



Indigenous Challenges during 400 Years – The Sami of Northern Scandinavia

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Sápmi of Northern Europe





Indigenous peoples

- **5,000** indigenous peoples
- in more than **70 countries**
- consisting of almost **400 million** individuals
- striving for increased **self-determination** and an opportunity to preserve and develop their cultures
- In many places they meet with great **difficulties**, and several indigenous peoples have ceased to exist
- There is a great need for **research based knowledge** and international collaboration in order to achieve improvements for indigenous peoples
- The main target is the opportunities for a **sustainable and democratic development**, and in some cases the chance to survive.

Aspect of colonialism facing indigenous peoples today

Dispossession of their lands and territories

Racial discrimination and stereotyping

Prevented from exercising their right to self determination

Foto: Isabelle Brännlund

Centrum för Samisk forskning



Indigenous Vulnerability Indicators

- Health
- Language
- Statistics
- Traditional economy
- Religion
- Relocation/reservations
- Educational systems
- Cultural diversity dynamics vs. stereotypes
- Self-determination

Who are the Sami?

The only recognized indigenous people in Scandinavia

Limited and stereotype knowledge

From segregation to assimilation

Urbanisation

Culture in motion

Strive for increased self-determination



The Sami in Sweden

- Present in Sweden for 10,000 years
- One of five national minorities
- 20,000 individuals (?)
- Speak nine different languages
- Since 1993 represented in Sweden by the Sami Parliament



Reindeer and caribou are crucial to many indigenous people in the Arctic. The samis of the Barents Sea region, once nomadic, are now struggling to retain their traditional grazing ranges, that are encroaching rapidly due to hydro power development, large cabin resorts, roads, forestry and mineral exploitation. Most of the fragmentation is done by continuous, small-scale expansion from the already existing network of roads and settlements.



Jean-Francois Regnard (1660s)

"a description of this little animal, usually called lapp, of which can be said that there is nothing except from the monkey that is so like humans"



Declining rights to traditional land use

- 1673 – The Settlement Act
- 1683 – The Forest Act
- The Parallel Theory
- Slow process
- Legal protection of the Sami
- Sami Taxation Lands
- The chaotic 19th century



Colonization of thought

- Shamanism / paternalism
- Pantheon of gods / monotheism
- Death penalties
- Slow process of christening
- The hiding of believes



The Era of Segregation

- Paternalism
- The clash of reindeer herding methods
- "The Lapp should be a Lapp"
- A process of modernization





Social Darwinism

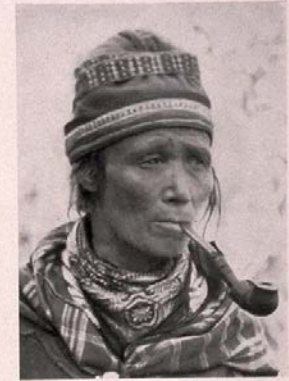
"the Laps are nomads at a lower cultural level, and must automatically be defeated by the stronger culture of the settled and will in the future cease to exist. May then the State give the Laps such care that they, without intolerance, can die in peace"

Swedish Parliament, 1893

An Ethnic Trauma



Typical Lapland boy.
Photo. H. Lundborg, Uppsala.



Lapp-woman from the north of Lapland.
Photo. H. Lundborg, Uppsala.



Lappewoman
Photo. H. Lundborg, Uppsala.



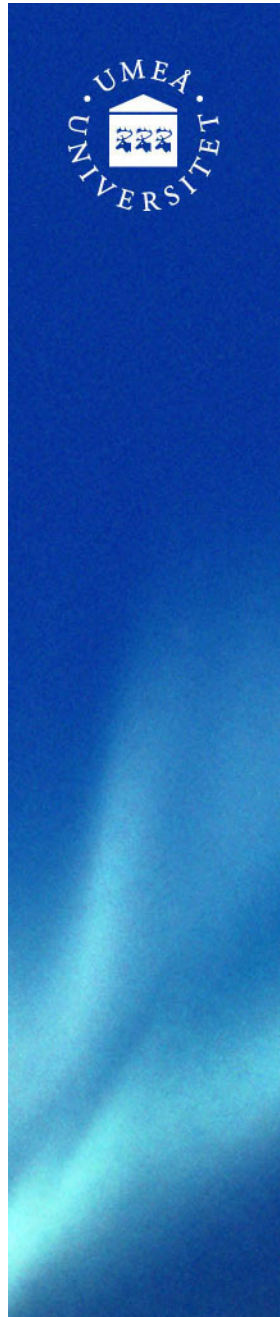
Lapp from Norrbotten.
Photo. Borg Mesch, Kiruna.

