

CHAPTER 11

From Nomadism to Ranching Economy *Reindeer Transhumance among the Finnish Sámi*

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Introduction

In the twenty-first century, reindeer herding continues to be an important livelihood in Finnish Lapland in the Sámi homeland, albeit practitioners cannot entirely rely on herding for their income. The practice of free grazing and the migration of reindeer between summer and winter pastures has endured and adapted to many influences over the last 150 years. Apart from its practical relevance for the local economy, we observe a growing symbolic importance of reindeer herding, and especially, ownership of reindeer in the definition and self-determination of the Sámi nation.

This chapter will describe the routines of Sámi reindeer herding today, followed by a brief overview of the historical and administrative limitations that have restrained old practices, and a discussion of some of the technological innovations that have enabled adaptation. We will then introduce current practices as transhumant practices in a ranching economy as well as the development of tourism for additional income. Having clarified both practices and terminology, as well as the opportunities arising from marketing, we then turn towards Sámi reindeer herding's contemporary cultural and political dimension. Research for this chapter has been conducted by the authors in the communities of Finnish Lapland since 1990 and 2007 respectively. More recently, interviews on touristic activities have been conducted by Nuccio Mazzullo in the context of the Interreg-funded project Arctisen at the Multidimensional Tourism Institute (MTI), University of Lapland (January to April 2019).

Sámi Reindeer Herding through the Seasons

In Finland, reindeer herding society is administratively organized into so-called reindeer herding cooperatives, or *paliskunnat* (pl.), with each *paliskunta* integrating several herding families. The entire Finnish North, a third of the country, about 100,000 km², is currently divided into fifty-four reindeer herding cooperatives of various sizes and reindeer populations. Each district has clearly defined borders, which are marked by high fences, and within which a cooperative's animals can graze without being closely supervised for most of the year.

Within the cooperative's borders, small groups of reindeer gather according to season as well as gender and start foraging together. Especially shortly before and after calving in spring, groups of female reindeer gather in small groups to defend themselves from predators and perhaps aggressive males. While male reindeer lose their antlers after the mating season, females lose theirs only after the calves have become strong enough to be on their own. May is the "month of the calves," or *miessemannu* in Northern Sámi language. It used to be the name for June, but with reindeer starting to calve already in May, the name was moved accordingly (Mazzullo 2012: 220). The location they choose for calving is usually the same. The calves stay with their mothers about six months if they are not slaughtered or prey to predators. The groups of females and their calves stay in the forest until the growing number of mosquitoes become dangerous for the calves. Thus, to protect the young ones, the animals move to higher grounds, or forest clearings and tundra-like areas, and that is the first time that herders are able to intercept with them. For this reason, mosquitoes are often called the "reindeer herder's helper."

During the time when the reindeer come out of the protection of the forest, in early July, the calves then receive their earmarks, and they are in first contact with humans. The earmarking cannot be done earlier because the young ones would be too small to move out of the forest, and not any later, because the warble fly becomes a nuisance in the second half of July, threatening to disperse the herd and making it impossible for herders to gather them again. Therefore, when the reindeer come out of the forest they are driven towards a corral. Herders and their dogs move around on ATVs, sometimes accompanied by a helicopter. The gathered herd is pushed towards (mostly) permanently erected corrals, the funnel fence. To identify the calves, they have to be separated from their mothers and tagged only to be reunited under the eyes of the reindeer herders who then observe together whose reindeer the calf is following and hence whom it belongs to. Back when herders were following the herd throughout the year, this was not necessary, as every calf would be earmarked

shortly after they were born. After having been earmarked, all animals are released back into the forest for the rest of the summer. All by themselves, the animals move to the summer grounds where there is less vegetation (tundra-like) and the wind ventilates the grazing area, which makes it more difficult for mosquitoes to fly. During the summer and late summer, the animals eat and get fat before the mating season in autumn.

