

# Reindeer herding in Finland

## A report for Trashumancia y Naturaleza

Tero Mustonen and Gwyn Jones



Skolt Sámi herders in Inari, Finland. Gleb Raygorodetsky, 2014, Used with permission



European Forum on  
Nature Conservation  
and Pastoralism

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## 1. Introduction to reindeer herding practices in their geographical context

Currently the maximum number of reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*)<sup>1</sup> allowed in Finland is 203,700 animals. Currently there are approximately 4,600 reindeer owners. Both Sámi and Finns herd reindeer and in fact any citizen of the European Economic Area can become a reindeer herder in Finland.

The modern reindeer year revolves around the following cycles<sup>2</sup>:

- A. *Calving*: The young calves are born between late April/early May and June. The majority of the calves are born in the 'wild'<sup>3</sup>. After that the reindeer are released to the summer pastures to roam freely.
- B. In mid to late June the reindeer are gathered for *calf marking*. Round ups are carried out in specific reindeer cooperative locations, where the herds are counted, the new calves marked with ear marks and then the reindeer are released to roam freely until autumn in small herds ranging in size from a few animals to dozens at a time.
- C. In the autumn the reindeer mate, after which they are collected into *reindeer corrals* and separated – the respective owners determine what animals will be butchered, ownerships are re-affirmed and the animals to be kept are counted. The work at the corrals often involves extended families and networks; whole villages can be involved.
- D. After separating the animals, they move to *winter pastures*. In modern times all reindeer cooperatives use artificial fodder in addition to the natural lichen pastures.
- E. After possible further separations for slaughter, additional corrals are organised to determine the ownership and group attachment of each reindeer. After that the animals are moved to *spring pastures*, and the reindeer year begins anew.

Modern day reindeer herding is a mix of traditional skills and land use and motorised herding. Some activities during the reindeer year, for example the gathering and corralling of animals, is conducted using helicopters, ATVs and in the winter time using skidoos<sup>4</sup>. At the same time, the knowledge which underlies decisions regarding pasture use and herding activities can be seen to form a long continuum all the way back to early historical times. Reindeer herding has shown remarkable adaptive capacity over the centuries.

The area of Finnish reindeer herding, especially the Sámi home area, is for the most part in the sub-arctic boreal zone and is situated north of the Arctic Circle<sup>5</sup>. It is located for the most part in the Province of Lapland, Finland. The focus of this paper rests on the Sámi herding territories of Upper Lapland with some additional information about the southern paliskunta<sup>6</sup> cooperatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Male reindeer can be from 90-180 kg, females 60-100 kg. Calves 4-6 kg at birth. A reindeer can live up to 20 years.

<sup>2</sup> Individual cooperatives may deviate or have regional variations.

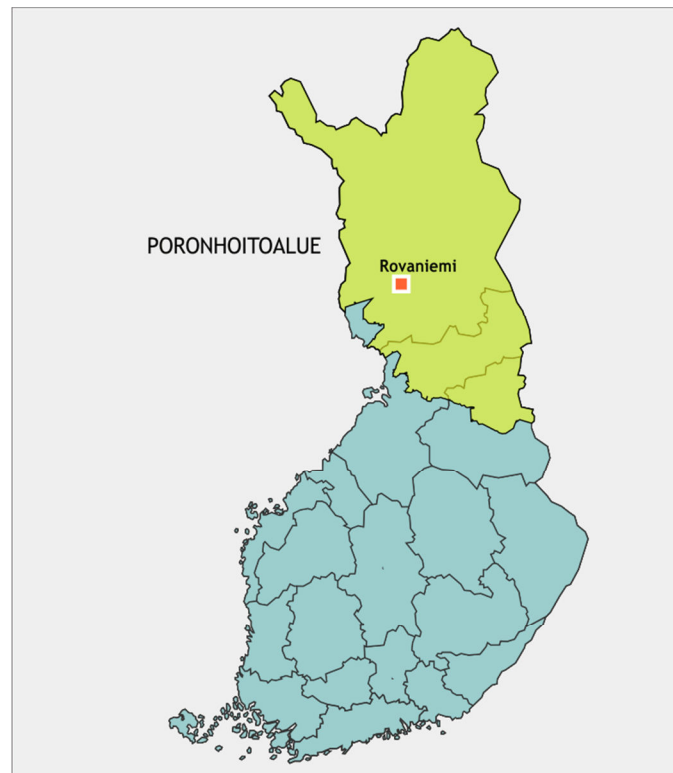
<sup>3</sup> Unfenced areas

<sup>4</sup> Arrival of skidoos in the late 1960s and early 1970s was seen as a 'revolution' in herding.

<sup>5</sup> Some herding paliskunta cooperatives are located south of the Arctic Circle. 41 are north of the Arctic Circle.

<sup>6</sup> Paliskunta refers to a reindeer cooperative within the state structure that has been the way to organise herding since late 1800s. The members are the reindeer owners of the region.

The Sámi often argue that their Indigenous *siida*<sup>7</sup> territories constitute the ‘endemic’ model of herding and socio-cultural organisation of the region. Tensions exist between the state-created paliskunta cooperatives and the Sámi siidas, to modern times.



*The Finnish reindeer herding territory (in green) as defined by the state. Picture: Paliskunnat, 2015*

The northern boreal forest is pine-dominated, even though birch and spruce can be found the region too. Temperatures are quite extreme, in the winter occasionally reaching down to -40 Celsius and in the summer climbing to 20-25 Celsius, with extremes of -50 Celsius and + 30 Celsius recorded. The current climate can be categorised as a short-summer and snow-dominated. The predominant winds are from the southwest, with the Gulf Stream’s influence making it milder than other climates in the same latitudes. Climate change may put human activities in the region under additional stress, especially when it comes to subsistence and land-based economic activities, such as reindeer herding and ice-fishing (see Arctic Council 2005).

## **2. Transition to modern governance involving the State**

The development of the traditional herding systems up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century is further described in the Annex. The most significant change in historic times was the decision by the (Russian-Finnish) State to impose a system of reindeer herding cooperatives called paliskunta-system from 1898

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<sup>7</sup> Here *siida* refers to the pre- to early historical self-organisation of a Sámi clan- and family communities. The network of *siidas* covered the whole northern Fennoscandia in early historical times. A *siida* has been defined as “an ancient Sámi community system within a designated area but it can also be defined as a working partnership where the members had individual rights to resources but helped each other with the management of the herds, or when hunting and fishing. The *siida* could consist of several families and their herds.” (reindeerherding.org)

onwards<sup>8</sup> (Nahkiaisola 2003b: 302-303, Aikio and Helle 1985: 203-204), disrupting and destroying to a large extent the foundation of the Sámi indigenous subsistence land use economy.

Sámi were forced to implement joint land-use decisions that did not follow their cultural governance or ecosystem-based, nomadic free-ranging pastoralism with the reindeer. Each new state-imposed paliskunta reindeer herd had to adapt to closed, marked territories, as opposed to herding on an open range, adapting the use of pastures to the variation in the seasons, climate conditions, snow amounts and the availability pastures for the reindeer. With the imposition of state land use came as well the notion of private land use (Nahkiaisola 2003b: 302-303), which was an alien concept to the Sámi endemic land use decisions.

Today, Sámi land use and land use decisions co-exist simultaneously with the state-imposed paliskunta system. This triggers several pasture and land use *conflicts* with no end in sight.

### 3. Reindeer herding and the CAP

#### *Views on the relationship between reindeer herding and 'agriculture'*

In Finnish the term *maatalous* refers 'agriculture' in practice and administration. *Porotalous*, or sometimes *poronhoito*, which is reindeer economy and husbandry/herding, forms a distinct, separate segment of rural land use in Finland. While some RDP measures are relevant to reindeer (and outlined below), the main reindeer herding activity is dealt with at the national level outwith the framework of the CAP.

