

Reindeer economies and their transformations

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Approach to the problem

Talking of 'Reinventing the Commons', as done in the headline presentation, means to originate new methods or instruments concerning co-management. Such a 'drill-operation' is not my intention. On the contrary, my contribution to this conference is only to present a very few reflections concerning the idea that something is getting lost simultaneously within the on-going modernization.

With my presentation I intend to throw light on: i) Traditional adaptations (see figures 3 and 4), ii) By the Government invented arrangements (see figure 5) and iii) By the Government invented proposal (see figure 9), all those with regard to which way to organize co-management of 'common property' within the wide expanse of Finnmark and Northern-Troms (see figure 1). The underlying question is: Is the Government's proposal to regroup the 'districts' and with that, 'restitute' the administrative traditions within the reindeer husbandry? I attempt to describe the proposal within the framework of some historic arrangements and restrictions.

Concerning causes of historical transformations I attach importance to the economic development since 1970 until today. Throwing light on this closely related period I attempt to explain tradition as opposed to modernity. Time allotted for speaking only allows me to put forward a very few, according to my opinion, important characteristics with an eye to the development.

As a starting point, I put out numeral data concerning reindeer husbandry in Finnmark (see figure 2). The data indicates distinctly an increasing rate of population growth and an overall growth in the amount of reindeer. Furthermore the consequences of this development is overgrazing on reindeer moss (lichen) and lack of fresh pastures, particularly within the final stage of an entirely stable period of 150 years. This overgrazing has, according to survey¹⁾ brought up an apparent state of 'Tragedy of the Commons' in part of the wide

¹⁾ Johansen, Tømmervik og Spjelkavik, FORUT, Tromsø 1991, Vegetasjonskart - Kautokeino/Alta.

expanse of the area. In order to meet this as a theoretical approach, I am pleased to be here to discuss historical transformations within the scope of 'reinventing the commons'. However, it is essential to net this occurrences to its historical foundation.

A historical approach

Before the 14th century the relative needs in 'Sápmi²⁾' (see figure 1) were in principal based on sharing meat, equipments, etc. The individuals were probably organized in family holdings ('báiki') idealized as subsistence state of (many small and different) self-governed hunting-, fishing-, catching-, gathering adaptations. Their division of control over exclusive blocks of territories was, as far as we know, clarified between different regional societies, acting rural community constitutions ('siida' or 'bivdosiida') a term which has been in use in all dialects in Saami language (see figure 3). This mode of living states a seminomadic conduct of life where 'small scale' pastoral reindeer husbandry (as careful management of flocks and herds) and ranching (as subsistence farming) is to be considered as a part-time means of subsistence on behalf of the whole community of each 'bivdosiida'.

During the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, the Saami siidasystem was disrupted, which came to pass mainly as a consequence of impoverishing the natural resources, as pastoral land, small and big game, water systems, rock minerals, fjord- and sea-resources, etc. For great many of the saami families and the different rural communities, the 'answer' was to become specialized as 'large scale' pastoralists, i. e. whole-time nomads³⁾. By this, the different 'families' managed to maintain their traditional inner selfgoverning system within new siida-constellations ('boazosiida'). To operate as pastoralists gave possibility to use natural resources along the extended migration routes. This manner became (more) flexible and gave the pastoralists 'free' access to 'common' resources as it did to fresh meat and milk (see figures 4 and 5).

During the 17th century the exploitation of pastoral land to agricultural purposes, weakened the conditions to keep on with pastoralism (see figure 6). The sosio-

²⁾ The term Sápmi describes the general concrete and abstract concept referring to the saami people, land and spirit-in saami language (see Keskitalo, Alf Isak; Research as an Inter-Ethnic Relation, Diedut 7/1994, Sámi Instituhtta, Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino).

³⁾ Sara, Anders 1994; Reindriftspolitikken i Nord-Norge i perioden 1974-1994. Bakgrunn, mål-virkemidler og organisering. NORUT, Tromsø.

economic and political opinion and practice, impacted by the formation of new nations, laws and regulations, brought down partly the customary borders and the traditional management system⁴⁾ (see figures 3 and 4). In spite of these transformations, still 95 percent of the land area in Finnmark is, as part of the national legislation, considered as common property ('statsallmenning'). This area is often perceived as wilderness among the town population in Finnmark and in touristbrochures too. In opposite to this, the Norwegian Government has, according to international legislation, approved officially the ILO-convention no 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries. This is an acceptance of indigenous peoples' rights, which can appear to be stronger than proprietary rights⁵⁾.

Today the majority of the families and households are organized as semi-nomads, breaking away from the state of pure pastoralism. The siidasystem is still the principal support to reindeer husbandry in Finnmark. Tradition is thus attached in the process of modernizing towards a fully evolved capitalist economy. This combines the private ownership of livestock within the division of mutually exclusive blocks of regional privatized territories ('guovllu orohagát') (see figure 9). The expanded siida borders are to be further confirmed by publicly financed fence-constructions. According to the public opinion, this administrative 'invention' is an ecological mistake.