Repatriation





Fig. 69 1875

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The Sápmi Population Data Base

- Individually linked
- Complete life biographies
- Family composition
- Mortality with causes of death
- Migration



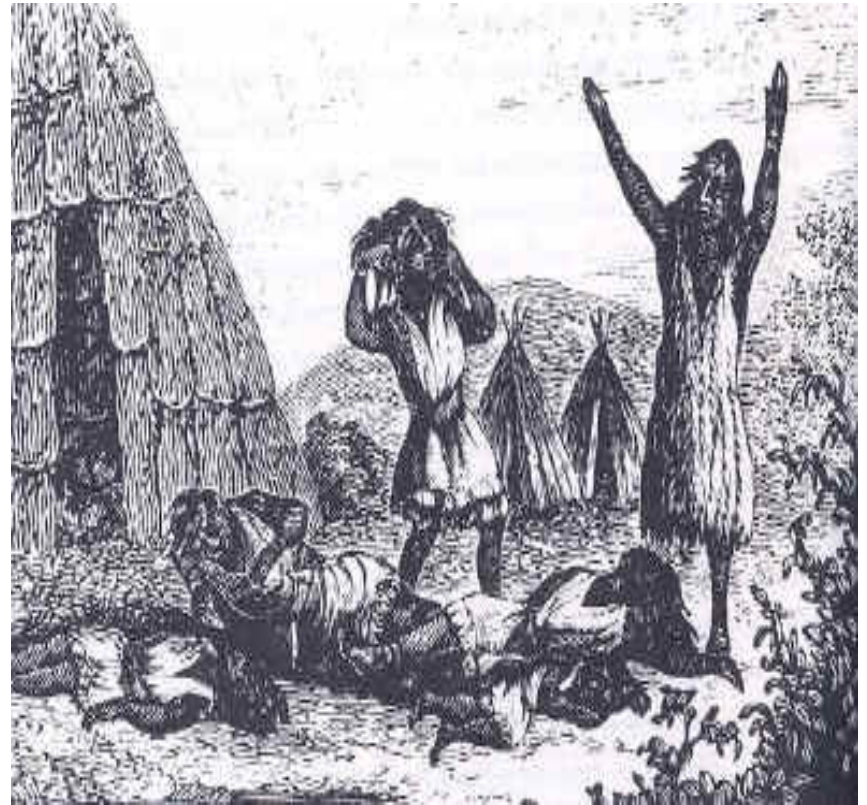
Sami health until 1900

- Mortality 2-3 times higher among the Sami
- Infants and children
- Tuberculosis
- Climate
- A dying people?



Smallpox

- The Latin American experience
- The Swedish experience
- Vaccination



Smallpox in Sápmi

- Low Sami smallpox mortality
- High frequency of epidemics
- Cultural understanding of a disease
- Fatalism or flight



The epidemiologic transition in an international indigenous perspective

1800: Sami
mortality twice
as high as the
rest of Sweden

2000: No
remaining
differences

Compare:
Aborigines,
Inuits, South
and North
American
Indians etc.



Reindeer herding – the most dangerous occupation

- Double risk of fatal accidents for reindeer herders
- 7 times higher risk for fatal snowmobile accidents



Suicide

- Women and non-reindeer herding men: no difference
- Reindeer herding men: 1.50 higher risk (also in Norway and Finland)