During early winter migration, when the first snow has fallen in Finnish Lapland, the animals gather in bigger herds and start to follow a herd leader, which is usually a larger male or female reindeer with certain skills (such as physical strength, orientation, or social skills). At the top of the herd, several strong animals take turns trampling the snow to create a path; the rest of the herd, and at some point, the herders will follow them. A line of animals forms on that path, including between one hundred and several thousand reindeer. The herders put a bell (nowadays also a GPS collar) around the neck of the animal that has been chosen as a leader by the herd and which used to be a half-tame animal in the past. To identify the leader requires a trained eye, otherwise the bell is put on the wrong animal's neck. A specific path is suggested by the herders to the lead reindeer through the creation of a track that the animals find appealing to walk on. Today, such suggestion is prepared by snowmobile, leaving compressed snow behind. In earlier days, this would be done by skis.

For the separation and slaughtering in late autumn/early winter, herders move several of these larger herds together. Before Finland's accession to the EU, slaughtering would still take place in field slaughterhouses, in the vicinity of corrals, some consisting of beams on the ground and a makeshift roof. Slaughtering animals in freezing conditions in autumn has proven to be safest as bacteria are unable to spread, especially when handling the entrails of the slaughtered animals. Despite their good hygienic record (Vaarala and Korkeala 1999), the field slaughterhouses had to be replaced with plant slaughterhouses to meet EU requirements. For private use, reindeer herders are still allowed to slaughter reindeer in the field, and this practice continues to be an important social event, particularly in connection with intergenerational sharing of traditional knowledge. Around half of the herd is slaughtered each year, and the other half is released back into nature. The herd moves to the winter pasture deep in the forest by itself, or sometimes with the help of the herder. In the forest, the snow is not exposed to the sun and the snow cover does not melt and freeze so easily. The reindeer continues to graze by digging for edible plants under the snow (changing climatic conditions have caused the snow cover to melt and freeze more frequently, making it harder for the reindeer to dig for food under the snow). In late winter (March/April) Sámi reindeer herders have now started to move around and look for weak animals to

provide them with some fodder (hay, artificial feed). Among Finnish reindeer herders, who often keep reindeer as an additional income for their agricultural farms, feeding reindeer is a widely accepted practice. Among Sámi reindeer herders, this is still not considered a viable option, although it is becoming more common. At this point in the year, reindeer survive on their body fat and eat lichen hanging from trees to keep the digestive system going. They are most vulnerable to legally protected predators, such as wolverines, wolves, eagles, and bears.

To summarize this description of the herding cycle, reindeer herder's physical contact with the herd occurs twice a year, during roundups for earmarking in summer and separation/slaughtering in autumn/winter. During other times, animals are mostly observed from a distance, through binoculars, and are approached only if a weak or orphaned reindeer is identified.

While herds can graze freely within a certain area, maximum sizes of herds are set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the conditions of the pastures are closely monitored by scientific staff to prevent overgrazing. The "carrying capacity" for a specific pasture is determined for ten years at a time, from which the maximum herd size for each cooperative is then derived. The issue of overgrazed pastures has been discussed since the end of World War II, when the land had been divided into cooperatives and competing land uses started to have a greater impact on the reindeer herding area. The quality of pastures has severely suffered from intensive forestry, as old-growth forests have almost disappeared. During the cold time of the year, and especially towards the end of the long winter, reindeer feed on lichen, either dug from underneath the snow or stripped from trees. The younger the forest, the less lichen grows. In addition to these limitations, which have led to open conflicts between herders and the Finnish state in the past (Strauss and Mazzullo 2014; Mazzullo 2013; Lawrence and Raitio 2006), reindeer often become prey to protected predators. In order to receive compensation for loss to predators, the herder has to provide evidence that a killing has taken place and hope that the animal is still identifiable (i.e., that the ear is still intact). Since reindeer roam the landscape on their own for most of the year, carcasses are not easily found.