A theoretical approach

In view of the historical approach I find it fruitful to set up, as a framework, tradition as opposed to the on-going economic modernization (denoted as modernity) which implies two meanings.

- 1) A strong contradiction where the modern represents an experience of transformation without looking back and comparing with previous times.
- 2) A consideration not as a contravention with traditions but as a support of something attracted by the community. This is of some extent my experience in approaching the modern which provides a motive for establishing a logical conclusion regarding 'refine the commons' (see final remark, p. 8).

4) NOU 1994:21, Bruk av land og vann i Finnmark i historisk perspektiv, Bakgrunnsmateriale for Samerettsutvalget.

5) 'The Saami people as landowners', Reported in an article 1994. 10. 11 in 'Nordlys', Tromsø.

Traditional reindeer 'husbandry' consists largely of adapting data and information into 'in person accustomed experience' ('hárjánanolbmo-máhttu'). In this meaning tradition, or culture, often explicitly defines itself by opposition to what it sees as the undesirable attributes. The value of the 'local accustomed experience', defines a vitality of life throughout the working process itself. Thus the local reasoned basis for motivation to keep on with traditions is more or less composed of distinctive groups each differing from one another in significant ways. Saami people, and particularly the reindeer herders accustomed experience, impart a specific universality because it always has defined itself through 'universal' skills - in different shapes of establishing organisations and modes of life. This universality shows a remarkable ability to adjust to new states of 'culture'.

Pastoralism is more or less based upon specialized reindeer breeding economy that embodies certain social principles governing access to fundamental productive resources on which it depends; herds and pastures. This combines principles of divided access to animals, constituted by earmark ('beallje-mearkka'), and 'common' access to territories, constituted by kinship, inheritance (succession) and/or social and 'economic' adaptations within each 'districts' ('boazoguohtun-orohat') (see figure 5). These 'siida-system' differs from the historical 'bivdosiida' (see figure 3). In turn, the division of control over more or less exclusive blocks of territories within a 'district', is clarified between the individuals often as 'communized' property, grouped roughly in summer-, autumn/spring- and winter pastures ('siiddastallan'). The sets of property relations specifies a corresponding rationality of exploitation. Modern pastoralists are of necessity more concerned with the optimum use and conservation of natural resources than hunters and gatherers have ever been.

Concerning further theoretical comments on these matter I refer to Ingold (see Ingold 1980⁶⁾), who sets out to explain the causes and mechanisms of transformations between the above named states hunting, pastoralism and ranching. Without explaining this more detailed the following 'intervening' **examples** intend in some extent, to illustrate the above named apparant clash of interests concerning tradition opposed the economic modernization.

⁶⁾ Ingold, Tim, *Hunters, pastoralists and ranchers, Reindeer economies and their transformations.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1980.

1) The subsistence farming (ranching) in 'Šiččajávri', within the municipality of Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino in Finnmark, is keeping about 30 reindeer. This 'year-round' bounded husbandry within the winter locations is in opposition to the local reindeer herders association ('Guovdageainnu Johtti-sápmelaččaid Searvi') and the public authorities law on keeping reindeer ('Lov om reindrift av 9. juni 1978').

2) The year-round pastoralistic based husbandry, runned by one family in 'district' # 41, 'Beaskádas' within the municipality of Guovdageaidnu and Alta, is forbidden by a lower court decision. The case is appealed to a higher court. The process and final result is of principal interest.

In tradition the mutual dependence between 'area', 'reindeer' and 'human' organizations is woven together (see figures 7 and 8). In addition the manifold and combinations in livelihoods within each 'stable' historical period, illustrated as state A, B and C in figure 7, influences the subtle balance between, on the one hand, the 'area' and different reindeer herd categories and, on the other hand, their habituated local passage and seasonal migrations (see figure 4).

The **area** comprehends blocks of territories ('eanangáppálagat'), which includes area extension, uniti- and utiliquilities of oceans, lakes, rivers, the mountain wilds, topography of the terrain, lichen, grass, other useful pastures, berry-bearing, fishes, species of animals, etc. within its seasonal limited locations (see figure 8). The 'area' has become much restricted in extension by foreigners' occupations, laws, regulations, etc., not only in the late 1970's, but also throughout the history, particularely since the early 1500's (Sara 1994³).

The **reindeer** comprehends categories of herds or groups of herds of calfs, females, males, etc. (Eira 1994⁷).

The **human** organizations exist often as grand families ('boavji'), housekeeping units/tent ('goahti', 'báiki'), now and again committed with co-worker(s) ('reanga', 'biigá'), and as jointly responsible alliances of collective collaborates ('siidaguimmečagat', 'orohatsiidaguimmečagat'), depending on time of the year/seasonal location ('siiddastallan').

7) Nils Isak Eira; Bohccuid luhtte, Gulahallat ja ollášuhttit siidadoalu, DAT O/S, Guovdageaidnu 1994.

The migration scale among pastoralists is unlike between different collaboration herding groups interregionally (‘gudetge boazoguohtunguovllus’). In Finnmark, for instance, herders may migrate widely with the herd, e. g. up to 200 km, between summer and winter locations (see figure 4). The migration has increased the access to certain goods and established and still maintaining mutual act of friendships (‘verdde’), both as part of a subsistence economy, accumulation and market-oriented economy. This has in fact improved the husbandry economically.