Why has this situation arisen? In two separate indicative interviews the role of permanent grasslands and the EU situation regarding reindeer herding was discussed<sup>9</sup>. Ministerial Adviser Tiina Malm from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry confirmed that reindeer herding is a category of its own and should be seen as completely different economic activity from the rest of the Finnish rural economic activities<sup>10</sup> (Malm 2015). She said that:

- The reason why reindeer pastures are not a part of the EU and national, general pasture management is first of all the wishes of the reindeer herders themselves to keep the reindeer sector separate
- The long distances to manage, monitor and supervise the reindeer pastures<sup>11</sup> in a way compatible with the demands of the CAP would be extremely difficult to the point of being nearly impossible. It is important to remember here the vast territory of the reindeer herding area in Finland – it contains habitats ranging from tundra conditions to treeless marsh-mires, pine tree forests. The various pastures come in many forms, from small lichen patches to vast natural feeding grounds<sup>12</sup>.
- In the future of course reindeer herding and pastures may become an issue, for example in biodiversity-related questions, but currently it is not. (Malm 2015)

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<sup>8</sup> Finland was a Grand Duchy of Russian Empire at the time.

<sup>9</sup> Conducted by phone 17th June, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> In relationship to agriculture.

<sup>11</sup> By the state authorities

<sup>12</sup> Preference even in the southern cooperatives is to use, when possible, natural pastures. Terrain differences bring over the vast territory different forms of pasture uses.



Having said all that, the author also discussed the future – i.e. how do Helsinki, the herders and others see things – are we moving to EU aid or will we stay mostly with a State Aid system? The Ministry thinks that there might be some movement towards the EU model in the future. However, this would bring a hugely-burdensome inspection regime to locations which are extremely remote – if only for this reason, the State Aid system seems destined to survive for some time.

#### *Direct payments and ‘permanent grasslands’*

Ministerial adviser Juha Palonen (2015) from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry confirmed the special place of reindeer herding and its pastures separate from other pastures and other forms of grazing. Permanent grasslands have absolutely nothing to do with herding. As reindeer areas are natural pastures based on the rights to free roaming, they lie outside the EU CAP discussions, including the permanent grasslands. There are no similar non-herding systems in Finland – reindeer herding is on its own.

In Finland the reindeer herding is defined in the Law on Reindeer Herding<sup>13</sup>. In the law the geographical territory of the reindeer herding is defined and the statutes and responsibilities of the state agencies determined. In terms of governance reindeer herding is managed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry<sup>14</sup>.

The modern day reindeer cooperatives, can, in theory, decide themselves the uses of natural pastures to a large extent (Jänkälä 2015). According to the experts at the Reindeer Herder’s Association, which acts as a coordinating body for all of the paliskunta cooperatives, they have awareness of the new round of CAP negotiations (Ollila 2015).

Each paliskunta unit has so-called ‘right to use pastures’<sup>15</sup> that guarantees the cooperative the means of choosing, as the situation demands, the seasonal uses of their lands. As there are 56 recognized cooperatives for herding, it means there are “56 decisions on how pastures are used” (Ollila 2015). Individual details reflect, for example, the presence of additional feeding, ecological and geographical specificities of a paliskunta cooperative territory (Jänkälä 2015). Often the cooperatives favour the instincts of the reindeer themselves when choosing which pastures are used (Jänkälä 2015).

Chief Executive Officer Ollila (2015) feels that as reindeer herding is a very specific form of economic activity, it would be “impossible” to control the situation from Brussels, given the 56 cooperatives and individual situations. In two separate interviews, the Chief Executive Officer Ollila (2015) and the Reindeer Economy Advisor Jänkälä (2015) both confirmed that the CAP decisions would not affect the uses and decisions regarding reindeer pastures. Rather they are and continue to remain under the decision-making of the individual paliskunta cooperatives.

#### *State headage aids for reindeer*

There is a headage-based State Aid for all herds with at least 80 animals per ‘household’. The current amount is 28,50 €/animal; the Sámi Parliament and other bodies have tried to raise this to

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<sup>13</sup> Poronhoitolaki 14.9.1990/848

<sup>14</sup> [www.mmm.fi](http://www.mmm.fi) - Maa- ja metsätalousministeriö

<sup>15</sup> *Vapaa laidunnusoikeus* in Finnish.

36 €/animal, but have not so far succeeded. The total annual budget is in the range of €4.4 million, which equates to roughly 155,000 animals.

The Ministry determines the total number of animals allowed for each cooperative unit, which is in effect a 'cap' on the number of animals supported. There is a rigorous slaughter plan imposed by the Ministry on the cooperative paliskunta units annually. New entrants would have to be integrated into the cooperative's total allocation. What happens when there are 'too many' reindeer remains a constant and varied internal conflict, with some Sámi/non-Sámi elements. In short, many cooperatives may have too many animals, sometimes 'hidden' from officialdom, causing conflicts. Conflict over other issues can spill over into 'purely' grazing questions -in the Nellim case (see Annex below), the cooperative penalised the Sámi herding unit in the NE corner, due to their protests against the forestry (which the majority of the cooperative supported).

Despite the existence of these State Aids, there is overall only a low level of national support for the livelihood – around 12-14% of total income<sup>16</sup>. The main source of income is the selling of reindeer meat<sup>17</sup>.

#### **RDP support**

The 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme is currently being rolled out and implemented regionally and locally<sup>18</sup>. It contains roughly the same limited number of measures which incidentally support reindeer herders as the 2007-2013 Programme.

Reindeer farms can of course, like other rural businesses, apply for various support measures from the Rural Development Programme and initiatives such as LEADER, as long as they meet the criteria. However, when the application is being assessed, reindeer herders would not be considered to be any different from any other rural actor, so it is not 'reindeer-herding-specific'. Such funds are rarely granted to reindeer herders, to the best of the author's knowledge.

The Finnish RDP says that *"reindeer herding on extensive grazing grounds is practised only in northernmost Finland, where it has a special significance for the Sámi people, besides fishing and hunting."* (MMM 2013: 7). Because of this, reindeer herding needs to be treated in a special separate way; this Finnish approach is different even from those of Sweden, Norway<sup>19</sup> and Russia, the neighbouring countries with similar herding economies.

Agri-environmental issues, Less Favoured Areas, organic farming and so on are not considered relevant for the reindeer pasture discussions. When Finland joined the EU in 1995, Malm participated in the negotiations, but reindeer herding manifested only in a few details during these talks, and there were no special conditions included regarding pastures.

A new entrant herder can, if his or her application attracts sufficient assessment points, receive a one-off payment of €25,000, partly funded from the RDP. To give some context, the average spend in the past 5 years has been €0.45 million/year.

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<sup>16</sup> MMM 2013

<sup>17</sup> 100,000 animals are butchered, resulting in 2-2,5 million kgs of meat.

<sup>18</sup> MMM 2013

<sup>19</sup> In Sweden and Norway it is only the Sámi who can practice reindeer herding.

Would there be scope for using some of the more useful RDP measures in a more targeted way for reindeer herding? Agri-environment measures could indeed be a potential tool in addressing and perhaps solving some of the current problems. However, action taking place within the EU framework would probably increase the administrative burden – not just for the Government in terms of monitoring etc. (c.f. comments on direct payments above), but for the herders themselves. Since the reindeer herding economy is already hanging by a thread, such additional burdens could tip the balance. Seen in this perspective, domestic aid at least partially guarantees the flexibility needed, despite its weaknesses.

