

# SKOLT SAMI AND INDUSTRIALIZATION: STATE-DIRECTED TERRITORIALIZATION AND COMMODIFICATION IN THE ARCTIC BORDERLANDS

## ABSTRACT

This article shows how the Finnish state, in connection to international actors, has advanced industrialization, territorialization, and commodification on the Skolt Sami home grounds, and how the Skolt Sami people's nature-linked livelihood activities have changed or become threatened in connection with these processes. The theoretical starting points of the article sheds light on territorialization and the power practices of the state, and on commodification (i.e. the development of industrial economic features). The three cases of territorialization and commodification discussed in this article are the following: (1) the industrialization of the Petsamo area until 1944, (2) the industrialization of reindeer herding from 1995 on, and (3) the Arctic Ocean railroad plan in 2016–2021. The article argues that international factors have significantly influenced the process of state-directed territorialization, which on several occasions has divided the Skolt Sami. Furthermore, the article claims that in the process of commodification, despite having changed, traditional nature-related livelihood activities are important for the continuity of the Skolt Sami way of life.

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Keywords: Skolt Sami, livelihoods, reindeer herding, natural resources, state, industrialization

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## INTRODUCTION

The Skolt Sami are part of the indigenous Sami peoples living in northern Europe. The Skolt Sami live today mainly in Finland, Russia, and Norway. Focusing on the Skolt Sami in connection with Finland, the article shows how the state has advanced industrialization,

territorialization, and commodification in the northern borderlands in relation to international actors, such as companies, governments, and the European Union. Related to these processes, the article analyses local-level transformations of the Skolt Sami nature-related livelihood activities and threats to them. Cases of industrialization from different eras demonstrate these processes.

The article helps understand manifestations of the officially driven industrial-economic model and what they have meant for the Skolt Sami at different times. The processes of territorialization and commodification have been part of the industrialization of the Finnish society. In these processes, the prerequisites of Skolt Sami traditional livelihoods have become threatened by other actors. Today, in relation to the use of natural resources, the Skolt Sami have to deal with challenges that are partly similar to those from a hundred years ago (for example, competition for the use of lands and water), even though they are now officially recognized as an indigenous people in Finland (see Suomen perustuslaki [The Constitution of Finland] 1999: 17§).

The three cases were selected for this article because they have been documented quite well and because the roles of the state and the international operators are visible in all these cases. The cases deal with different times that have represented turning points for the Skolt Sami. The cases are the following: (1) The industrialization of the Petsamo area until 1944, especially the construction of the nickel mine in the area shortly after Finland had become an independent state in 1917. (2) The intensification of the industrialization of reindeer herding from 1995 on, when Finland became a member of the European Union. (3) The Arctic Ocean Railroad Plan in 2016–2021, namely the railroad plan between Rovaniemi, Finland and Kirkenes, Norway after two decades of Finland's EU-membership.

The first research question the article asks is how has territorialization taken place on the Skolt Sami home grounds and how has it affected the Skolt Sami? The article explores the actions of the state representatives in territorialization and the influences of the international operators in this process. Using

territorialization as the theoretical starting point of the article makes it possible to focus on the power holders' ways of asserting control over land and people; in addition, it can expose responses to territorialization. The first argument of the article proceeds as follows. International factors have strongly influenced the processes of state-directed territorialization. These processes have divided the Skolt Sami on several occasions through the forming of borders between states and by splitting their home areas within the state into discrete parts. Territorialization brings state control to places of natural resources (i.e. resource frontiers). In this process, the state can define its ownership of land and waters and give settlers access to real estate. For example, in the old Petsamo area, the settlers got tax reliefs and were allowed to purchase real estate (Alavuotunki 1999: 41). This article concerns the border areas of Lapland in Northern Finland. When the frontiers are close to national borders they can be called resource-rich borderlands where a military presence may be required, according to Eilenberg (2014), who has studied border areas and resource frontiers elsewhere.

In relation to territorialization, the second research question of this article is connected to the process of commodification. How has local-level commodification taken place on the Skolt Sami's home grounds and how has it changed their nature-related productive activities? Combining different livelihoods has been an important part of the Skolt Sami culture through time. The article explores how commodification has influenced the combinations of livelihood and what the meaning of entrepreneurship is in this process. The second argument of the article is the following. In the process of commodification, traditional nature-related livelihood activities, despite being changed, are important for the continuity of the Skolt Sami way of life.

In social and cultural anthropology, interest in state activities and their local-level consequences has been growing. Eric Wolf (1982: 384–385, 395–396) has pointed out that the state uses structural power when it ‘shapes the social field of action’ and maintains one version as truth. James Scott (1998: 3–5) has shown how state representatives can use their authority by simplifying things and utilizing high-modernist ideology to achieve their goals in conditions where members of a weak civil society have no ability to oppose these actions.

Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Peluso (1995: 385–386) have paid attention to the treatment of the natural environment through the process of internal territorialization that occurs on a local level, and also in a much broader context. Vandergeest and Peluso argue that all modern states use territorialization strategies (for example, by surveying and registering land property or by mapping and guarding forests and other natural resources). In the cases examined in this article, state regulation consists of the following elements: (1) definitions of geographical borders, (2) division of land rights, and (3) definitions of the use of natural resources in Finland. On the local and regional levels of state administration, *Metsähallitus* (Forest and Park Services) in practice often controls the use of natural resources. Some theorists have claimed that increased global integration has weakened the capacity of national states to control their territories (Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 413–415). In the Skolt Sami cases reviewed here, territorialization has an international dimension in addition to its local and national aspects.