Transitions

In the previous section, the aim was to describe reindeer herding as it is practiced today in Finnish Lapland, in particular among the Indigenous Sámi. The changes this practice has undergone are described extensively

in other publications (e.g. Bjørklund 2013; Dana and Riseth 2011; Forbes 2006; Mazzullo 2010), however a brief overview is necessary to continue discussion.

The first evidence of a transition from hunting to herding reindeer dates back to the seventeenth century (Leem 1767, cited in Mazzullo 2018) when the Sámi started to keep animals not only for draught or as decoys but as a herd. Over the next centuries, the livelihood developed into a nomadic lifestyle where a community of reindeer herders (*siida*, pl. *siidat*) followed their reindeer herd through the landscape. Animals and people lived and stayed together the whole year on their migratory cycle between inland and coastal areas across the Fennoscandian North. The distance covered throughout the year encompassed several hundred kilometers. This practice was interrupted with the consolidation of state borders at the beginning of the nineteenth century when reindeer and herders were no longer allowed to cross into another national territory. Depending on availability of coastal and inland areas, like in Norway, the seasonal routes and routines remained intact for some communities. In addition, the Lapp Codicil, a bilateral agreement between Sweden and Norway allowed for traditional migration between the inland and the coast on Swedish and Norwegian territory (Koch 2013). In Finland, however, practices changed more dramatically as access to the northern coast was cut off. Pastures available within the newly established borders were used to survive these abrupt changes. The range of movement was thereby reduced significantly, yet, herding families continued to live in the communal organization of *siida* and continued to move around with the animal. In its attempt to treat all citizens equally, the Finnish administration ignored the minority's traditional values and aimed at a reorganization of Indigenous reindeer herding society (Lehtola 2015). In 1932, the Reindeer Herding Act was passed by the Finnish Parliament (amended in 1948 and 1990) which enforced a system of clearly delineated cooperatives that incorporated the existing *siidat* but no longer allowed for the previous degree of flexible land use. The *siida* was made redundant and almost obsolete, and by the end of World War II, completely transformed into herding cooperatives. The traditional communal management of pastures had been flexible within the smaller unit of the *siida*, where decision-making was done according to actual needs and availability of resources. If, for instance, a large herd shrunk in numbers due to overgrazing, difficult winters, the spread of diseases, etc., and pastures were becoming available, then other *siidat* would aim to negotiate with the current land user, who did not need those pastures any longer, and agree on its future use. Often, one *siida* would liaise with another through marriage (exogamy). Accordingly, the use of natural resources was based on needs rather than tenure rights,

hence it was dynamic and served the herding community well on these margins of arable land.

Within the newly established, larger herding cooperative, several *siidat* were integrated and headed by a single, democratically appointed herder as determined in the Finnish reindeer herding law, and as a result decision-making became less flexible and more focused on equal opportunity rather than its members' actual needs. In addition, by integrating diverse herding groups together within the same cooperatives, a clash of herding cultures was inevitable, both equally in those cooperatives that included different Sámi groups or Finnish and Sámi reindeer herders. In Finland, unlike in Norway and Sweden, reindeer herding is not an exclusive right to ethnic Sámi, but it can be practiced by all residents of the Finnish Reindeer Herding Area.

With the establishment of nation states, competition for good pastures grew within the area of Finnish Lapland. A greater number of herders was now depending on an increasingly scarce resource within a new, enforced management system. The remedy that reindeer herders came up with was the construction of fences around each *paliskunta* (cooperative) to avoid losing reindeer crossing national borders and to prevent them from moving to other cooperatives' pastures. From there, the reindeer would have to be recovered personally by the owner or otherwise they would have been incorporated into that respective cooperative's stock, slaughtered, and sold as cooperative's common property.

The construction of fences was the vehicle of a major transition in Sámi reindeer herding society. Until the extensive network of wooden structures was erected, herds had to be supervised and guided through the landscape. With the (cooperative's) borders becoming physical obstacles, it was no longer necessary to closely tend the animals. By the time fences were being built, from the 1930s onwards, herding families had settled in winter villages where schools and other facilities had been made available.