The Government is aware of the needs of reforms. The issue goes beyond particular measures however; it may well be that a complete and through-going overhaul of the national policy on herding is needed to solve the outstanding Sámi land and water rights issues and the relationship of reindeer herding with other land uses, particularly forestry and mining. All the parties probably want to reform the system, but problems emerge in balancing the Sámi, state, Finnish herding and economic and environmental needs of this unique form of cultural-social traditional practice. On top of that, additional burdens emerge from rapidly-proceeding Arctic climate change.

### *Other relevant forms of support*

The State also gives support of the order of €1.4 million to other investments in reindeer herding, of which roughly 1 million goes to erecting and repairing reindeer cooperative (paliskunta) boundary fences with other cooperatives and the neighbouring states. To put that in perspective, investment support to Finnish agriculture is €250 million per year, but this does not reflect their respective value for Sámi culture and tradition, tourism and so on.

The state also makes around €1.8 million in loans to herders annually, including loans to new entrants and for skidoos and the like.

The State provides State Aid compensation for losses resulting from predation. Currently, according to ministerial degree 503/2012 and law 2009/105, the base prices for lost animals are:

- Adult female reindeer up to €676.20 for lost animal
- Adult female reindeer due to be slaughtered €225.40
- Adult Males €322-483
- Calves €141.68

Losses to golden eagles are no longer compensated; the current payments cover bear, wolf, wolverine and lynx. The compensation can be paid to the owner of the reindeer and/or to the cooperative (the situation varies, for example, if the owner is not known). The amount payable actually varies over the year, using a rather complicated formula.

Specific support is also given to the Skolt Sámi (see Annex), due to their special socio-historical situation - they are the only Sámi group in Finland to have their own specific law, which provides for support as follows:

- Only Skolt individuals, collectives of individuals and communities can receive support
- If a person earns more than €42500/year they cannot receive support



- Eligible Skolts can get a grant for 45% of the construction costs of a new house and 45% of other costs as agreed
- A house renovation grant covers up to 50% of costs and a loan up to 40% of the costs
- For pipes, plumbing and so on 40% grant and up to 50 % in loans
- To purchase lands in the Skolt territory, 85% loans
- To purchase reindeer (animals) and related tools etc., grant of up to 40%, loan up to 50 %
- To construct a fishing base in the wilderness, grant of up to 40 %, loan up to 40 %
- Investments in initial investment and start-up costs of small businesses, grant up to 60%, loan of 30%
- Purchase lands for the business loan of up to 85%
- State provides the loans, interest at the moment is 3% and loan period 5 to 25 years

This is all national aid amounting to around €0.35 million in grants and €0.25 million in loans on average.

#### 4. Current conflicts and challenges

Today in Finland, reindeer herding is associated with many conflicts. Within the ‘system’ there are on-going disputes over Sámi land and water rights and the tensions between “Sámi-style” herding and the State’s approach to managing herding. ‘External’ conflict drivers include, for example:

- Climate change impacts (Arctic Council 2005)
- Over-grazing which leads to feeding with artificial fodder and hay
- Non-traditional land uses: mining, infrastructure development, roads, in part tourism (for calving areas), wind power, hydropower (Aikio et al. 2011), industrial forestry
- Conflict between agricultural activity and reindeer feeding (Ollila 2015)
- Ageing of the herders
- Poor price of reindeer meat<sup>20</sup>
- Impact from traffic accidents
- Predation by bear, wolf, wolverine and lynx and unsuccessful predator policies<sup>21</sup>
- Differences in interpretation of problems and scales (Niemi 2015)

Chief Executive Officer Ollila (2015) considers these increasing pressures in general<sup>22</sup> to be “of concern”. Seasonal pasture use is becoming more and more fragmented due to other land uses and this increases the pressure on existing pasture lands. If they are to address these problems, development projects need to take into account the necessary infrastructure, the amount of land needed and the demands made on it the scale of the issues and their relationship with the pastures.

Overgrazing is a sensitive issue – in the last few weeks the Reindeer Herder’s Association has disputed the interpretation of researchers that the reindeer pastures are overgrazed in Finland (Niemi 2015). The President of the Reindeer Herder’s Association Jukka Knuuti said in early June that the views of the researchers are not valid.

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<sup>20</sup> It has been argued that this emerges as one of the biggest challenges – the traditional knowledge of herding is not passed on as there are no young herders.

<sup>21</sup> The compensations the state pays regarding predation are paid late and are a constant source of criticism.

<sup>22</sup> Not referring to Sámi specifically

Scholars from the Natural Resources Institute of Finland argued in their study, released earlier in the Spring 2015, that lichen pastures of the reindeer cooperatives are 'significantly smaller' than before and that over the past 34 years their size has shrunk to just one third of their previous extent (Niemi 2015). In the predominantly Sámi cooperative areas of Inari, Utsjoki and Enontekiö, over 75 % of the natural lichen pastures have disappeared, according to the researchers. The reason for this, according to the report, is over-grazing.

Jukka Knuuti stressed that climate change is the main driver of the changes to the pastures. As the north warms up, lichen areas 'green up'. Some scholars have even argued in recent years that the presence of reindeer herding in natural pastures helps to slow down climate change<sup>23</sup>. What is undoubtedly the case is that there is now a need to feed the reindeer with artificial fodder and additional hay, especially during the winter time.

In any event, the overgrazing issue is plagued by different interpretations and the blame-game. Researchers say that the lichen pastures are under too much stress. The Reindeer Herder's Association, usually supported by the actual cooperatives, blames climate or other land use impacts, depending on the site. Forestry affects the tree-hanging lichen - another cause of legal battles, for example in the Ivalo region.

The Sámi argue that as their own endemic siida-style land use and pasture cycles have been wrecked by the imposition of new boundaries by the modern states (which only settled the area relatively recently) - they cannot take the herds where they should go as a part of a nomadic life style. The situation is similar for example in the Swedish Lapland close to Jokkmokk<sup>24</sup>.

Chief Executive Officer Ollila (2015) from the Reindeer Herder's Association stresses that each possible conflict of pasture uses in reindeer herding areas is assessed individually. In recent years the presence of reindeer on farmland has emerged as an issue in the south-western and south-eastern corners of the reindeer herding area<sup>25</sup>. These are ethnically Finnish cooperatives. Chief Executive Officer Ollila (2015) points out that the historical roots of this land use conflict stretch back for hundreds of years.

The farmers are concerned that the reindeer eat the hay on the fields, and the herders stress the right to free pastures. Some cooperatives have solved the issue by erecting new fences to prevent the animals moving to the fields, while an increase in herding activities have also relieved some of the conflict (Jänkälä 2015).

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<sup>23</sup> This controversial idea rests on the 'trampled snow' phenomenon – when the pastures are in use, animals trample the snow cover, and this reflects sunlight back into the atmosphere in a dispersed manner, as opposed to a unified, unbroken snowcover, which then speeds up the heating.

<sup>24</sup> Additionally there is a similar conflict in Enontekiö region, Finland.

<sup>25</sup> For Southwest: Torniojoki area with Lohijärvi cooperative and for Southeast: Kuusamo-Posio region (Jänkälä 2015)

Ollila (2015) feels that the best model of solving the conflict with farmers is through local negotiations. There is a legal mechanism in place, the “Board for Assessment of Damages”<sup>26</sup> which consists of the representatives of the farmers, reindeer cooperative, the state officials<sup>27</sup> and an outside person to assess the actual damages. Remedies must be sought there before any legal proceedings can commence.

The outside expert is supposed to be a ‘neutral party’ in the farming conflict. Chief Executive Officer Ollila (2015) feels that the work of these boards has been from time to time “inefficient” and the skills to make proper assessment of the damage and compensation due vary.

The Nellim case is a particular example illustrating some of the problems, including some of the international dimensions to the issues.

