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THE CHANGING ROLE OF SÁMI WOMEN IN REINDEER HERDING  
COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN NORWAY AND THE 1970-1980s WOMEN'S  
RESISTANCE AND REDEFINITION MOVEMENT

By

MARCIE KAYE BREMMER

Bachelor of Arts, University of Montana, Missoula, Montana 2009

Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Masters of Interdisciplinary Studies

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Approved by:

Sandy Ross, Associate Dean of The Graduate School  
Graduate School

Dr. Kathryn Shanley, Chair  
Professor and Special Assistant to the Provost for Native American and Indigenous  
Education

Dr. Len Broberg  
Professor and Director of the Environmental Studies Program

Dr. David Beck  
Professor and Department Chair of Native American Studies

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Abstract Title:

The Changing role of Sámi Women in Reindeer Herding Communities in Northern Norway and the 1970-1980s Women's Resistance and Redefinition Movement

Chairperson:

Dr. Kathryn Shanley, Professor and Special Assistant to the Provost for Native American and Indigenous Education.

Abstract:

Historically, different nations-states at different times have tried to claim authority over the Sámi in the circumpolar north. After the nation state borders were drawn in the 1700s and 1800s, separating Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland, Norway introduced a harsh and 1800s separating Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland, Norway introduced a harsh assimilation policy that lasted over a century. Cultural Darwinist views and national assimilationist legislation and social strategies chipped away at Sámi society and its identity as an indigenous people. Over time Sámi women found their accustomed social, economic, and political autonomy eroded. Post World War II, the emerging welfare state of Norway began a policy of "rationalization" in an attempt to equalize and raise living standards for their citizens. The result was an increase of social and national pressures that called for the Sámi people to conform to the majority society. Social efforts at rebuilding the nation were constructed according to Norwegian political, economic, educational, and cultural norms and the Sámi were feeling increasingly unrepresented. It was at this point, between the end of the war and the later part of 1960s, a kind of Sámi renaissance arose. Through the organization of knowledge, the Sámi opened up new areas of social and political understanding. For women, the formation of cooperation initiated by Elsa Laula-Renberg in 1904 created the atmosphere for Sámi women to begin evaluating their positions and roles in a modernized and advancing society, along with giving women the political and structural tools to address their concerns regarding increasing social and economic inequalities. The 1978 Reindeer Herding Act was dubbed a gender neutral policy; however, because of ambiguities and omissions in the construction of the act, it only continued to perpetuate Sámi women's invisibility as participants in an occupation that was traditionally central to their ethnic identity. In response Sámi women in the 1970s and 1980s began holding seminars and created organizations to address these issues socially and politically.

Key Terms: Sámi, rationalization, women, gender neutral, organization of knowledge.

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## **Introduction**

In the ancient tale of “The Origin of Wild Reindeer,” two sisters, Áhceš-eadni and Náveš-eadni who each owned a female reindeer, but maintained separate dwellings, made their living from milk provided by the reindeer in their care. The reindeer moved freely, returning in the evening and again in the morning to be milked. While grazing one day in the forest, Áhceš-eadni’s reindeer complained that her mistress had treated her unkindly calling her names and scratching her udder with her nails while milking. The reindeer stated right then that she would not go home again and sped off to the warmth of the woods. It was on that day that the tame reindeer was turned wild, according to the myth. Náveš-eadni’s reindeer, though, had never experienced such poor treatment; her human caretaker was kind and used a soft touch when she milked her. Because of the kindness Náveš-eadni’s reindeer had experienced, she felt pity for the woman and chose to stay, perhaps recognizing the human need to live in harmony with animal nature. The decision to stay created what the Sámi know today as the semi-domesticated reindeer (Odd Mathis Haetta, “The Ancient Religion and Folk-Beliefs of the Sámi”). The tale establishes two things that are essential to this research project. First, it shows the reciprocal relationship between humans’ and reindeer. Second, the tale describes the role that women had in founding the human relationship with reindeer.

## **Problem Statement**

Indigenous women are often portrayed as caretakers and custodians of their cultures and traditions. Their responsibilities frequently include ensuring that specific ethnic and traditional information is passed on to future generations. Women who are racial and ethnic minorities participate in all the burdens and joys of modern society that their mainstream women counterparts do, but with increased burdens. Rajkumari

Chandra Roy, <sup>1</sup> a Chakma lawyer from writes “Indigenous women are the most vulnerable among indigenous peoples, and face double discrimination—on the basis of their gender for being women and for their ethnicity for being indigenous. In some parts of the world, there is triple burden to bear as indigenous women are also poor” (Indigenous Women 3). Roy points out that often women who are a racial and ethnic minority along with being economically depressed live in environments that have poor political representation and that offer little in the way of economic and educational opportunities for them and for their children. In this way women have had to cultivate skills, strategies and adaptations to survive various forms of discrimination, violence, marginalization and oppression (Roy 3). “The challenges and barriers may vary from country to country and even community to community, but indigenous women in developing countries...face the same structural imbalances in gender equality as their sisters living in Canada and Norway” (Roy 4). The issues Sámi women face, relative to what Roy describes as the experience of Indigenous women around the world, take on the specificity of region in important ways, perhaps most significantly in relation to their traditional cultural histories and geographies that Norwegianization ideologies have threatened.

In the tale of how semi-domesticated and wild reindeer came to be, the handling of and cooperation between human beings and reindeer implies the consequences between unkind and kind human interaction with other forms of life. The story conveys socially acceptable ways for Sámi individuals to live harmoniously in and with nature.

1. Roy is among those responsible for the creation of an “inter-regional technical cooperation project” aimed at increasing awareness and application of standards with the International Labour Office. Roy has also worked for the ILO and is currently working on international legal issues as an independent consultant emphasizing in gender issues, human rights, discrimination and indigenous peoples (GÁLDU).

The story presents a skill-building strategy that transfers traditional knowledge to the audience. The traditional connectedness between men, women and nature for the Sámi people has undergone many changes in Samiland in the past few decades, resulting in Sámi women having to find ways to redefine alter and adapt their traditional and customary roles to changing environmental, political and social climates over time while still remaining Sámi. In Jorunn Eikjok's "Gender, Essentialism and Feminism in Samiland," she states that these changes have taken the Sami "from a way of life anchored in nature to one featuring modern and diverse lifestyles...A number of decades ago the vast majority of Sami people lived off traditional economies, using what nature provided" (108). In modernity Sámi women in developing and industrialized countries have faced drastic changes from the traditional social and economic roles. Tools and resources that used to be provided by nature were replaced with modernized transportation and more permanent living environments. The Sámi trade and resource-based economy was replaced with an economy that demanded cash. New technologies were expensive and herding was becoming more and more male- oriented. Women were in a position to support the industry by obtaining steady employment. Many women in reindeer herding communities sought higher education in order to be better prepared to address changing conditions (legislation and rules) that applied to reindeer management in order to support the modernization required to stay economically viable. Although cultures change, particularly with the introduction of new technologies, the Sami story involves more complicated race-based issues, and Sami women faced challenges other indigenous women face relative to nation-state domination.

Though Roy does conflate indigeneity with ethnicity in ways that are somewhat



problematic, she nonetheless eloquently addresses the issue of Sámi women being a racial or ethnic minority in an industrialized country. She states, Sámi women like other “indigenous women have been forced to develop skills and strategies for survival—for themselves, their peoples and their cultures...yet often their contribution to the struggle of indigenous peoples is not recognized or acknowledged” (3). The subject of discrimination based on race or ethnicity is far-reaching and controversial; however, the experience of people enduring various forms of biases such as verbal, emotional and even physical abuses are vividly real. For women, these occurrences can be “two-pronged” occurring inside and outside of their own societies (Roy 6). In the case of Sámi women, the entrenchment of Eurocentric ideology forced many women to make adaptations to their cultural identity. Veli-Pekka Lehtola, author of The Sámi People Traditions in Transition, is an Anár Sámi who received his Doctorate in Literature Studies from the University of Oulu, Finland; he contends that, over time, the accumulation of forced assimilation and active interrogation policies, along with education and language strategies that favored the dominant society, resulted in Sámi men and women being quite often alienated from their own ethnic backgrounds (52, 57). The alienation of Sámi women from their traditional roles as culture-bearers comes together poignantly in an examination of reindeer herding. The focus of this study is on the political and social environment that led to the Sámi women’s resistance and redefinition movement of the 1970s and 1980s. I argue that the intersections between and among three things led to Sámi women’s seizing of their own political agency in an effort to reclaim what had nearly been lost to them: changes in post-World War II Norwegian social awareness, global racial/ethnic minority and feminist rebellions, and environmental activism. As

within other racial /ethnic solidarity movements against colonialism, the Sámi revitalization movement also involved an internal awakening of Sámi women's consciousness resulting in an intragroup gender movement. Given that indigenous lifestyles of the past are nearly impossible to recover, revitalization such as we see among Sámi women of necessity involves redefinition of themselves. In other words, remaining Sámi along with adapting to a changing social, political, economic and environmental world was the goal of this extraordinary Sámi women's movement.

Sámi women's issues have only recently been given a place in academic discourse, and no research to date pulls together the multiple historical forces that came to bear on Sámi women. With a primary focus on Sámi women who reside in northern Norway, living and/or working in reindeer herding communities, I situate Sami women's changing roles in reindeer husbandry within a historical and cultural nexus of events.

### **Methods, Approaches and Sources**

This inquiry incorporated both qualitative and ethnographic methodologies. The feminist gender perspectives originate mostly from Sámi feminist texts. A post-colonial theoretical framework was used to address the social and political atmosphere present in Norway after World War II. Though this term connotes the end of colonialism, the theoretical concept does incorporate "neo-colonialism."<sup>2</sup> The post-/neocolonial

2. Peter Childs and R. J. Patrick Williams suggest in "An Introduction to Post-colonial Theory" that neocolonialism is the process of ongoing colonizing behaviors by nation states to ensure that profits from resource extractions in previously colonized environments are not reduced. Post-colonial processes give support to the idea that colonialism is over. However, this is an unrealized perception for many indigenous populations as the global world market finds ways to gain the support of nations which were former colonies for reasons of corporate profitability. With their main objective to make profits through the extraction of local resources and low wage jobs (Childs and Williams 5-7). Some post-colonial academics argue that the term in-and-of-itself is "contentious because it is multifaceted and loosely used, is often used as a synonym for contemporary forms of imperialism, and in a polemical way is used in reaction to any unjust and oppressive expression of Western political power....Hence while formal methods of control like the implementation of administrative structures, the stationing of military forces, and most importantly the incorporation of the natives as subjects of the metropolitan government, neocolonialism suggests an indirect form of control through economic and cultural dependence" (Yew).

theoretical approach allows for the conclusion that power relations globally historically and in modernity are still influenced by colonial processes (Childs & Williams 1-5). Because post-colonial theoretical processes allow for the examination of “neo-colonial” political and social attitudes, the theoretical framework is a necessary component for understanding the processes behind the “reconstruction” period in Norway and the effects these policies had on women in Sámi reindeer communities politically, socially, culturally and economically after World War II. Rauna Kuokkanen argues in her essay, “Myths and Realities of Sami Women: A Postcolonial Feminist Analysis for the Decolonization and Transformation of Sami Society,” that using a post-colonial feminist approach and a feminist analysis as a critique of hegemonic relations that are associated with imperialism, patriarchy and colonialism “helps” to identify the more subtle influences and changes that occurred during the active colonization and assimilation period in the gender relationships of the Sámi (Myths 83-85). Post-colonial feminist criticism can also be effective when discovering various roles women have had in Sámi society that have been underreported, overlooked or excluded (even by Sámi male writers) in the histories (Kuokkanen, Myths 83-85). She goes further to state that in Sámi society it,

would be misleading and naïve to seriously believe that... Sami gender relations have remained entirely unaffected through the centuries-long colonizing process that changed every other aspect...of our people. One only has to look around to see the results of the colonial process, contemporary Sámi life hardly differs from that of mainstream Nordic societies....In such circumstances, it is peculiar indeed that...there has not been a systematic analysis of colonial processes...including

assimilation policies, racism, marginalization and erasure of our epistemic foundation and value system...Feminist critique may assist us to expose not only the patriarchal, hierarchal structures of our governing bodies and models but also the (perhaps unconsciously) internalization of hegemony, which prevents us from achieving a meaningful self-determination.

(Kuokkanen, Myths 84)

The intricacies of interplay between gender constructions, representations and other forces can best be understood, in other words, through feminist critique. By asserting that “Sami life hardly differs from...mainstream Nordic societies,” Kuokkanen implies that studying the erasure might reveal a lot about Norwegian society and history. How researchers categorize different aspects of gender can also influence racial and ethnic minority opportunities both socially and economically along with public opinions.

Einar Niemi states, in “National Minorities and Minority Policy in Norway,” that, “Categorizing is a matter of definition, to a great extent, and in the exercise of definition lays an exercise of power” (398). There are many examples in Norwegian history that show the variety of ways researchers have used different modes of classification to influence public and political viewpoints in regard to ethnic identity, both for the good and ill of those being classified (Niemi 397). Defining “primordial” and “instrumental” theoretical approaches illuminates how different scholars used theory and interpreted data during different time periods. In a Spring 2010 lecture at the University of Tromsø which I attended by Lars Ivar Hansen called, “Ethnicity – identity – culture: Theoretical approaches and analytical tools,” Hansen provided an explanation of the history scholarly frameworks used throughout Sami history. Hansen is a Professor in the Department of

History and Religious Studies at the University of Tromsø in Tromsø, Norway,. Professor James Lett, anthropologist, scholarly author and recipient of several teaching and writing awards of Indian River State, presented a paper on “Emic/Etic Distinctions,.” Combining these two academics’ ideas with the views of Sian Jones in The Archeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present ties together the concepts and viewpoints offered by both Hansen and Lett to provide a clearer understanding of how these two approaches, used at various historical times, independently and in combination affected political and social concepts and legislation that negatively and positively impacted racial and ethnic minority populations.<sup>3</sup> Organization develops through social experiences and interaction, self-description, and self-categorization in relationship to each other. These contacts sometimes result in certain cultural features being accentuated or changed in varying degrees. This occurs through the social, cultural, and/or economic needs and desires of the cultural community at the time (Hansen). Sámi women like other women who are considered by the dominant culture to be racial and ethnic minorities, also developed characteristics that assisted them in participating and creating a livelihood in the dominant culture in which they reside.

Sami women’s traditional roles have changed over time, due to assimilation and

3. The “primordial” perspective begins with an “objectivist” viewpoint, which maintains an “etic perspective.” The objectivist definition presumes that ethnic groups can be described precisely consisting of cultural complexes that are reliable, standardized, and uninterrupted units and have elevated levels of internal constancy that demonstrate group unity and stability. Unity and stability must be able to be measured over time, and be studied as separate isolated entities. The description of ethnicity also includes fixed selections of linguistic and cultural identifiers (Hansen). The “instrumental” perspective relies primarily on a subjectivist approach when aspects of relational or behavioral aspects are accentuated. This theoretical model uses an “emic perspective which focuses on the intrinsic cultural distinctions that are meaningful to the members of a given society” (Lett) and views “ethnic groups as culturally constructed categorizations that inform social interaction and behavior...and define ethnic groups on the basis of the subjective self-categorization of the people being studied” (Jones 57). This approach in the straightforward sense appeared during the 1960s and 1970s. The subjectivist approach as defined is a way of organizing human groups. Organization develops through social experiences and interaction, self-description, and self-categorization in relationship to each other. These contacts sometimes result in certain cultural features being accentuated or changed in varying degrees. This occurs through the social, cultural, and/or economic needs and desires of the cultural community at the time (Hansen).

integration policies along with forced Christianization and language suppression, evidence that will be better expressed in the body of the research. The historical review provided the foundation for comparison between women's traditional cultural roles and the colonizing pressures that forced changes in gender equality amongst the Sámi before World War II. National policies, slowly implemented over time are shown in this thesis to have provided the conditions for Sámi men and women post--World War II to begin questioning their roles as individuals and as citizens of Norway—to question their ethnic identities, culturally and individually.

The research compiled qualitative data through both primary and secondary sources from the Tromsø University Museum (the facility has an extensive Sámi educational center) and from lectures I attended at the University of Tromsø. Literature reviews for this work were restricted to English because of my language limitations. Writings that have been written in Norwegian or Sámi were accessed through reviewing summaries in English. While this approach to addressing the language limitations I face when considering information gathered in Sámi or Norwegian is not ideal, it did nonetheless provide a degree of understanding. Summary information was used as a starting point to research and was not used as a verifiable form of data collection for this thesis. Quantitative data was gathered for this research from existing public reports, annual reindeer herding reports, herding authorities and organizations such as the Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry Administration (a resource that provides yearly reports on reindeer ownership) and other primary sources. Due to my language limitations, all quantitative and qualitative data and documents accessed were what in English. Because of the nature of this study it was also necessary to look at and explore geographical areas outside of the research perimeters. This was done in order to establish important

references and inclusions of important Sámi women's participation and contributions in the 1970s-80s feminist resistance and redefinition movement.

***Interviews:***

I conducted two successful interviews during my field work, one of which was conducted through e-mail. Each of my informants provided valuable and important insight into the lives of Sami women. These interviews came about through established connections I had made during my year in the Indigenous Studies Program at the University of Tromsø as an exchange student from the University of Montana. My original intent for doing my fieldwork during late June early July was to attend the Riddu-Riddu. I was informed that this Sami international festival was a time that many Sami people, particularly from reindeer herding communities, gather to celebrate. My hope was to arrange interviews with women who were active in reindeer herding and management. However, as with many well-intended plans, my objectives were to be put on hold due to the most horrendous national tragedy experienced by Norway since World War II. A lone gunman committed acts of terror when he exploded a bomb in Oslo and then proceeded to kill vacationing children at a labor party youth camp.

During the aftermath of that tragic event the festival operations at Riddu-Riddu adapted to the needs and the welfare of the community they were serving. And within just a few hours they had established communication lines and crisis support for their festival guests. In a show of solidarity, they cancelled all events the next morning to honor the lives that were lost and grieve with the survivors.

Despite not being able to interview as many women as I would have like, through the interviews I obtained, I was able to gain valuable ethnographic information. The e-mail interview was structured around a set of questions.

1. Growing up as a female in a reindeer herding family, what was the most significant change to traditional roles of women in reindeer husbandry under the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act, and how did women adapt to the new regulations?
2. What is the procedure to obtain an earmark, and at what age does a person gain the right to mark their reindeer?
3. Is there any issue in relationship to Sámi women living and/or working in reindeer herding communities that you feel is important?

The personal interview was informal and was taped to ensure accuracy.

### ***Ethical considerations***

Ethical considerations related to any research study dealing with and involving humans, sentient beings are as important as the research itself. This study ensured that the welfare and safety of all participants were given the utmost consideration. Because this study acquired individual interviews, particular safeguards were met to ensure that participants were fully aware and informed concerning the purpose of my research. I followed all rules of ethical behavior, along with cultural expectations to the best of my ability. In 2003, Jim McDonald and Amanda Graham<sup>4</sup> put forth a guide for

4. The ethical principles outlined by Amanda Graham and Jim McDonald in Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North were done in partnership with north and researchers. The principles are summarized as follows: 1. researchers should respect all local and national laws where they will be studying. 2. Community consultation should be sought out. 3. Researcher should respect communities, language and conduct themselves with highest scholarly research principles. 4. Respect of privacy and dignity of the people and familiarize yourself with the local traditions and cultures of the communities. 5. Respect the knowledge of the people. 6. Where practical, enhance local benefits that could result from research. 7. Person in charge is responsible for everything. 8-14. Informed consent is a must, participants have the right to know sponsors, purpose, investigators responsibilities and financial support. Participants must sign a consent form and be informed of all risks and benefits. Interviewee has the right to refuse and to a translator. 15. Explanations of research methods, findings and objectives should be made available to the community. 16. Confidentiality, descriptions of the data and data storage should be filed with the community and locally stored.. 17. Research summaries should be available in the local language. 18. Research material published should refer to the informed consent and community participation as needed. 19. Credit should be given to all persons involved. 20. The potential for contributing to research knowledge does not take precedence over the total welfare of the individual, group, community or environment you are researching (Graham and McDonald 5-7).



research and ethics in the North (5-7). The guide offered 20 principle guidelines that I found very helpful the guide was developed for doing research specifically in the north, much as Native Americans might offer guides for doing research on reservations. Thus, the strategies outlined I found very useful for this study.

