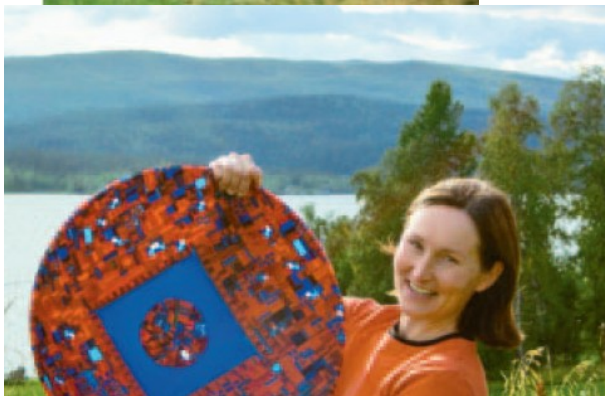


Diversifying Identity, Diversifying Strategy

Revisiting the Sami of Sweden

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Images from *The Sami*, and informational booklet developed by the Swedish Sami Parliament and published in 2005.

Introduction

It has not been two years since *Indigenous Peoples & Poverty* was published in 2005. Depending on your frame of reference, this could be a short or long period of time. In the context of political fashion or public attention, a biennium can be as several lifetimes; in terms of spreading change, two years is no time at all. However, snapshots can contribute to an overall picture of progress over time, much like stop-motion photography can reveal slow-moving physical processes to those of us with short attention spans. Under this assumption, then, it is worthwhile to examine at this time what changes in the socio-political landscape have taken place since the assessments of the book were compiled. Below I revisit some Sami strategies which address their economic position in Sweden, in a way that complements the assessment of Hicks and Somby in their chapter “Sami responses to poverty in the Nordic countries” from *Indigenous Peoples & Poverty*.

There are four areas addressed below: updates to Sami legal rights in Sweden, representations of Sami by themselves and others through the lens of identity negotiation, other strategies of Sami which draw on identity for economic security, and the lessons that can be learned from the Swedish Sami experience.

General rights status

Indigenous peoples are more likely to have lower quality of life indicators than the dominant populations in a country, either due to unequal rights, poverty patterns, or incompatible lifestyles (Bodley 1999, pp.132-144). The Sami are not like other indigenous groups in this regard, in addition to their comparable economic indicators as pointed out by Hicks and Somby (p.285). A recent study provided empirical evidence that Sami mortality rates and causes of mortality have been similar to those of the rest of Sweden's population (Hassler et al. 2005). This is partly due to the high degree of their integration into Swedish society which has occurred over time (Hicks and Somby, 2005). This

overall similarity between Sami and other Swedes perhaps begs the question of why Sami need 'special' rights as indigenous people in the first place. Accustomed as we are to stories of Westernized indigenous people locked into dependency on the state and high rates of alcoholism and earlier mortality, the Sami case reminds us that there are other rights valued by humans beyond mere survival which are worth fighting for. In Maslow's terms, social, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs are higher level needs which translate to more meaningful rewards of belongingness, self-respect, and growth than simply food and security (1943). Ole Henrik Magga, a Norwegian Sami and chairman of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues from 2002-2004, explains it this way:

We do not risk being murdered, no, but the same mechanisms affect us too, irrespective of the standard of living...it's like saying that [Scandinavian] unions should not fight for better wages because workers in Central America only earn 1% of what we earn. -*The Sami, 2005*

Currently the Sami are in a position of working towards cultural survival. Their ability to pursue livelihoods and development which can forward this goal are curtailed by their historical and ongoing relationship with the Swedish state. Land rights, usufruct rights, livelihood diversification rights, and rights to self-determination have all been impacted.