### *The case of the Nellim reindeer pasture conflict*

The community of Nellim reindeer herders has been in a state of conflict with the state reindeer-herding cooperative Ivalon paliskunta for several years. Their central argument has been that they conduct a distinct “Sámi-style” reindeer herding, with traditional pasture areas which do not conform to the boundaries set for the state forestry and reindeer cooperative in the area. The State on the other hand considers that it ‘owns’ all the land in Upper Lapland and can therefore decide on the relevant issues, whether it is industrial logging or herding.

The contemporary reindeer herders of Nellim belong to a handful of Sámi families. One of these families is the Paadar (Mustonen 2011b). Previously the community herders have herded as members of the state-governed reindeer herding cooperative “*Ivalon paliskunta*”.

This paliskunta has divided into two distinct reindeer herds and the Nellim herd uses separate winter pastures than the main stock of the Ivalon paliskunta herd, for example so that the spring pastures of the Nellim herd are mostly located in the wilderness areas of Sarmitunturin erämaa-alue away from the paliskunta proper grazing areas (Mustonen 2011b).

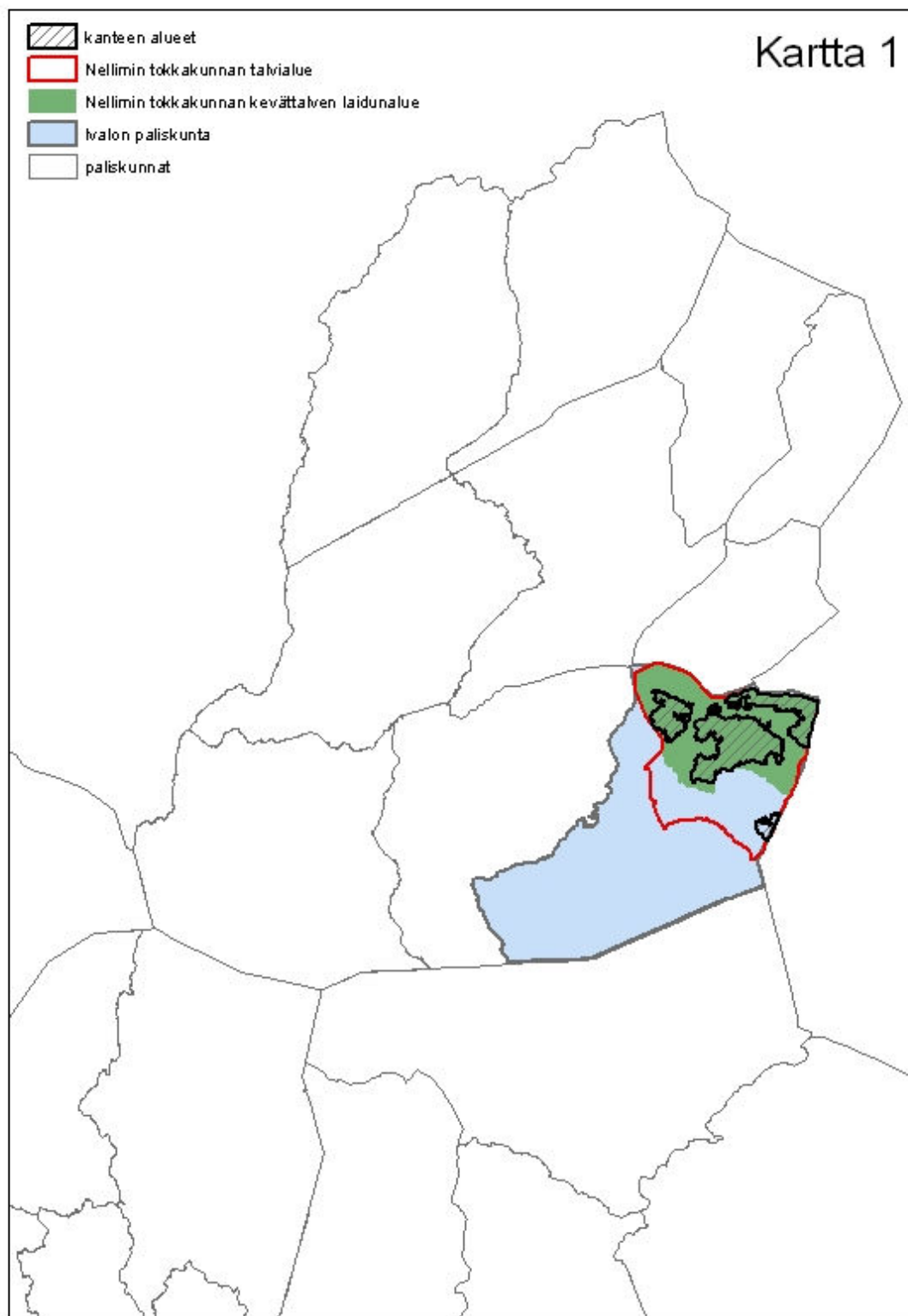
In modern terms the system of the Inari Sámi which derives from the siida times seems to be ecosystem-based integrative system of land use and occupancy. For example the role of predatory animals in the whole complex system was more accepted<sup>28</sup> and reindeer losses more probable due to the specific characteristics of the “eastern”-style reindeer cultures of the Inari and Skolt Sámis.

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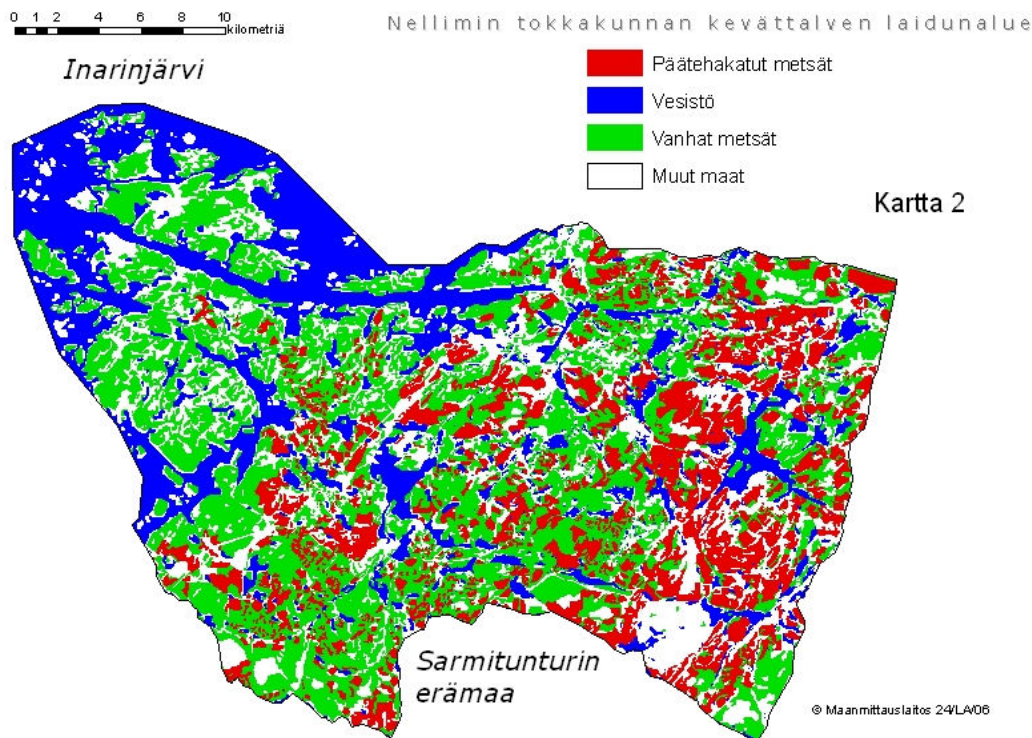
<sup>26</sup> *Vahinkoarviolautakunta* in Finnish. Each municipality according to law needs to have one such board.

<sup>27</sup> ELY-keskus (Ollila 2015)

<sup>28</sup> historically.