With the introduction of snowmobiles in the 1960s, the time that reindeer herders spent on the land was further reduced. Instead of spending several days tracking down the animals, a herder could get an overview where his herd was currently grazing within a single day. The use of helicopters and airplanes as well as GPS collars is a continuation of this development, making the locating of animals even quicker and easier. The use of drones is being considered for this purpose (Länsman and Satokangas 2019).

In much of the literature on innovation in reindeer herding society, the wooden fences do not receive much attention. Probably because they were initially entirely made of wood, and certainly cannot be considered a recent invention. Nevertheless, they allowed a revolution to take place,

fundamentally affecting the relation between herders and their animals. The introduction of snowmobiles, which is normally described in revolutionary terms (Pelto 1973), brought less qualitative change but made the sporadic visit to the herd in the forest more efficient, and has thus to be understood as a merely quantitative development. Another of such important changes among reindeer herder societies has been described by Stammer (2009) in the context of mobile phone use among nomadic Nenets. As Nenets continue to move around with their herds far away from urban facilities and infrastructure, the snowmobile with its high dependency on fuel supply and spare parts makes herders extremely vulnerable, while the recharging of mobile phones requires much less resources and has had a significant impact on the organization of people and herds moving in the open tundra. For similar reasons of low capacity and lack of supporting infrastructures, electric snowmobiles are only in limited use in the tourism sector in Finnish Lapland.

Transhumant Practices in a Ranching Economy

On Finnish territory, Indigenous Sámi practiced a nomadic reindeer herding lifestyle up until World War I. With more and more fences being erected along the herding cooperative's borders, from the 1930s onwards, however, it was no longer necessary to stay with the herd constantly. Around the end of World War II, herding practices changed significantly. Until then, two people with dogs would still be sent to circle around the herd, one of them clockwise, the other one counterclockwise. This was done every few days. Nowadays, the herds are still being supervised, however, this is done increasingly remotely, and with the help of most recent technology. Interaction between reindeer and herders has decreased to a minimum and the herder's relationship to the animals no longer resembles the close nomadic connection that was prevalent one hundred years ago. Herders refrain from "becoming-animal" (Palladino 2018: 123, in reference to Deleuze and Guattari 1987), which is constituted by walking and sleeping with the animals, which has been described as a hard, but emotionally rewarding livelihood. At the same time, such a close connection prevails among the older generation of reindeer herders, and it is believed to be impossible to manage a herd without the ability to "think like a reindeer."

Ingold (1988) describes the transition from nomadism to ranching economy meaning that reindeer never stay in a shelter constructed for them, they are always outside on their own and thus, they are actually wild animals, as their keeping resembles hunting (predatory) practices. If they

find refuge in an inaccessible place, or spread over vast territory, they cannot be managed by people.

For the greater part of every year, the animals see little or nothing of man; some, indeed may avoid human contact for years on end. Unlike the pastoralist, who requires regular access to his herd for subsistence, the rancher need not round up his stock more than twice a year: once for branding calves, and once for selecting animals to be sold for slaughter By allowing his animals the freedom of the range, he not only minimizes the labor costs incurred in their supervision, but also enables them to make optimal use of available pastures. This last factor is of critical importance in a ranch economy where land constitutes a scarce resource, and where the condition of animals is directly reflected in their market value. (Ingold 1988: 238)