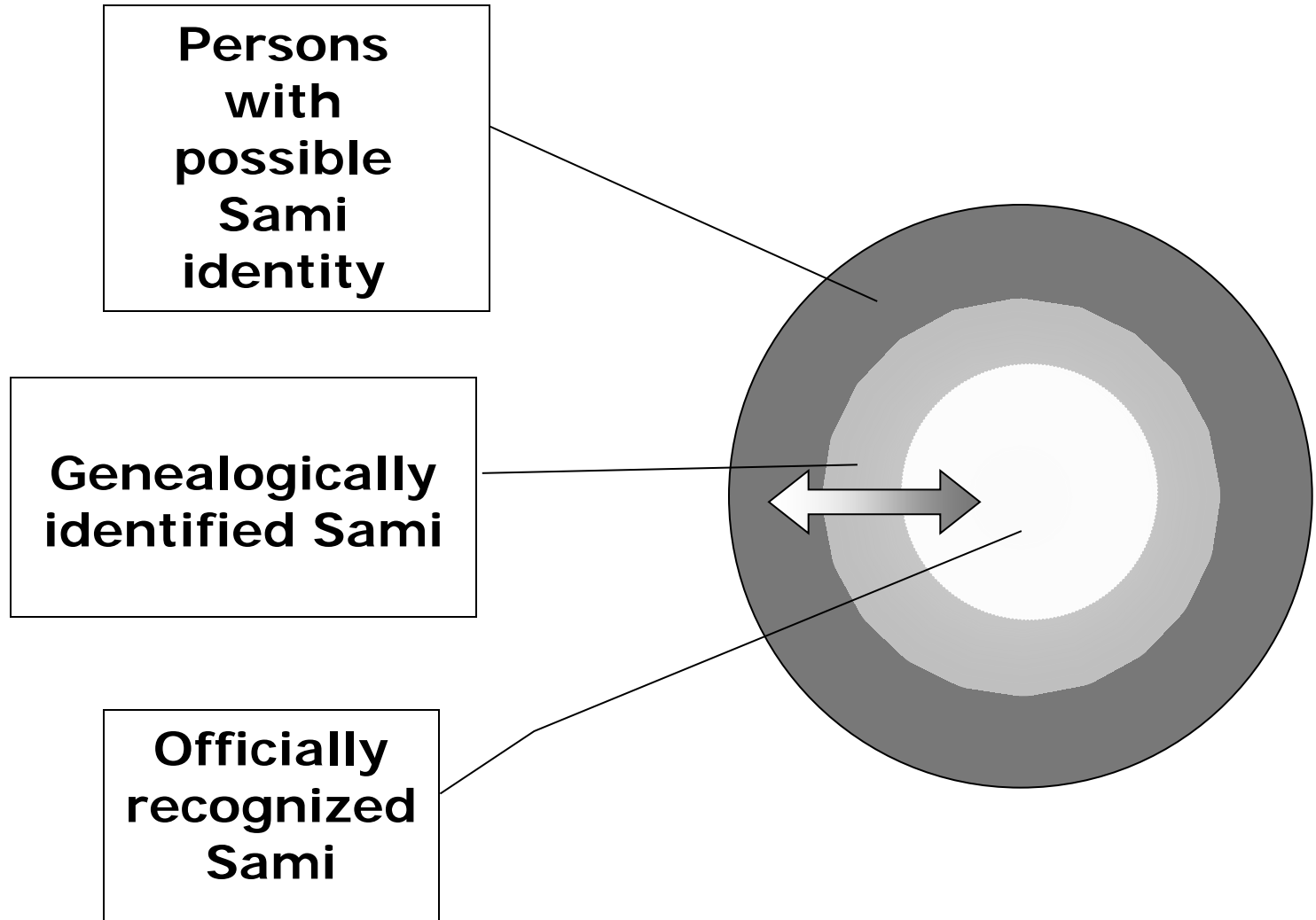


Categorization and Identity

- Who is Sami?
- Cultural complexity
- Sami settlements
- The censuses
- 1945 – the end of ethnic registration in Sweden