The explanatory discussion only gives a glimpse into the comprehensive picture of the ‘nature’ of the reindeer husbandry. The distinction in social space has been made between households (‘báiki’) and local/regional(‘siida’) levels. Concerning the national level, both the original flexibility and ‘siida’-rules and regulations, including economic- and legal agreements between the national association of reindeer owners (‘Norgga Boazodoallosápmelaččaid Riikkasearvi’/NBR) and the public authorities in Norway, are partly left out in this brief description (see Sara 1994³).

Conclusion

In spite of longlasting political and legislatively pressure, and later also the influence of socio-economic policy, reindeer husbandry has, to a high degree, maintained autonomy. This may to a great extent be credited to the flexibility, adaptation and distinctive qualities of the reindeer husbandry. Such peculiarity has point of origin within the mutual interaction between the freedom of the individual and common arrangements. In a scientific concept I would dare to say this continual changing of the point of view is to be like changing between the instrumental and dialectical outlook on organizing of different ways of living.

Combining organizing flexibility with ‘in person accustomed experience’ and low degree of hierarchy in administration between co-operating family holdings (‘báikedoalut’) as acting rural communities (‘siidadoalut’), constitutes the foundation of sustainable socio-economical community constructions (‘orohagaid’ og ‘districts’). The flexibility of the community constructions has also shown to be traditionally strong in Inner Finnmark. It was not until the seventies and eighties that clear signs of changes was striking. Compared with the development of the rest of society, the reindeer husbandry has maintained its traditions. On the other hand, relatively little sociological research has been done to put light upon different aspects on Saami reindeer husbandry.

Concerning the on-going economic modernization I will put forward some plain modes of reasoning and incidents which often are used as cause explanations within the closely related history (see figure 2).

- 1) The public schools and the local based economy has for a long time been disintegrated. The standardized given competence has weakened the local based economy. Simultaneously, the local based economy has weakened the motivation to go through the public school and secondary education, especially among males.
- 2) The national programme to raise housing standards in inland Finnmark, has lead to a centralized settling (in winter- and summer places of residence).
- 3) The snowmobil revolution and modern means of communications, e. g. roads, mobilized slaughteries, fences, mobile telephones, helicopters, etc., has increased the herding mobility. This altered the terms of basic store of knowledge and thereby herding strategies, etc.
- 4) The above named (second and third) initiatives have altered and increased the share of adult males among the herding peoples. This has been a contributory factor coming to a head conflict's in the 'field'.
- 5) Numerous childbirths in the late 1950 and 1960 has increased the rate of population growth in general and also among the reindeer owners and families.
- 6) Low rate of growth in the local based economy has given few alternatives for employment opportunities to keep reindeer. This has in turn, lead to an accumulation of people within reindeer 'husbandry'. Certain compensations have obtained out of subsidiary sources of income within the limitations of pastoral land. But, in spite of this, almost everyone had to slaughter down the livestock to a minimum, which 'slimmed' the economy among the households and brought up accumulated needs to increase the livestock. At that time when the socio-economic agreement between the national association of reindeer owners ('Norggá Boazodoallosápmelaččaid Riikkasearvi/NBR') and the public authorities (the Department of Agriculture) was introduced in 1976, enabled the reindeer owners to increase the investments in livestock capital instead of slaughtering for income. Later on the legalizing management improvement unit ('driftsenhet'), introduced by legislation in 1978 as an socio-economic distribution

arrangement, reinforced this trend. Unfortunately the initiative disturbed the subtle economic balance between different households ('báiki') as a consequence of that some received many units, others only one.

The above mentioned initiatives have constituted a challenge to the arrangements based on traditional knowledge and customs, the local accustomed experience, as well as to the modern administration system. Research⁸⁾ indicate an increasing numbers of cases and levels of conflicts between individuals, families, collaborators, etc. The problem is, as I comprehend the situation, that the initiatives so far are in lack of sufficient totality in planning and administration.

Intending to reverse the long-lasting negative trend (see figure 2), the Norwegian Government, initiated⁹⁾ a five-year programme for readaption in Inner-Finnmark, ('Omstillingsprogrammet for Indre-Finnmark' (FFD: 11/93¹⁰⁾). In short terms, the aim of this programme is to 'buy out' enough management improvement units ('driftsenheter') to reduce the overall amount of reindeer. So far 54 units are ceased and out of the 'business'. This affects 177 persons. The amount of reindeer is dropped from 157.000 in 1992 to 144.000, as it is estimated at the time. In general, the main proposal is to reduce the amount of reindeer to 127.000 (FFD: 3/92¹¹⁾). By the way in 1989, three years before the programme was started, the amount of reindeer was 200.000, which is a historical maximum. The reduction from 1989 to 1992 was 27 %. By way of comparison, the reduction from 1992 to 1995, was only 8 %, both percents referred to the level in 1992.