Within reindeer ranching economy, the herds are aided to move between different pastures according to the season, and in this sense, Sámi reindeer herders employ transhumant practices. Their home and families remain settled in one place, while the animals move between the same summer and winter pastures on the same route through the years (see Habeck 2006 on transhumance among the Komi reindeer herders; Luick 2008). In regard to altitude, the movement used to be the opposite of transhumance as practiced in mountainous areas in central and southern European areas: the lower grounds at the coast were sought in summer because they are less frequented by mosquitoes, the higher forest grounds were sought in winter as their snow conditions were more stable and they provided shelter from wind chills. With the closing of national borders, for those Sámi herders who remained on Finnish territory, this practice came to a halt and the seasonal cycle is now a movement between forest and open plain/higher ground pastures with only slight differences in altitude (at least when compared to the differences cattle and sheep overcome in, for instance, the Alps and Pyrenees). Because of its rather recent nomadic past, the terminology to describe current practices in the Finnish context is hardly ever connected to the concept of transhumance. Instead, the term semi-nomadism is often used, while transhumance actually appears to be more appropriate to describe the regular transition between open-plain summer and forest winter pastures.

A clear definition of transhumance is difficult as practices are diverse and in constant adaptation to changing environmental and social circumstances (Costello and Svensson 2018). In his work *The Appropriation of Nature* Ingold discusses various modes of movements of peoples and animals. In his view, the term transhumance could be used “in a much wider sense, to denote any movement of people occasioned by the seasonal exploitation of diverse ecological zones” (Ingold 1987: 182). In many definitions of transhumance, however, limited crop cultivation appears as

a means to sustain the livelihood of those living on the margins of arable lands. In a definition delivered by Jones (2005: 358) a transhumant economic system consists of “(1) permanent villages, (2) arable agriculture, and (3) the seasonal movements of livestock.” Transhumant communities have permanent settlements and “the village forms the nucleus of transhumant society” (Johnson 1969: 18–19, cited in Jones 2005: 358). They engage in agricultural activities to complement their livelihood.

While interaction with agriculturalists was common, agricultural activities were not practiced among Sámi reindeer herders. Instead, reindeer herding appeared as an additional form of income to those Finnish farmers who were making their living south of the Upper Lapland region. For them, the movement between pastures is only one way of providing feed, and supplementary feeding is common. As pointed out above, among the Sámi, the additional feeding of reindeer is accepted only in emergencies (*hätäruokinto*), not as a regular practice. In the past, Finnish farmers have borrowed reindeer during winter as draught animals, but at the end of the season, those animals on loan would go back to their original herd and migrate together to the coast. Furthermore, reindeer herders never developed the production of cheeses, though they practiced milking and cheese making on a smaller scale for own consumption considering the little milk reindeer give. A group of intermediaries, called *verdde*, existed, helping to trade products other than dairy between Sámi herders and Finnish farmers. These were mostly farmers settling close to herders and keeping close relations with them, far away from farming villages. In addition, many Sámi reindeer herders used to work as seasonal forest workers with the effect that there was less conflict between forestry and herding during that time. Fundamentally, by being employed, herders had more control over the felling of trees as they were directly involved in the process.

Breeding in reindeer herding has not focused on the development of individual traits. Traditionally, Sámi reindeer herders have put emphasis on the composition of the herd rather than the reproduction of specific traits across the group of animals. A herder put effort to maintain a diverse herd including also “non-productive” animals. These have “particular roles which contribute to the productivity of the herd as a whole” (Tyler et al. 2007: 197). Hence, profit is derived not from the output of a single animal. But just as a diverse landscape with a variety of pastures fulfills different functions in the seasonal adaptation to weather, so do breeding strategies gain their strength from the diverse composition of the herd. The Sámi term *čappa éallu* describes “a beautiful herd” in terms of its composition (Oskal 2000). For instance, in a herd that normally features few males, strong, old female reindeers are important to break the ice to access plants underneath or trample the snow in order to make a path (Tyler et

al. 2007). This would generally not be understood as an “efficient form of breeding,” but it is most appropriate in maintaining and sustaining herding practices in the long term.