### ***Literature Review***

Sámi women's issues have only recently been given a place in academic discourse, and "women's studies programs are lacking in academic settings" (Andrews 3). Much of the historical literature dealing with the participation and contributions of Sámi women in reindeer societies, portrays women in traditional domestic gender-roles and often presents women as caretakers rather than equal partners in community—a view that needs correcting. In Sámi society women have historically held and do contemporarily hold a primary responsibility for raising and educating children. The socialization of children in Sámi society in times gone by was based on traditions and collective responsibilities that were directly related to nature and the people's survival. The literature shows that women historically played a major role in practical education and community socialization (Andrews 3; Brenna).

The contribution that women have made in the transference of knowledge to present generations allowed the Sámi reindeer herding people of Northern Norway (and also in Sweden, Finland and western Russia) to maintain many aspects of their culture and social order. The postcolonial criticism and theory have increased and opened speculation into historical possibilities. Rauna Kuokkanen points out in "Sámi Women, Autonomy, and Decolonization in the Age of Globalization" that in Nordic countries there is a "shortage of postcolonial analysis of colonialism in Sapmi and research

considering the effects of the colonial legacy on Sámi society” (Sámi 2). In her analysis of the “official” discourse suggests that the data gathered does not address the subtle and pervasive forms of active colonization. Nor does it address the “epistemic violence” or in lay terms, knowledge destruction that can occur when an “other’s” cultural perspective is involuntarily thrust upon a racial or ethnic minority. This often includes a forced identity and an oppositional world view (Kuokkanen, Sámi 2). By contrast, the literature also argues that the roles of women in Sámi society both historically and in modernity were not limited to educating and raising children, but were active and involved in all aspects of Sámi political, social and economic life. Rauna Kuokkanen states in “Sami Women: Upholding Cultural Traditions or Joining the Mainstream” that “Sami women have historically held a form of equality with men that has been characterized by complementary roles and tasks” (Kuokkanen, Sami Women 8).

Kuokkanen maintains that Sámi women held control over certain domestic domains and retained their own personal property and land. Economically women and men inherited and financed loans independent of one another and upon a husband’s death the widow returned to her family with her personal property. Many of these traditions and customary practices changed, especially during the 1950s as traditions were replaced with more practical economies and modernized technologies in Sámi society (Kuokkanen, Sami Women 8). As a tool in this research, postcolonial feminist analysis of patriarchal hegemony was functional, in “the critical analysis and deconstruction of colonial discourses, practices and relations of power, and it does not suggest that colonialism belongs to the past” (Kuokkanen, Myth 73). This theory became a useful instrument in critically evaluating space/time while also deconstructing the political,

social, and economic conditions pre-World War II allowing for some comparison that assisted in clarifying particular pressures socially, economically, politically, and environmentally between the years 1945 and 1970s that led to women in the 1970s and '80s to take their concerns to the national and international stage. Else Grete Broderstad's work is a comprehensive view of Sámi politics and nation state influences on Sámi ethnicity and ethnic identity formation in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Her work was invaluable in deciphering the changes in not only the politics during this time in history, but the social need of the Sámi during this time period to reclaim their own identity as an ethnic minority and as Norwegian Citizens. Veli-Pekka Lehtola's book The Sámi People Traditions in Transition serves as a valuable source of historical information, but also provides the foundation that produced ideas for investigative research for this study.

### **Who are the Sámi?**

The Sámi are an ethnic minority/indigenous people who have their own languages and cultures that are somewhat unique to each Sámi group's geographic location and economic trade and resource environment. The Sámi are also "the only ethnic group in the European Union to be recognized as an aboriginal people" (Lehtola 9). In Sweden, Finland, and Norway the definition of a Sámi is "a person of Sámi origin who feels oneself to be Sámi and who either has Sámi as their first language or has at least one parent or grandparent who had Sámi as their first language" (10). The Sámi living within the borders of Russia are defined by self-ascription with an emphasis on a relationship with the Sámi language, a feeling of "Saminess" and a sense of cultural unity (Lehtola 10). The Sámi Malgosia Fitzmaurice in "The New Developments Regarding the Saami

Peoples of the North” and Thomas Hylland Eriksen in Ethnicity and Nationalism Anthropologic Perspectives, agree that Sámi identity is defined by “linguistic, historical and cultural identities” (Fitzmaurice 80; Eriksen 77).

In his important essay, “Law and Aboriginal Reindeer Herding in Sami Norway,” Bjarne Melkevik, speaks from a legal perspective when he writes, “the system lies in the legal monopoly granted to Sami descendants only. This is an ethnic right, the ethnicity of which is more linked to a cultural fact than to a ‘racial’ fact” (Melkevik 2). Because the Sámi are really one people who reside in four nations and had contact with each other, many of the traditional and customary practices between Sámi groups were similar before colonization. Christianization and territorial controls began to change Sami life. The name Sámi (*sápmelaš*) is a relatively new cultural description beginning to appear in the 1900s. This ethnic description suggests the Sámi identify as a separate culture, different from the dominant society they live. The word “Sámi” was self-designated by the Sámi people to replace the term “Lapp.”<sup>5</sup> The Sámi have chosen to reject this word, feeling it is an archaic and even offensive term since its nature is descriptive, and the label was applied to the Sámi by outsiders (Lehtola 11).

The Sámi people traditionally occupied *Sápmi* (Sámiland) a territory that historically was “600,000-700,000 square kilometers, ranging from the central Scandinavian mountains to the Kola Peninsula and from Lake Ladoga to the Arctic Ocean” (Seurujärvi-Kari et al. 10). The territory today has been reduced to about 30,000-40,000 square kilometers and borders’ four countries Finland, Russia, Sweden and

5. Historically, the term “Lapp” was used for the Sámi, This term, beginning around the 12th century, was used to allocate between economic activities. The ‘Lappish’ economies historically were assigned to those persons who made their living by “...fishing, hunting and later reindeer herding-in an area that they permanently owned and for which they paid property tax to the State”, and also applied to those living on the fringe of civilized society, who did not farm and were considered to be uncivilized (Lehtola 2004:10).

Norway (Seurujärvi-Kari et al. 8, 10).

Lehtola states that the estimated population of the Sámi varies depending on “how they are counted” (11-12) and range between 60,000 to 100,000 collectively, with some believing it is higher. Bjørg Evjen, in her essay “Research on and by ‘the Other’ Focusing on the Researcher’s Encounter with the Lule Sámi in a Historically Changing Context,” explains that there are, “three official groups of Sámi...Northern, Lule, and Southern Sámi. In addition, we find several ‘unofficial’ terms in use reflecting divisions, either through their way of living or their geographical belonging, such as reindeer-herding Sami and Sea Sami” (Evjen 176). Norway maintains the largest populations of Sámi reindeer herders and is also home to a group known as the Coastal Sámi (also referred to as the Sea Sámi) with a population of around 40 to 50,000 respectively (Lehtola 11-12). Under half are located in Finnmark. In Norway the largest populations of Sámi are the Coastal Sámi who resides on the shore line of the Arctic Ocean. Reindeer herding is only a small part of their economic viability. Their language “is one of the dialects of North Sámi” (Lehtola 12). There are also four groups of Sámi in Finland, the oldest being in Lake Aanaar (Anár). The Lake Aanaar (Anár) Sámi has a mixed economy of small scale farming and fresh water fishing. The Deatnu Sámi has similar lifestyles but included reindeer as a supplemental resource. Today, many of the Deatnu Sámi own farmsteads and are making a living by raising cattle or sheep and through dairy agriculture. There is also a small population of Skolt Sámi living in the territory known as Sápmi who were relocated and resettled to the interior of the Kola Peninsula in Russia (Lehtola 12,66).

Else Grete Broderstad, in “Saami Identity in Cultural and Political Communities,” a Working Paper for The Research Council of Norway suggests that because Sámi communities are only located in a small number of regions, it is reasonable to consider the idea that the communities formed both a social and political body. For the most part these groups shared a common dialect, historical background, and handicraft traditions (3). Broderstad states that differences in vernacular, however, did occur within the different Sámi groups, an example of which can be seen in the language differences found between north and the south Sámi (3). However, Lehtola points out that even though differences in languages were so great that speakers of different Sámi groups could not understand one another, “it is still possible to recognize the original base of the languages through their common structure, for instance in the similarities of place names throughout Sapmi” (11).

The Sámi language is of the Finno-Ugrain language family; this means that the language of the Sámi is related to the Finnish language. It is believed that the Sámi and the early Finns spoke a common language three or four hundred years ago but as cultures developed linguistic differences occurred. The two groups took on different “livelihoods” along with moving to different geographical locations, resulting in the development of different ethnic characteristics. The difference in environment, isolation, economy and outside influences constitutes some explanation for the differences in language development. The Sámi language borrowed words from other ethnic cultures such as Germanic, Russian, Baltic, Scandinavian and the Finnish. Subsequently, differences became so great between some vernaculars that speakers of the different Sámi dialects could not understand one another (Lehtola 11-12). As of 2004, around 50,000

speakers of the Sámi language were represented, with the greatest number of individuals speaking North Sámi. There are ten Sámi languages, separated into two groups; eastern and western. The eastern group consists of the Ter, Skolt, Aanaar, Akkala and Kildin Sámi. The western language group consists of the Ume, South, North, Lule, and Pite Sámi. The tenth Sámi language is the Áhkkil and is “no longer a living language” (Lehtola 10-12). The importance of language to the Sámi is stated persuasively by Lehtola as,

not just a means of communicating information, it also contains the central cultural elements of a people...Expressions are developed as ...needed, especially in areas...important. Each language has its own particular fields with especially rich vocabularies. In Sámi these have to do with nature and reindeer. T.I. Itkonen listed over 500 expressions relating to reindeer in his catalogue of vocabulary...The Sámi language is also particularly precise for describing the qualities of natural phenomena and places.

(14)

Language is a central element of any people. In regards to the Sámi people in reindeer herding communities, traditional knowledge gained through experience and cultural evaluations are encapsulated within the language. Many of the phrases and words developed by the Sámi have been specifically developed to define specific characteristics and happenings. The language is descriptive with characteristics built in that identify particular weather events, snow conditions and specific environmental landscape and changes in geographical regions and a variety of very specific reindeer traits and characteristics (Lehtola 88).

The Sámi never formed any kind of governmental body that would fulfill the European concept of a state. But, from ancient times, the Sámi people in reindeer herding communities had organized themselves politically, socially and economically into independent extended family systems known as “*siidas* or Sámi villages.” The *siida* was the foundation for the administrative and economic systems and considered in prehistoric times to be the “highest level of Sámi social organization” (Seurujärvi-Kari et.al 10). Reetta Toivanen (Åbo) “The Development of Sami Civil Societies” explains that historically the *siida* was a unique collective organization in Lapland structured around the Sámi villages. For the most part, each *siida* operated independently from one another. In a modern sense the village would be considered the landowners and the *siida* the governing body that made decisions concerning land use along with fishing and hunting access. The *siida* was designed to work in partnership with the members of the village. The *siida* was the governing structure that decided who and where a person in the village could hunt and fish and whether there was space within the *siida* to support newcomers (132).

The Sámi throughout their history have tailored and developed a variety of cultural and traditional methodologies to assist in managing and coping with the unique geographic and extreme environment they call home. The Sámi historically and in modernity have created unique and successful livelihoods by making use of the environment and resources available to them and through the development of specific economic niches (Lehtola 12, 66). However, most notably, within the Sámi two different kinds of traditional ways of making a living and feeding a family emerge. There were those that made the bulk of their living from herding reindeer and those that supported



themselves by fishing and trading. The two economic practices differed profoundly. The depiction of traditional Sámi way of life today has been simplified and often only represents the lives of reindeer herders (Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry Administration 20; Toivanen 132). “Thus, there is a set of markers considered as ‘the tradition,’ a kind of canon portrays the Sámi in a peculiar way—homogenizing, unifying, and ethicizing them—and leaves no space for controversies, ambiguities, or negotiations” (Toivanen 132).

Kuokkanen agrees with Toivanen and continues the discussion by pointing out that, traditionally various *siidas* functioned as mediators, holding hearings, addressing disputes over territory, creating husbandry and resource use guidelines, along with addressing local disagreements. She goes further to state that the administrative system known as “*siida*” created by the Sámi was an early model of self-determination and was a system gradually erased and ignored by colonizing states (Indigenous 499). The reindeer herding industry today is under the control of the public through the royal Ministry of Agriculture and the Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry Board (Ulvevadet 113).

Modern reindeer husbandry, according to the *International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry* (ICR), is conducted in nine countries: Norway, Finland, Sweden, Russia, Greenland, Alaska, Mongolia, China and Canada with a small herd also maintained in Scotland. There are about thirty reindeer herding peoples in the world and 3.4 million semi-domesticated reindeer. The intimate connection between humans and animals is perhaps best embodied by this relationship as reindeer husbandry represents a connection ancient in origin and practiced almost identically wherever it is found (ICR 2012).

Johnny-Leo L. Jernsletten and Konstantin Klovov note in “Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry” that because of the complexities of herding a semi-domesticated mammal such as reindeer, important aspects of knowledge are needed to produce and then in turn manage a successful herding operation. Herders, both men and women, must know their animals through their color and their behavior. Highly valued characteristics such as a variation in color and a proportional amount of male to female ratio must be maintained. The family is essential to the herder, because the family unites as the work force in the intensive periods of reindeer management. Such periods are slaughtering, marking calves and the reducing herd sizes into smaller units (Jernsletten and Klovov 20). Community-based activities such as hunting and herding are rural activities. It is reasonable to assume that reindeer herders of the circumpolar north fit well within the framework of what is considered to be “rural” living. Historically, the Sámi had control over their own land and institutions that monitored resource and cultural activities. Subsistence-based economies were and still are an important aspect of maintaining ethnic identity (Ulvevadet 15).

In Norway, approximately 140,000-146,000 square kilometers, around 40 percent of all surface area is “use” allowed for reindeer husbandry in the counties of Hedmark, Troms, North-Tøndelag, Nordland, and Finnmark, with Finnmark holding the heaviest concentration of reindeer and herders. This area of designated land provides grazing for over 200,000 to 240,000 reindeer respectively. The grazing land is varied and complex with different environments being used at different times for specific reasons (Brenna; EinarsbÅ, Reindeer 1; Eira, et al 20; Jernsletten and Klovov 85; Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry Administration 20; Strøm Bull 223; Ulvevadet 113). On a National scale

economically, the industry contributions are minor; however, on a local level, it is important both culturally and financially.

Birgitte Ulvevadet explains, in “Family-Based Reindeer Herding and Hunting Economies, and the Status and Management of Wild Reindeer/Caribou Population” that reindeer husbandry has a long tradition and can be comfortably dated back to around the 1500s to the 1600s although; there are some academics that suggest the industry is much older” (15). There are approximately 2700 to 3000 Sámi who identify their main or part-time occupation as reindeer husbandry. The right to herd reindeer is for the most part a “Sámi only right” in Norway within the designated reindeer pastures and grazing areas (Jernsletten and Klovov 85; Ulvevadet 113; EinarsbÃ Reindeer 1). In 2004, Ulvevadet reported that women only represented seventeen percent of the husbandry units and up to 83 percent of women participating in the industry were registered under their husbands units (124). In Norway, although the Sámi maintain a majority in the herding industry there is an exception to the Sámi only rule, and that exception is limited to the “Concession Area.” These environments support around 10,000 to 12,000 animals owned and managed by both Sámi and Norwegians and is located outside of the designated reindeer pasture areas (Jernsletten and Klovov 85; Ulvevadet 113).

The Sámi historically and in modernity have found multiple ways to adapt and create economic opportunities in continually changing social, political and ecological environments. In history, reindeer herding communities have had the opportunity to trade reindeer meat, bone work, and hides for needed goods and taxes. However, with the reconstruction period which began after World War II came a predominantly cash-based economy. The change in the source of trade forced the Sámi in reindeer economies

to make monetary adaptations over time, in order to function in the dominant economic structure. The capital form of monetary exchange not only transformed a barter and trade economy to the cash and credit economy operating in industrialized first world countries today. But it also changed the social structure of Sámi society as worth was no longer in relationship to how many reindeer an individual owned. For many Sámi families the cash economy also promoted the need for income gained outside of the industry, a role often filled by women (Ulvevadet 117,119-122).

Changes in herding practices and technological advances in transportation altered customary practices of both men and women. Many women in Sámi communities have taken advantage of the welfare state's academic and professional skills training and have actively sought higher educational opportunities with the intent of supporting the industry in a different but needed way. Ulvevadet states; "The job outside of the reindeer herding industry gives the women a chance to be part of a different society, which the herding industry is dependent on and from which it cannot be separated" (120).

### **Traditional Gender Roles in Reindeer Herding Communities Pre-Christianization**

Historically, the gender roles of Sámi groups in northern Norway maintained culturally specific tasks that applied to both men and women. Religious and customary practices built into Sámi societies prior to Christianization and Euro-centered economic policies, allowed for specific male and female roles to develop while also supporting individual and community activities that allowed for integration. Both men and women were responsible for passing on traditional and customary information to their children. Roy points out that traditionally, "In Saami Society, men and women have, each in their own way, been bearers of culture, though women carried the greater share because they had the responsibility for raising the next generation" (7).

Sámi women like other women in indigenous societies around the world were historically deemed different but equal in importance to men with roles that complemented customary expectations and traditional gender norms (Kuokkanen, Indigenous 500; Rydving 144-145). Customarily, Sámi men held the domain outside of the household. Women were considered independent and had control and authority over a variety of family responsibilities. In the case of reindeer herding women, they also often took on the responsibility of their families' economic welfare and over certain aspects of both private and domestic domains. Within the home, it was not uncommon for women to be in charge of managing the family income (Kuokkanen, Indigenous 500).

Dr. Håkan Rydving in The End of Drum-Time argues that traditionally Sámi society had clear distinctions in socially acceptable gender responsibilities. Men, fished, hunted, made baskets, skis, and sledges along with guarding the families' reindeer. Men also, traditionally, did the cooking. Women made clothing, shoes and harnesses for reindeer. Women were responsible for bringing up children, milking reindeer, and making cheese, as well as scrubbing the utensils after meals. Women historically only hunted and/or fished in times of necessity or during journeys and did not suffer any social stigma because of their participation. Traditionally the culture was structured for women to be responsible for maintaining tasks that spread out over the whole year. Men assumed tasks that responded to nature's yearly cycles, but the demands of these tasks were not bound as tightly to the cycle of the seasons as resources in the circumpolar north are only available at specific time in the year. Harvesting and gathering were considered during this period of time a women's responsibility. This allowed for men to have longer gaps of inactivity. Men often used this time to conduct craft activities such as reindeer

bone-handled knives and baskets. This time was also spent in repairing equipment among many other things (144-145). Rydving asserts that in regard to social roles and the space given culturally to each sex men were found to occupy a wider environment and increased social connections outside of the village. A man's world allowed him access to "all areas (sg. *duobdá*) used for hunting, fishing and reindeer herding" (145). For women historically in these societies, their world revolved within the social and domestic framework of home (*goahte*) and community (Rydving 145).

Social networking and economic arrangements were often tended by the women in the community. In the past and even today, women's social networking is an important part of maintaining alliances and economic partnerships it was also a way to stay connected with one another. According to one Sami feminist, because women and men had balanced yet in different areas of responsibility inside and outside the immediate household "...Sami women were independent and possessed power and control over certain domains" (Kuokkanen, Myth 74). The Sámi also pre-Christianization, had an active and complex nature-based world view where gender roles were also defined and where a variety of Gods and Goddesses <sup>6</sup> guided both men and women in daily activities.

For women the most important were the Primeval Mother or Mother Goddess, *Máttaráhkká* Mother of Creation, along with her three daughters, *Sáráhkká*, *Uksáhkká* and *Juoksáhkká*. The Goddesses assisted Sámi women at various times in life.

Women made daily offerings of water and food in the fireplace (*árran*) to the Mother Goddess. The Goddesses assisted women in a variety of ways. The Door Goddess, *Uksáhkká*, assisted women during their menstrual cycle and guarded the dwelling entrances both

6. Goddess in this research refers to a female supernatural being that has some form of controlling power over the seen and the unseen and is personified and worshipped.