The borders between different countries have impacted the Skolt Sami by splitting them into three separate states. In the Skolt Sami Area in Northern Finland, most of the land and waters are owned by the state. In their

Plan of Natural Resources, state representatives divided areas into different kinds of sections according to the degree of nature conservation and type of economic activities (*Ylä-Lapin luonnonvarasuunnitelma* 2013). In areas that have been designated for economic activities, such as in southern parts of the Skolt Sami district, large-scale forestry has distracted somewhat from traditional, nature-bound forms of livelihood.

Territorialization takes different forms depending on time and place. In many cases, development projects meet indigenous communities and their living environments (Peluso and Lund 2011).

Indigenous people are often at a disadvantage in the use of natural resources compared to other groups (Bassett and Gautier 2014: 12, 14). For the Skolt Sami and many other indigenous peoples, even formal equal status with other interest groups in relation to the use of natural resources is at times insufficient to ensure the continuity of indigenous ways of life; for example, members of the majority culture can exercise more power in a competitive environment.

Industrialization has been studied extensively with regards to its historical, social and cultural consequences (see for example Polanyi 1957 [1944]; MacIver 1957; Wolf 1982; 2001). Polanyi claimed that freedoms of the modern economic system had to be limited by the state in order to serve social interests (Polanyi 1968 [1947]: 74–75). Polanyi’s examples show how big countries like the United States and Germany formed strong state-driven politics in the 1930s as a reaction to the Great Depression. The cases of this article reveal how a smaller country, Finland, has served the social interests in connection with the Skolt Sami.

Chris Gregory (1982: 121–177) describes industrialization through the arrival of colonial

capital, which has led to the transformation of gifts into commodities in primary commodity production, that is, in the process of *commodification* (see also Kelly and Peluso 2014).

Gregory (1982: 149) has further claimed that economic changes, in the case of the indigenous people of Papua New Guinea, should not be described as the decline of the 'traditional' sector and the rise of the 'modern' sector but as the rise of both gift production and commodity production. Expanding from Gregory's analysis this article explores the meaning of entrepreneurship in nature-related forms of production. Thus, attention is drawn to the commodification of the means of production and nature, including the distribution of natural resources to different interest groups. Commodification also forms the basis for explorations of the meanings of traditional livelihood activities and entrepreneurship. Malinowski's (1968 [1945]: 78) notion about the survival of a community can be applied to the process of local level commodification as follows. The existence of the community and its culture can be supported by the fact that it has been able to maintain to some extent its traditional social, economic, and legal values.

Several sources have been utilized in the descriptions and analyses of this article's three cases. Studies on Skolt Sami people and culture have been important sources, including research material from the author's recent research projects in the field of social and cultural anthropology (see Itkonen 2012; 2018). In addition, media articles and historical publications have been used. Furthermore, the article utilizes laws and regulations as well as publications of the Skolt Sami administration, the Sami administration, the state administration, regional administration, and the administration of the European Union.

## THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF PETSAMO

Until the beginning of the Second World War in 1939, the Skolt Sami people lived on their original home grounds in Northern Europe on the south side of the Barents Sea, in the area that today is divided between three countries: Russia, Norway, and Finland. In their traditional way of life, families had symmetrical livelihoods; nearly all families had similar combinations of livelihood which consisted of reindeer herding, fishing, hunting, and gathering. This way of life has been called semi-nomadic because households annually moved several times so that they could fish in different places at different times of the year. The change of place also served reindeer herding, hunting, and gathering. The winter period, from December until the end of April, was spent in the winter village together with other people of the *sijd* (the Skolt Sami village). Skolt Sami forms of fishing included, for instance, net fishing and seine fishing. Seine fishing often involved two boats from two different households. During the winter period, the reindeer were herded near the winter village by separate herding groups. One herding group usually consisted of a few households. (Tanner 1929; 2000; Nickul 1948; Sverloff 2003; see also Itkonen 2017.)

The industrialization of the Petsamo area on the original home grounds of the Skolt Sami people already began in the 1860s when the Russian Tsar Alexander II gave permission for the people of Finland, an autonomous area of the Russian Empire, to settle on the shores of the Barents Sea. Within two decades, the Skolt Sami of the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds* became minorities in their traditional areas. (Alavuotunki 1999: 41.) In reindeer herding, the Skolt Sami of the Peaccam *sijd* suffered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because the mountain Sami

with their large reindeer herds arrived in areas of the Skolt Sami and began to dominate the livelihood (Tanner 2000: 61–63).

Before the First World War, fishing boats of foreign countries such as England, Germany, Norway, and Sweden began to encroach with their trawls and nets in the waters of the Barents Sea close to the fishing places of the Petsamo shore. Together with Russian fishing boats they violated the interests of the coastal population in circumstances where the boundary line between open sea waters and the regional waters of the local population was not exactly marked. (Riihinen 1999: 273.)