How does reindeer herding as it is practiced by the Sámi in Finnish Lapland fit into the discussion of the heritage of transhumance? While it fits the definition of making use of land that cannot be harvested with agricultural techniques (the growing of crops is hardly possible in the southern parts of the reindeer herding region and it is impossible in the northern parts where only berries and mushrooms can be collected from the forest, as well as occasionally riverside grass as fodder), it is far from being a marginal practice. In fact, it is the only viable livelihood within an extensive region. The emergence of transhumant practice in Finland, however, is due to administrative changes, aided by the installation of fences around newly demarcated territories. Thus, the tradition is only about one hundred years old. Previously, herding communities followed a nomadic livelihood with flexible routes and grazing opportunities, covering a larger area and crossing with other herding communities’ routes.

As it is practiced today, reindeer herding is highly dependent on the market economy for living on the land. During times of nomadic livelihood, slaughtering was done for the herders’ own consumption, or to trade meat and hides for tools. With the growing importance of nation states, these increasingly pushed for a modernization and rationalization of reindeer husbandry “to promote sustainable, but maximal, economic yields” (Beach 1997: 123 in reference to the Swedish case), a process that is not yet considered complete in current discourse. In the Finnish context, still in the 1970s, most of the meat was consumed in the area of production, whereas since the turn of the millennium, most is consumed in the Helsinki region (Saarni et al. 2007). After a period of declining profits from meat in the mid-1990s a reappropriation of centralized meat-producing facilities has taken place in the reindeer herding area. The business became more profitable for small enterprises run by Sámi herders by training their own butchers at the Sámi education center in Inari, SAKK, and by avoiding the use of middlemen to sell the product. In the attempt to use all parts of the animal, meat, hides, leather, and also antlers are being turned into profitable products.

Functional items produced from natural material in Sámi handicraft are called *duodji*. The concept describes the process of production, which is taught in and through personal relationships, as well as the different products (Guttorm 2017). The production of handicrafts continues to be an important cultural marker and economic sector, with growing business opportunity in tourist markets. Guttorm (2017: 166) argues that a process of “autonomization” has occurred in the relationship between the item

and the crafter, but in a certain respect, it will always resemble the art of crafting as it was done when items had practical use. For instance, the selection of suitable wood for the making of a reindeer milking bowl requires the *duojár* (the maker of *duodji*) to search the woods for a birch tree with a burl (deformed growth) just like in the old days.

Marketing Reindeer Transhumance in the Tourism Sector

Duodji items as authentic products are rather expensive due to their traditional production methods, and hence mainly affordable to well-off tourists. A small wooden cup made traditionally from birch burls may easily cost EUR 200. For decades, cheap souvenirs, produced elsewhere on industrial scale, have entered the market and since then been contested. Smaller, more affordable items are also produced in Finland, and the Sámi are pondering ways to regain control over the production and sale of souvenirs in Sámi reindeer herding area by, for instance, producing authentic items of lower quality than *duodji* items. Rather than buying a pen that reads “I was in Lapland,” made in China, visitors could buy a locally produced matchbox made from birch wood. The sale of (untreated) antlers directly to tourists is another opportunity.

It has to be stated, however, that most herding routines do not allow for (slow) tourism experience. A growing number of tame reindeer are frequently used in tourism encounters, to stand for pictures in city centers or take tourists for a short sledge ride (but so are husky dogs, which are foreign to Scandinavia). An increasing number of reindeer “farms” in the vicinity of tourist resorts invite visitors, who can experience animals on leashes, or within fenced areas in closer vicinity. The selling of such experience is a lucky opportunity in the sense that weak reindeer which have to be pampered and made fit to be send back to the forest can recover and bring additional income as they are visited by tourists in zoo-like conditions. In some cases, the older generation of herders run the reindeer “farms.” Small enterprises are organized in the association of reindeer farms that coordinates tourist activities and that watches over animal rights to prevent exhaustion.