*The map indicates in blue the state cooperative “Ivalon paliskunta”. The red line divides the Nellim community winter pastures from the cooperative lands. Green indicates the late winter – spring winter pastures. The shaded area has been under dispute and a source of conflict between the forestry and the Nellim herders. Map: Nellim community herders, 2011.*



*Nellim community disputed spring pasture lands. Red shows the clear cut pine forests. Blue indicates rivers and lakes. Green the remaining old-growth forests and white 'other lands'. The presence and impact of pasture fragmentation from forestry activities emerges clearly. Map: Nellim community herders, 2011.*

Since 1990s the Nellim herders had various disputes with their herding partners in other parts of the Ivalon paliskunta cooperative. In the 2000s the herders from Nellim have entered into legal and land-use conflicts with the state and state forestry company "Metsähallitus" over the rights of the reindeer to utilize lands which have been clear-felled for the purposes of industrial logging.

Various national juridical rulings have been made regarding these disputes (Mustonen 2011b). Some of the conflicts have been solved through long-term agreements (Metsähallitus 2011). It is worth noting that these agreements that the Nellim herders achieved with the state organizations led to several similar agreements on conservation of timber lands for the purposes of reindeer herding between 2009 and 2011 in Upper Lapland (Metsähallitus 2011).

Over many decades and using a variety of sources, the Sámi have demanded that issues to do with their own locally rather well-documented herding models be considered as part of an urgent reform of the reindeer economy of Finland (for example Aikio 1985: 201, Aikio et al. 2010). At the same time, society at large has imposed several activities which impact significantly on natural resources, including road construction and forestry, on the lands and waters of the Nellim area. There are plans for mining and railroad construction.

The United Nations Human Rights Commission has called for a moratorium on industrial land use in the region until such a time a solution can be found which settles the outstanding issues between Sámi land uses and ownership and the 2005 land claims of the Finnish state.

Given the fact that the United Nations reacted strongly in 2005 by issuing a moratorium on parts of the area based on the need for state-Sámi relationships to be clarified, we can determine that the region, the community and the Inari Sámi peoples living in the contemporary Nellim belong within the international legal aspects of Indigenous peoples. Therefore they should be partners in a far-reaching and multi-year scientific study of the situation in the community.

Until the findings of such an inquiry are available for public debate, scholarly criticism and Sámi participation, all imposed actions from the larger society and state should be suspended. This would allow proper time and space for this unique Sámi community to address their histories, land use and occupancy and reindeer cultures in all of its forms [examples from Norway include for example Oskal et al. (2009), from Finland from another region (Aikio et al., 2010) and from Russia (Mustonen et al., 2011)].

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## Annex: Historic background to the contemporary reindeer herding systems

### *The first settlers*

The last Ice Age caused the formation of the current water bodies and geographical features (Carpelan 2003: 21). The defining element of the region is the Lake Aanaar-Inari, which influences the human histories, and land uses of the area. The Sámi know this region as “Sápmi”, land of the Sámis or Sámi homeland. The first human inhabitants reached the region known today as the Finnish Province of Lapland roughly 7370 BC (Carpelan 2003: 31-32). The oldest human occupancy evidence has been dated 8000-6000 BC from Inari region (Carpelan 2003: 33). This is roughly 2000 years *before* the oldest known samples of pine were growing (7520 years ago). These sites are areas of communal dwellings that have been discovered in archaeological digs. For example, Carpelan (2003: 33) claims that the first arriving peoples to the Aanaar-Inari region came from the coast of the Arctic Ocean north of Aanaar-Inari. These peoples can be classified as hunter-gatherers, and this was the dominant mode of existence for a large part of the last 8000 years, as evidenced by a range of archaeological evidence.

The link between these prehistoric societies and the contemporary Sámi triggers often-heated debates and divides scholarship. It is a matter of political and legal interpretation too. For the purposes of this paper it is enough to state that the contemporary Sámi populations conceptualise themselves as the “indigenous” inhabitants of the region. This is significant in international and national legal debates and indeed has been recognised in the constitution of Finland<sup>29</sup>.

### *Development of Sámi Nomadism*

The switch from hunting gathering dominance towards reindeer herding in Sámi society has been a source of considerable debate amongst scholars. In pre-historic and early historic times it seems likely that the Sámi utilised reindeer as draft animals and hunting decoys to lure wild deer to hunting spots.

Aikio (2004) has explored the fate and strategic choices made by the Peltokylä Sámi community located in the present-day Enontekiö and argues that the hunting economy of the Sámi could not withstand the increased pressures of the Finnish settlers who arrived in the region from late 1600s and 1700s onwards. Sub-arctic hunting requires large territories to sustain even the small human populations of the Sámi *siida*. As the Finnish and other settlers also began to hunt and fish the Peltojärvi ecological zone, this left the Sámi with few alternatives. The North Sámi in the high mountains of Sweden and Norway had already developed a nomadic, large-scale herding way of life. This provided a model also to the Sámi in Peltojärvi to maintain their distinct society, culture, language and other elements of survival in the face of growing pressures from the arriving colonists.

It is important to note that these siidas were autonomous reindeer herding and hunting societies that existed well into the historical times. The pasture uses within these endemic land occupancy systems relied on free-ranging pastoralism and careful decisions on pasture territories as a part of nomadic cycle. Towards the 1700s herding started to dominate across the region as opposed to deer hunting. The two European powers influencing the region, the Swedish Crown and the

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<sup>29</sup> Which refers to the Sámi as *the* indigenous peoples of Finland. See more in Constitution Act, 1999.

Russian State, both recognised these forms of indigenous governance by for example the Skolt Sámi in written *gramota* documents (see more in Mustonen 2011: 79).