In the Tartu Treaty of 1920, the Petsamo area (i.e. the area of three Skolt Sami *sijds*), became part of the independent state of Finland. Of the three Skolt Sami *sijds* here, Paacjok and Peaccam were hit hard by losses in sea fishing in the 1920s, as the Finnish fish industry developed in the area, while the Suenjel *sijd* in the inland areas of Petsamo was able to maintain its traditional livelihoods (Lehtola 1999:149, 151). The rest of the Skolt Sami *sijds* had their home grounds in Norway (Njauddam *sijd*) and in the Soviet Union (Muotke, Nuetjaur, and Saarves *sijds*).

In the 1920s, settlers who came to Petsamo mostly from Finland intensified professional fishing on the Barents Sea near the shore of Petsamo and built up the fishing industry in Petsamo. The wedge seine fishing of Finnish fishermen near the shore started to reduce the salmon stock of the Petsamo river, thereby diminishing the Peaccam *sijd* Skolt Sami's possibilities of salmon fishing. In addition, as the Finnish fishing industry grew, the Skolt Sami started to lose their properties to the newcomers on the shore of the Petsamo Fjord and the traditional fishing places in the sea areas of the Petsamo Fjord. In Liinahamari, the fishermen who had come from Finland bought cottages

from the Skolt Sami or settled in their seasonal residences without asking for permission. When a dock was built in Liinahamari in 1930, big ships started to appear in the Skolt Sami fishing waters. Buildings to the fishing industry were constructed next to the Skolt Sami's cottages so that you could barely see the cottages between them. Moreover, settlers could also take up reindeer herding, which increased the strain on the limited reindeer pastures. A representative of the Skolt Sami objected to the increased fishing of the newcomers and their right to own reindeer, but the strong position of the newcomers led to decreased possibilities of the Skolt Sami to practice their traditional forms of livelihood and limitations to their use of natural resources. This in turn meant that they were forced to make a living more and more by wage labour, for example as fish handlers in the fishing industry. In the Peaccam *sijd*, at the end of the 1920s, less than half of the Skolt Sami households (10 of around 22) were able to fish for salmon on the sea waters of the Petsamo fjord. At about the same time, the Paacjok *sijd* lost its rights to sea fishing close to the shore of Norway. (Lehtola 1999: 151.)

In the beginning of the 1920s, the Petsamo area aroused great interest in Finland. The government increased funding for the Geological Research Institute of the State, which founded the Petsamo exploration group (Kauranne 2010: 28). The Petsamo exploration group hired local Skolt Sami to help search for minerals, as they knew the environment; they worked as guides, porters, and diggers. In 1924, a Skolt Sami man found the first stone that contained ore (Warm 1989: 16–18).

After further explorations and promising ore discoveries, the government of Finland started to advance the planning of the Petsamo mine construction in 1933. The resources of the only significant Finnish mining company

Outokumpu Oy were considered too limited for this project, which is why the government called on the director of the Geological Research Institution to contact foreign mining companies. The government evaluated the resources of foreign companies and the interests of foreign countries in order to ensure protection for this remote mine. Representatives of Finland considered the Canadian Nickel Company Ltd (Inco) strong enough to take responsibility of the project, as the company already held 90 percent of the world's nickel resources. (Warma 1989: 20–25.) Inco's English affiliated company Mond Nickel Company negotiated with representatives of Finland and became the major owner of the new mining company Petsamo Nickel Ltd (Petsamon Nikkeli Oy). (Warma 1989: 24; Autere and Maijala 1989: 26.)

The mining area was founded on the Skolt Sami traditional land of the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds*. In the state-directed territorialization of Petsamo, the Skolt Sami of the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds* had to compete with other interest groups over the use of natural resources with little protection from the state. However, the Peaccam *sijd* people were allowed to retain fishing places for net fishing on the Petsamo River (Lehtola 1999: 151).

The mining area (40 kilometers by 5 kilometers) covered parts of the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds* close to the shore of the Barents Sea. A road was built in the late 1920s to connect the Inari municipality to the mining area and Barents Sea coast. It ran through the traditional lands of the Paacjok *sijd*. These constructions significantly hampered the Skolt Sami traditional nature-bound forms of livelihood. (Alavuotunki 1999: 52; Lehtola 1999: 153.) When the construction of the mine attracted more people to the area, the Skolt Sami people's portion of the population of the Petsamo area decreased from 17 percent in 1921

to 10.5 percent in 1939 (Lehtola 1999: 155). The total number of inhabitants in the Petsamo area more than doubled in ten years (1930–1940), rising from 2,307 to 5,142. At the same time the number of the Skolt Sami in Petsamo area remained steady: 397 in 1929 and 400 in 1934 (Kuusikko 1999: 127, 139).

The legislation of 1925 made it possible for newcomers from Finland to settle in Petsamo in the areas of the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds*. This caused the Skolt Sami of the Suenjel *sijd* to feel threatened as well, even though the new settlement law had not yet been implemented in their home grounds, which were located inland. In 1930, the Village Meeting (*norraz, sobbar*) of the Suenjel *sijd* (i.e. the *sijds*' traditional self-governing institution) sent an application to the Ministry of the Interior, calling for a type of autonomy that would have restored the old fishing and hunting rights of the Skolt Sami and the Village Meeting's right to control the *sijds*' areas. In 1932, the Ministry of the Interior made an official initiative to keep the Suenjel *sijd* outside the settlement activities. Further attempts of the Skolt Sami in this regard were supported by friends of their culture, such as the scholars Karl Nickul and Edward Westermarck, but the issue was still not finalized in the Finnish state administration, when the Second World War started in 1939 and halted this process. (Lehtola 1999: 159–163.) Nevertheless, new settlements were not founded in the Suenjel *sijd* area and the Skolt Sami of Suenjel could maintain their traditional semi-nomadic way of life until 1939. In Suenjel, the Village Meeting was able to gather in the 1930s like before to make decisions, concerning, for instance, the use of the *sijd* area and its natural resources.