Since 2005, Sweden has made scant progress towards expanding the rights of the Sami. The national government still has not signed ILO Convention 169, nor has it passed any of its own laws to provide Sami rights over their traditional lands. The Sametinget (Sami Parliament), disseminates the view that Sweden essentially considers that the resulting ownership transfer of lands currently held by the state, or non-Sami would be "too expensive" (Sápmi, 2006). The director of Sami Research at Umeå University, Peter Skold, told Reuters in early 2007 that "the concerns of mining agencies and private landowners about potentially dramatic consequences had led the Swedish Government to repeatedly put ratification off" (Edmonds, 2007). The only advancement has been in a limited area of self-determination, where, as of January 1, 2007, the Sametinget was ceded Central Administration for the

Reindeer Industry by the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the County Administrative Boards (Edmonds, 2007, Samitinget 2006). Again, depending on the frame of reference, this step could be considered as significant or inconsequential. Inasmuch as elected Sami representatives have finally won the unprecedented right to manage a resource of any kind under Swedish rule, this represents a significant advance. However the Samitinget itself is not a full-fledged governing body¹. It cannot set its own budget and must carry out the decisions of the national Plenary Assembly to which the Sami still have no representatives. And it should not be forgotten that Sami affairs and the Samitinget is under the administrative domain of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Affairs. Not the Ministry of Culture, nor of Health and Social Affairs, nor of Integration and Gender Equality². This fact is reminiscent of colonial times when 'natives' were regarded as sub-human, conveniently (as also in the case of Sweden) unable therefore to own land (Bodley 1999, pp.18-22) It also reflects that what Sweden is most wary of is losing control over the valuable resources to which the Sami have traditional claims (Samitinget, 2006). Keeping the Sametinget as an implementation authority under the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Affairs (formerly the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries) maintains a tighter leash on its potential. Other symptoms of political suppression include the continued absence of a Sami census ("Sami in Sweden", 2006), and a Swedish Sami parliamentary building().

In the Government's own documents, there is some hope for future progress. A 2006 study of hunting and fishing rights is currently under review, and the Government has indicated to the United Nations that it will be reassessing the possibility of ratifying ILO Convention 169 in light of the study's results (Government of Sweden, 2006). Also, despite a long record of unfavorable court rulings, a recent decision of a major traditional rights dispute was ruled in favor of the Sami villages (Sweden, 2006),

1 The Sami Parliament Act sets the purpose of the Samitinget "to monitor issues that relate to Sami culture in Sweden". (Samitinget, 2006).

2 However, it should be noted that at times, other Ministries do conduct inquiries into Sami affairs as relevant. For example the Ministry of Integration and Gender Equality submitted reports in 2005 and 2006 regarding Sami language administration. (See Government Offices of Sweden, <http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2188/a/19444>). For a discussion of this initiative in the context of cultural struggles, see below.

which now takes the place of the previous vacuum of precedent.

The four areas in which the current Sametinget President, Lars-Anders Baer, has identified interest for more autonomy are school education, language, culture, and resource management (The Sami, 2005). Resource management was identified as the most important issue, but as discussed above, the most unlikely to be broadly ceded. Current efforts in each area are discussed in more detail below.

Representations

Hicks and Somby argued that the Sami elite have used cultural strengthening as their primary means of securing economic and legal equity. This has been and still is evident, in particular as a means to advance Sami tourism, but recent efforts also suggest that Sami are now implementing a 'dynamic identity' strategy to create the legitimacy to access to a more diverse set of livelihood strategies. This new phase could be symptomatic of the success of what might be loosely termed as the preceding 'Saminess' campaign. The difficulty of the new 'diverse Sami' representation is that it conflicts with the former representation, and it is not clear that Sami politicians have figured out how to manage this yet.