As an initiative to get out of the ecological malaise, the Government has, by delegating the principal of democracy in local affairs, put forward a proposal to regroup the 'districts' in Finnmark and Nord-Troms¹²⁾ (see figure 9). The suggestion causes a reduction of 'districts' (and boards of 'districts') from 49 (51) to 7 (see figures 9 and 4).

Symptomatically, the two last named suggestions have not provoked particular opposition. This strengthens my statement that the reindeer owners/ herders 'accustomed experience' is in position of remarkable ability to adjust to new states

8) Sara, Anders og Karlstad, Stig; Reindriften i Vest-Finnmark - Omstilling, utvikling eller avviking, Diedut 1/1993, Sámi Instituhitta, Guovdageaidnu/NIBR, Alta.

9) St. meld. nr 28 (1991-92) Om bærekraftig reindrift.

10) Rammeplan for omstillingsarbeidet i Indre Finnmark 1993-1997, Finnmark fylkeskommune, Vadsø 1993.

11) Fløttenutvalgets innstilling, Finnmark fylkeskommune, Vadsø 1992.

12) Forslag til ny distriktsinndeling i Finnmark, Reindriftsadministrasjonen i Alta, 1994.

of 'cultures'. Owing to my comprehension this is of interest in addition to carry on research.

Concluding remarks