In the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds*, the yearly cycle of the semi nomadic lifestyle was disturbed and many Skolt Sami stayed in the winter village throughout the year. People of



the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds* had to deal with new competitors in fishing and reindeer herding. Nevertheless, the Skolt Sami adjusted their old cultural traditions to the new conditions and practiced their traditional forms of livelihood as much as they could. (Nickul 1935; Tanner 2000: 53–74, 85–97.)

Many people of Paacjok and Peaccam took wage labour jobs and many were in economically dire straits. The local fish factory had 20–30 employees, mostly Skolt Sami and Karelian migrants. The Skolt Sami had adopted some forms of agriculture on a small scale: for example, potato cultivation and sheep herding. (Lehtola 1999: 151, 153; Tanner 2000: 63; Riihinen 1999: 277.)

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 shocked the Skolt Sami. After that, life was not the same for them. Due to the Winter War in 1939–1940, they had to leave their original homeland for the first time. Many of them returned to Petsamo for a short period after the Winter War. They left their homes the second time in 1943. This time it was final. (Lehtola 1999: 163–166.)

The Second World War changed the fundamentals of the Petsamo mine as well. In the first phase of the war, the Winter War, the Soviet Union appropriated the mine, which was not yet open. The Soviet Union returned the mine to Finland in April 1940. (Vuorisjärvi 1989: 178.) After the Winter War, the political leaders of Finland re-evaluated their options for the country's international politics. In June 1940, representatives of the Finnish and German governments began trade negotiations in which Germany's priority was to obtain nickel from the Petsamo mine. In July 1940, representatives of the Petsamo Nickel Ltd made the first nickel contract with the German company I.G. Farbenindustrie. At this stage the representative of the English company Mond

resigned from the board of Petsamo Nickel Ltd. In the later phases of the Second World War in the years 1940–1944, the Petsamo Nickel mine largely served interests of the German war industry. (Autere and Maijala 1989: 42, 48; Vuorisjärvi 1989: 179–181.) As a condition of the Moscow Armistice of 1944, Finland ceded the Petsamo area, including the nickel mine, to the Soviet Union. After the war, Finland had to pay compensations to the Soviet Union and to the English company Mond for the mining project. Economically speaking, the mining project was not a success for Finland. (Autere 1989: 198–199.)

Regarding the conclusion of the Petsamo mine from the point of view of the state, the international-political dimension of the mine became more important than the economic dimension. At first, the mining project strengthened ties to England and an English company. After that, it was a valuable element in relations with Germany. The government negotiated guidelines in relation to the mining project, even though the mining company Petsamo Nickel Ltd, made the plans and the contracts, and took care of the production. (see Autere 1989: 189–199.) During the mining project, the newcomers can be seen as shapers of new (internal) political forces on the local level of the Petsamo area, even though they were mainly interested in making a living.

To summarize the era of Petsamo industrialization until 1939 concerning the Skolt Sami, they were divided through two kinds of procedures. First, after the First World War in the Tartu Treaty of 1920, new borders separated the Skolt Sami of the Petsamo area of Finland from the Skolt Sami of the Soviet Union and Norway. Second, within the Petsamo territory of Finland, the three Skolt Sami *sijds* were divided into two kinds of areas: the protected area of Suenjel and the area of economic usage

of Paacjok and Peaccam, where the Skolt Sami had to adjust to the terms of industrialization and territorialization, including new inhabitants. The industrialization of Petsamo was inseparable from the territorializing settler-politics and the construction of the mine and the fishing industry, and furthermore through the changes in reindeer herding. This led to frontier-like conditions of resources and the diversification of Skolt Sami productive activities.

## THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF REINDEER HERDING

After the Second World War, most of the Skolt Sami of the Petsamo area moved to Finland where they were divided into two different areas. Most inhabitants of the Suenjel *sijd* found their new home grounds in the Sevettijärvi and Näätämö area on the northern side of Lake Inari. Inhabitants of the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds* were mostly placed south of Lake Inari, in the villages of Keväjärvi and Nellim, for instance. The state arranged the resettlement in collaboration with the representatives of the Skolt Sami, and the state constructed housing for the Skolt Sami people. In the Sevettijärvi area, each family received some reindeer. In 1955, the state created special legislation that has supported the Skolt Sami people's households, livelihoods and administration (see Kolttalaki 1995 [The Skolt Act 1995]: 68§). The Eastern parts of the Inari municipality were defined as the Skolt Sami Area.

The second case of this article discusses industrialization, territorialization, and commodification in relation to reindeer herding among the Skolt Sami starting from 1995, when Finland became a member of the European Union. Since this year, EU membership has enabled the state to control more strongly

than before the economic aspect of reindeer husbandry.

