–211; Lantto 2000: 79). I believe these factors acted synergistically with herders’ desire to establish or take over farms as capital investments and as a means to spread risks.
 - ³¹ Geographical area and social community, smaller unit than a tjiellde.
 - ³² Reindeer belonging to elderly people who had settled down were also included in this category.
 - ³³ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 43.
 - ³⁴ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 43.
 - ³⁵ Lappfogden i Västerbottens län. Årsberättelse 1916 [‘Sami bailiff in Västerbotten yearly report of 1916’]. RA/Renbetesdelegerade 1913 (YK 1766)/ Vol: 20 Handlingar rörande lappfogdeberättelser och lappfogdens verksamhet i Västerbotten: 28–29.
 - ³⁶ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1908: 487. Following the bailiff’s

writings the distinction he made was between the reindeer herders themselves (who he calls *the Sami*), non-reindeer herders (who he called *the residents*) and Norwegian citizens.

³⁷ Former name: Sörkaitum

³⁸ Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelse 1916: 561. The Bailiff's statement is obviously questionable and has patronizing, derogatory undertones. However, previous researchers have suggested that high proportions of reindeer being tended for other people may have raised problems. Nordin, for example suggests that it could have resituated herders as "attendants rather independent herders" (Nordin 2002: 103).

³⁹ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I.

⁴⁰ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II; Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelser 1890–1924; Lappkommittén 1919 Vol I; Nordin 2002, p. 157.

⁴¹ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II; Lappfogdens i Norrbottens norra distrikt årsberättelser 1890–1924; Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I.

⁴² See also: Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I.

⁴³ Lappkommittén 1919 Vol: I

⁴⁴ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 411.

⁴⁵ Utredningar angående lappförhållanden inom Västerbottens län av C. Österberg, H. Jonasson och E. Bergström. Del II: 71.

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