The above mentioned initiatives and inventions and by itself, the increasing rate of population growth and the overall growth in the amount of reindeer, has weakened the local 'accustomed experience' concerning the subtle balance between the resource management and ecological sustainence. In view of this, the proposal of regrouping the 'districts' can be comprehended as a new basis to 'refind' realistic and fair 'felted' distribution- and management systems. The proposal is supporting the transformations attracted by 'new local' regimes as part of the delegation of the principal of democracy in local affairs. But, before such initiatives can be a fair felted instrument, the politicians and the bureaucrats necessarily have to take into account that the administrations within different 'districts' during the on-going process, is in fact lack of planning competence and financial capacity. Under such circumstances the will and ability to co-operate is in danger to be subverted.

Thank you for your attention.

Figure 1



Locations of circumboreal peoples (by T. Ingold, *Hunters, pastoralists and ranchers, Cambridge studies in social anthropology*, Cambridge University Press 1980).

Figure 2

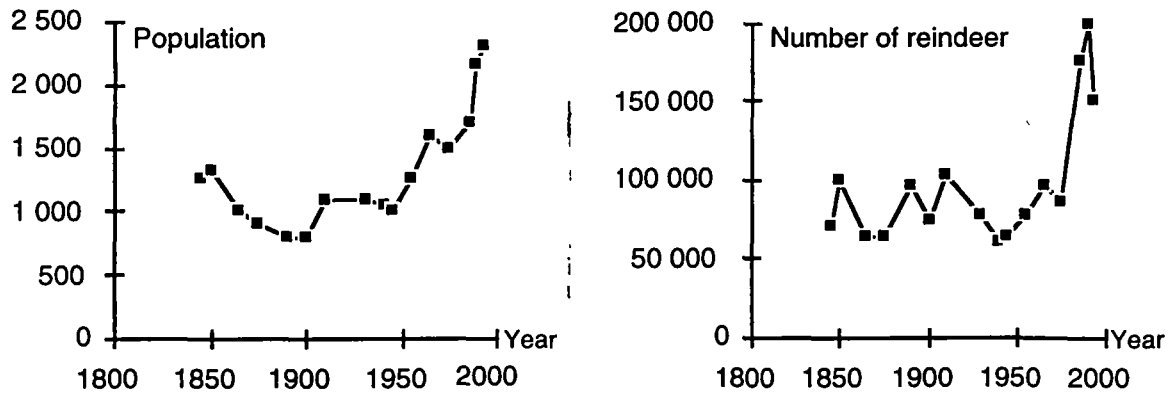
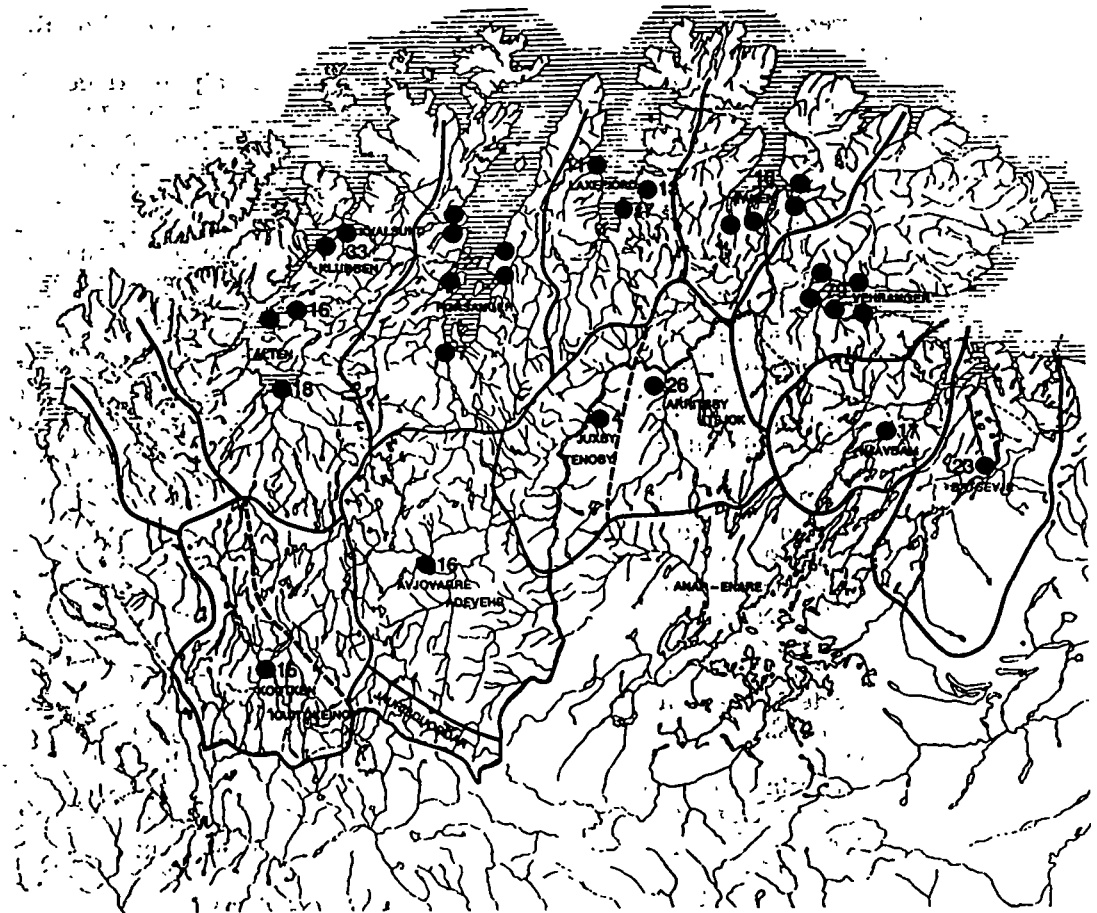