Goddess to ensure the fertility and assistance in birth for both women and animals. front and back, her place of dwelling was under the door (*uksa*). *Juoksáhkká*, the Bow Goddess lent her skills of the bow to male children and also was responsible for their safety (Andrews 1-2; Solbakk 33). The presence of female deities interwoven into the old belief system does provide some support to Sarah Andrew's suggestion that "Sámi society once tended to be matriarchal" (Andrews 1-2). However, more research and investigation focused on this topic is needed before any real conclusion can be made, if indeed the term "matriarchal" as a Western gender term can be said to be culturally appropriate to describe Sámi.

Aage Solbakk explains in her book What We Believe In, that during the pre-Christian era prior to the 1300s wherein Beach claims the first process of Christianization were introduced in this region (Beach 7). The Sámi also had a naming ritual called *Sáráhkká-Lávgun* (*Sáráhkká* baptism). The baptism or naming ritual was directly connected to the *noaidevohta* for its success. The ritual was performed by the *noaidi* or shaman<sup>7</sup> and began before a child was born. The *noaidi* performed sacrificial acts in order to connect the child to the spirit world at an early age. The central figure for the ritual of naming was *Sáráhkká*. She was honored in many ways including a toast specifically for her, *Dát lea Sáráhkágárri* (This is a drink to *Sáráhkká*). The naming ceremony honored two deities, the other being the Female Baptist *Lávgoeadni*- the Baptism Mother. It was common in the naming ceremony to have the child named after a deceased ancestor, believing that the identity and traits of the departed would carry on in

7. The term shaman or shamanism was first described in Arctic cultures originating in s Siberia. The term was created by researchers to explain a cultural phenomenon that had traces of itself in other parts of the globe. The term today is used by religious-scientific discourses and is not connected with any specific religion or in any-way associated with a competency (Pentikäinen 385).

the child. Later it became traditional for “some name” to be passed from Grandmother to Granddaughter and Grandfather to Grandson. In this way many names became common within families. During the “Missionary period” which is recorded to have really began around the late 1200s to early 1300s, with the strongest push for Sámi conversions happening in the late 1600s to early 1700s (Beach 7; Solbakk 49). Priests and other authoritarians were mandated to do away with the “heathen” Sámi names and replace them with “proper” Christian names. Children received a baptism and assigned a new name by the priests. Adults received their new names at tax collecting time from the Bailiffs assigned to take their money. Yet, long after the mandates, many parents believing that their child would be developmentally hampered or become ill, re-baptized their children. They would “wash” off the name assigned by the priest and re-name the child in honor of *Sáráhká*, thus keeping their traditions and beliefs, though in secret, alive for future generations to know (Solbakk 49).

In regard to women being historically an integral part of the development and domestication of reindeer husbandry, Sarah Andrews suggests (like the folklore at the beginning of this research) that reindeer husbandry itself may be a contribution initially instigated and originally maintained historically by women; “It is suspected that Saami women began the domestication of reindeer” (1). The idea of women taking the initiative in the domestication of reindeer makes reasonable sense. Traditionally, as direct caretakers of children, Sámi women were actively involved in creating a sustainable food source from reindeer, providing both milk and meat to their families. Domestication and taming of the reindeer by women as well as men could have fit well into the subsistence lifestyle of Sámi reindeer cultures as the needs of the family and household were



historically part of the traditional responsibilities of women, and a man's world evolved around the aspects of the herd. This is an area that is very under-researched as I could only find suggestions relating to the possibility of women being the first domesticators or as participators in the actual taming of reindeer. And, I could find very little written in English on whether or not men and women participated together to tame reindeer used for domestic services. Due to the lack of material on the subject of gender participation in the domestication of reindeer, no substantive conclusion can be drawn. Further research into early Sámi female as well as male contributions to reindeer husbandry would potentially be interesting. Robert Paine, Herds of the Tundra does give question as to which gender actually did the milking he states that:

Perhaps the most significant change historically (and with accelerated speed in the twentieth century) has been away from milk production in combination with the slaughter of animals for meat...to meat production alone. Milking and milk processing, unlike the slaughter for meat, meant a heavy daily routine of work for the pastoralist.

(13-14)

Although in this statement Paine is only evaluating the work in relationship to the pastoralist (male), how such changes effected the roles and participation of women during this time period as meat production increased and milking production decreased would illuminate issues about treatment of animals as well, much as "The Origin of Wild Reindeer" suggests. In other words, did the move to a meat-based industrialized form of processing the animals and the reduction of what appears to be a women's role in milk producing, also result in a reduction in food based resources from reindeer?

The important role of establishing and caring for social relations historically has been a role women in reindeer societies have taken very seriously. Vuokko Hirvonen states that the role traditionally established harmony and provided solutions to community issues, enhanced opportunities for trade, and built social and personal relationships within the structure of the society (9-10). He also claims that historically “Sami women have always been agents of change in their communities. They have linked themselves to the social struggle and traditionally have articulated both a gender and ethnic dimension in their resistance” (Hirvonen 10). In families that maintained reindeer, Sámi women as well as men acquired reindeer very young.

Young people received their reindeer through the form of gifting. Gifting was done for a variety of reasons and various celebratory occasions (Rydving 45). The practice of gifting reindeer to the young ensured that both Sámi girls and boys had an economic foundation and were well schooled in reindeer husbandry by the time they reached adulthood. In the past all members of the family held private ownership of reindeer and participated in reindeer husbandry. Traditionally, women maintained ownership of all reindeer she brought with her in marriage. The male members of the family would start their own husbandry through their community’s *siida*. The daughters of the family would marry and bring their reindeer to the *siida* of their husband, though they retained their ownership rights to all reindeer that they brought with them into the marriage (Ulvevadet 120).

The social incorporation of economic equality was a foundation of Sámi individual and collective economic security. The tradition of equality in female ownership and independence allowed Sámi women to hold a stronger position socially

and economically than other women within the dominant social structure of Norway at the time. This occurred, because Sámi women held their own wealth through the ownership, management, and involvement in reindeer propagation and through such activities as preparing hides and sewing clothes (Roy 7). These activities helped secure the position and importance of women in Sámi society, because it was through the female talents of sewing clothes and manufacturing shoes that men were able to meet the harsh environment and meet their obligations in the field. However, the roles of women in Sámi society were to change as the political and social environment in the region also changed.

To gain a better understanding of environmental, social and political conditions that existed prior to the actions that were to take place after World War II, it is important to examine the role governmental decisions played in preparing the controversies that would come to fruition during the 1970s and 1980s. Therefore, it is necessary to review the historical role nation-states have had in defining Sámi ethnicity and gender roles inside and outside of Sápmi.

### **Historical Time Line: Norwegianization policy period**

Betty Bastien, Jürgen W. Kremer, Rauna Kuokkanen, and Patricia Vickers authors of “Healing the Impact of Colonization, Genocide, Missionization and Racism on Indigenous Populations” agree that in the Middle-Ages, the kingdoms surrounding Sápmi (Samiland) increasingly became interested in the resources and land. Because of its geographical location, this area became a war zone in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (27). The thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries was a time when none of the competing national powers had obtained any long lasting control or authority over the region in the northern areas. None of the competing powers were strong enough to fend

off opposing rivals, and some of the tribes themselves were highly respected, powerful and large. No one state had complete sovereignty, shared or otherwise, over any particular region or area of Samiland (even though two or three of the powers claimed to possess that autonomy) (Domokos 158; Pedersen 73). Because of this tenuous relationship, Hugh Beach in “The Saami of Lapland” reveals:

Kings who laid claim to regions in Lapland often followed a course favorable to the Saami, for they could ill afford to estrange ‘their’ Saami. Not only did the Saami supply valuable goods in the form of tax, but their allegiance to a particular king helped him to secure a claim on the territory used by the Saami.

(7)

Beach points out that during this time in history “missionary activity was...also a means for a kingdom to establish political control through and with tax rights” (8). The Religious factions had already built a church in Tromsø and established contact with the Sámi as early as 1252. During the fourteenth century the Sámi were reporting and registering for taxation in the different regions. It was not unheard of for a Sámi having registered to have paid for protection (through process of taxation) to one dominating influence of authority while being simultaneously taxed by three other magistrates. In 1313 as a way to incentivize the Sámi to become Christian, the King of Norway offered economic reductions in State-owed taxes for a twenty year period, in exchange for individual conversion (Beach 7). This is an important point in the historical literature. Because of educational opportunities, the Church had positioned itself to register individuals and record the yearly taxes received for the nation in authority. Beach argues “At this time, missionary activity was...a means for a kingdom to establish political

control (through and with tax rights) over a territory” (Beach 7). Written records recorded kept by European national emissaries (in the form of missionaries) by the various realms of individual was an important tool in the process of colonization and power relations that was building between nations. Cassandra Bergstrøm claims, in Claiming Reindeer in Norway: Towards a theory of the dynamics of property regime formation and change, that historically, between colonist and indigenous people, it was not uncommon for each group to be aware and respect one another’s customary laws and social agreements (123). This included territory claims and common use areas. Prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Sámi men and women maintained specific geographic environments that were claimed by a single household. Mutual respect between different family groups was put into question when ancestral land and waterways were divided by nationally imposed boundaries. Bastien, Kremer, Kuokkanen, and Vickers agree with Bergstrom and further explain that, “By the end of the 13th century, Denmark and Novgorod had divided the Sámi area by a mutual treaty, and in 1751, in the Treaty of Stroemstad, Norway and Sweden imposed the first foreign boundary on Sámiland” (27). Outsiders claiming authority over land- divided reindeer pastures, traditional migration routes and calving grounds. This resulted in separating many women from their customary gathering environments, denying them access to sustenance and economy. Women in Sámi societies held the domain of the household and community traditionally and were often the ambassadors for trade between various *siida*’s and settlers. The application of national boundaries would have impacted women both socially in relationship to their position as ambassador for trade within the community. The boundaries would have also impacted women in reindeer herding communities economically since normal trade

connections would have been disrupted. Established research regarding the impact to women in Sámi communities during this time in history is sparse. Further investigation through interviews of women in their senior years in order to document memories and stories, along with a feminist analysis approach in exploring Sámi oral tradition might prove useful in trying to ascertain what effects, if any, state-imposed boundaries had on Sámi women's ability to carry on customary social and economic practices during this time period and centuries later.

The consequences for the Sámi in relation to outside occupation and the new set of political mandates were laws that prohibited individual Sámi from owning personal land, and the abolishment of grazing and hunting rights on the opposite side of the border (Bastien et al 27). According to Henry Minde, noted Norwegian scholar, in "A Century of Norwegian Research into Sámi Rights," the treaties were designed and implemented by three kingdoms; the Swedish/Finnish, Russian, and Danish/Norwegian's with each of the three ruling parties asserting that they had jurisdiction and dominion over the Sámi people living within its borders. This prompted the need for an agreement between the states over the Sámi, particularly in regard to the reindeer herding communities. Approximately five hundred years later, through a series of addendums between Sweden/Finland and Denmark in 1826 and another between Norway and Russia in 1834 the Lapp Codicil<sup>8</sup> was created.

In recorded history governments have played an important role in defining the social order of any time period. National identity formation in order to establish control

8. The Lapp Codicil gave Sámi reindeer herder's special status allowing reindeer herders to move freely between countries. As the century moved forward, these agreements began to cause conflicts between the ruling countries. Legal battles between states over Sámi land and land rights ensued and a wave of Norwegian immigrants moved into Northern areas (Minde [A Century](#) 113).

over their citizenry often creates an “us and/or ‘them’” scenario in order to shame the “ascribed inferior” culture into blending into the preferred culture. The creation of the “us and them” class separations became the first ignominy to Sámi ethnic identity. By creating contrasts between minority and majority populations the government was able to create the perception that “ethnic minorities” were “foreigners” and the term “immigrant” replaced “indigenous identity” (Niemi 407). Each group of Sámi men and women, including those involved in reindeer husbandry, has had to address unique social and political variances that have forced their cultures to become flexible and adapt. Christianization, immigration (which brings with it different social expectations and taboos), new laws and state legislations impacted many aspects of the Sámi people as a whole’s cultural identity and pressured traditional gender roles.

Fredrik Barth in his article “Enduring and emerging issues in the analysis of ethnicity” suggests that often the concepts of the “other” is not developed through the attitude of strangers but more often is created within closely interrelated societies among populations that know each other (13). The establishment of trade and social contact between the Sámi and the colonial settlers supported the state in establishing a Norwegian framework to begin its process of assimilation and integration of Sámi residing within their international border. The rules applied (on the surface) to both settlers and Sámi alike, so room for Sámi complaint by either women or men to the authorities can be assumed to have been limited (though I could find no information to verify this claim). Literary material available in English was meager.

Nations fighting over Sámi territory, treaties, excessive taxation, Christianization and national borders defined by colonizing nations played important roles in influencing, changing and forcing adaptations in and onto Sámi cultural structure and customary

practices. In northern Norway a “harsh Norwegianization policy” began in the mid-1800s. Changes in attitude by the 1850s prejudiced national policy in the new nation state of Norway. The closure of the Russian border now made it impossible to continue normal and traditional “semi-nomadic” activities that included “land-use” rights in Finland. The Sámi at this time in history were deprived of pasture land for their reindeer and consequentially needed resources to survive economically and materially (Fitzmaurice 88). Malgosia Fitzmaurice explains that:

Severe forced assimilation policies and certain hostility towards Saami characterized this period (they were perceived as a ‘fifth column’ of Russia in the case of conflict). This was evidenced by the repression of the use of the Saami language in education and attempts to convert the Saami to the Christian faith and impose Norwegians lifestyles.

(88)

The government attitude toward the Sámi and their ancestral land was one of control and containment, and can be seen in the actions of the Norwegian state as it claimed ownership of all non-registered land in Finnmark after 1850. State-led legislation and continued policies of integration and assimilation lasted nearly a century, with its strongest enforcement during the period between 1870 and 1914 (Fitzmaurice 88-89; Lehtola 44). The policies were based on Darwinist views and were made legally applicable through various state regulations- that reflected a “common ideology” political attitude in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a perspective that held the belief that inferior cultures (like the Sámi) would die-out and Sámi identity would blend with the dominant society. The Sámi like many indigenous peoples during this time in history- were considered to be



a dying ethnic group of a “lower social order” and not eligible for the same legal considerations as Nordic citizens. Because of this belief and strong cultural ascription asserted on the Sámi by the government, Sámi interests would not be allowed to stand in the way of establishing a civilized social order based on Norwegian agriculture and sedentary lifestyles (Lehtola 44; Beach, The Sámi 8). The fact that Nation states initiated controls and authority over many aspects of Sámi culture, economic, and traditional life, changed many of the customary and cultural roles women maintained. This was done by lowering the importance of Sámi culture and in turn their traditional economies in favor of a more Norwegian, male-dominant style of “civilized” living.

In this research the concept used for exploring “cultural ascription” and how it applies to identity formation and responses to the authority of the “state” is well detailed by Ana María Alonso, in “The Politics of Space, Time and Substance: State Formation, Nationalism, and Ethnicity.” She states that cultural inscription occurs when the “idea” of the state through the use of material and symbolic organization of “social space” transforming over time “into a Being” (381). The author goes on to explain that the establishment of the state as the archetypal and unbiased negotiator of public “is an effect of a topography of hierarchized binaries whose terms are constructs as autonomous spaces. This topography conceals the workings of relations of rules and forms of disciplines in day to day life” (Alonso 381). Furthermore, Alonso also feels through the use of feminist analysis and criticism further investigation connects the topography of modern state formation to the consolidation of gender inequalities and provides the connecting narrative to the state’s amalgamation that supports the creation of status hierarchies of ethnic inequalities (Alonso 381-382). Nearing the end of the 19th century,

Norwegian authorities directed their attention again to the restriction of grazing rights for the Sámi in an attempt to further pressure the Sámi to give up the nomadic lifestyle.

Veli-Pekka Lehtola explains that it was felt essential during this time period that the government of Norway take steps to maintain strategic border relations with Russia the Norwegian state was intent on creating legislation to ensure the northern area of Norway was under the firm control of the state. “After the mid-1800s in northern Norway a harsh Norwegianization policy began, which was to last nearly a century. Its most intense period coincided with the general European colonialist period which was strongest from 1870 to 1914” (44). Between 1851 and 1905 Norwegian legislation designed policies to increase Norway’s hold on the northern areas that were strategically important to Norway’s relations with Russia (Lehtola 44).

The administration systems of the past had been constructed to “ensure the even distribution and efficiency of tax-producing operations” (Beach 8). In Sweden legislation was quickly changing the “rights” of reindeer herding Sámi to “privileges.” The “privileges” were established through a set of guidelines which were incorporated into legislation. The guidelines and particular state supports were designed to support the “nomadic and exotic lifestyle” of the Sámi reindeer herder. Sámi of other cultural and economic practices did not get this same privilege (Beach 8). The Sámi reindeer herder in Sweden was considered “different” according to Beach, “Sweden’s attitude seems to have been that the Saami should be able to keep their exotic culture and enjoy certain *privileges* (as opposed to *rights*) of resource access as long as they stuck to the reindeer herding niche and did not disturb the pace of ‘progress’”(8).

Norway was suffering from “nationalistic fevour toward the turn of the century” (Beach 8) and legislation in Norway began to tie land rights and ownership to Norwegian language proficiency for both the South and the Northern Sámi. Beach states “In 1905, the Norwegian-Swedish Union (established by the treaty of Kiel in 1814) was dissolved. Norwegian settlers expanding north encouraged by their government wanted to restrict the access of Swedish Saami to the traditional Norwegian grazing lands”(8) and the Swedish government, against the rights of the Sámi accommodated Norway’s demands. Because of this accommodation, Beach argues, many Northern Sámi were displaced by the Norwegian government and forced from their customary summer grazing lands in the north to lands in the south. The forcible relocation of the Northern Sámi impinged on the Southern Sámi’s civil rights by forcing them to accept them on their territory. Also the encroachment by Norwegian settlers and land accommodations granted by Sweden were in direct violation of the Northern Sámi immemorial land rights as “defined by Swedish and Norwegian law” (8). The power of the policies were found within the legal applications exercised over the Sámi people as a whole and in the development of legislation that served the majority population over what had been promised previously to the racial and ethnic minority population (Lehtola 44).

Remembering that during the- pre-World War II-era, social Darwinism was the foundation for many governmental policies directed at minority populations. There were two main goals of the Norwegianization policies, the first objective of the state, was to legislate economic and settlement policies aimed at instituting a more civilized and advanced livelihood based on agriculture in the eastern area of the Sámi, while also opening the region to immigration. In addition to reinforce assimilation and interrogation

of the Sámi, a series of Norwegianization policies focused on cultural integration, state absorption of indigenous land, and linguistic destruction were legislated (Jernsletten 147; Lehtola 44-45). The research will look first at the issue of land.

In 1848 the “Diet of Norway” began exploring the idea of selling “the so-called” Crown owned public land throughout Norway. Steinar Pedersen in “State or Saami Ownership of Land in Finnmark?” explains that data had been collected all over the country except in Finnmark by the Department of Finance. The exclusion of information was due to the department choosing to treat this area differently than other common lands and deemed Finnmark owned by the State. The department also proclaimed that this ownership had been recognized since “ancient times.” The Department of Finance claimed that the ownership was based on the fact that no agrarian activity was found that established a show of permanence like the erection of dwellings. Because Sámi men and women in reindeer herding *siidas* were a “nomadic” people, they were considered immigrants under Norwegian policy that had not obtained proper right or title to ownership. In this way, Finnmark was considered a colony by Norway since “ancient times” (78-79). Under the social Darwinian theories prevalent in 1848, the Department of Finance decided that persons who have a lifeway that was not attached to the agrarian forms of land use “had not and could not” constitute the right to any form of ownership (Pedersen 78-79). This decision is important because “all other legislation concerning land and resources in Finnmark, are in reality built on the premises from 1848. The state’s exclusive right of ownership, was very soon adopted in judicial theory, and made functional through different enactments” (Pedersen 78-79). Under the concept developed in the Doctrine of Discovery in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Christian explorers were given the right

to claim lands not inhabited by Christians for their Christian Monarchs. The doctrine also allowed for the exploitation of lands that were discovered. The “pagan” inhabitants of the discovered land were given the opportunity to convert to Christianity, and for non-converts the law allowed for enslavement or even death. This ultimately means that if a person residing on a piece of land does not technically have the ability to sell their land, they really do not own it. The state now assumed ownership of all land not under agrarian use leaving Sámi reindeer herders with no legal claim to their traditional grazing and herding areas.