The industrialization of reindeer herding had begun long before this time point though. The American anthropologist Pertti J. Peltto (1973) has shown how the snowmobile revolution in the mid 1960s meant a big step in reindeer herding in terms of the mechanization of the livelihood and the centralization of reindeer ownership. Due to the snowmobile revolution, the costs grew and competition between individual reindeer herders increased. Many owners of small personal reindeer herds had to give up their livelihood at this stage, because they could not afford to buy snowmobiles and pay for gasoline. In the intensification and commodification of reindeer herding, vehicles have become common in many work phases. Today, the snowmobile is a must for reindeer herders. Motorcycles were common among reindeer herders three or four decades ago, but since then they have been replaced by all-terrain vehicles (ATV:s) which have four wheels. The use of a helicopter is common too. The helicopter and its pilot come from outside the reindeer herding community to help in the final stages of the gathering and transporting of reindeer before the herds are separated. The use of these machines has increased the cost of reindeer herding. Recently, however, new technology has raised hopes of reducing these costs. The need for motor vehicles can be reduced with the satellite tracking of reindeer, which makes it easier to find reindeer in the wilderness.

Reindeer herding was treated as an integrated part of agriculture in Finland's membership negotiations with the EU. This meant that the state subsidies for reindeer husbandry have been administered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Finland's



membership in the European Union began in 1995. Thanks to this membership, the state could strengthen the industrialization of reindeer herding. A new form of subsidy was introduced for reindeer husbandry, and it is paid for each live reindeer in accordance with the same principles as the 'per hectare' system of agricultural aid in the European Union. (Itkonen 2012: 209–214, 242–244.) The EU agricultural policy has aimed at better productivity through the 'continuous process of structural change, with decreasing numbers of farms which are increasing in size' (European Commission 2016: 11). In addition to the per animal subsidy, the state financially supports the investments of those reindeer herders who get the main portion of their income from reindeer herding (Hallituksen esitys [Government proposal] 1989: 2). The per animal subsidies of reindeer herding are based on the Act on National Subsidies of Agriculture and Horticulture (Laki maa- ja puutarhatalouden kansallisista tuista 1996/2001) and they are paid from the state's resources.

When Finland had joined the EU, the state representatives set the criteria for the subsidies of reindeer husbandry so that the minimum number of personally owned reindeer has to be 80, and the maximum number is 500 in the northern parts of the reindeer herding district. A clear majority of the Sevetijärvi reindeer herders thought that the 80 reindeer minimum was too high for the per animal subsidies. Some wanted to remove the minimum requirement entirely and others wanted to considerably reduce the minimum. On the regional level of reindeer administration, a minimum number of 50 personally owned reindeer was proposed as the minimum for the per animal subsidies after consulting representatives of all the reindeer herding cooperatives. These voices from the field were largely ignored in the

formal decision-making on the subsidy criteria. Accordingly, the decision-making process can be characterized as authoritarian. (Itkonen 2012: 209–217.) Among reindeer herders the new subsidy led to a division between those who receive subsidies and those who do not. Some owners of small herds (less than 80 reindeer) adapted well to the situation and continued as before, some managed to increase their personal number of reindeer to meet the minimum requirements, and others began planning their exit from reindeer husbandry.

The current policy of reindeer herding promotes the industrial-economic model of reindeer husbandry where most reindeer herders should be specialized full-time reindeer herders. In this mode, meat manufacturing takes place to a great extent in distant meat manufacturing plants owned by large-scale food industry companies. (Itkonen 2012: 209–214.) At the early stages of the implementation of the new subsidy policy in 2003, reindeer husbandry fell into a market crisis, where the producers' earnings for reindeer meat fell dramatically in deals with the few companies of the large-scale food industry. This showed reindeer herders the challenging side of the economic-industrial model. (Itkonen 2012: 212–213.)

In the Skolt Sami reindeer herding community of Sevetijärvi, the centralization of reindeer ownership has recently advanced quite quickly. Over the past 20 years, the number of active members of the Sevetijärvi reindeer herding community has decreased by 25 percent (Itkonen 2018a: 33; 2020: 722).

Next to the decline in the number of reindeer herders there have been a few parallel processes. Today reindeer herders specialize more and more only in reindeer husbandry. This has made them more dependent on the centralized industrial-economic model, including state subsidies. Their situation was

different before, when most also practiced other commercial livelihoods as well as self-sufficient nature-linked activities besides reindeer herding. If they ran into economic difficulties in reindeer herding because of bad weather conditions, their additional livelihoods helped the economic survival of their households.

The work groups that conduct the annual reindeer separations are based less and less on the collaboration between owners of small- or medium-sized personal reindeer herds and their fairly equal relations. Accordingly, symmetrical reciprocity relations have diminished as a basis for collaboration in the work groups. Instead, the work of reindeer separations now tends to be carried out more and more by work groups which are formed of nuclear families and owners of large personal reindeer herds. In these work groups, collaboration is to a great extent based on asymmetrical reciprocity relations and authoritative forms of action. (Itkonen 2012: 261; Itkonen 2018b.)

Products of the other nature-related traditional livelihoods of the Skolt Sami (i.e. fishing, hunting, and gathering) are nowadays for the most part not market-oriented. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, many Skolt Sami still sold products from these livelihoods (Pelto 1962; Ingold 1976). Today the Skolt Sami, including the reindeer herders, generally consume products of these other livelihoods directly in their own households, while a smaller portion are aimed at the market. These livelihood activities have also changed somewhat in comparison to the old practices. For example, seine fishing has become rare. In any case, these livelihood activities are still important constituents of the Skolt Sami way of life and bring food to the table. Fishing and berry picking are practiced in most Skolt Sami households. In addition, about half of the Skolt Sami consider hunting to be important, and the same number favor handicrafts. Certain

handicrafts utilize materials that come from nature or from reindeer. (Itkonen 2018a: 39, 53, 58, 61.) Nature-related activities, including reindeer husbandry entrepreneurship and activities of other nature-linked livelihoods, can be seen as a way to maintain some control over the land and waters.