The Shift Away from Monism In late 2005, Sami parliamentarians were widely reported as having criticized their minister (of Agriculture, Food, and Consumer Affairs) by saying that she “equates reindeer husbandry with Sami culture” (e.g. see “Swedish Sami criticise minister” in *Norden*), suggesting that Sami in Sweden are indeed moving on from the strategy of identifying Sami with reindeer herding. This is likely due to a recent shift in political power. Between 2001 and 2004 a new Sami political party was formed called the Hunting and Fishing party. Their goal is to obtain the same rights as Sami who practice reindeer husbandry (The Sami, 2005). They have quickly become the largest Sami party, representing a third of the seats in the Sametinget. In the 2005 election, they closely missed becoming the ruling party when four other parties formed a coalition that forced them into

opposition (“Nyvkest acts over Sami reindeer rights”, 2005). Nevertheless, it seems apparent that as the opposition party, they are having some effect on the way Sami are presented and represented. This political shift mirrors a trend noted by Sametinget President Lars-Anders Baer of the migration of Sami away from sparsely populated areas³. The enhanced visibility that has resulted from more Sami in higher population centers means that the broader diversity of Sami society now has a chance of being represented, and they don't necessarily have to just “stick to herding reindeer” (The Sami 2005, pp.63). Another strategic reason for diversifying their image can be found in criticism that has been leveled at Sami, that reindeer herders, as the Sami elite, are “bound in, and binding to, the past”, despite the “dead-endedness of reindeer herding” and the subsequent reliance on a welfare state (for example see Norberg, 2006).

A set of materials ideally suited for analyzing identity representation strategies was made widely accessible in 2005, with the publication of “The Sami – and indigenous people in Sweden” and the launch of the National Sami Information Center and accompanying website called “Sápmi”, meaning 'Samiland'. The booklet and website are the primary products of the Swedish government's “national information campaign on the Sami and Sami culture” (The Sami 2005, back cover) carried about between 2001-2004, now transferred to the control of the Sametinget (Government of Sweden, 2006). A systematic review of the text, structure, and images employed by these two pieces of media offers a wealth of insight as to the emergent dialectical approach of the Swedish Sami elite. The theme of dynamism, in contrast to the previous emphasis on establishing 'a Saminess', are openly discussed in the booklet's introduction, entitled “Times change”. It does speak on the one hand of an age-old people with a retained distinctiveness of culture. However on the other hand it presents the Sami culture as one that has been forced to change, and which has become creatively active in the modern world.

³ In turn, he attributes the movement to the effect of membership in the European Union has had towards regional governance and general integration within Sweden .

The older narrative, of a monistic people primarily identified by reindeer husbandry and authentic enough to lay claims on the present (Conrad, 1999, cited in Hicks and Somby p.276), is apparent in background passages such as this one: “People met their need of heat, food, rest, and company in interaction with nature and the landscape. [In the northern wilderness,] the Sami survived and thrived” (The Sami 2005, p. 31), and this: “As Sami handicraftspeople and life companions, Astrid and Sune Enoksson live close to nature. There is an annual rhythm to their work” (p. 41). These selections indicate that this older narrative of authenticity strategically taps into another, familiar, narrative: one which attributes inherent ecological wisdom to indigenous peoples. At some level it is a shrewd strategy to bolster the legitimacy of Sami land rights claims. More generally, text from the Sápmi website evoke the immemorial-use argument:

...as the Sami are originally a primitive people, the Sami culture traditionally also has a spiritual link to the surrounding countryside...The Sami culture is therefore entirely dependent for its survival on continued access to traditional livelihoods...As hunting and fishing constitute such central elements of the Sami culture, the Sami are considered to have a greater right to hunting and fishing in the Sami areas than other people who live in those areas today.

Explicit discussion of land use conflicts covered in the booklet are exclusively between development and reindeer herders. Other authors have noted that the effort in diminishing ethnicized land conflicts through the overall information campaign thus far have focused only on reindeer herders (Müller and Pettersson, 2006).

The newer narrative in evidence is a much more complex one claiming adaptability and diversity for the Sami. The arguably dominant theme of *The Sami* can be summed up by one sub-heading within one of the sections: “Sami, but innovative” (p. 43). This phrase, and the rest of the book, draws on a multiplicity of meanings, and contestations. 'Saminess' has implied tradition and authenticity. Now it lays claim also to the changeability of innovativeness, an apparent inconsistency: Sami can change, but

they are still somehow Sami. Further, a secondary claim is apparent: that to change *is* Sami. One can almost see the struggle within mirroring the struggle with the outside. This claim is to not just the passive adaptability of chance-blown organisms, but to an active and reactive creativity. Of the seventeen profiles of individual, modern Sami, nine are representations of artistic or entrepreneurial creativity, e.g. “The design group from the North makes Sami-inspired modern clothes,” and “Sara takes the future into her own hands”.