The decision made by the Department of Finance, laid the foundation for a mirage of social and cultural impacts. Beginning with officially classifying the Sámi as “foreigners” proved to successfully reinforce already present stereotypes. Women’s sovereignty in reindeer communities was jeopardized alongside their families’ rights as grazing land was reduced for agricultural and other state projects and limited Sámi access to ancestral lands. The ability for women to milk and graze reindeer, along-with gathering non-agrarian food was impacted as their access to traditional territories was reduced (Jernsletten 147). At this time “international relations directly affected reindeer herders” (Bergstrom 130).<sup>9</sup> In 1852, Russia was claiming “extensive Saami fishing

9. Cassandra Bergstrom explains that it occurred because grazing land had now been restricted across borders, such that the Sámi had to begin to construct various ways and use different means to gain access to their traditional and customary pasture lands. The border closings had resulted in making reindeer migration routes from Norway to Finland inaccessible for Norwegian Sámi reindeer and their herders. This resulted in many Sámi from the region of Kautokeino, Norway migrating to Karesuando, Sweden with around 20,000 reindeer and they registered as Swedish citizens. By becoming Swedish citizens they could now access both additional pasture land and traditional land in Finland due to the borders between Finland and Sweden still being open. It is estimated that for the Sámi remaining in Norway the closure resulted in about 50,000 animals and their herders losing access to grazing, pasturing and calving lands. The loss of access to pasture land became a crisis and was recognized by the Norwegian government (131). Reindeer husbandry and the resource the industry provided became very important in the northern areas. Protests from the reindeer herders ensued as the chaos increased which in turn brought about a “special law, exclusive to the northern most region of Finnmark” (Bergstrom 131). This resulted in the enactment of the Reindeer Law for Finnmark in 1854. This law separated summer and winter pasture areas and introduced constraints over the number of animals that could be set out to pasture in all district areas (Bergstrom 131). “This law was based upon the territorial idea of the *sii’da*, but rather than recognizing Saami interests in flexibility the borders were strictly defined” (Bergstrom 131). This law was requested by the reindeer herders and was felt to be protective and was not contested by those outside of reindeer herding (Bergstrom 131)

rights” on the coast of Norway. Norway rejected the claim. Russia responded by closing their borders to Norway. Sweden and Norway responded to Russia by closing their borders to Russia. The legislative actions and further resource restrictions enacted by the four Nation states caused “chaos” for the Sámi *siidas* inside Norway and across the various borders. In response to the discontent of the herders, the Norwegian government in 1854 enacted “The Reindeer Law for Finnmark.” The Act required separated summer and winter pasture areas and reindeer herding districts along with being designed under the “territorial idea of the *sii’da*, but rather than recognizing Saami interests in flexibility the borders were strictly defined” (Bergstrom 131). The purpose of the limitations was to begin to introduce controls over the number of animals being grazed at any one given time in any one particular area. The state owned most of the land in the area of Finnmark and interest in the land at this time was limited so no objection arose (Bergstrom 131). Bergstrom writes that “at this point in time, the state appears to both protect and develop reindeer herding in order to respect reindeer herders’ rights....However,...new regulations, laws and amendments came to be introduced, building upon other ideals, ideas and interests” (131). The Norwegian government stayed true to its policy of maintaining the right to assume title to land that was deemed economically viable and the elimination of Sámi reindeer herding in all areas deemed economically viable to state interests (Jernsletten 147). According to Pedersen, the intent was to make certain that the Norwegian state had the authority to access Sámi land that they felt was “culturally and economically superior” (80). This land was to be used for more civilized practices such as farming and forestry. Norway’s attitude in 1902 toward minority populations was made clearer with the enactment of the policy law that “granted land ownership” only to

those who spoke Norwegian (Pederson 80). In 1933 a national law in regards to reindeer herding was enacted.

Norway continued to maintain policies that were directed at eliminating reindeer herding on land that was economically viable to national interests (Jernsletten 147) and further enacted laws that would maintain state security. In 1933 the emergence of a national reindeer policy coincided with the mechanization of Norwegian agriculture (Bergstrom 159). The need for farmers to graze animals in outlying fields and the need to collect fodder was reduced. Bergstrom points out that this should have reduced conflicted interests between herders and farmers but it did not. The Sámi had and still retain today “usufruct rights to resources” (160). This means that the Sámi must actively use their resources in order to benefit from their rights. Farmers, however, had no incentive at this time to acknowledge rights belonging to herders. “Farmers claimed exclusive landed property rights in the areas outside the border: Saami continued to argue, by way of historical use, to their rights to access and use some of these areas” (Bergstrom 160). The 1933 law was based on the same three base principles: reporting requirements, common responsibility and district divisions which had been established in the Common Lapp Law.<sup>10</sup> The Sámi in response during the government negotiation period presented their demands. The demands focused in on gaining a definition of what was meant by “right to herd” in the areas of geographical specificity and in regards to

10. The Common Lapp Law of 1883 recognized three main principles that are still found in modern reindeer herding laws. The law established “district divisions.” The districts were based on Sámi herders’ customary and traditional “use” of specific regions for reindeer management. It also required specific reporting requirements which mandated that new herders register themselves and their herds with the sheriff. The last policy established “common responsibility.” This meant that the herder was responsible for any damage caused by his animals to any agricultural (farming) activity. Bergstrom makes an interesting point in that the common responsibility principle is unusual in how it is applied. In this case the government used the “idea of guilt by association” (139). This was done by maintaining that the burden of innocence lay with the herders within the vicinity of the damage being said to have been caused by reindeer and is directly opposite of the commonly held belief of innocent until proven guilty (Bergstrom 139).

other Sámi interests. Calling for the designation of particular state-owned areas to be “free use areas” for reindeer herding and asking for a guarantee from the state for “other areas defined by traditional use” (Bergstrom 165) would not be restricted for reindeer husbandry. The Norwegian government firmly rejected both proposals. The rejection by the government meant that there was no longer any legal possibility for Sámi herders to limit outsiders’ access to various pasture areas. Under the new law the government introduced the term “*fellesbeite*” which means “common pasturing area.” No longer did the state recognize traditional and/or customary “use” claims made by Sámi reindeer herders. Now pastoral land that had been restricted was opened to the possibility of another herders using the same land (Bergstrom 165). The Sámi had traditionally used the siida system to assign different areas to different individuals maintaining specific boundaries with “recognized rights of access” (Bergstrom 165). This new practice was foreign to the Sámi reindeer management structure.

According to Bergstrom, the Herding Law of 1933 was a law intended to be in agreement with the administrative wishes of the Norwegian government (Bergstrom 165). “In this case, questions of legitimacy and the over-riding authority of government and government regulations were often set against customary interpretations of rules” (Bergstrom 166). The state then proceeded to assign state-recognized experts to a variety of professional spots within the reindeer industry. “Traditional knowledge of particular animals, of herds and of the inter-relationship between the animals and land was marginalized, as was knowledge of, and interest in, inter-relationships between the animals and the Saami society” (Bergstrom 168).



The Sámi like other racial and ethnic minorities all over the world have been subject to foreign authorities that created policies designed to gain control over territory and mandate the mastering of one national language. The control over traditional resources and language is an attempt by the prevailing social order to refocus traditional cultural practices by replacing them with the dominant society's social and political structures. Lakota Scholar and feminist, Dr. Beatrice Medicine's, Learning to Be an Anthropologist & Remaining "Native," speaks about the importance of language revitalization and the consequences of language loss for American Indians in the United States:

it is a matter not only of importance, but of necessity that the Indians acquire the English language as rapidly as possible....the main reason of educating them is to enable them to read, write, and speak the English language and to transact business with English-speaking people...Nothing more surely and perfectly stamps upon an individual a national characteristic as language...It is also believed that teaching an Indian youth in his own barbarous dialect is a positive detriment to him. The first step to be taken toward civilization, toward teaching the Indians the mischief and folly of continuing their barbarous practices, is to teach them the English language.

(39-40)

Steps taken by the United States government during the active stages of assimilation to rid Native people of their distinct and unique cultures and their diverse languages were very similar to Norway's policies toward the Sámi historically. Like the American Indians, increased governmental integration policies, language restrictions, economic

advantage disparities, forced Christianization and increased colonist encroachment by settlers only served to marginalize both Sami men and women well after World War II as Sámi ethno-nationalism developed very slowly (Lehtola 45, 58).

The Norwegian government incentivized the learning of Norwegian for minority populations by not only creating regulations that propagated the Norwegian language. The government through a number of legislative policies coupled language proficiency with land ownership (Lehtola 44-45). The development of these policies and the impacts they imposed on the composition of Sámi traditional culture can be seen in the time line of which follows events beginning in 1851:

1851: All schools were to function only in the Norwegian language

1864: First declaration for property ownership which was based on language competence. Those who spoke Norwegian had first option to buy state land. This definition was defined as any person that could read and speak Norwegian.

1879: Land owned by the state was designated Norwegian settlement land, especially in the areas of east Finnmark, South Varanger, Unjárga and Tana. Those individuals deemed foreign citizens were prohibited to inhabit state lands as colonists.

1880: It was decided that the Finnish and Sámi languages could only be support languages in Norwegian schools.

1895: Land was again opened but only those defined as Norwegian citizens could partake in the free access of state land. This land could only be accessed upon being certified by authorities as a person that had “mastery of the Norwegian language.”

1897: Sámi exemption from military service was repealed.

1898: Sámi language is forbidden in Sápmi.

1902: Interpreters forbidden in administrative institutions. Land laws became more specific. The law connected ownership to the Norwegian language by attaching Norwegian names to property. Later the attached names became the surnames of families.

1905: Sámi language in the Romsa (Troms) Seminary was prohibited. At the same time Norway was providing special salary incentives to try and attract Norwegian teachers to go to Sápmi to teach.

(Lehtola 44)

Many of these policies had direct and indirect consequences for traditional women's roles in reindeer herding communities. The 1898 law that children were now taught in school systems, while not completely destructive on its own, did reduce the importance of the role that women had in regard to the transference of traditional language education and language knowledge in the form of culture bearers. It was now illegal to speak Sámi in Sápmi. A common perception was present in the following statement:

Through active colonialism: Sámi were clearly to be assimilated into Norwegian society and they were to obliterate the Sámi language...Through implied colonialism: it was possible the Sámi could become civilized by converting to Christianity and by reading general refined literature in Sámi. By civilizing the Sámi it would be possible to direct them into the Norwegian language and culture.

(Lehtola 45)

As the Sámi men and women became more and more integrated into the dominant society and Christian theology began replacing Aboriginal belief systems, "the state decided that the rights to occupations should be tied to men" (Roy 7). Historically, Sámi society had a strict gender-based separation of labor, particularly for men. Women, however, could do both women's and men's work (Eikjok 110). Under the concepts of Christianity and male patriarchy, many aspects of Sámi women's customary daily routines changed. No more taboos about entering or leaving a dwelling were respected, nor were the customary

traditional gender divisions concerning home and economic activities valued. Life for Sámi women had again significantly changed.

The “Norwegian language only” law enacted in 1898 and the new policies of occupations being tied to men can be assumed to have dramatically reduced a woman’s ability to conduct her customary and traditional roles, not only in her children’s education and language development but also her ability to be independent economically. This in turn abridged her importance within the family structure as she no longer held the position of primary family educator nor was she economically sovereign. The state changes resulted in effectively lowering a Sámi women’s position in relationship to men in the community (Roy 7). Along with the state wishing to homogenize its populace, Beach points out, the national agenda arose from the fact that Norway for centuries had been occupied by the Danes only to be forced into an unwanted union with the Swedes. Increasing anxiety from Norwegian nationalists over the possible “Finnization” of Norway and the desire of the government to prove “historical heritage” also help initiate the policy of land-ownership being tied to the ability to speak Norwegian. This policy was a direct affront to the minority populations and assisted in language loss and even in some cases extinction. The policies also left heavy stigmatization on the Sámi (The Sámi 8). The literature does suggest that the impact of colonization did affect all areas of Sámi traditional life and resulted in changes to customary economic systems, religious beliefs, gender relationships, and cultural and social structures. And therefore can be assumed to have affected women’s lives also. The laws and policies nation-states imposed on the Sámi people from the late eighteenth century onward is an example of both colonial and patriarchal domination and discrimination (Kuokkanen, Myths 79).

The literature available in regards to women in this time period is scant with women only being represented in a general manner, if at all. Rauna Kuokkanen feels that the early history of outside occupation and political mandates had a strong research base; however, women's issues are not well represented within the historical accounts, which are often gender-biased. This has left a gap in the research as far as investigating specific or group incidents regarding how these laws positively and/or negatively impacted women (Kuokkanen, Myths 79). Yet, not all women were inactive during this time in history, as governmental pressures of assimilation and integration increased and the dominant population gained more control over the region, the Sámi people in Norway began to realize that they needed to organize in order to make changes for themselves. One such person was Elsa Laula-Renberg.

### **The first Sámi Awakening Elsa Laula-Renberg**

The first "Sámi Awakening" in the early 1900s was a response to tightening conditions of existence and local conditions of social and economic inequality. In 1902 a law in Norway was passed that prevented any citizen from owning land that did not use or speak Norwegian. This governmental mandate selectively prevented many women at this time from owning land or participating in reindeer husbandry, because many Sámi women did not speak Norwegian. This resulted in Sámi women living both in the north and south having to make choices between maintaining traditional livelihoods or obtaining work outside of their communities perspective industries in order to meet the increasing costs that accompany a cash-based economy (Kuokkanen, Indigenous 500-501; Seurujärvi-Kari 192-193). At this time in history, Bergstrom points out that public interest in woman's rights overall and rights for Sámi in general were beginning to increase. Bergstrom states that the rise of Sámi interests as a "political activity in the

north was led through established Norwegian political parties; the most politically active Saami in this area acted out of person interests and were from outside herding communities” (161).

Elsa Laula-Renberg, a South Sámi writer, politician, and founder of the Sámi movement was one of the most important political figures of the early twentieth century and among the first active voices for the Sámi. Laula-Renberg is regarded as the “foremother of the Sámi” and in 1904, while still working as a midwife, she was the first Sámi woman to publish her own writing, “*Inför Li feller Död? Sanningsord i de Lappska förhållandena* (Facing Life or Death: Words of Truth in the Lapp situation)” which dealt with issues ranging from the land ownership, social Darwinism, Swedish government policy of assimilation and educational opportunities (Seurujärvi-Kari 192-193). Most importantly, she felt that “cooperation between the Saamis and particularly Saami women was crucial” (Seurujärvi-Kari 434).

Laula-Renberg began her work in Sweden but married and made her home in 1908 in Norway where she continued her campaign. She was an exceptional woman who sought out meetings with important government officials including the King of Sweden. Her views were not always welcomed by the authorities and her political activities and writings sometimes made it hard for her to move and work in the political venues during this time period (Lehtola 46-47; Seurujärvi-Kari 192-193; 434). Renberg was a stout supporter of Sámi interests and lent the majority of her support to small herding operations. Renberg took the position of traditional reindeer management comprising much more than just milking, and was part of a way of life that included distinctive languages and “unwritten rules” that were worthy of preservation and protection

(Bergstrom 161). Bergstrom explains that the fact that a woman represented the traditional views and showed strong interest in maintaining traditional herding showed the strong position women still maintained in Sámi society (162). Renberg also held a firm position toward the importance of women involving themselves in *actively* in the issues of the days. Her feelings about utilizing the process of discourse and creating dialogue and addressing concerns in order to discover solutions cannot be understated. The literature states that Renberg believed that through discourse Sámi men and women could work together not only to find solutions but also establish organizations that would benefit all of their people. Between 1906 and 1908 five local Sámi organizations were founded in the southern part of Norway and by 1910 organizations focused on Sámi issues had been established in Norway in the area of Finnmark. Because of the steps taken by Laula-Renberg, the first Sámi women's organization (*Brurskanken Samiske Kvindeforening*) was founded. In 1917 this association was the catalyst that brought about the first National Assembly of the Nordic Saami. Interestingly, the invitation to this assembly contained a special ruling that asked for Sámi women to be present (Lehtola 46-47; Seurujärvi-Kari 192-193; 434).

The meeting held in Trondheim, Norway, on February 6, 1917, was considered to be the peak of Sámi activism at the time. This meeting was the very first effort to bring Sámi representatives together from both sides of the border of Norway and Sweden. Out of the 140-150 people reported to have attended, ninety to one hundred of these were Sámi, with the majority of these being from the South. The Southern Norwegian Sámi had their own personal conflicts with farmers. However, they were in a better position in dealing with the Norwegian government because of the Norwegianization policies of the

past and forced integration into Norwegian society. Because of the exposure the Southern Sámi of Norway had a strong base and understanding of the Norwegian language, social culture, economic structures and political environment as integration into Norwegian culture and language had been experienced at a deeper social level than Northern Sámi regions (Bergstrom 161). This day is now the Sámi National Day (Lehtola 48).

Kuokkanen states that, “Renberg’s role in the early Sami rights movement has usually been minimized or left out in historical accounts (including those written by men), which focus on her male contemporaries and their activities” (Myths 76). The response by women and men to support issues that directly affected Sámi traditional livelihoods blossomed. However, the issues of the Sámi as a cultural minority would inevitably be postponed as Norway was forced to join World War II and Sámi men for the first time in their history are called to serve their country in war. The Norwegian policy of equality after World War II provided many Sámi reindeer herders with permanent housing through the government housing programs. The government housing program, however, had one catch: homes had to be built either near or within a village. This was also the time period that the government enacted the national school reform policy. This policy made school compulsory for all children under sixteen. The combination of program and policy compelled individuals to take advantage of the governmental offer while also complying with the school reform process (Berg 75). Moving from a nomadic and semi-nomadic lifestyle was a change for both men and women in Sámi societies in the north. This aspect of Sámi ethnic identity was again asked to adapt while being demanded through legislation to conform.



## **Education policies 1952-1960**

In the years 1952 through 1956 “The Saami of the Nordic countries” established what would be known as the “Saami Council.” This council represented an inter-Nordic co-operative body (Jernsletten 150). In 1956 the Norwegian “Labour Government” decided to review “the Sámi question” and appointed the Samekomiteen (*Saami Committee or Commission*). This Committee came out in 1959 with a series of recommendations. The report offered suggestions that were focused on providing the Sámi with a sense of “pan-Sámi” cohesion and cultural security that was to be achieved by the state supporting the enrichment of a variety of Sámi social, educational and economic conditions. The report above all, focused on the re-establishment of mutual respect (Jernsletten 148; Niemi, History 336; Niemi, National 416; Stordahl 4). Einar Niemi, in “National Minorities and Minority Policy in Norway” argues that it was the Commission that felt by the state supporting these recommendations the Sámi social, educational, economic condition and standard of living could be raised up to meet Norwegians. Nonetheless, this recognition and acknowledgment by the central authorities did not result in an immediate overturning of old Norwegianization policies particularly in regard to schooling (Niemi, National 417).

In Norway the general undertone of the “modern welfare state,” though sympathetic to the Sámi, appeared to still hold the belief that the state policy of “one people” would take place (Niemi, National 418). Under this political and public climate it is to be expected that recommendations formulated by the “special Sámi Committee” were not as readily received by local jurisdictions in the north. The recommendations were heavily debated and ended up being rejected (Niemi, History 336). This resulted in many of the old Norwegianization policies toward minorities, particularly within the area

of education, remaining intact for a short time. Ivar Bjørklund in “Sápmi-becoming a nation the emergence of a Sami national community,” writes that as the “1950s and ‘60s wore on, more and more Sami realized that Norwegian language and cultural skills were absolutely essential if they were to participate in the general rise in living standards.

Saminess was...perceived as culturally inferior and a hindrance to everyday life”

(Bjørklund 11). Ivar Bjørklund “Sápmi-becoming a nation the emergence of a Sámi national community” describes that under the Norwegian governments policies schools were used as an,

important arena for spreading the ideology of the welfare state. All social classes were to have access to education—as was the Sami population. For more than 100 years, Norwegian authorities had worked to make the Sami and Kvens (people of Finnish extraction) as Norwegian as possible. Schools in Sami and Kvens areas would thus conduct all their teaching in Norwegian only.