Competitive circumstances bring uncertainties to the Skolt Sami traditional forms of livelihood. Reindeer herding is threatened by competitive land use and Skolt Sami reindeer ownership by possible conquerors from outside the community. In parts of the fishing waters of the Skolt Sami Area, fishers from other cultural groups practice professional fishing. Fishers of other groups also practice many other kinds of fishing in the Skolt Sami Area. In addition, professional ptarmigan hunters who represent other cultural groups have come to the Skolt Sami Area to hunt. People of other groups also practice several forms of hunting for their own purposes in the area. Professional fishing and hunting guides from other groups have brought their customers to the Skolt Sami Area as well. In berry gathering too, people from other groups can create increasing competition around the picking places (for instance, in areas where the number of holiday cottages in the Skolt Sami Area has increased). (see Itkonen 2018a 29–60; 2012: 94–95, 99.)

Conclusions that connect reindeer herding to territorialization and commodification are the following. On the one hand, the state has supported continuity among all Skolt Sami of the Skolt Sami Area through the Skolt Act (see Kolttalaki 1995) and through subsidies of reindeer husbandry. On the other hand, the state has advocated change in the Skolt Sami communities by its economic approach towards reindeer husbandry where ‘big is beautiful’. It is good to remember that there are also other factors besides state subsidies behind the

centralization of reindeer ownership, such as the process of mechanization. The centralization of reindeer ownership has had, for instance, the following consequences. First, the size of Skolt Sami reindeer herding communities has diminished. The position of reindeer husbandry officials has correspondingly weakened in the state administration (Itkonen 2012: 233). Second, the meaning of additional modern forms of livelihood has decreased among reindeer herders, for example the meaning of local meat manufacturing, restaurant services, and wilderness guidance. Third, reindeer herders have become more dependent on state subsidies.

## THE ARCTIC OCEAN RAILROAD PLAN AND TERRITORIALIZATION

The Arctic Ocean railroad plan became news in Finland in 2016. The plan was presented by the Minister of Transport and Communication who had discussed the topic with representatives of the state of Norway. In 2017, the Finnish Transport Agency, under the Ministry of Transport and Communication and Norwegian railroad officials started a study about the profitability of the railroad and the possibilities to build it. The projected 400-kilometre long railroad would run from Rovaniemi Finland to Kirkenes Norway. In the northern parts of Finland, it would pass through the Skolt Sami home grounds. Official negotiation was conducted with representatives of the Sami following the principles of the Act on the Sami Parliament. (Arctic Ocean Railway Report 2018: 5.)

The Skolt Sami participate in the work and elections of the Sami Parliament. The Parliament of Finland approved the founding of the Sami Parliament by the Act on the Sami Parliament in 1996. Its predecessor the Sami Delegation (Saamelaisvaltuuskunta) had been founded by

a statute of the government of Finland and it was active in 1973–1995 (Suomen Saamelaiskäräjät 2020). The Sami Parliament operates in the administrative field of the Ministry of Justice, and thus it has plenty of collaboration with it. The Sami Parliament works in connection with but not under the Finnish government and state administration.

As indigenous peoples in the Sami homeland and area, the Sami have the rights of self-government over their own language and culture. For the tasks related to this, the Sami elect the Sami Parliament. Authorities consult with the Sami Parliament on those far-reaching and significant measures which may have an immediate and specific effect on the status of the Sami as an indigenous people and which concern the Sami homeland. In matters falling within its remit, the Sami Parliament may make initiatives and proposals to the authorities and issue statements. (Laki saamelaiskäräjistä [The Act on the Sami Parliament] 1995: 1§, 5§, 9§.)

The Skolt Sami Village Meeting is a traditional institution of Skolt Sami self-governance. Today, the task of the Village Meeting is, among other things, to deliver statements on official matters related to Skolt Sami's livelihoods and living conditions. (Kolttalaki [The Skolt Act] 1995: 44§.)

The railroad line was planned to go through the home grounds of the Skolt Sami in the Sevetijärvi area. The Arctic Ocean railroad plan has been resisted by representatives of local people, such as the Skolt Sami Village Meeting, the reindeer herding cooperatives of the Sevetijärvi area, the Sami Parliament, other reindeer herding cooperatives of the railroad line, and the Reindeer Herders' Association. Yet, some local people have had hopes that the railroad could bring tourists to the area. In other words, the Arctic railway received some support among locals despite strong local opposition.

The majority of the Skolt Sami objected to the railroad plan (Itkonen 2018a: 139). The Skolt Sami's trusted man, the Head of the Skolt Sami Village Meeting, explained the objection in terms of the following factors. The railroad would threaten the Skolt Sami culture, because it would dramatically change the local environment. Reindeer pastures would be split up and the movement of reindeer and reindeer herders would be disturbed. Fishing would be disturbed by constructions over the water. (Feodoroff 2019.) The Skolt Sami leader further pointed out that the construction of the railway would facilitate the start of mining projects in the Skolt Sami Area, and that potential mines could endanger the fishing waters and leave marks on nature and soil. In discussions, local Skolt Sami people have described how geological surveys have been carried out in the area. This has raised questions about the future.