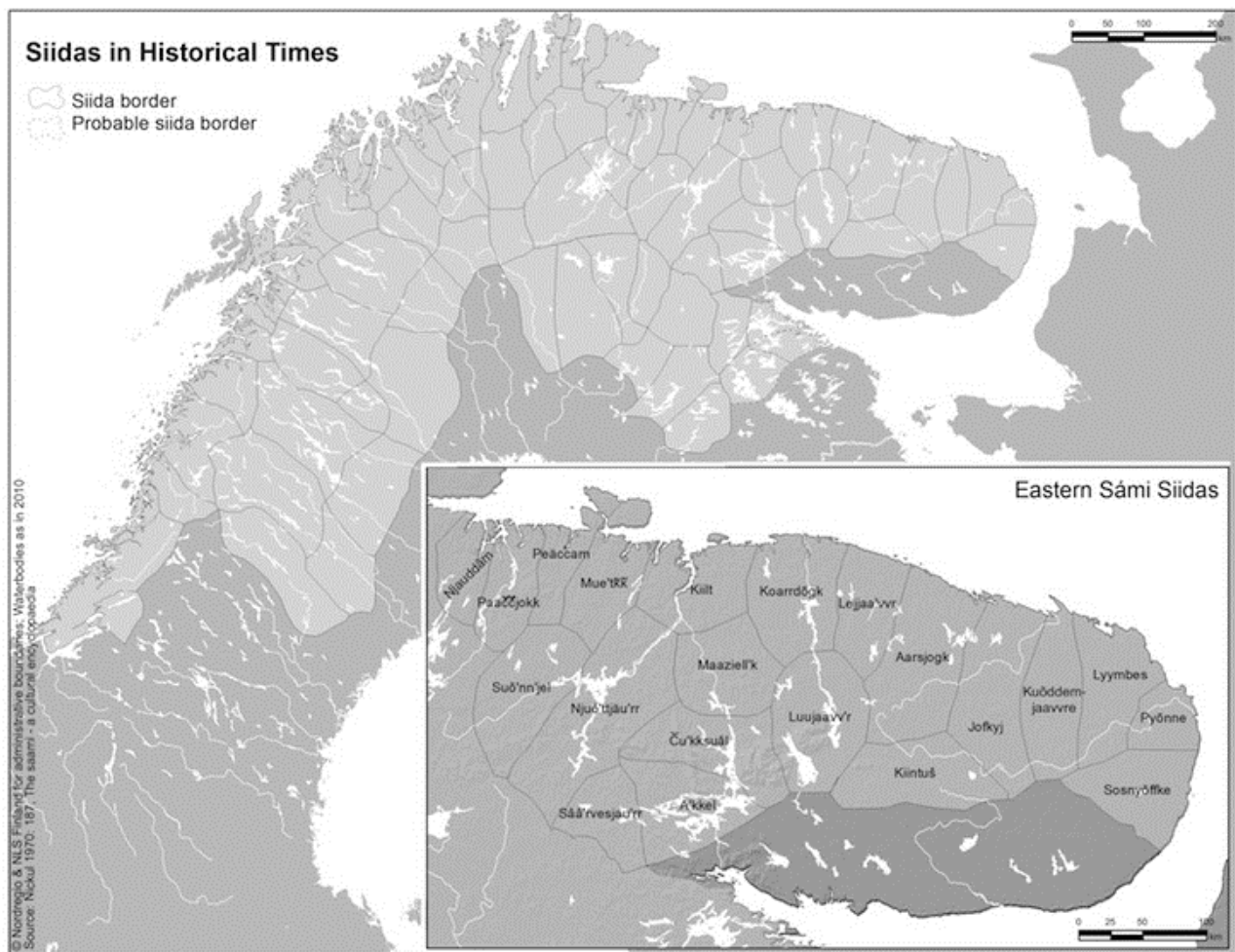


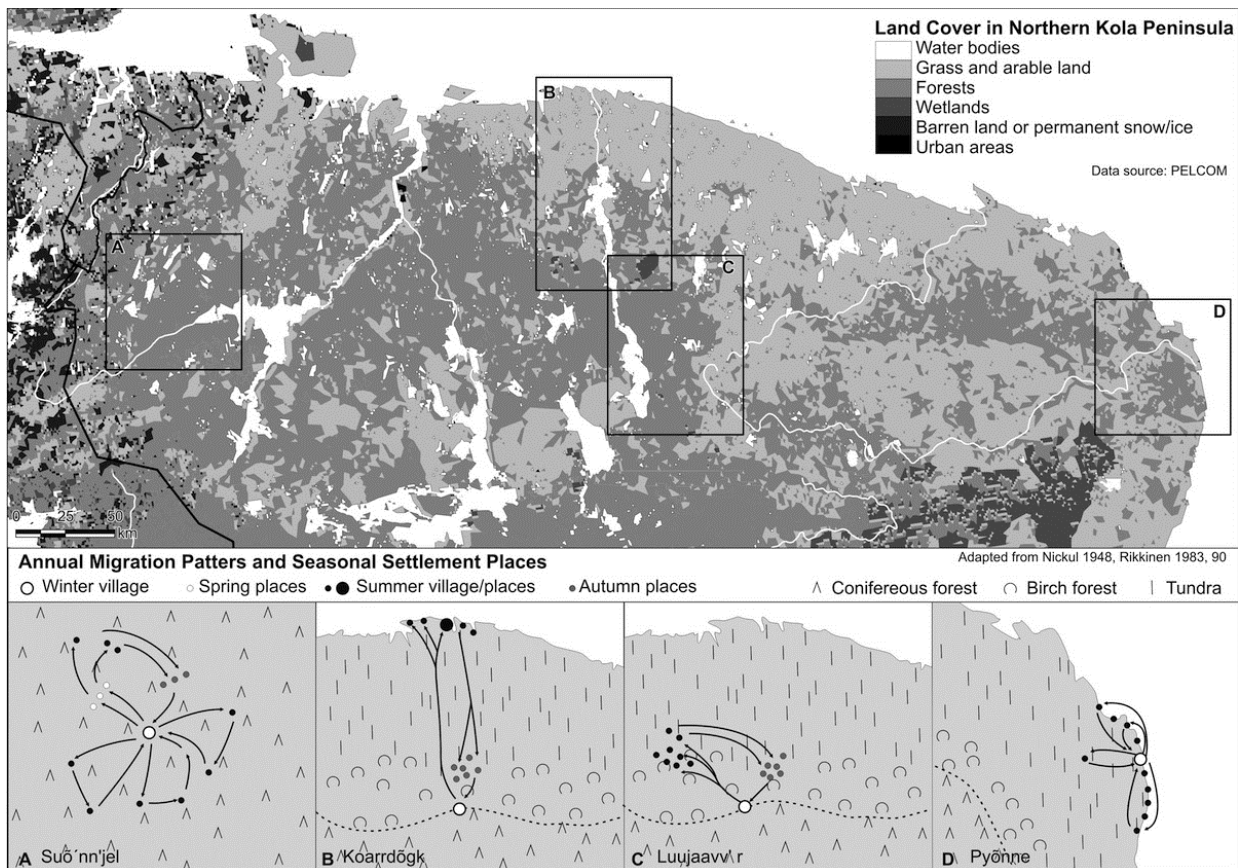
Figure 2: Early historical Sámi siida communities. Map: Mustonen& Mustonen, 2011

If Aikio's (2004) is correct, then we can see seasonal nomadic reindeer herding in its diverse forms (see below) as a truly endemic innovation by Sámi societies, one which enabled them to maintain their own ways of life in a region under increasing population pressures.

Interestingly enough, nomadic reindeer herding developed more or less simultaneously after 1200 AD in many regions of the Eurasian Arctic from Siberia to Northwestern Russia and Fennoscandia.

### Historical variations in the Sámi nomadic model

A common feature of nomadism as a survival strategy is the use of *seasonal pastures*. Below, in brief, are discussions on the Sámi nomadic models of the three distinct cultural groups within modern-day Finland.



Four models of endemic reindeer pastures of the Eastern Sámi peoples. Map: Mustonen & Mustonen, 2011

### Eastern Skolt Sámi

The Eastern Sámi peoples have historically occupied the Kola Peninsula and parts of NE Norway and Finland. In Finland they are represented by the Skolt Sámi. The Inari Sámi language, though currently spoken only in present-day Finland, belongs to the Eastern Sámi dialect group.

The Skolts and other Eastern Sámi peoples have historically been first and foremost fishermen and hunters. Reindeer herding was small-scale, used as pack animals, hunting decoys and so on. The Skolt Sámi also had their particular pasture selection models for their small herds.

In the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century those Eastern Sámi peoples who remained in the Soviet Union were forced to adapt to the Komi<sup>30</sup>-style of large scale nomadic herding, and those who stayed in Finland, merged, with various local variations, into the Finnish-state sponsored *paliskunta* cooperative system, with closed, clearly demarcated herding territories.

<sup>30</sup> The Komi developed large-scale herding on the tundras of the modern-day Komi Republic, further east, and arrived in Murmansk region in late 1800s. In Soviet period, their style of herding was chosen as the state form of herding for Kola Peninsula.