The problem with implying adaptability is that claims to authenticity are weakened. Perhaps it was in this consideration that some balancing profiles were chosen: “Learning your own language”, “Handicrafting with heart and soul”, “A balancing act in the reindeer grazing lands” and “Driving reindeer from the air”. Perhaps the most strategic profile is entitled “A life full of sidelines”. The Sami community at large has often maintained that reindeer herding has never been the sole occupation of any Sami. Instead, Sami maintain that, though reindeer herding is a distinctly Sami occupation, reindeer husbandry provides insufficient livelihood, and therefore a diversity of livelihood strategies has always been the norm. The profile “A life full of sidelines” deals with a particularly innovative sideline that involves processing reindeer meat and selling directly to the market, rather than abiding by the current norm of losing markup to middlemen. In one stroke the apparently conflicting legitimacies of modern salience and traditional authenticity are portrayed as, in fact, mutually reinforcing. Other profiles also attest to the dynamism of the Sami, by presenting complex identity narratives and a pointed diversity between representations.

Additional claim to creative adaptability is made for the Sami language, which is described as “...well equipped to form new words the help of endings...As times change, new Sami words are found for new phenomena, just as in other languages. Thousands of new Sami words have been invented in the last few decades with the help of derivative suffixes, neologisms or loans, for example *dihtor* 'computer',

dáidda 'art'...'” The effectiveness of this claim lies in the clear 'otherness' of a language. Languages can change, but possibly no other single trait has the strength of authenticity than a distinct language. So to claim dynamism in such an arena is safer, than, for example, changes in dress.

Visual Representations Clothing is not addressed formally in the book, perhaps because it is less strategic to do so in such a limited forum or perhaps because the authors deliberately sought to avoid reinforcing an image that would de-legitimize Sami who do not wear recognizably Sami clothing. Instead the book honestly – and again, shrewdly – includes a multitude of images of self-identified Sami in a wide range of clothing, from the brightly-colored traditional kolt (a long tunic in particular styles), to cosmopolitan fashion, to universal-looking northern latitude workwear. The Sami Information Center website, on the other hand, discusses clothing in some detail, and distinguishes between “traditional Sami costume” (as it is translated in the English version of the site) and “everyday” clothes. Traditional clothing is identified in the “Culture” section as an important identity symbol, but primarily worn on ceremonious occasions. In the “Trades: Questions & Answers” section, it is emphasized that Sami wear clothing much like other Swedes, though perhaps with Sami style accents. Interestingly, it also explains here that “[r]eindeer herding Sami wear more traditional clothes as workclothes” (see illustration taken from the “Traditional Sami Clothing: Northern Sami region” page at right). Given the historic and continued primacy of reindeer herding Sami rights over the indigenous rights of non-herding Sami in Sweden, this representation has the effect of reinforcing their relative indigenous authenticity, even as the broader information campaign seeks to diversify the public's definition of who Sami are. Although the comparative choice in dress is

Illustration 1: Image from the Sami Information Center website, depicting a reindeer herder in his everyday workclothes.

in all likelihood a simple fact, selective representation of facts is the essence of political narrative.

Representations in Tourism Aside from the book and website as implicitly political interfaces with the general public crafted by the Sami elite, other self-identified Sami also engage the public in a planned fashion via their tourist economy. This venue of self-representation is less than three-dimensional because indigenous tourism as a niche must market the 'otherness' of the offered cultural experience. This marketing leads to stereotypes (Pettersson, 2007), with which the political elites' educational campaign must negotiate in the public sphere. The success of this marketing can be seen in its ripple effects. Northern Scandinavian tourism legitimizes its marketing brand as a wilderness experience in part by tapping into the indigenous ethos. As Miller and Pettersson explain, “[d]espite the rather rare engagement in tourism [of travelers with Sami], pictures of Sami and Sami heritage are used in most tourism brochures in [Northern Scandinavia]” (2006).