The state organized a research project in relation to the railroad plan that was carried out by a consulting company. The Arctic Ocean Railway Report (2018: 6–7, 17, 22, 24) presented several reasons for the railroad. The transportation infrastructure and its functionality are meaningful for the sake of the competitiveness of companies and for the sake of other mobility. The Northeast Passage sea route opens up new possibilities to connect Europe to Asia. The northern sea route can be connected to a railroad corridor that goes through Finland. The railroad tunnel between Helsinki Finland and Tallinn Estonia would be part of this corridor. It is important to develop connections between the Arctic Ocean and Central Europe. The new railroad line would improve Finland's security of supply as well. In preliminary calculations, the railroad proved to be economically unprofitable, but, according to the study, that situation might change if a new mine were to be opened in Northern Finland.

The dimension of international politics has been strong in this project, to such an extent that the railroad's transportation corridor seemed at least as important for Europe and Asia (China) as for the state of Finland. A Finnish company and a Chinese company have been mentioned among the possible funders of the railroad (Ruokangas 2019).

The Finnish government elected in 2019 did not add the Arctic Ocean railroad plan to its agenda, but central actors and the majority of the political board of the regional authority continued to advance the drawing of the railroad line on maps as part of the formulation of the Provincial Plan for Northern Lapland 2040 (Lapin liitto 2021a).

The Sami Parliament of Finland opposed the marking of the railroad line on the maps of the Provincial Plan of Northern Lapland, because the potential impacts of the railroad were not studied properly (Saamelaiskäräjät 2018). The Skolt Sami Village Assembly has objected the mapping of the railroad in all its statements (Lapin liitto 2020: 3).

On 17 May 2021, the politically appointed council of the regional authority Lapin liitto decided to stop the planning of the railroad; that is, the representatives of different municipalities of the region decided in a 43–3 vote to object to the railroad alignment, because it would have negative effects on Sami culture (Lapin liitto 2021b). The Sami Parliament welcomed this decision of the regional council. The decision has been interpreted as removing the railway alignment from the Provincial Plan. (Saamelaiskäräjät 2021.) This decision of the council of the regional authority was a positive turn for the Skolt Sami and other Sami, and it raises the hope that democratic decision-making can support the Sami and their culture, even if the Sami are a regional minority.

In the Skolt Sami Area in eastern parts of the Inari municipality in Northern Finland, most of the lands and waters are legally defined as state land and thus controlled by the state. In connection with territorialization, this means that the officials of Metsähallitus (Forest and Park Services) play a major role in planning the rules of these regions. In their Plan of Natural Resources (Tolonen et al. 2013), state officials have divided the state's areas into different categories. The categorization of the areas is a form of mapping. It facilitates the process of commodification, as it defines how natural resources can be utilized. (see also Lounela 2019: 54) The land use categories concerning land and waters in Northern Finland made it possible to place the Arctic Ocean railroad line in areas where economic use of land is allowed, and thus go around the Wilderness Areas (see Erämaalaki 1991 [Wilderness Act]) where nature conservation is the priority.

As a summary of the Arctic Ocean Railroad Plan, the actions of the central actors of the government and the regional administration may be seen as attempts to strengthen the state-directed territorialization of the Skolt Sami home grounds (see Vandergeest and Peluso 1995: 385–386). The plan broadened the gap between associated key officials and the Sami, including the Skolt Sami. On the other hand, it has been a positive sign for the Skolt Sami and other Sami that the planning and mapping of the railroad line have been stopped by the democratic processes.

## CONCLUSION

This article analyses three cases of industrialization in relation to the Skolt Sami people. It argues that in all three cases, international political factors have fundamentally influenced the process of state-directed territorialization.

The Petsamo mine became a significant piece in the international power struggle in the 1930s and during the Second World War. In the borderlands of a small country, the mine proved to be directed more by international political interests than national economic ones.

In the industrialization of reindeer herding from 1995 on, Finland's membership in the international political organization, the European Union, generated a new economic policy following the principles of the policy of agriculture of the EU. A new form of subsidy was introduced to advance the centralization of the ownership of reindeer.

In the Arctic Ocean railroad plan in 2016–2021, many prominent reasons for its construction were international. Improvement of the connection between Europe and Asia (China) was one of the railroad's central objectives. The international dimension of territorialization recognizes the borders between countries, but in the planning of the Arctic Ocean railroad, the border between Finland and Norway was crossed without any problems. This can be interpreted so that the significance of the international factor has grown stronger in territorialization and the related official decision making.

As the railroad planning process progressed, it seemed for a few years that the position of the Skolt Sami was as weak as nearly a hundred years earlier in Petsamo where they lost a great deal of their territorial autonomy. It appears that promoters of the railroad tried to obtain more power over the Arctic frontier by advancing the commodification of nature. The planning stopped at the national government level because the railroad proved to be economically unprofitable. The mapping of the railroad continued through the regional authority for a while, but was then stopped by the regional authority's council consisting of local political



representatives. This may give the Skolt Sami and other Sami hope that the democratic process can also support their culture in the future.