Figure 2 The variation of population among the reindeer-keepers and the number of reindeer in Finnmark between 1845 and 1994 (source: The Directorate of Reindeer Husbandry, Alta).

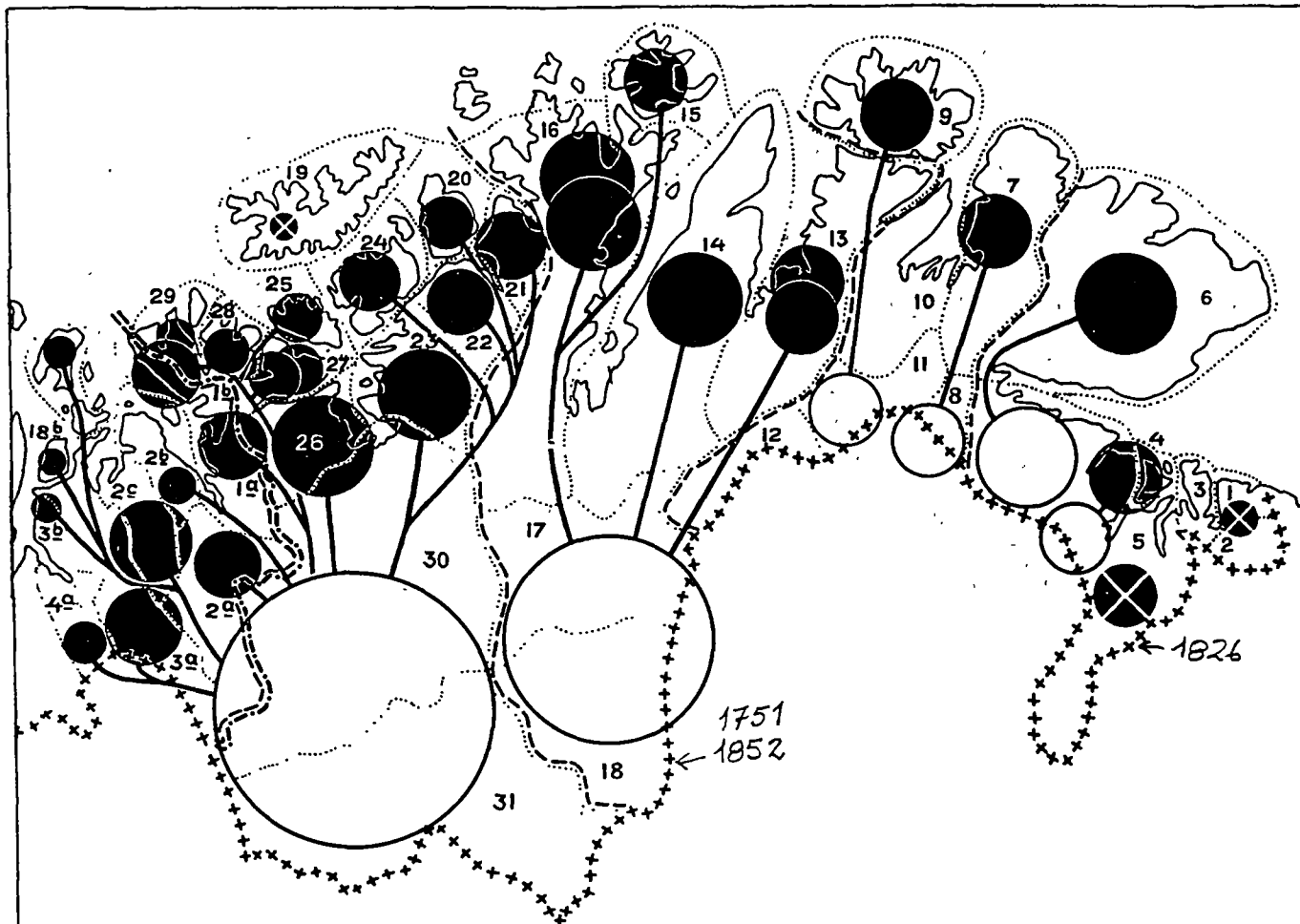
Figure 3



Siidagrenser i Finnmark 1694.

Kartet er utarbeidd av universitetet i Tromsø, Institutt for musevirksomhet, samisk etnografisk avdeling. NOU 1978: 18A Finnmarksvidda - natur - kultur, side 155.

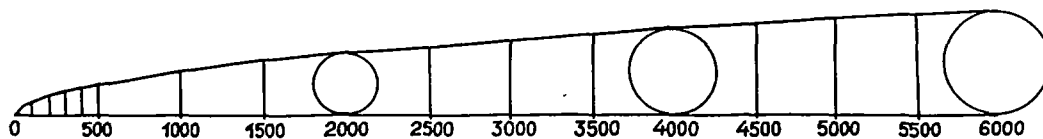
Figure 4



Finnmarksamenes reinbeitedistrikter i Finnmark og Nord-Troms angitt med nummer. Fordelingen av reinmengden på sommer- og vinterbeitedistriktene.

Reindeer pasture districts of the Finnmark Mountain Lapps indicated by the figures. Distribution of the reindeer herds on summer and winter pasturages.

- | | | |
|---------|--|---------------------------------------|
| +++++ | Riksgrense | National boundary |
| -.-.-.- | Fylkesgrense | County boundary |
| ----- | Reinsognsgrense | Boundary of reindeer circuits |
| | Reinbeitedistriktsgrense | District boundary |
| ○ | Reinbestand på vinterbeite | Reindeer on winter pasture |
| ● | Reinbestand på sommerbeite | Reindeer on summer pasture |
| ⊗ | Reinbestand på felles sommer- og vinterbeite | Reindeer on summer and winter pasture |



Målestokk som angir reinmengde i hver sirkel. Scale which gives number of reindeer in each circle.

Gjeldende inndeling av Finnmark og Nord-Trøndelag reindriftsdistrikter (Fra henholdsvis 1934 og 1963 med senere endringer.) Beitetider i parentes

Etter 1934/1963.

1963.

1934.

Elver

Off. grense.