(9)

Between 1898 and 1959 under Norwegianization regulations all education was based on the following two regulations, all teaching was to be in Norwegian and the Sámi and Kven languages were to only be used as a supplemental tool in explaining particular events or words that were perplexing to the student. Second, the teacher was to make every effort to ensure that the first regulation was enforced and the Kven and Sámi languages were only to be used when absolutely necessary (Bjørklund 9).

The policy of language suppression was also accompanied by a saturation of historical representation that favored Norwegian “national heroes” over racial and ethnic minorities’ important historical champions. In fact, Bjørklund writes that literary

references most often represented the Sámi (if mentioned at all) as a nomad living the “exotic” life of a reindeer herder. Through only recognizing reindeer herding Sámi, the coastal Sámi’s own culture and heritage becoming invisible in the social narrative and viewed by the dominant populace the educational process reinforced the “Norwegianization policies” that had already been in place for over a century (Bjørklund 10-11). The policy of the state post-war Norway was differences between their citizens was over and “the old class society belonged to a bygone age, and Sámi culture was a thing of the past” (Bjørklund 11). For Sámi women many of the Norwegian state policies forced them to make adaptations in their own lives and customary practices. However, Bergstrom does point out that,

Throughout the period of Norwegianization, despite a clear policy of assimilation of the Saami people as a whole, reindeer-owning Saami still remained visible. As the profession within the districts remained distinctly Saami, it was these herding families and sii’das that continued to define herding, including its many social and cultural practice. They were consequently able to maintain many of their traditions and ties to the land. ...many Saami recognized that it was largely among the herders that the Saami language was being actively used and maintained.

(158)

Even so, the “Norwegianization” policies of Sámi language and history suppression remained active until around the “late 1940s, when the educational system began to be reformed. In 1959 the “Norwegian language only” constraints were ended and the Sámi language was re-introduced in the class room (Bjørklund 9-11). “The last

comprehensive Norwegianization directive of 1898 –Wexelsenplakaten- (*the Bill of Norwegianization*) was not actually overturned until the introduction of ‘den niårige skolen’ (*nine years’ schooling*) around 1960” (Niemi, National 416} Emphasis mine].

In May of 1963 the report finally made its complete circle and had been commented on by all concerned parties. The parliament and members involved decreed that the state policies of the past were now outdated. The new policies, however, concentrated on the Sámi being individual Norwegian citizens and did not reflect a distinction racial and ethnic minorities and the national Norwegian identity (Stordahl 4-5). This can be seen by the states’ continued use of the phrase “Sámi-speaking Norwegian” a term frequently used when officially categorizing the Sámi. This term was evident through this time period as a form of “nation-building ideology” used by the welfare state (Niemi, National 418). Yet, the decree and removal of the policies of the past was an opening for the Sámi men and women to begin analyzing their needs in the present.

The administration contributed to the new minority policy initiative by providing public funds for social services, welfare programs, public housing and economic development projects yet the projects still reflected a Norwegian construct. The state also took special interest in the Sámi language. This was done by recognizing and correcting the spelling of Sámi place names on state maps and giving the Sámi the right to educate in the Sámi language. The creation of the Commission and the response of the state revitalized the Sámi political identity movement. Many Sámi organizations that had been created in earlier years re-organized themselves and became active again. By the 1960s

varying organizations and associations could be found in municipalities throughout the region of Sápmi (Stordahl 5).

Jorunn Eikjok explains that Norway began to increase educational opportunities for their citizenry around the 1960s. In Sámi society education became tied to success. It was found that those individuals that could both speak Norwegian and Sámi held better prospects financially and socially. It was both young and mature Sámi women that opted to take advantage of the state-sponsored higher education being offered (Gender 55).

One of the reasons given by Ulvevadet for women taking advantage of educational opportunities over the male population is “many reindeer families view the boy as the future of reindeer herder, while the girl is encouraged to get an education and/or a job outside the industry” (118). She also finds that the development of encouraging one sex over the other in modernity is caused as much by internal factors as external factors (Ulvevadet 118). Eikjok points out in her article written in 2004, eighty percent of all students at the Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu were women and in certain districts twice as many women as men chose to go on to higher or University level education. One reason thought for the decline of men in higher education is due to “the male role changing considerably. In some situations men stagnate and become losers; the male role seems to have less flexibility than the female one. Because Sámi masculinity is so strongly tied to nature, it appears that Sámi men reject hegemonic male ideals created in the modern or urban majority society” (Gender 55). In modernity the perception is the catalyst for transforming Sámi cultural expressions and these expressions are handled differently according to gender (Eikjok 55). In this regard education according to Eikjok “creates a new dividing line between the sexes” (Gender 55-56). Further research

concerning how education effects gender relationships would be valuable in evaluating whether or not education is creating dividing lines and all the attendant tensions related to domestic turmoil or even violence between genders in these communities.

### ***The 1978 Reindeer Herding Act***

In reindeer herding communities, traditional indigenous gender roles were shaped by Eurocentric ideologies. Changes in gender roles for Sámi reindeer herding societies were introduced through colonial strategies; which gained entrance to Sámi society through Christianization policies, establishment of national borders, and Norwegian legislative restraints on traditional herding practices. The Norwegian government recognizing the economic value of reindeer, in the form of meat production, sought to gain knowledge and control of herd sizes, along with protecting pasture-land enacted the *Reindeer Law for Finnmark* in 1854. This Act specified specific herding “districts and separated winter and summer pasture areas” (Bergstrom 131). The Reindeer Act of 1933 further reduced Sámi reindeer herding rights along with increasing male-centered ideologies that tied occupations to men, continued to make “Sámi women invisible in the livelihood in which they had always played a prominent role” (Kuokkanen, Indigenous 501).

In the later part of 1970s, Norway enacted the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act, which replaced its predecessor. According to Bjørklund, the Act was developed to abolish traditional and customary practices in regards to reindeer management, herder recruitment, and institute licenses to eligible Sámi reindeer herders. The new regulations had two objectives: first was to prevent overgrazing; and, the second was to raise the revenue of licensed Sámi reindeer herders (43). Under this Act the state now “decided

*who* should own reindeer, *where* reindeer herding should be permitted, and *how* it should be carried out” (Bjørklund 43).

The policies of the new Act, though, was marketed as gender neutral as no component of the law *formally* favored one gender over the other, (which will be discussed later in this section), did not consider a number of variables that resulted in gender inequalities, which expanded the divide between men and women (Ulvevadet 124). Women in reindeer herding communities, which had already started organizing the 1978 Reindeer herding Act, only fueled the need for more women to voice their concerns and initiate grounds for legislative change.

Fitzmaurice suggests that 1978 Act was made up of the same operational principles that were in the 1933 Act and moved “even further from customary Saami law of the *siida* and fails to reflect the usufructory rights to particular land areas with the *siida* for households and individuals within the *siida*” (89). Ulvevadet explains, for women functioning in a modernized economy and social structure, mandatory primary education for children, the necessity for supplemental income, and an increasing need for “muscle power” to operate mechanical apparatus made it more challenging for females to maintain active participation in reindeer herding equal to men. The ability for women to acquire husbandry units as they became available, having on the ground work experience in the industry was “an important factor when available husbandry units are up for redistribution, something that many reindeer owners think is unfair” (124). This negatively affected women’s ability to obtain a permit unit over men.

Because of other social and economic demands often placed in the domain of Sámi women, Sámi women may or may not have as much recognized “on the ground”

experience as her male counterparts. This resulted in women's contributions to the industry going unrecognized and lessening the ability to gain husbandry units (Ulvevadet 124). Along with not recognizing how women participate in the now modern industry, the Act ignored the notion of cooperating members of a *siida* maintaining collective ownership of land (Fitzmaurice 89). In addition, the new Act remained silent on the traditional *siida* management system under which the Sámi customarily operated. Instead, rights were designed in accordance to Norwegian preferences.

The *siida* was traditionally the primary governing body and worked as a community system within a particular geographic area (Jernsletten and Klovov 2002:20). Bergstrom claims that Social Darwinism, even as late as the 1970s, was still prevalent and had a "pervasive influence" within the Norwegian administrative and jurisdictional body (155). In the past, state held interest was served by establishing national borders through recognizing the needs of the reindeer herd and the herders. There was a value placed on both the reindeer as a resource and herders for their knowledge. However, Bergstrom points out that state supported agricultural expansions and the practice of "herding" was increasingly seen as an "impediment to progress" (156). Discussions over the reindeer industry and land use continued and resulted in the Ministry of Agriculture conducting an evaluation concerning Sámi reindeer herding and pasturing issues in 1976. The resulting assessment usurped an "earlier judicial recognition of Saami rights from ancient practices and were clearly politically motivated" (156) rights that had been established as far back as 1883.

The Ministry of Agriculture determined that land being used for reindeer herding came under the understanding of being "only a tolerated use" (Bergstrom 156).



Bergstrom explains that during the 1970s some social Darwinist views were still prevalent in governmental and social structures. The belief that agriculture as both natural and desirable would surpass reindeer herding and nomadic practices (the latter being undesirable in a modernized technologically advancing society) was still being represented as preferable and was supported by government. Also, during the investigation neither Sámi men nor Sámi women were represented. The 1976 commission initiated new laws and regulations. Notably, the right to compensation for loss of pasture was omitted; and the restriction of herding at the time that herding was expanding resulted in Sámi herders experiencing significant economic losses. Continuing in the manner of reduction, the state proceeded to develop a new act to replace the Reindeer Herding Act of 1933. The Reindeer Herding Act of 1978 also formally replaced the traditional Sámi *siida* structure (202-212).

In Norway the basis for reindeer husbandry is the Norwegian management system “husbandry operating unit” (*driftsenhet*). Under the direction of the husbandry unit a qualifying person can obtain a license (EinarsbÅ 2, Jernsletten and Klokov 20). This unit normally consists of “one person, or the spouses together, if both persons have their own earmarks in the herds. If both persons have a husbandry unit before they are married, they can keep their separate units also after the marriage” (Jernsletten and Klokov 20). What this means is that “legally it is one unit, but in the official statistics it is recorded as two separated units” (Jernsletten and Klokov 88). The permit unit also allowed for a few close relatives to keep reindeer within the operational unit of the permit holder. The permit unit was gained through the consent of the relevant husbandry areas, through inheritance, or be obtained by way of an agreement made between a spouse and/or close

relative. Irrespective of background the permit unit upon death of the individual could be if desired taken over by a spouse (EinarsbÅ 2005:1-2, Jernsletten and Klovov 2002:20, Ulvevadet 2004:114). The license gives a specific individual (usually male) the right to become an operational unit and manage reindeer in a specifically assigned geographic area (district) assigned to him or her by the “Area Board.” The Area Board is responsible for assigning districts and issuing licenses that identify new “husbandry units,” “operation units,” or “permit units” (These terms will be used interchangeably). To clarify, the operation unit is actually considered a public permit that allows qualifying persons to own a specific number of reindeer in a specific area. “The law defines a husbandry unit as being a flock owned and run by one manager who is considered accountable for her/his flock. Often, the men would become the head of the unit” (Ulvevadet 114). Under the act, “even if women own their private reindeer, they have no formal rights as long as they have no ownership to a husbandry unit” (Ulvevadet 119), this also included all other forms of governmental and economic support such as the ability to apply for loans or be granted subsidizes for reindeer they personally owned, because the government only recognizes the permit holder as the primary controller of herd management and authorized only the unit holder to access to claiming both subsidizes and opportunities for loans (Ulvevadet 120; Roy 12).

In an e-mail interview with Rávdná Biret Márja Eira, a Sámi Masters student at the University of Tromsø at the time of the interview, contributor to the EALÁT: Reindeer Herders Voice: Reindeer Herding, Traditional Knowledge and Adaptation to Climate Change and Loss of Grazing Land project, and a member of a family whose

primary economic occupation is reindeer herding (statements given in their original format— no changes in sentence structure or words) states,

Well, I was not yet born in 1978 but the effects of the implementation of this new law are still visible in a reindeer herding community. Before the law was adopted by the Norwegian state reindeer husbandry in Norway was a family-based lifestyle where every member of the family had a certain task in the cooperation with the herd and their life. The most significant change with the 1978-act was the change of the importance of the members. The member still had the same tasks, but the women and children were not highlighted in the Reindeer Husbandry Administration because now there was appointed-out leader of the permit unit, usually the man/husband. The family-based herding changed into a man's work and the women were not so significant or important in that sense that they needed a "status" as something on the papers. All members were listed up belonging under permit unit, but the man was the leader...

(Eira, e-mail interview)

The literature proposes the reason men had applied for the units instead of women was that women had chosen to stay at home in the *siida* (Ulvevadet 120; Roy 12). Ulvevadet explains that in the past young men and women were automatically part of reindeer husbandry and had their own personal reindeer. Traditionally women brought their reindeer to the *siida* in which their husbands belonged (120). "When the husbandry units were implemented in the 1970's, most men applied for such a unit, while women continued to move to the *Siida* of their husbands" (Ulvevadet 120). In other words, as women joined their personal reindeer with their husband's reindeer herd and the wife's

reindeer (unless she already held her own permit unit) according to the 1978 law became part of the husbandry unit, all recognition for ownership went to the permit holder the male. If the female individual did not already hold a husbandry unit her ownership recognition (as far as the government was concerned) was non-existent and therefore unseen economically. However, statistics do show a spike in reindeer ownership and reindeer in general during the 1980s as increased meat production over milk production changed the direction of reindeer husbandry. The states now saw reindeer herding as part of the economic sector with the industry holding the potential to be modernized as well as rationalized (Bjørklund 44). According to Bjørklund,

State subsidies favored mechanization rather than the use of manpower. The increase in the reindeer population caused huge problems for herders, since new laws rendered traditional Sami forms of collaboration very difficult. The result was overgrazing, low profits, and major social conflicts – the opposite of the intention of the 1978 law.

(44)

Jernsletten and Klokov write that in part, the rise in herders was due to the changes in the registration system which took in the fact that a married couple may own two husbandry units with each unit being *recorded statistically* as *two* husbandry units but *recognized officially* as being a *single* husbandry unit (88). The lack of recognition of traditional practice of women bringing their herds to their husband's *siida* under his operational unit, and not legally recognizing ownership, is a cause for the *official* absence of husbandry units being owned by women during this time period (Jernsletten and Klokov 120). The lack of official recognition, the states re-figuration of the family based economy to reflect

primary economic values on meat over milk production, devalued women's traditionally economies and reduced their need to participate in the direct care and taming of reindeer. The states now saw reindeer herding as part of a male dominated economic sector with the industry changed the direction of reindeer husbandry.

Berg states that the concept behind the production unit was to have only one unit issued per household. The state *assumed* that several adults would take part in the enterprise. Due to the state (as explained earlier) still entertaining patriarchal perceptions when considering economic activities, the male head of household was expected to be the owner of the permit unit. Upon his inability to continue in the leadership role the permit unit was supposed to be inherited by one of his heirs or gain the husbandry through contract. The problem resulted when the government had difficulty in figuring out who had the *right* to own the permit unit (78). The government not knowing who had the right and who did not have the right to own a permit unit was thought to have been solved in 1980. In order to control the problem, authorities decided that all persons over eighteen that fulfilled the state's requirements to own a permit could receive their permit after paying their taxes. However, the unintended result of the new regulations was that one household could now own multiple permit units with each permit unit being eligible for government support through a variety of different programs (Berg 78). The state did not realize its *assumption* that *different* adult permit holders would band together and create reindeer enterprises through the combining of their operations. Instead, in many cases consolidation between family members (maintaining some of the aspects of the *siida* structure) created collective enterprises.

Government subsidies meant to reduce herd sizes, actually increased herd sizes and the number of herders during this time period. The economic support offered by the state for various types of technologies and forms of modernization had both positive and negative results for both those with and without permit units (Berg 78). Rávdná Biret Márja explains:

This change brought changes in the importance of the people and became a very masculine work. The focus was on meat production and the women were kind of pushed out of the system, even though they were needed "behind"; sewing, baking and cooking, taking care of children etc. The women's status changed and was not so important anymore on the administrative level, but at home had the same important status. There were a few women who had the opportunity to get a permit unit which was imposed in the 1978-act. Every family needed a leader of this permit unit which made this Western way of thinking, more agricultural, not traditional at all. I think, but I am not sure, that the Norwegian government wanted reindeer husbandry to more alike agricultural and that is why the law was changed to get a similar system of it.

(Eira, e-mail interview)

The 1978 Reindeer Herding Act which initiated the rationalization for husbandry units solidified the government's desire to move the industry towards a single person enterprise rather than being a family-based operation (Ulvevadet 117). The changes in the herding management structure eliminated the functions of the *siida* which traditionally had held a "working partnership where herders co-operate in managing the reindeer" (Ulvevadet 115).

Ulvevadet suggests that because women often are the main contributor and often responsible for passing on knowledge to future generations, participating in the industry is felt by the Sámi to be the best way for young people to learn. Women who are working outside of the industry *force* the problem (out of economic necessity) of passing on traditional reindeer herding knowledge (118-119). Also, the restrictions to the number of herds using summer grazing pastures in modernity reached its maximum capacity a number of years ago. So room for increasing herd size is not available in the recognized reindeer districts. This resulted in young people having to wait to become a herder. As of 2004 the reported median age for a herder was 43 years old (Ulvevadet 118-119). Further research is needed to see how the transfer of reindeer into a “meat commodity” and exploring the reasons why women at this time did not actively seek a permit unit may or may not have forced women into the background and how if at all the changes to the industry impacted women in reindeer herding community’s economic sovereignty.

Chandra Roy points out that for women, the importance to be recognized for the “considerable” work they did manifested because, according to the authorities under the 1978 Act, all income earnings were attached to the license holder, who was most often a man. The issue of inequality became in *how* retirement or pension points were applied to individual contributors/participants of a husbandry unit by the state. Because all earnings held within a permit unit were automatically given to the permit unit owner, men then most often receive higher pensions because of higher recorded earnings. Women, participating under their husbands received no extra pension point even though they did work equal to and alongside the men. In some cases women who often end up only

receiving the state minimum pension even in some cases of death and divorce a woman cannot increase her annuity (Roy 12).

Eira also reflects on the importance of women's participation in reindeer husbandry in modernity,

I think the women are very important in the daily life of reindeer husbandry today. They still have the same tasks but mostly are now also working beside the work at home. Me and my mom are needed when the herd I brought to corral, we are responsible for giving medicine against botflies and also helping when working in corral with discovering our reindeer when separating the whole siida's herd into smaller herds (usually in spring before migration starts to summer areas and my family (me, mom & dad and my brothers) separate our herd from the rest and migrate on our own to our spring areas, but can also be separation in the winter if the pastures and grazing conditions are not so good, then it is better to have a small herd since it will make it easier to find pastures).

(Eira, e-mail interview)

As Eira points out women traditionally and in modernity have important roles in the care and knowing the earmark<sup>11</sup> of their own and others reindeer. Women actively participate

11. The Sámi form of earmarking dates back "at most 1000 years." The reason for this is that prior to 1000 years ago the need for identification was not necessary. "the economy of the Sámi people is based entirely on the individual rights of ownership of each member of the community...the pastoral aspect of reindeer-property is a special phenomenon which is closely linked to the social order. This is because the pastoral aspect rests upon economic relations between different households or 'economic units.' These relations can be formally expressed by marking the reindeer in a socially acceptable system of earmarks" (Näkkjärvi 82-83) "Saami women continued to own their own reindeer, and continued to make use of their own earmarks, also after marriage. ...and as a reflection of the social nature of property...against the linear functions of property as a wealth producing institution..." Changes in attitudes toward economic interests during this time period and a thought by governmental agencies to issue just one earmark to a family unit with the wife able to keep her own earmark if she had one before marriage was an attempt to consolidate outward signs of ownership toward the male identity resulting in shifting roles away from the "shared responsibility" of the household unit (Bergstrom 162).



with reindeer through the administering of medicines. Women like men must also be able to recognize and identify who reindeer belong in order to assist in the separation of reindeer into smaller herd sizes. Earmarks are a visible claim to reindeer and became necessary because of wild reindeer herds.