Identity & Vulnerability



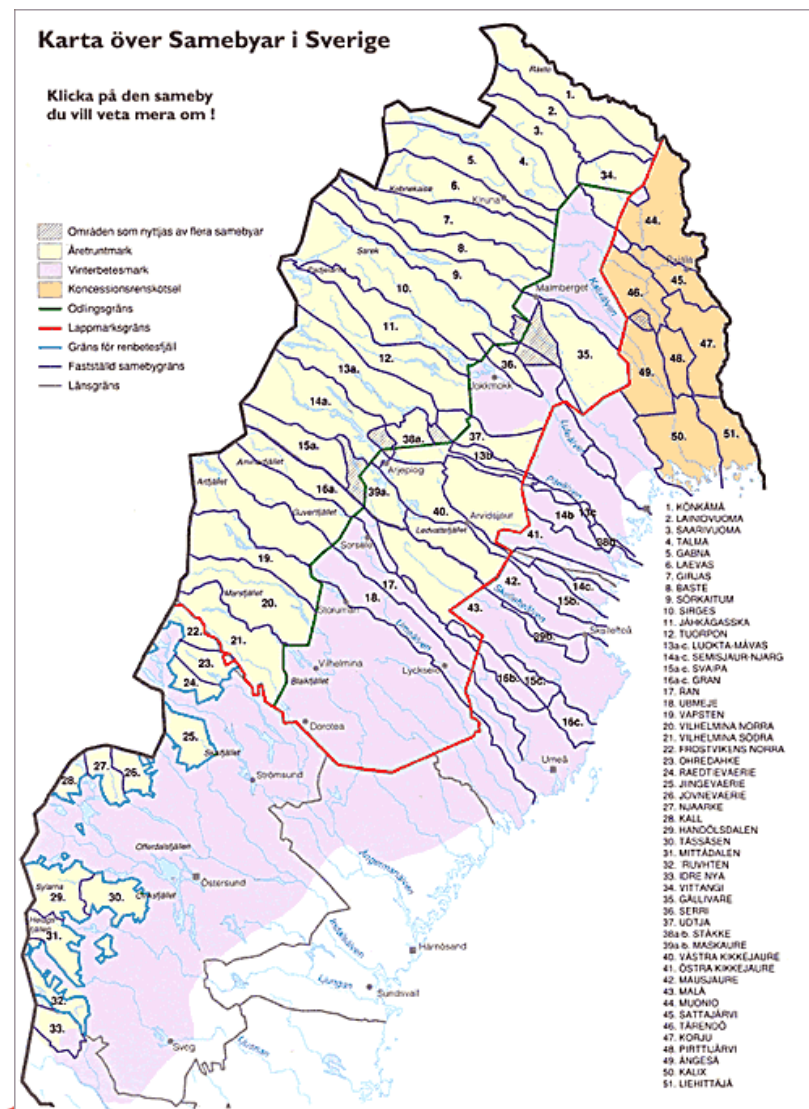


Relocation Processes in Sápmi

- Border closures
- The administrative system
- Reindeer Herding Laws
- Denial of self-governance

Reindeer husbandry in Sweden

- Reindeer husbandry is only exercised by the Sámi people living within Sámi communities
- The reindeer herding is organized in 51 Sámi communities
- There are more than 4 000 reindeer owners in Sweden
- The land used for grazing of reindeer covers more than 50 % of the Swedish land surface



Reindeer herding rights



Reindeer herders have legal rights to use land and water. Winter grazing lands are not specified, but rest on ancient rights of previous use. This often result in disputes and court cases.


Nordmaling (1998-2011), Idre (2001), Gällivare & Udtja (2002), Härjedalsprocessen (2004), Bjurö, Ratan