Veier

Isbreer

Innsjøer

Land

Hav

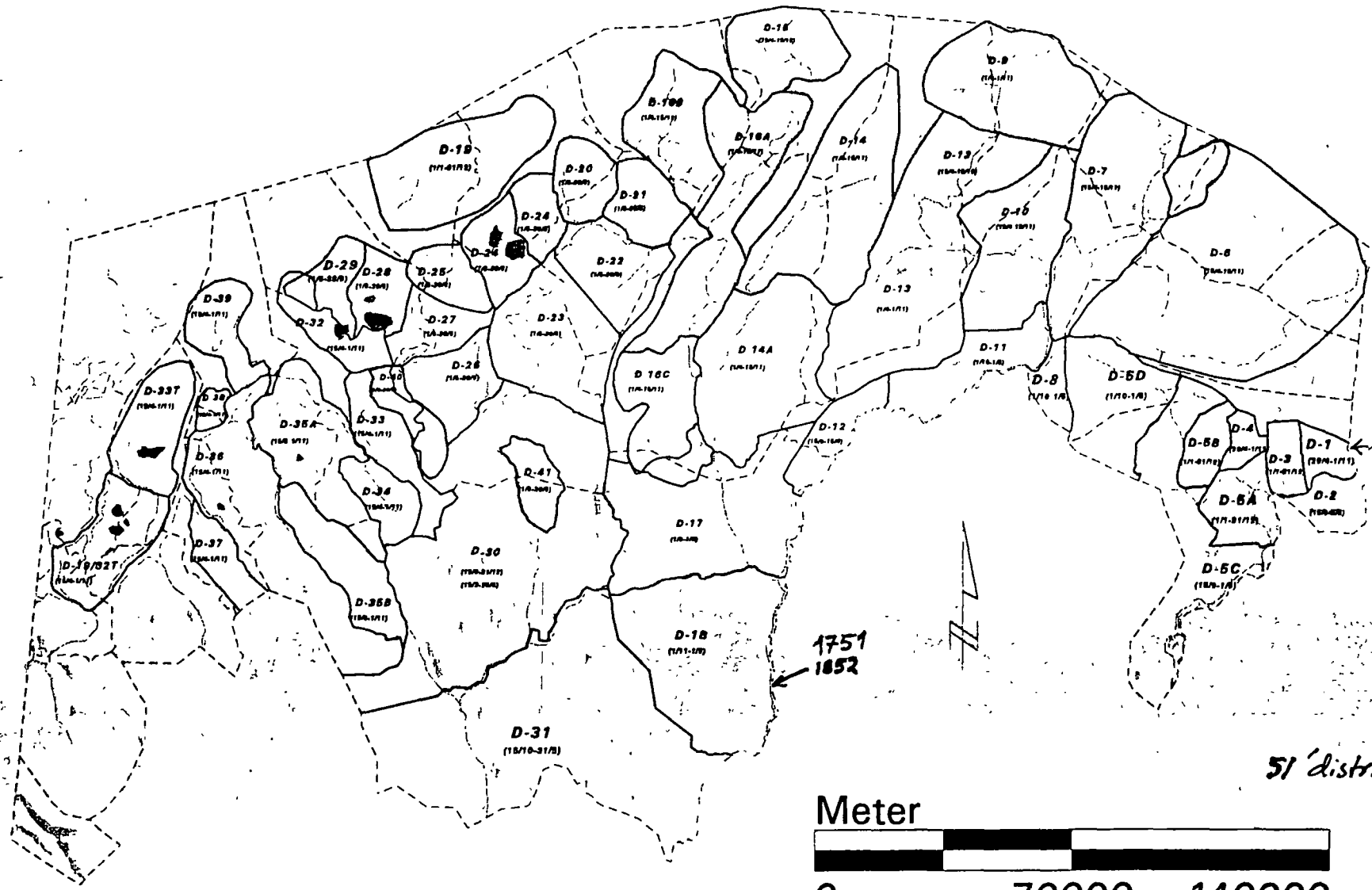


Figure 5
Divisions or groups of districts for keeping reindeer in Finnmark and Nord-Trøndelag, prevailing from 1934 to today. (In parenthesis, the legal grazing-times).

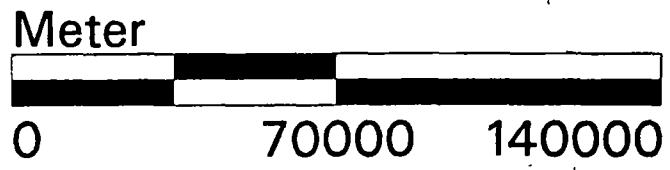
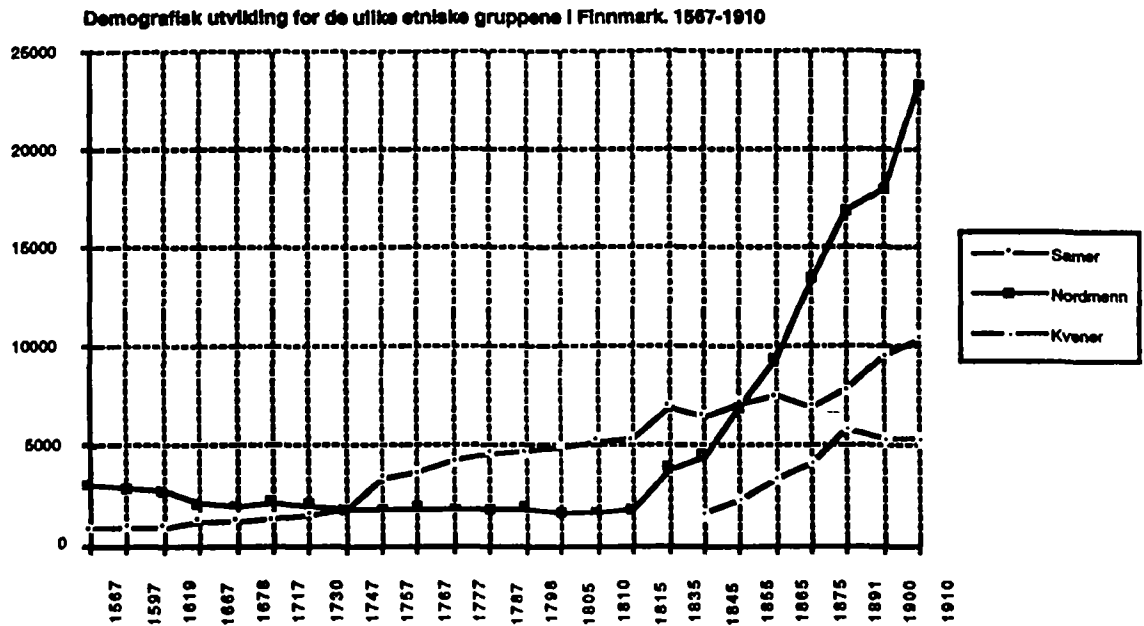


Figure 6



Demografisk utvikling for de ulike etniske gruppene i Finnmark. 1567-1910.