In the three cases examined in this article, the state deployed different territorial strategies connected to different international actors (see Bassett and Gautier 2014: 3; Peluso and Lund 2011). The state territorialization has been deterritorializing for the Skolt Sami, as it has erased Skolt Sami ways of creating and maintaining territories. The article argues that divisions have emerged among the Skolt Sami because of the state-directed territorialization strategies.

One of the territorial strategies that has divided the Skolt Sami is mapping (see Vandergeest and Peluso 1995; Scott 1998). This has been advanced by the government and executed by state officials and other actors in the public sector, such as regional authorities in the case of the Arctic Ocean railroad. In the mapping of the Petsamo area before the Second World War, the areas of the *sijds* were dedicated to industrial development with little concern for the Skolt Sami who were subjected to the arrival of new settlements and the construction of the nickel mine. At the same time, the Suenjel *sijd* became an area where interests of the Skolt Sami were protected by the state.

In relation to the state policy of reindeer herding, many reindeer herders have benefitted from the subsidies. However, the reindeer herders have had little possibility to influence the actions of the state (see Scott 1998: 3–5). The new subsidy policy has taken a stronger grip on the ownership of reindeer. Implicit territorialization can be perceived in relation to the environment. Through the direction of reindeer ownership, the state representatives have gained more control over the people who use the land, regardless of whether this has been

done deliberately. In this way, the state officials' possibility to control the use of the land may have intensified as well. (see Bassett and Gautier 2014: 12, 14.) Authorities of reindeer herding have used structural power by maintaining one version of the economy of reindeer husbandry, aiming for profitability through large units. The state subsidies have been important for reindeer herders, but the centralization of reindeer ownership has had a variety of consequences among the Skolt Sami. It has advanced changes in social relations, for instance. (see Wolf 1982: 384–385, 395–396.) In terms of the Skolt Sami's own territorialization, the international agricultural trend of centralization has meant that an ever-smaller number maintain control of the land through reindeer.

The state strategy has influenced the Skolt Sami in two ways. On the one hand, the state-led industrial-economic model has fostered competition and division based on reindeer ownership, as the amount of individual aid depends on the number of individually owned reindeer. On the other hand, the state has supported all the Skolt Sami through the Skolt Act and through general forms of social security. This has softened competition and division in the community. This two-sided strategy can be seen as the state's way of serving social interests to some extent in the process of industrialization without dramatically limiting freedoms of the modern economic system (see Polanyi 1968 [1947]: 74–75).

I argue that in the process of commodification, nature-related livelihood activities continue to be important for the continuity of the Skolt Sami way of life, even if the forms and functions of these activities have changed somewhat. In the earlier circumstances of the Skolt Sami, all families had similar combinations of livelihood. In today's conditions of commodification, the ways of combining

livelihood activities vary. Reindeer herding is the Skolt Sami's most important profession and form of entrepreneurship. Many reindeer herders have had other business activities and forms of wage labour as additional income sources. However, because of the centralization of reindeer ownership, the number of reindeer herders' additional livelihoods has declined.

Next to their professional activities, as part of their combinations of livelihood activities, most Skolt Sami households, including the households of reindeer herders, practice fishing and berry picking. Furthermore, hunting as well as handicrafts are important for many Skolt Sami. Products of these activities are aimed mostly at the Skolt Sami's own households, and, to a lesser extent, the market. All these livelihood activities support the survival of the households. They also play an important role in the Skolt Sami way of life. The traditional forms of production maintain social relations and pass a direct relationship to the environment on from one generation to the next. In addition, they most likely form sources of strength and inspiration for the Skolt Sami (see Malinowski 1968 [1945]: 78).

The commodification of the labour force of the Skolt Sami has meant that many have taken wage labour jobs. From the perspectives of independence and the relation to the environment, I propose that current entrepreneurial and other livelihood activities in nature-related forms of productions can be seen as a continuum to the old way of life (see Gregory 1982: 149). For example, reindeer herders make independent decisions in relation to their reindeer, at least to a certain extent, and they have gained some control of the land through their professional activities. The other nature-related livelihood activities can be seen to have similar functions.

Territorialization and the related commodification of natural resources have increased competition between groups of people. In the Paacjok and Peaccam *sijds* of the past, the fishing opportunities of the Skolt Sami decreased dramatically as representatives of other groups began to fish in the same waters. In these *sijds*, the Skolt Sami also faced new competition in reindeer herding as the settlers were allowed to own reindeer. In their present-day home grounds in the municipality of Inari, the Skolt Sami have had to adjust to competition as well. In these conditions, their reindeer and the reindeer pastures may be threatened. Furthermore, in fishing, hunting, and gathering, other interest groups compete with the Skolt Sami, and there are no signs that this competition would weaken in the future. The Arctic Ocean railroad plan was a large-scale industrial project that presented a threat from outside to the Skolt Sami community. Mining, power plants, and mass tourism belong to the same category.

In relation to the competitive circumstances, my conclusion is the following. Because of the processes of industrialization, territorialization, and commodification there is a danger that the Skolt Sami may lose part of the natural resources that have been available to them. When the increasing competition for natural resources weakens the position of the Skolt Sami in the Skolt Sami Area, the level of protection for the Skolt Sami's nature-linked livelihood activities and natural resources would have to grow correspondingly in order to materialize the Skolt Sami's constitutional right to practice their culture as indigenous people.

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