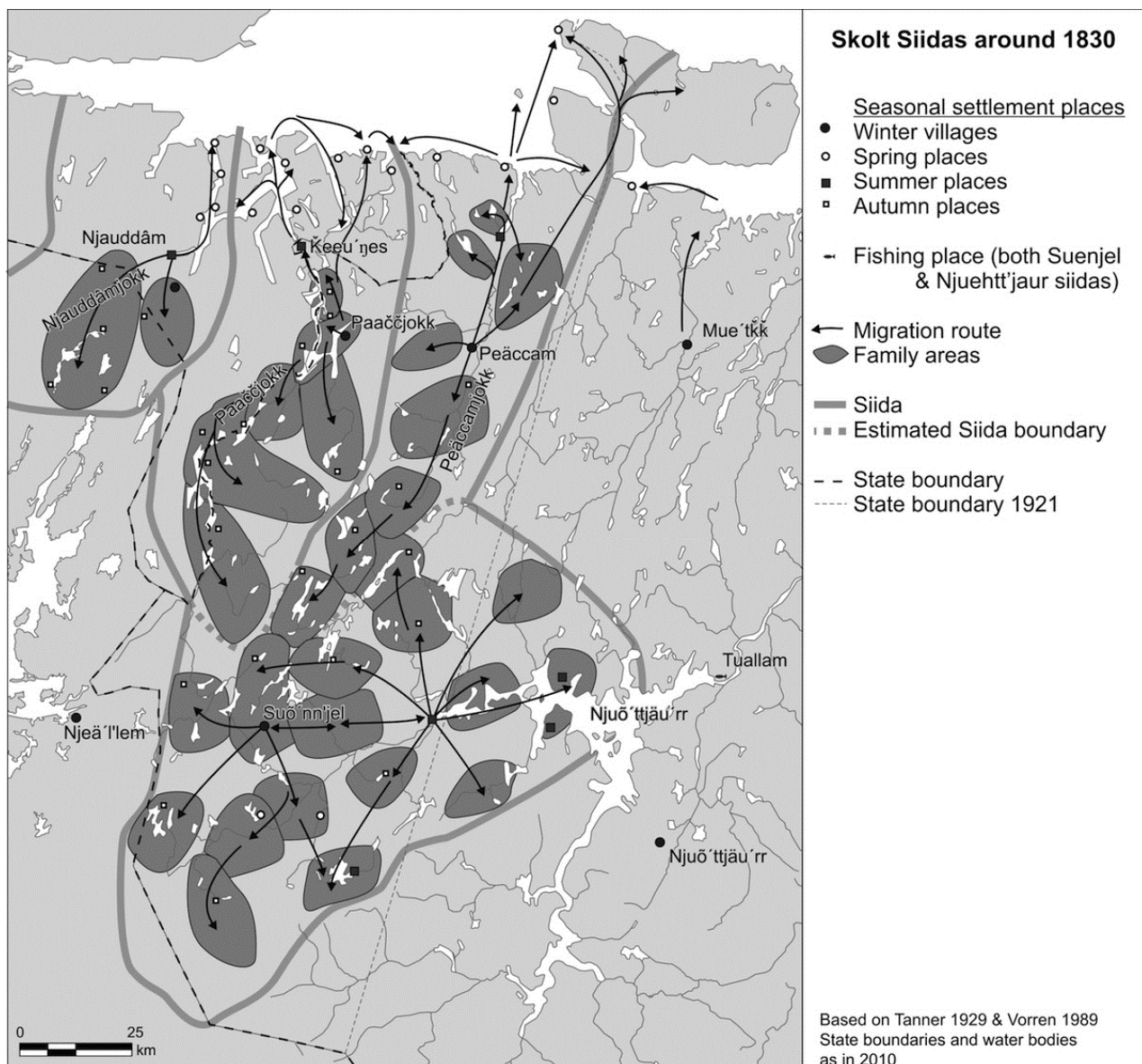
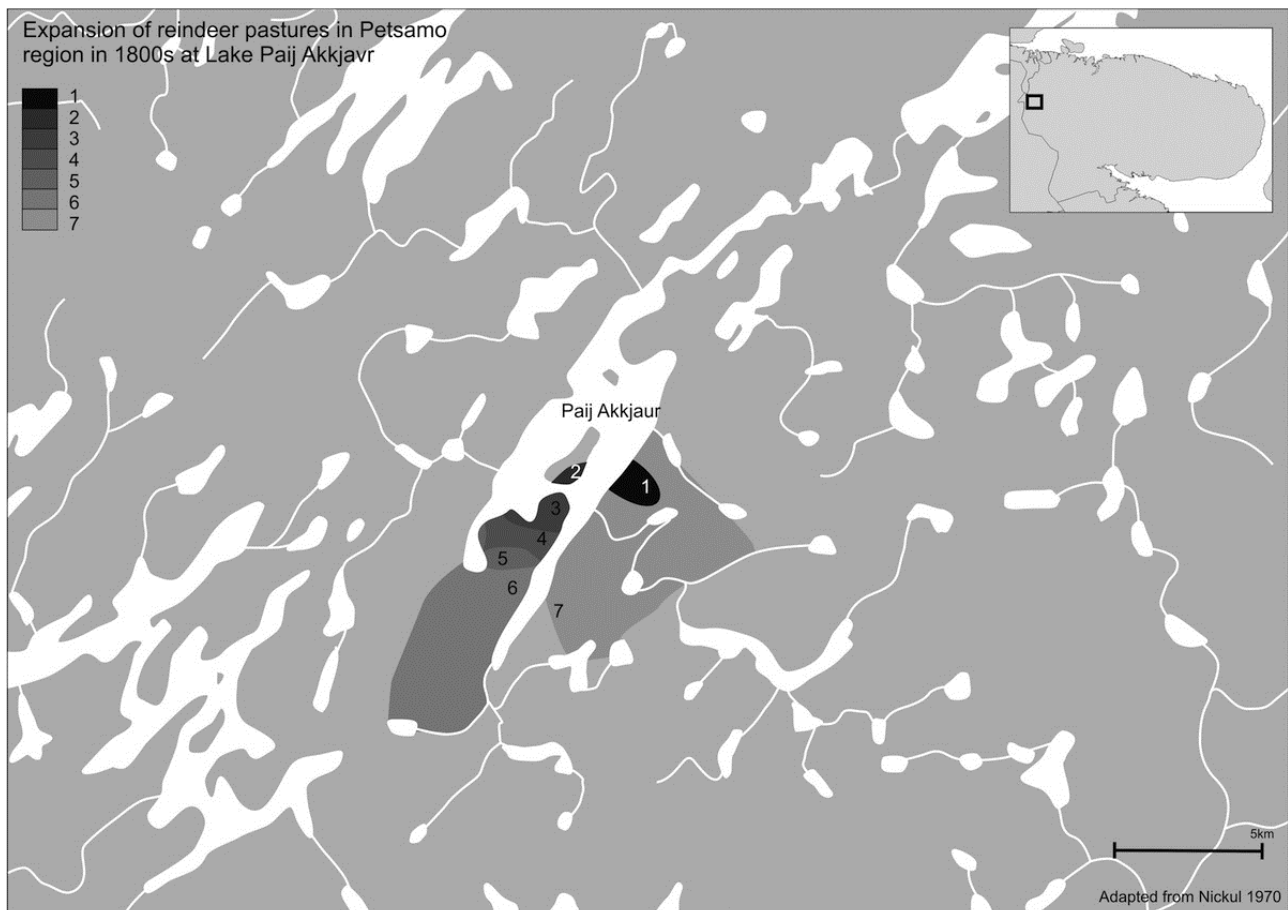


Figure 4: Family uses of land in the Skolt Sámi area, 1800s. Map: Mustonen & Mustonen, 2011



*Example of Skolt Sámi small-scale endemic pasture expansion in the 1800s. Map: Mustonen& Mustonen, 2011*

### *Inari Sámi*

According to, for example, Carpelan (2003: 71-73), the Sámi societies of the Aanaar-Inari region organised themselves into so-called winter village territories or *siidas*. Before the development of this method of land use, bands of hunters and fishermen would occupy the lands surrounding the Inari Lake and the Nellim area according to their seasonal cycles.