Tallene gjelder de forskjellige etniske grupper under dansk-norsk jurisdiksjon. (Før 1613 var de jurisdiksjonelle forhold for alle samene tildels uklare.) Til 1751 gjelder tallet kun for de samene som bodde i fjordstrøkene og på kysten (eksklusive nåværende Sør-Varanger). I 1751 ble hele innlandet lagt under dansk-norsk eneoverhøyhet. På figuren gjenspeiler det seg ved en sterk økning i antallet samer. I 1826 ble Sør-Varanger lagt under norsk eneoverhøyhet. Til og med 1835 ble samer og kvener regna sammen. De sistnevntes antall var imidlertid relativt lavt fram til da.

Figure 7

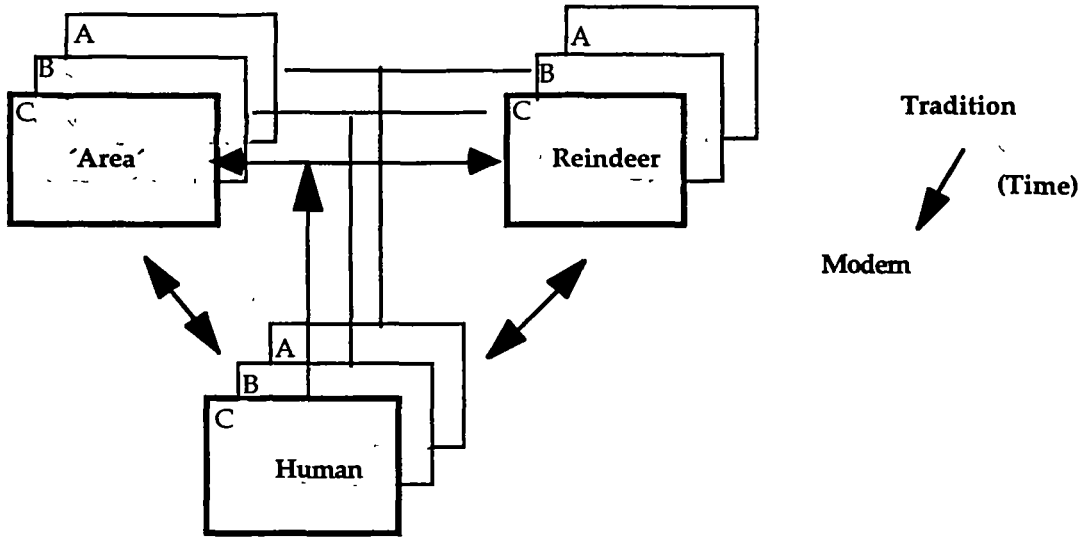


Figure 7 Tree basic elements in keeping reindeer in Saapmi. The lines connecting the elements together in an analytic frame or modell, indicates the mutual dependent between the elements. Arrow indicates the direction of main influence between the elements.

Figure 8

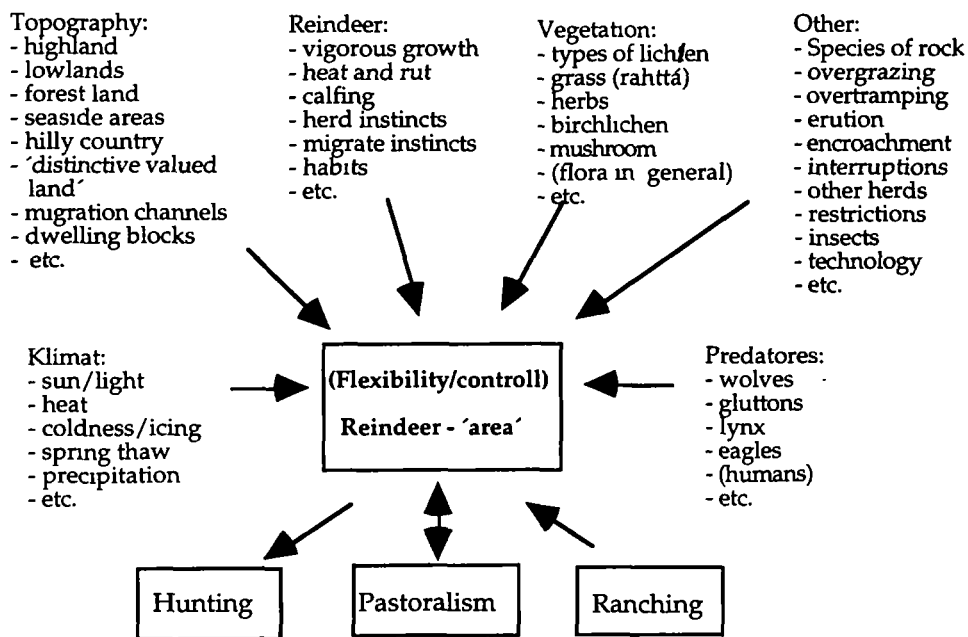


Figure 8 The firure illustrates the mutual dependence between 'area' - reindeer and different forms of livelihood, i. e. human organizations for instance hunting, pastoralism and ranching as idealistic states.

Figure 7. Forslag til ny inndeling av Finnmark og Nord-Troms reirbeitedistrikter
 Proposal to new grouping of 'districts' for keeping reindeer in Finnmark and Nord-Troms

Figure 9