These zoo-like conditions are seizing the opportunity to let tourists meet reindeer, but it is not the transhumant practice that allows for such an encounter, as it involves too many risks for all participants, humans as much as animals. Any person unfamiliar with the environmental conditions of migrating or rounding up the animals in sub-zero temperatures, or in muddy conditions without any facilities in convenient proximity, would be at risk themselves, and require too much attention from the

herders. Moreover, the uncoordinated movement of people and vehicles within the herding area can easily lead to the dispersal of a herd, or the exhaustion of young reindeer who might die if pushed along a route too quickly. During migration and roundups, a group of herders and their family members work as a team that relies on decades of common experience in the context of centuries-old traditions. It is mostly implicit knowledge that makes a person know when, where, and how to move. Growing up in reindeer herding society lets a herder observe animal needs with a trained eye (Ingold 2000). For these reasons, tourists are welcome at established points of encounters and as consumers of product, but they are considered a disturbance to work routines outside those points. While a very limited number of visitors (explorers, adventurers, scientists) has always managed to find entrance to Sámi herding society by working hard to learn the skills required for such activity, the average, regular visitor today expects comfort and care which reindeer herding cannot offer along the transhumant path. On the contrary, a visit to the real world of reindeer herding may be rather disillusioning, considering the use of modern technology, nontraditional clothing, and the potential killing of animals. This side of the story is underrepresented in (social) media accounts of tourism experiences, which tends to romanticize and gear everything towards a Santa Claus winter wonderland, with Sámi in traditional clothes in silent and peaceful snowy landscape on a sled pulled by reindeer (or huskies).

The numbers of tourists are still rising. An approximately 1.5 million tourists visit Finnish Lapland each year, which is significantly more than the 180,000 inhabitants of Finnish Lapland, and a fourth of Finland's total population (Veijola and Strauss-Mazzullo 2018). Airports are being extended everywhere across Lapland, allowing more tourists to visit remote places regularly. Additional capacities are being installed, and an increasingly greater diversity of activities is offered, serving different ideas, needs, and budgets. With more and more tourists entering and thus appropriating the landscape, conflicts arise. The lakes commonly reserved for local elderly have seen hobby fishers from abroad, and consequently the younger generation of the local population has started to fish, too, in order to prevent the lake from being harvested mainly by foreigners, leaving little fish behind for those elderly who used to fish there. Similar disruption is being experienced from husky safaris crossing reindeer herding area. While routes for snowmobiles are fairly established and indicated, there are no such routes that dictate to the owner of husky sledges where to go. If the dogs get too close to reindeer herds, they leave considerable mess behind, as a herd might disperse completely in the attempt to escape.

It cannot be denied that the income from tourism has been gaining momentum in reindeer herding society among the Sámi of Finnish Up-

per Lapland. For example, over the past five years, the town of Inari has changed significantly. Especially winter is not as it used to be. Previously, the town would be silent and calm in winter, mostly inhabited by locals. More recently, it has been bustling with activity in the coldest time of the year, and only two months of the year have been less frequented. Taking tourists to the forest in winter has a good side. Because of the snow cover, reindeer pastures do not suffer from the impact of vehicles. In addition, silent tourism is being experimented with: snowmobiles equipped with electric motors allow for a less disturbing trip on the land. Due to short battery life however, it is only a niche so far.

During the spring and summer season of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has prevented foreign tourists from entering Finland, and the additional income that many herding families tend to rely on has fallen away, with resuming domestic tourism hardly filling the gap. Regarding the future, it is already clear that mass tourism as Finnish Lapland knew it will not resume in the same way. This means that more fish will be available to local fishermen, but also clearly needed as rising unemployment drives people to rely on subsistence measures.

Reindeer Herding's Symbolic Functions

The contemporary image of Sámi livelihood centers around reindeer herding, however, previously subsistence practices were more diverse, and they continue to be vital for the local economy. Fishing, hunting, and trapping, as well as gathering are at least part of every family's (formerly *siida*) economy, and depending on the availability of resources or the season of the year, one or the other activity can be pursued. Within a family, activities are divided by gender, age, and skill. For instance, among the Sámi there is the common agreement that the lakes near a village are reserved for the elderly, while the younger generation is encouraged to seek places less easily accessible. Independent of their actual importance regarding monetary gain, the Sámi livelihood consisting of reindeer herding, fishing, hunting, and gathering techniques entails nutritious sources, local activity, social encounter, and symbolic practice at the same time.