The earmark is much like a western brand as is assigned to an individual. The marks are made with a sharp knife to the ear through a series of notches. Examples of the earmarks can be seen at the end of this research (appendix 1-5). This mark gives both men and women legal and recognized ownership rights over individual reindeer. Earmarking began when herd sizes increased and a system was needed to identify ownership. Unlike branding in the United States, earmarks across the board are very similar in nature. The reason for this is quite simple: there is only so much room on a reindeer's ear. The practice can be assumed to have been practical in nature; the cuts in the ear can be easily seen because the ear stands out. When considering the "pastoral aspects" of reindeer as property. This consideration is an unusual occurrence connected to the Sámi social order in reindeer herding communities and the relationship between a herder's wealth/status and how many reindeer he/she personally owns. The earmark indicates which reindeer is owned by what family or economic unit with the most primitive markings found as early as the 1700s with the first written recording found in the codexes of Hammurabi. The first mention of earmarks is found in the "Lapponia" and was published in 1674. Earmarks allowed a herder to identify individual animals, as well as, whole herds. This was and is an important benefit because the earmarking could be seen if the reindeer was found among a wild herd. The earmarks being unique to each herder identified the animal to a specific owner. This form of identification also helped in

reducing claims by hunters outside of Sámi reindeer herding communities that a particular reindeer taken was wild. (Bergstrom 125-128; Näkkäjärvi 82-83). To help further understand the process of earmarks and the social cultural significance, Eira was asked to explain the procedure that a person must go through to obtain an earmark, and at what age does a person gain the right to mark their reindeer? She states that;

The parents apply for an earmark when child is born and choosing an earmark which is close to the fathers or mothers earmark; e. g that the child gets an earmark after the mothers where just one cut or two might be the difference. I have an earmark which is an earmark after my mothers', we have very similar earmarks where just three cuts are the differences. My mother's earmark is after her grandmothers so there is a red thread from generation to generation. I got my earmark approved in year 1990 when I was 6 years. You can get an earmark already when you are a newborn, but it takes some time because the parents must apply for an earmark and then it needs to go through a hearing round through the Administration of RH and then they send out to all other siida's around. And if no one opposed on it then the select committee approves it.

(Eira e-mail interview)

Under the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act all persons are registered and recognized by the state under one unit permit which was usually male. Yet, Eira's example of her mark in relationship to her grandmother is an excellent illustration of adaptation by the Sámi. In this case women maintain and cultivate traditional heritage through the passing on of specific earmarks. Through the use of symbols (which in this case are the notches in each reindeer's ear), a generational time-line of history is preserved complete with a story

of each woman associated with each earmark in the family lineage. This mode of preserving connections to heritage is a source of maintaining and passing on ethnic identity. The earmarks—each of them individual, but all in some way the same—link generations together through stories found in Sámi oral history, which in turn creates the “red thread” connecting past generations to the present by way of story. The tradition of moving an earmark through generational lines has grounds for further analysis in order to understand the generational ties and how they have been developed and passed on over-time and might increase knowledge of women’s traditional participation in the domestication and taming of wild reindeer in the circumpolar north.

### **Political and Social Conditions 1945-1980s**

Post-World War II was a period of reconstruction and a concentrated move by the state to uplifting the status of participating in agriculture. Bergstrøm maintains that after World War II “The entire north of Norway affecting Saami and Norwegians alike was devastated” (193). Forestry and farming were considered by the state to be the preferred means of making a living. The romance of reindeer herding was gone and privileges extended to the Sámi in these communities that had allowed them to continue their traditional and customary lifestyle and economic system were ending. In the 1950s this type of “exotic” economic activity was considered by some to be an inferior form of livelihood. Cash became the preferred form of exchange between supplier and consumer which in turn eventually led to the demise of the Sámi economic base (Lehtola 52-53; Nyssönen 167). However, despite the hopes of the authorities, reindeer herding did not disappear, but the combination of assimilationist education policies, road building, encroachment, and the media did have an effect on the construction of Sámi ethnic identity (Nyssönen 167) and the state concern at the time was to bring equality to their

people. Hugh Beach explains, “Some of the motivations that prompted the programme of rationalization were based on humane values of caring and compassion” (Beach 9).

Bergstrøm writes that the government initiated a process of standardization which meant “that everyone in need would have access to the same” (193).

Ulvevadet suggests that “The social and technical development processes have been very rapid for many indigenous peoples” (17); for the Sámi, rapid progress in the form of both modernization and transportation technologies grew with the assistance and support of the Norwegian government between the 1960s and 1980s. Ulvevadet reports that it is during this space in time the most fundamental change in Sámi reindeer herding families was, that families no longer worked as “one-family based enterprise.” There are a number of reasons for these occurrences. Primary education was mandated in all of the Arctic countries and meant families needed to be near a school. This resulted in many Sámi particularly women, moving closer to settlements and urban centers. Blending educational needs and legal requirements with industry’s needs, was sometimes difficult for Sámi parents. Education, however, was considered by Sámi parents to be very important for their children’s futures. Also, the absence of the welfare system out on the taiga or tundra was difficult for women with small children. Many women chose to live where they had access to medical facilities and other accommodations such as housing. Because of the increase in modernized transportation inside and outside of the herding areas, many families had adapted and grown accustomed to a higher standard of living, and additional income was needed to cover extra expenses. Women often filled that role by gaining employment outside of the industry (Ulvevadet 118,123-124). Eikjok explains that socio-cultural changes for women altered, not only how generations relate to one

another but also, eliminated an individual's ability to "inherit the lifestyle and identity of her parents and live life the way earlier generations did" (110) leaving the individual challenged "to create her own 'stories about herself,' defining her identity from the many possibilities available" (Eikjok 110) from inside as well as outside of her own ethnicity.

Post-World War II was a time of national rebuilding due to the massive amount of destruction caused by the war. Much of Sápmi, the Sámi homeland, was burned by retreating German soldiers (Lehtola 52). Between 1945 and 1948, Norway's minority policies continued to be based on the pre-war policy of integration and assimilation (Minde, The Post-War Z). Directly after the war the past policies remained but were not actively pursued. There was a growing belief within the authoritative body that the need to reinstitute old policies was no longer necessary. Because this was a period of national rebuilding, the assumption by the Norwegian government was based on the belief that since minority populations had accepted the state offerings they had also accepted the state identity.

The state moved forward in their decision to rebuild the infrastructure of the north in order for this area to become equal in comparison to the social and economic standards experienced in the south. The citizens of the south were asked to help their countrymen in the north to rebuild. This effort would stretch far into the state and result in achieving modernization in just a few decades. The "North Norway Plan" -was initiated. This plan provided not only economic support but also technical aid and education during this period of post-war reconstruction. This plan while not being a minority policy was part of a wider effort from the state to bring minority people into the process of nationalism through the process of united work efforts. The effort was in fact a way to combine

minority ethnic identities and fold them into the Norwegian cultural identity (Bellis 20; Paine 158-160; Stordahl 4).

As the state proceeded to tackle the massive job of rebuilding, an ideological change was beginning to form in the general, academic, and minority populations. Women, being part of that minority and who had taken on dual gender roles while their men were away at war, were beginning to question, alongside men, the fairness of past national policies. After the Germans left, the Norwegian population began questioning the governmental policies of the past. Having experienced forced occupation by a foreign power first hand, Norwegians took up an examination of past policies was now a topic. Infringements on the rights of men and women in Sámi society was forced by concerned citizens both Norwegian and Sámi alike, into the political forum. This examination would be a foundation for Norway to become a leading country in terms of initiating new minority policies particularly for the Sámi in the future (Kvist 72-73).

Norwegian racial and ethnic minority legislation at this time was distinguished by a flux of ideologies and a disparity between goals and means. On the one hand, the Norwegian government wanted the Sámi to assimilate fully into the dominant culture through whatever means necessary. Yet, on the other hand, there was a growing genuine desire amongst the public to improve all manners of life for the Sámi. There are two explanations for this: first, the reasons behind the war created the conditions of tolerance and resulted in Norwegian citizens as a whole gaining a more principled outlook when considering minority people, particularly since Norwegians themselves had undergone subjugation and occupation by the Germans: second, Norway's effort and diligence in helping draft and implement the 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* helped

encourage more ethical governmental approaches to minority issues and concerns. This in turn limited Norway from implementing minority policies based on assumed Norwegian superiority. Instead, they began considering minority policies based on equal rights. At first Norway thought it could eliminate any minority policy issues as long as the goals of the Norwegianization policy were achieved. The assumption was that once minorities received an equal share of the welfare society's offerings, they would become integrated. Therefore, the goals of Norwegianization could be achieved without the need to re-implement any out-dated policies (Minde, The Post-War Z; Niemi, National 416-417; Stordahl 3).

As stated prior, as early as 1948, public attitude had begun to change towards the Sámi as an ethnic group. Among the Sámi themselves a revival of cultural distinctiveness and a desire for recognition were increasing. Empathy for the Sámi as a native people was growing in both political and academic circles, and the Sámi themselves were reinvigorating their own causes (Niemi, History 335). This growing awareness and interest in the Sámi by the elite of the nation was in direct response to the ethnic genocide that occurred during World War II. Along with the growing awareness within certain populations of people the United Nations was focusing on the protection of Indigenous peoples including addressing issues of human rights. This combination of awareness and international attention to minority rights provided the foundation for the Sámi and those who supported the Sámi to activate politically (Niemi, National 417). In Norway, between 1948 and the late 1970s would be seen not just as “a non-policy” phase that was characterized by conflicting ideological currents but would also be seen as a time of mismatch between the goals of the government and means the administrative used to

achieve them (Minde, The Post War Z). This period will also be known as the era that laid the foundation through the process of dynamic group organization that initiated the state responses that developed what are now the Norwegian minority policies of today.

With a policy of integration still in motion, well-educated and motivated Sámi, by way of public demonstrations and legal actions began making their way into the national discourse. It is here that the Sámi began addressing the inequalities layered upon them by way of governmental policies and social constructs that limited the ability of a Sámi to participate equally as an ethnic minority and as citizens in the Norwegian society (Lehtola 9-11; Eidheim 2-3). Harald Eidheim in “On the Organisation of Knowledge in Sami Ethno-Politics” argues that this kind of political activity “for a long time: was only carried out by a few dozen people” (3). And in many ways it was these individuals beginning in the early 1950s who helped lay the ground work that initiated the rise of Sámi ethnic identity. As the rise of cultural awareness increased there was also a rise in ethno-political organizations such as the — The Norwegian Association of Sámi (*Norgga Sámiid Riikasearvi*). Established in 1951, the organization saw a rapid increase in membership through the practice of group consolidation. The growth of ethno-political organizations and their influence became a solid feature in future decisions made in both Norwegian and Nordic politics (Stordhal 5). Due to increased social and political involvement of both Sámi and Norwegian men and women, by the 1960s some of the discriminative and limiting laws and policies enacted by the government were being eased, just a little. As far as the political viewpoint of the state toward the Sami post-World War II goes the demeaning and assimilative attitudes were to be abandoned or in the very least lessened and the promise of the Sami being incorporated into the majority



population was now put into motion (Nyssönen 175-176). In Norway, a growing number of Sámi were becoming alarmed over an environmental justice issue between herders and the Norwegian government related to a proposed dam on the Alta River.

Two scholars, Rauna Kuokkanen “Self-determination and Indigenous Women—Whose Voice Is It We Hear in the Sámi Parliament?” and Malgosia Fitzmaurice, “The New Developments Regarding the Saami Peoples of the North,” suggest that the rise in Sámi resistance to national and social policies affecting their lives in the 1960s was in response to a proposed dam on the Alta River proposed by the Norwegian State. This dam in its original form would have flooded a Sámi village in Máze and important reindeer grazing and calving areas in the very heart of the reindeer herding and management area. This area was also a valuable resource area for the local people. The region under dispute was rich in various species of plants and animals, especially game birds. Another concern for this resource was the roadways that were being planned and to what was referred to at the time as resource exploitation or in this case over-exploitation by “tundra tourists” (*utmarksturister*). The Sámi objected on environmental grounds. This one issue led to an organized protest against the flooding of reindeer pasture, grazing and migration lands in the 1970s and early ‘80s wherein women played a central role, though they are rarely given credit for their active support and participation. During this issue the Government’s plans were met with ongoing resistance. In 1979 a massive organized demonstration was held at the construction site, and also a hunger strike was initiated at the Norwegian Parliament building in Oslo. At both of these events women were active participants (Fitzmaurice 89; Kuokkanen, Self-Determination 43).

Paine makes note that during the Alta affair, there were two women among the group of seven youths that gave an address on the stairs of the parliament in October 1979. The youth presented themselves in the traditional dress of the Sámi, “one of whom was a graduate of the Royal Academy of Art, and has her studio in Masi; and her parents are Saami from the coast. The other women being a schoolteacher in East Finnmark, where her parents were one-time reindeer-owning family but now had relocated to the interior of Finnmark” (Ethnodrama 195), it was important to Paine in “Ethno Drama and the Fourth World,” at the time of his writing to include a female singer Julie Felix, an American who arrived in Oslo for the engagement; “she immediately made her way to the parliament building where she declared her solidarity with ‘the Saami people’ and led the crowd in the singing of ‘We Shall Overcome’” (Paine, Ethnodrama 199). Though the name of the singer is given, I could not find the names of the women that Paine describes in his writing. The other references to women involved in the Alta conflict were in 1981 when fourteen women occupied Gro Harlem Brundtland, the Norwegian prime minister’s office. Brundtland met with the women but did not find their concerns “worthy of her time,” and after only a half an hour, she left. The women maintained their occupation and were “forcibly removed.” It would not be until 2005 that these women would receive recognition for their participation in a special ceremony awarded them by the Norwegian Sámi Association (Brenna; Kuokkanen, Myths 77).

There was also a group of mothers who were reported to have gone to Oslo with fears for the health of their young people who were participating in the hunger strike. Some of the women had never seen the city before. They first went to Bishop Andreas Aarflot of Oslo, on February 5, and a few of the churches in the area held “day and night

prayer services.” On the 6<sup>th</sup> of February the women met with the Prime minister. They spoke to her not only as a leader but also as a mother. The women refused to leave the office until the prime minister committed by way of a promise to stop the Alta dam construction. After spending a day and night in the office, of the Prime minister, she had them removed by Police. In the end, the Norwegian Supreme Court ruled and the Alta River was dammed. However, the huge demonstrations and the hunger strike brought international attention and was the catalyst that initiated State response to reconsider their policies of integration and assimilation and resulted in an amendment in the constitution authorizing the state to maintain and create environments and conditions that enable the growth and preservation of the Sámi way of life, culture and language (Bjørklund 41; Kuokkanen, Myths 77; Rojas-Munoz 2). A post-colonial feminist analysis of the reasons for different women’s involvement in this conflict would be useful in uncovering the motivations behind female participation.

Harald Eidheim, in “On the Organisation of Knowledge in Sami Ethno-Politics,” states there are several things to consider when trying explaining these events (1). Eidheim states that to understand properly the “driving force” or the “ethno-political” movement that inspired and developed a “Sami collective self-understanding” and revitalization of Sámi ethnicity one must also emphasize the ethnic identifiers at this time in history (1). Even though the battle over building the dam was lost, this environmental dispute quickly changed into an environmental justice and indigenous rights issue. It is at this time that Sami individual and collective rights both socially and politically become part of the national and international discourse. The environment for Sámi men and women to respond socially and legally to a variety of long-standing social, economic,

gender and environmental justice issues and inequalities laid the foundation for the gradual activation of the Sámi majority population in the 1970s and 1980s (Eidheim 3; Lehtola 9-11).

Else Grete Broderstad, “Saami Identity in Cultural and Political Communities,” reinforces this opinion by pointing out that “The ethnic membership – to be a Saami - was made relevant in connection with efforts for common political actions in relation to society at large” (5). She goes further to state that the ethnic identifiers can be seen in how an environmental justice issue, such as the hydropower development in the Alta/Kautokeino motivated a self-defense reaction by the Sámi along with a rise in Sámi self-awareness in this region of Norway (Broadstad 1997:5). Irja Seurujärvi-Kari in The Saami A Cultural Encyclopaedia supports Broderstad and Eidheim in maintaining that Sámi political efforts increased not only because of the Alta/Kautokeino conflict during the 1970s and ‘80s, but also because Sámi self-awareness and desire for official recognition led to the progression of legislation dealing with Sámi concerns rapid increase. The creation of the Sámi Rights Committee in 1980 was a direct response by the government to address the central issue of the Sámi; their national status. The Sámi Rights Committee first goal was to consider then make recommendations to the legal position of the Sámi people in the parameters of international and Norwegian law (Seurujärvi-Kari 351). Broadstad further supports the rise of Sámi men and women’s desire for recognition by explaining that, though often thought to be, the Saami association of Samenes Landsforbund(the Sámi Confederation) (SLF) founded in 1979, was “not a reaction to the government’s policy at the time but rather a reaction to the demand for greater Saami influence” (6). The need for recognition and an increase in

matters that concerned Sámi came from Sámi-created organizations such as the Norske Reindriftssamers Landsforbund (NRL), which was founded in 1948, and the Norske Samers Riksforbund, the Norwegian Saami National Union (NSR), founded in 1968 (Broderstad 6; Beach [The Saami](#) 10).

The 1970s and 1980s political and social struggles lead to increased discourse over Sámi identity among the Sámi themselves. Radio was a strong media participant in the growing feeling of community between Sámi. In 1959 Kathrin Johnsen became the first radio program secretary and maintained that position for thirty years. During that time she provided news and a way for Sámi people to connect with one another across borders. She was also named the “Mother of Sámi radio” (Lehtola 92). The use of radio broadcasting connected the different groups of Sámi with each other. Cultural information, Sámi languages and information about issues that concerned the Sámi people in all areas of social life and economy in all four countries was finally reaching the ears of Sámi people in the farthest reaches of the circumpolar north. Radio was used at this time as the medium to cross borders and share information important to the various Sámi populations that needed to be reached. “Radio is irreplaceable for developing the language and creating new expressions” (Lehtola 92) along with connecting Sámi issues with other Sámi communities. Sámi radio has a fifty year history and Sámi language broadcasts were aired on a regular basis in beginning in 1946 on Norwegian air waves.

### **Woman’s Resistance and Redefinition Movement 1970-1980s**

Early in the 1970s and into the 1980s Sámi women were heavily represented in the ethno-political movement as being “strong” and “less-repressed” than other Nordic women. This notion developed out of the need for the ethno-political movement to assert

a difference between the patriarchal societies of Norway and the presumed matriarchal Sámi society. A stereotype of what it was and meant to be a Sámi women was constructed and used as a symbol to define a difference between the Norwegian population and the Sámi. The implication was that Sámi women in contrast to women in the majority society were powerful and strong, along with representing the “all-mother” archetype of Sámi culture (Eikjok Gender 57; Kuokkanen, Sámi 8). Eikjok argues that “Mother power” represents a form of creation that extends far beyond the maternal experiences of women to include various aspects of the “motherly dimensions” such as compassion, love, language, desire and nurturing. But when used to describe indigenous women, in this case Sámi women, the term did not represent or bring attention to the need for women to transfer knowledge to their children and each other, in ways that were consistent with their traditional and customary methods of education. Nor did the symbolic label “Mother power” address the political and social need to change the structures and trade methods that have been and still are based on prevailing ideologies and masculine dominance (Eikjok 118). Another’s constructed perceptions of what it meant to be a Sámi woman, on top of years of patriarchal colonial pressures and Christianization, created changes in Sámi women’s traditional roles within and outside of the community structures. Added pressures to fulfill the “strong” women image and social pressures associated with the public myth, and having to conform to modern social expectations, resulted in many women feeling overwhelmed and under heavy societal pressures to live up to the typecast constructed by others (Eikjok, Gender 57; Kuokkanen, Sámi 8). This occurred at the time in the late 1960s early 1970s when women really

began to assemble and develop ways to address the stereotypes, economic injustices, and public opinions created by outsiders and began calling for equality in all areas of life.