The first historical reference to Inari or Aanaar was made in 1517 (Lehtola et al. 2003: VII). In those times the region would be influenced by six ethnic societies, the North Sámi, Skolt Sámi to the east, Russians, Swedes/Norwegians (Scandinavian peoples), Finns and the “local” Sámi, the Inari Sámi peoples. The first farmer arrived in the region in 1758 (Carpelan 2003: 36) and he was ethnically a Finn.

Carpelan (2003: 72) quotes Itkonen who indicates that there existed at least 11 *siidas* around Aanaar-Inari lake system in early historical times. Kittí (1984: 69), a Sámi scholar indicates that there used to be 15 *siidas* around Inari region. Inari Sámi language and culture are specific and on their own in the family of surviving Sámi languages.

In some aspects these traditional *siidas* can be linked to current family land use and territories. However the original *siida* system was destroyed through the colonial acts of the Swedish, Russian and finally Finnish nation states. They include the construction of a church in Aanaar-Inari in 1646



(Carpelan 2003: 81) and the taxation and regulation of hunting game, fishing and reindeer herding.

The semi-nomadic Sámi siidas were forced into partial settlement around Aanaar-Inari as early as 1666 (Carpelan 2003: 83). However the semi-nomadic cycles of seasonal life continued through this period of settlement and colonization well into the 20th Century (see more in Jefremoff 2001).

A crucial source of data for the indigenous land use and occupancy of the Nellim and Aanaar-Inari regions can be investigated through the Inari Sámi place names. Ilmari Mattus (2010) has explored the place names of the Eastern Inari areas at length. Samuli Aikio has written extensively on the Sámi place names of the Inari district (Aikio 2003: 98-112).

According to him (2003) the landscape of the Nellim and Aanaar-Inari regions portrays a wide variety of human interactions with the landscape, including hunting and fishing areas of different species, seasonal cycles of land use and sacred places. Families would use different, shifting territories (Mustonen 2011: 24, Paulaharju 2010: 53).

Aikio (2003) notes that person-based toponyms may be a product of layered histories of different events in a place and therefore special care should be paid if links between land use and occupancy and certain families are to be traced – this is a very crucial baseline for further studies of land use in the region (Aikio 2003: 104).

More specifically Aikio (2003: 106) claims that in the Eastern part of the Lake Inari system the nation-state border of 1323 between Sweden and Russia may have reflected Sámi winter village borders. One of these may have disappeared – perhaps it was called in Finnish *Paatsjoenniskan siida* community.

The winter village might have been located close to contemporary Nellim. Nellim was a border between the Lutheran Christian Sámi areas as well as the Russian Orthodox Skolt Sámis too. The lake Kontosjärvi community in Nellim area may have been a mix between Inari and Skolt Sámi families.

What is known is that in the areas of Lake Sarmijärvi and Kontos the border between Näättä, Suonikylä and Paatsjoki siidas existed, but it may be that an above-mentioned Inari Sámi siida was their neighbor in the early historical times (see also, but with criticism Viinanen 2003: 134-135).

The Sarmitunturi fjell areas and lake territories are derived from Skolt Sámi toponyms indicating wolf (Aikio 2003: 106, Mattus 2010: 213). Aikio claims that many of the place names on the Eastern and south-eastern side of the Lake Inari are a mix between Inari and Skolt Sámi toponyms and it can be derived from this that the region has been a border area between the two Sámi nations in early historical times.

### *North Sámi*

The North Sámi are the most numerous Sámi group in Finnish Lapland. Their main form of endemic reindeer nomadism can be described as a nomadic herding, with winter pastures having been located within the tree line in present-day Finland, and the spring and summer use areas on the coast of the Arctic Sea in modern-day Norway.

As an example of this system the map below explains the NW corner of Finnish Lapland and the various family nomadic routes from there to the coast. Due to border closures, some families moved to the forested region of Sompio (modern-day Vuotso) in late 1800s.

As a conclusion while the integrity of Sámi-style *siidas* as indigenous governance systems have been severely affected by the colonisation process undertaken as nation states expanded into the region from 1517 onward, *a cultural continuity* can nevertheless be seen in the reindeer-herding systems, with place names and family links to the documented seasonal rounds of the Sámi among the contemporary populations.

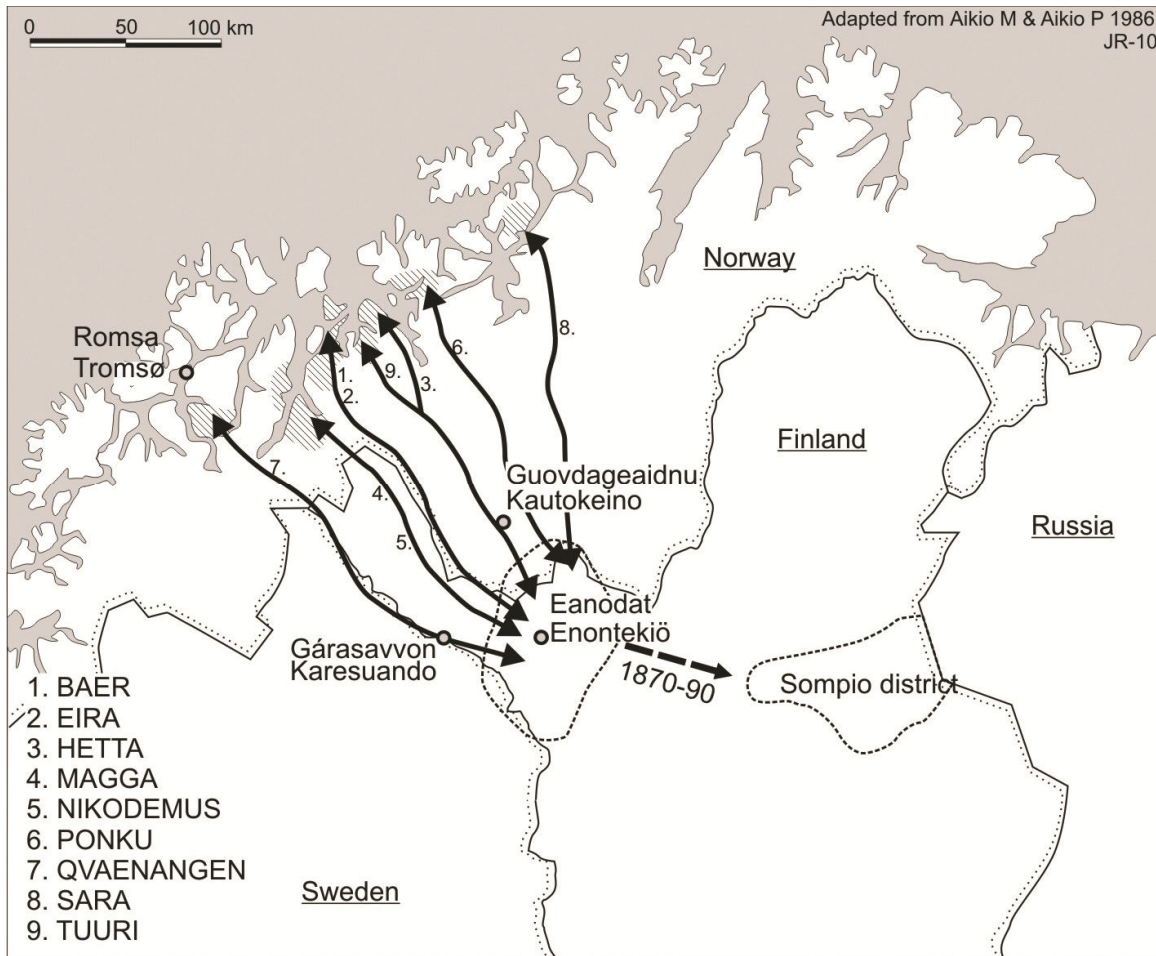


Figure 6: NW North Sámi nomadism in late 1800s to early 1900s. Map: Aikio et al. 2010