Thus, on the one hand, Sámi livelihood has been "normalized" towards reindeer herding. On the other hand, most Sámi today live far away from where reindeer roam, as sixty percent of approximately ten thousand ethnic Sámi are living outside their traditional homelands. For them, reindeer herding is no longer a daily routine. Nevertheless, reindeer herding remains an important cultural marker also for the "city Sámi," who often still keep reindeer earmarks even though these have little practical rel-

evance. The connection to reindeer herding livelihood is emblematic in conversations about identity and ethnic belonging, and it has become a powerful attribute. Until more recently, reindeer herding was highly important to sustain Sámi language, because it was the only place where the language was spoken regularly. Currently, concerted efforts are being made to preserve the language, and material and schooling in Sámi language is now available all over Finland. Hence, if herding disappeared, the language would persist without the livelihood.

Among currently active Sámi reindeer herding families, the tendency is to divide the herd among the children, which means that the herds are becoming smaller and smaller (in terms of their legal ownership), with as little as ten or fifteen animals belonging to a person today. For all those who own such a small herd, income from other activities is vital. Tourism often appears as the most opportunistic activity to avoid moving to other places with more employment opportunities, mainly cities or industrial as well as mining towns. Knowing the land and bringing the cultural characteristics of Sámi livelihood to the market is considered a crucial resource, but it also has been claimed that this needs to be protected. Harsh and open criticism is voiced especially towards the use of Indigenous dresses by non-Sámi and the sale of cheap copies of Sámi dresses and handicraft. “Ethical tourism” business also presents an opportunity for those coming back from the city who did not grow up in a reindeer herding community.

Conclusion

Transhumant migration of reindeer herds between summer and winter pastures among the Finnish Sámi is the result of legal restrictions of a former nomadic livelihood where communities of *siida* lived with and followed herds through the land. Considering the emergence of transhumance in the first decades of the twentieth century, we argued, following Ingold (1988) that the practice of reindeer herding resembles a ranching economy and is very much alive and a viable economic sector among Indigenous Sámi in Finnish Lapland today.

In particular, technological changes (e.g., fences, snowmobiles, and GPS collars) have determined the conditions for a transition of reindeer herding from nomadic livelihood to ranching economy requiring contact between herder and the relatively wild herd of animals only during certain times of the year. As such, restricted by natural and bureaucratic limitations, the livelihood has nevertheless resisted attempts to rationalize established practices to an even greater extent. Part of this resistance

is the refusal to provide reindeer with supplementary feed on a regular basis, which would allow herders to have more control over the herds' movements, bringing some independence from climatic variabilities and competing land uses. Rather than submitting to this model practiced regularly by Finnish herders, Sámi herders have fought for the preservation of winter pastures where forestry has had highly destructive effects (Mazzullo and Miggelbrink 2011). While they have not always succeeded with their legal claims and continue to live with the threat of forest clear-cuts on state-owned land that hosts important pastures, they have succeeded in inscribing transhumant reindeer practice into public memory far beyond the domestic context.

In addition, contemporary reindeer herding as it is practiced in Finland has found a promising counterpart in the tourism sector. It is, however, a balancing act between allowing visitors to encounter Sámi reindeer herding society without destroying the natural resources and traditional practices of the very same. In the attempt to protect while not completely avoiding the influx of tourists, it seems viable to continue to work with tourists along certain, restricted paths. The establishment of reindeer farms is an example of allowing visitors to experience animals and landscape without interfering with the transhumant migration cycle, that is, with the rounding up, selecting, slaughtering, and migrating animals. If these limitations can be observed, the traditional livelihood will continue to provide income and consolidate the cultural standing of the Nordic countries' Sámi Indigenous minority.

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