Women actively began seeking ways to gain needed legislation and social support that would make them visible and bring back traditional equality between themselves and their male counterparts (Kuokkanen, Myths 77). It is important to understand that the process of Euro-centered colonization and assimilation policies are based on domination. Often, women who are also indigenous will experience both gender and ethnic/racial oppression inside and outside of their communities simultaneously. Kuokkanen states that Sámi women's experiences can be compared to situations experienced by other women living in third world conditions. She makes the point to suggest that "If the Sámi in general are characterized as the Other, Sámi women have been in the multiple margins because most research on Sámi society has been conducted in the light of male activities" (Kuokkanen, Myths 77). Along with economic inequalities Eikjok argues that modern cultural expressions distort traditional perceptions of what is socially considered "preferred qualities" when considering what physical attributes are desirable. She suggests that the pressure to maintain the Western perception of a body that is both slim and in control are also experienced by Sámi women (Gender 54). This is a change from just a thousand years ago when historically, Sámi women were sought out for marriage by kings *because* of their "full-bodied" beauty, along with "powerful magic" (Domokos 159). Johanna Domokos describes just such an instance in "Indigenitude and the Scandinavian Context," and writes that over a thousand years ago, the Ynglingar king's traditionally sought out and married Sámi women who were known all over the land as possessing great "physical beauty" (158-159). The kings at this time also respected and

feared Sámi women (and men for that matter), for the potent magic they possessed. During the Pagan era the king of Norway, Harald the Fair-haired was invited to a Yule feast by a Sámi leader with the purpose of having the king meet his daughter. The king was so enamored by her beauty that he married her and she bore him three sons (Domokos 159). Yet, in modernity there have been reports that some Sámi men have made statements that imply women who “look Sámi” are somehow inferior to those that don’t (Andrews 2). This kind of discriminative “chauvinism” attacks from within and the individual and social ramifications are well documented and is a colonial construct created through national messaging that permeated into Sámi society. The state’s message of one nation, one people, all equal, was intent on assimilation and integration. Social and public constructs favoring the dominant Norwegian society initiates a preference for certain appearances and decides who does- not-have the right “look.” The wrong look, or for a woman to “look Sámi,” establishes a perception of inferiority within the social order of society and inevitably can produce lower self-esteem and other social/relationship problems. One way of understanding how “the power of communication” can control a marginalized population is through the concept of the “other” (Eythórsson 152).

The Sami historically have been considered by Norwegian communities to be outsiders (Eythórsson 154). The idea of ethnicity like the notion of power is relational and is “only relevant in relation to ‘others’” (Eythórsson 153) and the outsider is often known as the “other.” The control or power to control through communication arises when an idea or stereotype is formulated around ethnicity and people within a community join together to create the manifestation of “discontinuity” (Barth 16). In addition, Kuokkanen proposes the use of feminist criticism and analysis in order to uncover



“biased premises and perspectives on knowledge production” (Myths 77). She further expresses in “Making Space for Indigenous Feminism” that the cause of Indigenous women’s oppressions stems from colonization alone, and in her view that explanation is too simplistic and superficial along with being “a repudiation of responsibility. The colonization of Indigenous societies strengthened the original patriarchal structures and, in introducing modern, masculine power, over-rode any non-patriarchal elements within Indigenous society” (Making Space 116). Since most of the research has been centered on male cultural norms and traditional economic practices, women’s contributions, participation and roles in reindeer communities has been ill represented or at best neglected (Kuokkanen, Myths 83). It was also during this span of time that the Norwegian government initiated the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act, which was fully implemented in 1979 (Seurujärvi-Kari 434).

In the 1970s Sámi women in reindeer herding communities actively began to take steps to define themselves, as a distinct culture and as a unique ethnicity. Also, they began re-defining what it meant to be an equal participant in reindeer husbandry and management (Eidheim 2-3; Lehtola 9-11; Roy 12). Myrdene Anderson points out in “Proper Names, Naming, and Labeling in Saami,” Sámi women had many of the same types of possessions as men. However, over time their ability to exercise their customary rights was slowly reduced. Christianity, Norwegianization policies and legislation that tied occupations to men “skewed” reindeer herds into being perceived inside and outside of Sápmi as a male profession. One way this was achieved was by requiring a woman to pick a surname. Historically, “married women... retained their original earmark pattern, and their original initial brand, often without adding their husband’s surname symbol to

their brand” (Anderson 195). In the historical record Anderson states that “except for the Norwegian parish records, they did not assume the husband’s surname for any purpose” (Anderson 195). Yet, as time moved forward women slowly were removed from their own self-identity and forced to be just a reflection of their husband’s reindeer operations and invisible in the eyes of the government. For Sámi women the social and political climate for them to begin their own movement for recognition, ethnic identity and self-identity had come. The groundwork of activism that had begun with the Alta Affair became the catalyst for the redefinition and revival of the woman’s revitalization effort that Elsa Laula-Renberg had begun so many years earlier. An effort that was spearheaded “when female reindeer herders wanted to have the same rights as their male counterparts” (3). These women argued that non-Sámi legislation, modernization, and overprotective national policies had resulted in oppression and the decline of equality between women and men (Andrews 3), making women invisible participants in an industry in which they had always been an important and essential part. As the feminist or woman’s movement moved ahead, some Sámi women had trouble identifying with the term “feminist,” because the term to them tended to depict women as sufferers.

Some women felt the term was associated with attempts to oppress men, while others saw the movement as a form of “radicalization” and a threat to the social structure of Sámi families. It is suggested in the literature, that some of these views were promoted and moved forward with the support of those still entertaining patriarchal and colonial archetypes. It is also suggested by some academics that negative views and impressions of “feminism” were supported and maintained by certain interest groups through different public and media discourses (Andrews 3; Kuokkanen, Myths 85).

The women's movement in the 1970s into the 1980s was a reaction to the increased feelings of social limitations and respect along with continued government inequalities in recognizing women's participation and contributions in traditional livelihoods. Sarah Andrews suggests that:

the arrival of modernization in Sapmi brought with it a loss of power among women. Modernization in this case is a broad term that encompasses several different ideas: Norwegianization, Christian influences, and a loss of traditional Saami culture. Without both Norwegian and Christian influences and the Saamis' eventual forced assimilation into a different way of living, their customs and ideas likely would not have changed as dramatically as they did.

(2)

In this case, Sámi women's traditional roles in reindeer herding societies had changed and adapted to become more mainstreamed. Integration into the dominant society had altered and changed the Sámi traditional lifeway.

Jorunn Eikjok points out how after World War II a second wave of colonization was initiated. Indigenous women all around the world were placed outside of traditional and contemporary economies through the establishment of the Gross National Product (GNP). Meaning that, work performed by indigenous women was not calculated or appreciated as part of an economic prototype that supported the norms of western society. In the Eurocentric paradigm of economy and family structure, the breadwinner of a family and manager of the household and economic decisions were considered by the state to be the dominion of men and women held the domain of housekeeper. Societies wherein relations between sexes held women as having autonomy in a variety of different

domains were by Norwegian standards considered primitive and backwards (Gender 54). The state in its attempt to “standardize” its racial and ethnic/minority populations introduced laws and regulations that “brushed aside the position Sami women traditionally had, effectively weakening their position in relation to men” (Eikjok Gender 54). The choice for women in these communities was to find a way to adapt to the social, economic and political environment while still maintaining their collective and individual ethnic identity.

In the states processes of “standardization,” according to Bjørklund, how the quality of homes, diet, hygiene and outward attire all came under the Norwegian notion of what was “nice, healthy and correct” (12). During the 1950s and 1960s Sámi women and men began realizing that to succeed within the dominant social structure and “participate in the general rise in living standards, the Sámi must gain an understanding of both the Norwegian language and cultural skills” (Bjørklund 12). One of the first impacts to women’s economic value within the social structure of their families was the eliminating the need for making of traditional clothing. In the new Norway and because “Saminess was by most people— including many Sámi—perceived as culturally inferior and a hindrance in daily life” (Bjørklund 12), the traditional Sámi shoes (*komager*) and dress (*gákti*) were no longer part of a society that was based on standardization, the implementation of technological advances and modernization emerging (Bjørklund 12, Lehtola 62). As a modernized society clothing a family with new industrial advances, access to pre-made products and social preferences meant that; Sámi woman no longer had to take on the responsibility of making clothes or preparing reindeer skins, unless she wanted to. Changes also were initiated within the reindeer industry itself. The

“modernization” of the reindeer industry further separated women from their traditional role. Though still vital to the family she was not “absolutely imperative” to the reindeer industry in this capacity any longer (Andrews 2-3; Dana 86).

Industrial advances and modernization projects onto Sámi traditional lands began under the “North Norway Plan” initiated by the government as early as 1952. The plan was based on four concepts all starting with the letter K, known as the four Ks “*Kunnskap, Kapital, Kraft and Kommunikasjoner* (knowledge, capital, power and communications). Under this plan the government engaged in energy producing projects, road and boat-way expansions along with providing opportunities for small holders to create new diaries. Advances and government promotion of nylon fishing nets and echo sounders also helped initiate small fishing enterprises. Though these changes in land use were important, the strongest changes were felt within the walls of the individual home. Through the introduction of electricity inside the average home the state created the environment to introduce such conveniences as electric cookers and washing machines and light. For women Norwegian and Sámi both residing in the circumpolar north, these luxuries revolutionized everyday life (Bjørklund 12). Alongside changes happening in the home, changes in the way reindeer were managed also altered how women participated in reindeer management. For Sami women, alterations in the early 1950s in the management of reindeer and an increase in the need for cash in order to meet monetary obligations transformed how women participated inside the industry. Norwegianization policies, state sponsored modernization and industrialization of reindeer and their management resulted in women seeking higher educational opportunities that were offered by the state at this time and leaving the reindeer industry

moving into other occupations in order to meet the increasing cost of a cash based economy (Dana 87; Kuokkanen, Sámi Women 9; Ulvevadet 120).

Eikjok explains that as the state increased the amount of time children had to attend school more and more families decided to settle into communities. The work of herding which often required travelling into the mountains and tundra for extended periods of time became increasingly a male activity. The introduction of the snowmobile to Norway began in 1961 at an exhibition in an effort to modernize herding and was a success. Even though some believed the snowmobile's introduction to the circumpolar north would be a failure, the usefulness of the technology quickly spread and the Sámi herders adapted themselves to its use. With the modernization in transportation men could easily maneuver their time between herd and home. By the 1970s the snowmobile was firmly established as part of herding practices (Williams 238-239).

Ulvevadet reports that the development and implementation of a cash-based economic structure changed traditional subsistence practices within and outside of Sámi society. With the new technologies and modernization in transportation additional expenses such as petrol, motorized vehicle maintenance, repairs/replacements along with increased purchases of both ready-made commodities and convenience items. Moving from a nomadic self-sustaining form of livelihood to a more sedentary community-based lifestyle obligated many Sámi families to take on mortgages and monthly service bills. One way women adapted to the economic and social demands of a cash economy and state mandated primary schooling for their children was by choosing to take advantage of both the employment and educational opportunities offered by the Norwegian state (117-118). The move away from herding and into mainstream society was one way for women

to contribute to securing the future of the industry by making a significant monetary contribution to the household earnings (Dana 87; Kuokkanen, Sámi Women; Ulvevadet 120). By securing a job outside the industry, Sámi women not only contributed financially, women also took advantage of the opportunity to become familiar with and acquire knowledge of the Norwegian culture and social/political structure “which the herding industry is dependent on and from which it cannot be separated” (Ulvevadet 120).

Kuokkanen does suggest that the displacement of women occurred because of economic projects that have directly affected labor division between genders, with the “more recent process such as hydroelectric development logging, mining and tourism...led to changes in reindeer-herding activities, which in turn has radically reshaped communal work practices and introduced a new, gender division of labor” (Indigenous 503). It is within reason to assume from the research that woman found the challenges of adapting to new economic practices or finding ways to participate in achieving extra income easier than men did at this time. Rávdná Biret Márja states:

There has [sic] always been differences of the womans [sic] and mans [sic]role, traditionally women have been taking care of the home, but earlier, when my mom was a young woman she used to be herding the herd too. Today there are only a few women I know who are engaged in herding, who has the knowledge in that because there is certain knowledge needed. It is mostly men who do the practical herding in wintertime, fetch the herd to corral etc. On the other hand, the women engaged in herding are VERY tough who work with it all year around because it is hard conditions, both physically and psychologically. The women

are important and they are needed, so in the end I believe everyone, both men and women can agree on that!!

(Eira, e-mail interview)

Some studies have shown that women's participation in reindeer husbandry went down under this act. Because of the various social and political conditions present in the reindeer herding communities during this time period, Kuokkanen suggests that reindeer husbandry in of itself at the time was "made next to impossible" through different forms of colonial encroachments to the institution of the nation-state borders ( Indigenous 503). However, between the late 1950s and through the 1970s, in the effort to modernize northern Norway there was a dramatic increase in public jobs created by the Norwegian state. During this period of time Sámi women responding to the mandatory primary education of their children, the formation of government supported housing, and increased economic needs left active reindeer herding to work in the public sector (Roy 12: Kuokkanen, Indigenous 503). During this time period and into modernity women in reindeer-herding communities participate actively in the management and herding of reindeer in and out of the field. Rávdná Biret Márja Eira states that:

I believe most of the elder women kept working at home as they had been doing before, but most of the youth educated themselves and maybe that is why in Kautokeino area most of the girls today have education while boys chose to be working with practical things like reindeer husbandry. This is something I have heard that the Kautokeino women are highly educated while the men are not and this is true.

(Eira, e-mail interview)



In this statement it shows that even though women may or may not have been actively participating in the field, they were continuing their traditional and customary roles of ensuring that the children (often female) understood the importance of an education if they were to continue on in the industry. Eira reflects,

When looking at me and my background then my parents urged me to go to school but in the same time they taught me the most important parts/traditions/tasks in reindeer husbandry and I have always been taking part in the work with the herd since I was a child. And still do and intend to. But there are some things what I feel I should learn and know how to do, like slaughtering a reindeer. Since I am the youngest child of six where three of them are boys my dad was focusing to teach my brothers all that practical work like earmarking, herding, slaughtering etc. and I was just a little girl that time. When I got older around 14-18 years I had other interests and was not so eager to learn that what I NOW regret, because I feel it is not so easy to learn anymore when I am a grown-up.

(Eira, e-mail interview)

One positive aspect of women taking on the responsibility of finding outside economic resources is that it gives women a chance to participate in the larger society, while also gaining education in administrative skills. These skills are necessary in a modern economic system if herd management is going to comply with Norwegian legal requirements. Desirable skills sought out by women were often directly related to paperwork and governmental applications, tax and insurance forms and a variety of other

knowledge concerning both Sámi culture and Norwegian culture, in order to operate and manage a healthy and productive reindeer herd (Ulvevadet 120).

Eikjok states that “Women, to a much larger degree, are taking up the challenges of adjusting themselves to cultural changes and an evolving society” (Gender 112). The ease in adjusting to change stems from, rather than being in opposition to traditions that allowed for flexibility in the gender codes associated with labor. Women in Sámi reindeer herding societies traditionally were free to assume male tasks as need dictated. The lack of cultural rigidity and adaptation strategies created over nearly a century of colonization better prepared women to transition to the new economic and social structure when compared to men (Eikjok, Gender 112).

### **Women’s Response and Resistance**

The switch from a traditional subsistence economic based economy to a cash economy, the states move to modernize and industrialize the reindeer industry, and the increased focus on meat production, resulted in women taking notice of their own positions within the industry. The legacy left by Laula-Rehnberg, her belief that “cooperation especially between women was crucial,” was awakened as Sámi women took notice in how the modern Sámi social, political and economic roles and positions had changed (Seurujärvi-Kari 434) and in many respects had been left unchanged. Sámi women in northern Norway and later the South of Norway began to invite discourse on matters that concerned them. In response, the first large scale seminar was held in Kiruna Sweden in 1975. The theme was explicitly for Sámi women in Sámi society. The following seminar in 1978 was held in Karasjok Norway and focused on the position of Sámi women economically and politically inside and outside of their communities. The

seminar in 1982 was organized by South Sámi women who organized their discussion around issues of bilingualism and mythology. In 1985 the Sámi Council endorsed a seminar whose purpose was to discuss and promote women's traditional economies. In this seminar Márát Sáráh produced a report that revealed the "invisibility" of Sámi women in public life. The use of seminars helped gather women together in one place (Seurujärvi-Kari 434).

In 1988, after the Nordic Council's Women's Conference Sámi women came together and created their first association, the "*Sáráhká*" (*Sámi Nissonorganisašuvdna*). The organization was named after the daughter of the ancient Sámi Goddess. The association focuses on issues important to women and emphasizes that Sámi women are a unique group (in comparison to the dominant population) as they are an indigenous population and an ethnic minority. This association raised new questions concerning Sámi women's place and rights in Sámi economic issues and political affairs. "The place of women in Sámi society was not as straightforward and equal as it may seem from the outside; the association drew serious attention to violence in the home, for example. It pressured for the securing of women's legal status and was also concerned with child raising" (Andrews 3; Lehtola 79). *Sáráhká* also played a substantial role in the founding of the International Indigenous Women's Council (IIWC) (Lehtola 79).

Sámi women became active in demanding the inclusion of the Sámi language in the education system. Women as well as men initiated the reintroduction of the Sámi costume. Great pains were taken to research, gather and extend knowledge to the different Sámi garment styles and accompanying traditions, bringing the attire new life and meaning to the generations of the 20th and 21st centuries (Lehtola 92). By the end of

the 1980s Sámi women had extended their cooperative discourse and made alliances with indigenous people and woman's organization around the world (Seurujärvi-Kari 434). In 1989, the Sámi as a people were recognized officially by the Norwegian government as "indigenous peoples of Norway" and made that decision made it completely clear to the nation that the Sámi satisfied all criteria for being indigenous through legal decree in the "Selbu case of 21 June 2001" (Seurujärvi-Kari 148-149).

In 1993 the Sámi Nisson Forum (SNR—The Saami Woman's Forum) was created to assist women in maneuvering various aspects in political life. The organization came about because Sámi women were no longer satisfied "being secretaries and making coffee for men in political life" (Seurujärvi-Kari 434). The organization was responsible for addressing the problem of gender equality within the Sámi parliaments who held the concept of equality as being between peoples, minority and majority populations rather than with equality between the sexes (Seurujärvi-Kari 434). Norwegian Sámi Parliament created official legislation "to promote gender equality...it instituted a three-year post for an office to coordinate women's issues and to promote the position of women and in 1999 it decided to make the post a permanent one" (Seurujärvi-Kari 435).

In 1996 Sámi women introduced their own magazine *Gába*<sup>12</sup>. The magazine was created to give Sámi women of all ages a place to express opinions, concerns, short stories and poems. In 1999 the *Reindeer Herding Women's Network*<sup>13</sup> was officially

12. *Gába* is a bilingual (North Sámi, Swedish and Norwegian) journal contains information that depicts the Sámi community through a woman's perspective. *Gába* means "independent woman" and was first published in 1996 and is available every 1-2 years as funding allows (Lindi).

13. "The Reindeer Herding Women's Network has been active for nearly a decade and has placed at the forefront of its efforts the preservation and development traditional knowledge in reindeer husbandry. The network was officially created in 1999. The overriding intention of the Network has been to strengthen family based reindeer herding and the education of children and young people. In 2002, the Network started work towards the creation of a dedicated educational centre for reindeer husbandry. In 2009, the BIRGEN project was initiated as a cooperation between the Reindeer Herding Women's Network and the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry" (Kemi).

formed and began working on establishing a center that focused on education that promoted Sámi activities and livelihoods that promoted equality among sexes.

Discussions were also held to assess critically the positive and negative characteristics of traditional reindeer herding practices, one example being the practicality of the customary “earmarking” of more reindeer to male offspring, giving men more reindeer (Kuokkanen, Myths 80). For women in Sámi communities both North and South, as well as across borders, the active participation and open dialogue between women about women’s concerns and issues prompted women to seek social and governmental recognition of Sámi women’s issues in an effort to gain back autonomy, self-determination and economic independence that once was traditionally theirs.

### **Summary, Analysis and Recommendations**

In the beginning of this research I argued that the rise of the Sámi women to redefine and re-identify themselves lay at the intersections between and among three things; changes in post-World War II Norwegian social and environmental awareness, global racial/ethnic minority activism, and feminist rebellion. This has been accomplished by first establishing through post-colonial feminist approach that historical gender roles in Sámi society were historically different, but equally valued alongside men. Women and men maintained a variety of roles that were gender specific yet in harmony with social and customary practices pre-Christianization and pre-Norwegianization. The study found that during times of necessity or when away from the *siida* women historically suffered no social stigma if conditions socially or environmentally came up that initiated women to change gender roles and participate in hunting and fishing.