Climate change and the Sami

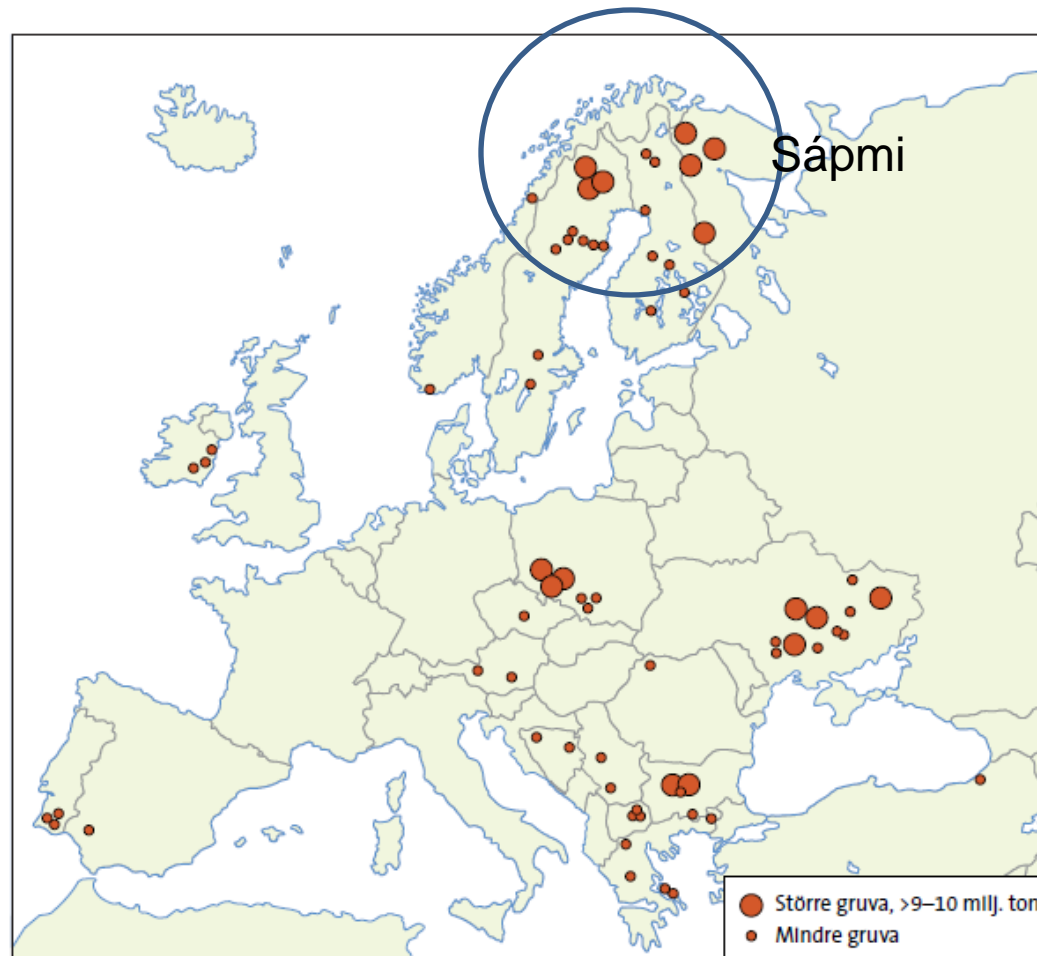


- Changing snow conditions
- Extreme wet and dry seasons
- Starving reindeer
- Increased extractive initiatives
- Traditional knowledge: adaptation

Threats to reindeer husbandry

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- A black and white photograph showing a person in traditional reindeer husbandry clothing, including a hat and a long coat, standing in the foreground. In the background, a large mining truck is parked on a rocky, uneven terrain. The scene illustrates the potential conflict between traditional reindeer husbandry and extractive industries.
- Extractive Industries
 - Forestry
 - Predation
 - Hydro power plants
 - Windmill parks
 - Tourism
 - Questioned legal rights

Mines in Europe



Figur 17. Gruvor i Europa. Källa: SGU, RMG.

Mines in Sweden

- Most mines in Sweden are situated within the Reindeer pasture land
- There is often no compensation for the loss of pasture areas
- No royalties paid to Sámi
- Through the exploitation of grazing land the customary indigenous rights are jeopardized



Figur 2. Gruvor i drift under 2007.

UN, as well as EU's environmental authority EEA, have in several reports calculated the threat to Sápmi:



- 1) Approx. 25% of the total pasture grounds are already severely disturbed/ lost as a consequence of development**
- 2) Approx. 35% of the summer pastures/ coastal areas are severely disturbed/ lost**
- 3) Approx. 78% of the coastal and calving-grounds will be lost during the next 30-45 years given continued development**



Languages

Identity

Traditional knowledge

Science

Colonization

Repatriation



Cultural stereotypes & Strategic essentialism





International critique

UN Committee for Human Rights(MRK)

UN Committee for Race Discrimination (CERD)

European Council Commissioner for Human Rights, Alvaro Gil Robles

Paul Hunt, UN Special Rapporteur for mental and physical health:

*"Given the special status of the Sami, the Special Rapporteur was surprised to find that Sweden does not have a Sami health research centre. This omission tends to explain what he was told by some while on mission: there is a shortage of research and knowledge focusing on the health of the Swedish Sami. As it was put in 2004: "Over the last decades, only a few studies have been published addressing health and disease in the Swedish Sami population." **Accordingly, the Special Rapporteur recommends that the Government support the establishment of a Sami health research centre, along the lines of the Centre for Sami Health Research based at the University of Tromsø, Norway**".*

The Era of Political Integration

- Political mobilization
- Sami organizations
- Media: a shifting focus from reindeer herding to conflicts
- Legal processes
- The Swedish Sami Parliament
- ILO 169



The Paradox of Self-determination



The Importance of Research

- Land and water rights
- Health
- Identity
- History
- Memory
- Understanding
- Education
- International perspectives
- Sustainable development



The Indigenous Paradox

- The complex nation
- The united nation
- The global nation



Thank you