The research demonstrates that the Sámi pre-and during the missionary period, had an established belief system that was overseen by the *noaidi* or Sámi shaman, and the Sámi themselves had a complex cosmic world-view and were watched over by a variety of divine beings. The study found that rituals amongst the Sámi like the naming ceremony were continued secretly by both women and men, even after the introduction of Christianity. The research also shows how the Norwegian state utilized a variety of legislative means to “convince” Sámi communities to “convert” to Christianity. The study found evidence that female deities were part of the collective and individual experience of both Sámi women and men in the pre-Christian period. Further research using postcolonial feminist analysis and criticism would be helpful to further understand how women in these communities held on to their ethnic religious understanding, while functioning and adapting to the missionary and governmental mandates to become Christian.

The study supports and maintains that traditionally; economic equality between sexes in Sámi reindeer communities was tied to individual reindeer ownership which began at a very early age for both men and women. Self-determination and gender equality in reindeer ownership was built in the social system. The research found that the practice of earmarking not only served as a visible way physically to identify individual reindeer from wild reindeer, but earmarks also personally identified the animal and the responsibility thereof to an individual person and to that person’s family. The earmark in the research has also been shown to be a physical symbol, linking one generation with the next or in this case grandmother to granddaughter by way of the “red thread.” Further historical analysis that combines governmental and missionary records with Sami oral

historical accounts to establish how far back the identification of individual ownership can be traced, would be useful in discovering more about the female connection to the domestication of reindeer, as the tale of “The Origin of Wild Reindeer” suggests.

The research finds that the tradition of equality in female ownership and independence permitted women to hold a stronger position socially, economically, and historically. Sámi women held their own wealth through the ownership, management, and involvement in reindeer propagation, and through such activities as preparing hides, sewing clothes and the ownership of her “own reindeer.” These activities helped secure the position and importance of women in Sámi society because of their reciprocal relationship with others; it was the female talents of sewing and manufacturing shoes that enabled men to meet the harsh environment and their obligations in the field. Ready-made clothing and shoes along with other pre-packaged modern commodities are shown in the study both to have a negative and positive effect on the traditional roles women maintained within their communities. The research shows that as the need for women’s talents in sewing and manufacturing shoes reduced so did the value of the traditional role. On the other hand, the research shows that women took advantage of this freedom and took the state up on educational and occupational opportunities transforming how they individually and collectively responded to political, environmental and social transformations. The cash economy required such adaptability.

The study found that historically the Norwegian state was intent on subjugating its minority population under the principles of national identity formation, shaped as policies of integration, assimilation, and social Darwinist idealisms. And, illustrates how Norway, as one of its first administrative tasks, defined the “us” and the “them” in their

society in order to establish formal differences between the civilized (preferred) and the uncivilized (non-preferred) populations and behaviors of the Norwegian citizen. Once established, the study found that the government and those that supported the ideologies of the day spread their message through the use of public venues and social organizations and over time, cultural ascription toward the state by Sámi men and women alike, assisted Norway in initiating controls and authority over many aspect of their own culture, economic, and traditional life, and therefore resulted in changing many of the customary and cultural roles women maintained pre and post Christianization and Norwegianization. In other words the Sámi themselves, buying into the variety of technologies and modern conveniences, over time also assisted in changing and adapting many of their own customary and traditional practices inside the home and in reindeer management. Further investigation using a post-colonial theoretical model in combination with post-colonial feminist criticism would be helpful to discover the depth in which women in relation to men culturally ascribed to the state and how the ascription affected each sex separately.

Like the American Indians in the United States who were subject to governmental integration policies, language restrictions, economic disparities, forced Christianization and increased colonist encroachment of land, Sami men and women suffered from such anti-minority practices, although on different scales and of different types. The historical time line in this study does show that Sámi ethno-nationalism developed very slowly with many of pre-World War II policies staying in effect until the late 1950s.

The research does support that the first “Sámi Awakening” in the 1900s was mainly a response to a law passed in 1902 by Norway that prevented any citizen from



owning land that did not use or speak Norwegian. In reaction to this piece of legislation and the historical oppression of Sámi identity and protection of Sámi cultural rights, Laula-Renberg spearheaded the first resistance movement in 1904. At the beginning of the World War II much of the Sámi activist movements were put on hold as Sámi men were called to fight in World War II by Norway. It would be interesting to explore what activities and means of economy women who stayed in these communities maintained during the war.

The research finds that a key instigator or “watershed” moment in Sámi redefinition and resistance and movement began due to a dispute between the Norwegian government, Sámi men and women, Norwegian settlers and environmentalists over the proposed damming of the Alta River. The study finds that, even though the dam was eventually built, this environmental dispute quickly changed into an environmental justice and indigenous rights issue. And, that this one issue led to creating the local, national and international environment for Sámi men and women to initiate their responses to address long standing social and legislative policies, trade and industry, gender inequalities and environmental justice issues. Women as well as men played key roles in this conflict, although women were poorly represented in the literature. More analysis using an investigative methodology such as feminine critique would be useful in identifying and understanding the different roles women held in the dispute. The research also finds that Sámi women during the 1970s came together in cooperation to discuss matters and issues important to them as women. From these meetings women created specific organizations that engaged other women to participate.

This study also has found that even though women made strides in 1970s and the 1980s, the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act was an example of the continued invisibility of women working in the industry and an obstacle in participating equally with men. Labeled as gender neutral the act in of itself did not make rules in areas such as divorce. Nor did the Act take into consideration the spouse in regards to equality in labor recognition, thus leaving women out of an economic practice of which they customarily had always been a part and which led to their questioning their own worth, inside and outside of their communities.

On the issue of internal racism this study found adequate literature to establish that women in Sámi society do experience from time to time internal racism. More research in this area is needed to provide a deeper look into the causes, in order to address the problem. The research uncovers that there were Sámi women during the 1970s and 1980s that were uncomfortable with expressions like “feminist,” in describing them. The study found that these women felt the term depicted women as sufferers or devalued the worth of men. Some women thought the woman’s movement itself was a form of radicalism. These views were not well illustrated in the literature. Information on why women felt this way and where they got their information or even who “they” as individuals were, was sparse and not readily available so no real conclusion could be drawn.

The study finds that women took advantage of the Norwegian government’s higher education and employment opportunities. Factors for changing occupations were due in part to the efforts of the Norwegian government to modernize the northern region. Technological advances in transportation such as the introduction of the snowmobile as a

herding tool increased the demand for cash which also stimulated women to seek employment outside of the industry. Sámi women took jobs in part to support the industry, but also because Sámi women had often been traditionally responsible for making social and economic/trading connections. It is in this way that Sámi women adapted customary roles and continued to work as the “ambassador” of the family. Outside work allowed for Sámi women to continue to network and make important social connections. This research found that there were academics who suggested female participation in reindeer husbandry went down during this period in time. However, when looking deeper, this study found that the reason for the reduction in participation appears to be more in line with Sámi families needing extra income and the increase of state jobs in the public sectors at the time. The research does suggest that in the 1960s the rise of women gaining higher education in northern Norway increased the gender gap between men and women. The study found that though a rise in reindeer herders occurred during the late 1970-1980s, it was due to how individual permit unit holders were registered not due to an increase in female herders.

The research finds that adaptation skills forced upon women through a variety of assimilation, integration and patriarchal economic structures had pre-conditioned women in many respects to become more adaptable to change. In many ways women were in a social and geographic position to assume the needed skills to function within mainstream society and open to the opportunity to work outside of the reindeer industry. In this way women began the process of expressing a different way of supporting reindeer herding and management, thus redefining how participating in the industry is viewed as early as the 1960s.

The women's movement focused on many issues important to women. The switch from traditional subsistence economic base to an economic base focused on meat production brought about the need for women to discuss ways to increase their own recognition and participation. The research finds that the women in Sámi society in the north began to structure their resistance and re-identification movement after the legacy left by Laula-Rehnberg. Using her belief and promotional style as a foundation for creating an environment of cooperation and discourse, Sámi women began the processes of coming together in the form of group lectures to find solutions for the social, political and economic conditions that continued to oppress them, but that in many respects had been left unaddressed by the Sámi rights movement. The lectures resulted in the establishment of women's organizations and magazines. The organizations and the magazines have given Sámi women a place to offer their thoughts, publish poetry and short stories, and establish connections with other women.

In 1988 the first women's association *Sáráhkká (Sámi Nissonorganisašuvdna)* was created this organization played a central role in the formation of the *International Indigenous Women's Council*. This organization brought Sámi women's issue into the public conversation and began to raise new questions concerning Sámi women's rights and their place in Sámi economics and politics. Sámi women had extended their cooperative discourse and made alliances with indigenous people and woman's organization around the world by the end of the 1980's. And it must be mentioned, that *Sáráhkká* had a significant role in forming the *International Indigenous Women's Council*. *The Reindeer Herding Women's Network* established itself as a center that

focuses on education that promotes Sámi activities and livelihoods that promote equality among sexes and continues on today.

Ethnic developmental involves ever-changing processes influenced by social and individual decision and ethnic identity with shared culture and common descent, as this research shows. The study also suggests how the researcher him/herself also holds power through the ability to ascribe ethnic definitions such as Euro-centered philosophies originated from Darwin and ethno-political groups; researchers can also create a positive distinction between the “us” and the “them” as in the myth of the “strong Sámi women.” Ethnic ascription formulated by accredited persons and carried on by dominant powers has been shown in this thesis, to have had positive or negative outcomes that carried on well into modernity.

## **Conclusion**

Although for Sámi women and other indigenous people all over the world there is no “going back to what was,” as Vigdis Stordahl writes, “among the Saamis we are now hearing women’s voices” (Stordahl, The Difficult 189). New methodology blended with the tried and true have been extended to include feminist approaches as ways to discover buried nuances in the historical literature and the inclusion of oral traditions as part of the historical accounts. Bjørg Evjen in “Research on and by ‘the Other’, Focusing on the Researcher’s Encounter with the Lule Sámi in a Historically Changing Context,” comments that over “the last few decades, the discipline of history had also been expanded to encompass social and cultural conditions - more widely understood - that required the use of oral sources. This contributed to the researcher and the researched being on more equal terms” (Evjen 186).

The Reindeer Husbandry Act of 2007 has now replaced the 1978 Act. The 2007 act concerns itself with internal changes rather than the “template of agriculture” on which the 1978 Reindeer Herding Act was based (Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry 20). According to the Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry Administration under the regulations of the 1978 Act the state had primary control in all areas of reindeer herding. Under the 2007 Act herders have been authorized a greater say within the industry and its management. The main changes in the 2007 Act when compared to the 1978 Act recognizes and gives a central position back to the *siida* system. The reindeer pasture district which is an administration one level higher than the *siida* herding alliances is in control of deciding land use regulations for each district. The 2007 regulations allow for the resolution of conflicts and finding rational and long-term solutions by reindeer owners themselves. The Act also permits herders to decide how many reindeer they may own but reserves the right to step-in in certain situations and initiate maximum limits of reindeer numbers when necessary. The most important part of the new Act is in the recognition of civil rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. The 2007 Act allows more involvement of parties in the industry over sections that previously had been the domain of the state (Norwegian Reindeer Husbandry 20). Though in modernity Sámi women in the circumpolar north continue to work together to bring their important concerns and issues to the political and social stage as new expressions of what it means to be a Sámi women and a female reindeer herder, they are currently being redefined. Patriarchal Western based economic systems are being reconsidered and re-evaluated through various legislative policies, and as Eikjok warns, “Sámi women’s perspectives and ways of understanding are scarcely reflected in the public discourse, which is still

dominated by men” (Gender 57). The question left for the contemporary world then is not whether or not Sámi women will continue to find ways socially and politically to make themselves visible in all aspects of reindeer management, but *how* Sámi women will redefine and reshape the patriarchal structure, in order to restore women’s place where they are considered by Sámi traditions to be a central part of Sámi life moving forward into the future.

Appendix

Figure 1: Ravdna's Earmark:

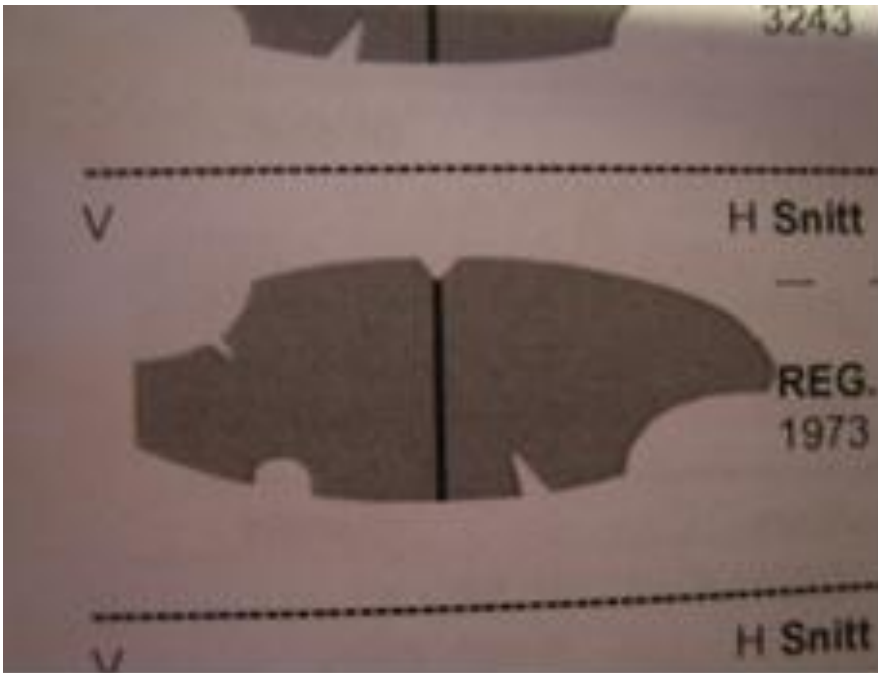


Figure 2: Ravdna's Brothers





Figure 3: Ravdna's Fathers Earmark



Figure 4: Ravdna's Mothers

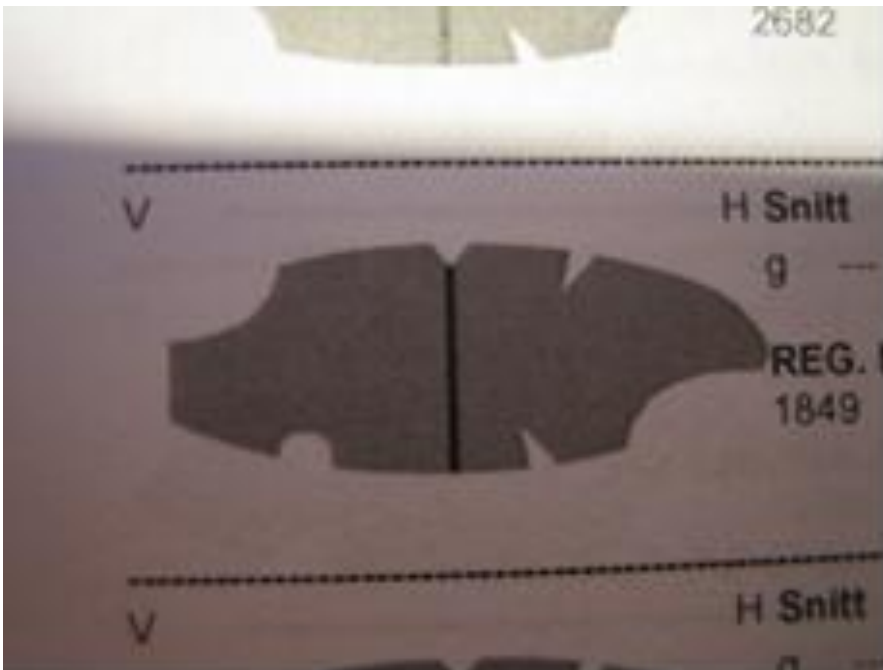


Figure 5: Ravdna's Youngest Brothers Earmark



(Reprinted for use in this research with permission from Rávdna Biret Marja Eira)

Figure 7: IRB



The University of  
**Montana**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

*for the Protection of Human Subjects*

**FWA 0000078**

Research & Development  
University Hall 116  
The University of Montana  
Missoula MT 59812  
Phone 406-243-6670 | Fax 406-243-6330

**Date:** May 2, 2011

**To:** Marcie Bremmer/Kathryn Shanley, Native American Studies

**From:** Dan Corti, IRB Chair

**RE:** IRB 90-11: "Exploring the traditional and contemporary role of Sámi women in reindeer societies:  
A Comparative Study"

*[Handwritten signature]* 5/2/11

Your IRB proposal cited above is exempt from the requirement of review by the Institutional Review Board in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 46, section 101. The specific paragraph which applies to your research is:

- (b)(1) Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- (b)(2) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) Information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.
- (b)(3) Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under paragraph (b)(2) of this section, if: (i) The human subjects are elected or appointed public officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
- (b)(4) Research, involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.
- (b)(5) Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate, or otherwise examine: (i) Public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in or alternatives to those programs or procedures; or (iv) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under those programs.
- (b)(6) Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

University of Montana IRB policy does not require you to file an annual Continuation Report (Form RA-109) for exempt studies. However, you are required to timely notify the IRB if there are any significant changes or if unanticipated or adverse events occur during the study, if you experience an increased risk to the participants, or if you have participants withdraw from the study or register complaints about the study.



**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA-MISSOULA**  
 Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
 for the Use of Human Subjects in Research  
 CHECKLIST / APPLICATION

IRB Protocol No.:  
90-11

At The University of Montana (UM), the Institutional Review Board (IRB) is the institutional review body responsible for oversight of all research activities involving human subjects outlined in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Human Research Protection ([www.hhs.gov/ohrp](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp)) and the National Institutes of Health, Inclusion of Children Policy Implementation (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/children/children.htm>).

**Instructions:** A separate registration form must be submitted for each project. IRB proposals are approved for three years and must be continued annually. **Faculty members** may email the completed form as a Word document to [IRB@umontana.edu](mailto:IRB@umontana.edu). **Students** must submit a hardcopy of the completed form to the Office of the Vice President for Research & Development, University Hall 116.

**1. Administrative Information**

Project Title: Exploring the Traditional and Contemporary Role of Sámi Women in Reindeer Societies: A Comparative Study	
Principal Investigator: Marcie Kaye Bremmer	Title: Graduate Student University of Montana
Email address: <a href="mailto:marcie.bremmer@umontana.edu">marcie.bremmer@umontana.edu</a>	Cell Phone:
Work Phone: Home phone- 406-493-6951	Office location: <u>NAC 112B</u>
Department: <u>NAS</u>	

**2. Human Subjects Protection Training** (All researchers, including faculty supervisors for student projects, must have completed a self-study course on protection of human research subjects **within the last three years** (<http://www.umt.edu/research/complianceinfo/IRB/>) and be able to supply the "Certificate(s) of Completion" upon request. Add rows to table if needed.

NAME and DEPT.	PI	CO-PI	Faculty Supervisor	Research Assistant	DATE COMPLETED Human Subjects Protection Course
Marcie Bremmer, Student, Dept. NAS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7/5/2010
Kathryn Shanley, Faculty Supervisor, Dept. Native American Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	5/1/2011
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**3. Project Funding**

Is grant application currently under review at grant funding agency? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, cite sponsor on ICF if applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		Has grant proposal received approval and funding? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes (If yes, cite sponsor on ICF if applicable) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Agency	Grant No.	Start Date	End Date	PI
Is this part of your thesis or dissertation? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		If yes, date you successfully presented your proposal to your committee: 02-26-2011		

For UM-IRB Use Only

**IRB Determination:**

- Approved Exempt from Review, Exemption # 2 (see memo)
- Approved by Expedited/Administrative Review (see \*Note to PI)
- Full IRB Determination
- Approved (see \*Note to PI)
- Conditional Approval (see memo) - IRB Chair Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- Conditions Met (see \*Note to PI)
- Resubmit Proposal (see memo)
- Disapproved (see memo)

**\* Note to PI:** Study is approved for one year. Use any attached IRB-approved forms (signed/dated) as "masters" when preparing copies. If continuing beyond the expiration date, a continuation report must be submitted. Notify the IRB if any significant changes or unanticipated events occur. Notify the IRB in writing when the study is terminated

Final Approval by IRB Chair: [Signature] Date: 5/2/11 Expires: \_\_\_\_\_

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