The same is true in the co-promotion of ecotourism. The national ecotourism brand, “Nature's Best”, was launched in 2002 by the Ecotourism Society of Sweden, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and the Swedish Travel and Tourism Council (Nature's Best, 2005). The website was launched in 2005. On its home page, “Lapland”⁴ is top-ranked in popular destinations, as both wild and Sami – both variations on the theme of 'authentic experience'. Under “Things to do” there is a category exclusively for “Sami adventures”. One researcher of Sami and tourism has noted that there is a higher ratio of Sami to non-Sami tourism entrepreneurs who have been approved with the ecotourism label of Nature's Best than there are overall Sami to non-Sami tourism businesses (Pettersson, 2006); Twelve of the forty Sami tourism businesses in Sweden are approved “Nature's Best” tour operators (Nature's Best, 2005; The Sami, 2005).

Sami as Environmentally Ethical The marketability of Sami tourism as also ecotourism lies

4 “Lapp” is the former term for Sami, now considered derogatory.

in a claim often made for, and by, indigenous groups mentioned earlier: that of being more intrinsically environmental. This claim in the Sami case was not discussed by Hicks and Somby except tangentially, but this representation as strategy does exist as an important undercurrent in modern Sami politics. The narratives around Sami-involved land use conflicts in the public sphere do not necessarily discuss relative environmental impacts of the contested uses⁵. However it has been common belief in Sweden that Sami herders have created a “tragedy of the commons” situation in *Sweden's* northern mountains with their ever-growing herds (Beach, 2004). Ecotourism, then, is a way to draw on a different, internationally recognizable narrative of indigenous ecological legitimacy which may have the effect of countering the 'irresponsible' image at home.

Strategy

Other components of Sami elite strategy are to bolster Sami language and education, and reinforce their agenda through international fora.

Language and Education The importance of Sami language for the Sami sense of identity and cultural belonging is emphasized repeatedly in *The Sami*. A headteacher and chairman of the Gothenburg Sami Association is quoted:

Swedish education policy in relation to the Sami had deprived me of something precious, indeed perhaps the most precious thing of all, my language...I have found my identity and I now know that I have my own valuable culture and history to fall back on.

A young Sami teenager presents a different perspective on the role of language and belongingness:

I didn't need to learn the language to confirm my identity, like many other people. I regarded it as a part of my education, something I needed to make my dreams come true...As a South Sami...you're still an outsider. For North Sami speakers the language is more alive and most of what happens in our community is reported in North Sami.

Here the Sami language(s) are not necessarily a prerequisite of Saminess, but it does have a reinforce a

5 For examples, see “Sami struggle for ancestral lands in Sweden” <http://www.galdu.org/web/index.php?odas=117&giella1=eng> and “Sweden's Sami struggle over land rights” <http://www.reuters.com/article/inDepthNews/idUSL0320809920070109>

sense of belonging. Expanded use of radio, television, print, and electronic media have been notable for normalizing the language and strengthening Sami interconnectedness; surveys show that 70,000 viewers every day see the fifteen-minute Sami language news broadcast aired on regular television in Norway, Sweden, and Finland, which subtitled in the relevant languages (Arbelaitz, 2006). Other efforts to promote the Sami language include the creation in 2004 of a Nordic Sami language prize by the Nordic Ministers for Sami Affairs and the Samitinget presidents.

Officially, Sami has been a recognized national minority language in Sweden since 2000, although it is taking some time for the expected benefits of this status to manifest in terms of higher levels of language use and access (Sapmi, 2006). Among other rights, Sami people are now allowed to interact with government authorities in Sami within the so-called 'Sami administration area'. This area in practice excludes Southern Sami (Sapmi, 2006), but since 2005 there has been reason to hope that this administration area will soon be expanded to cover Southern Sami municipalities. A report commissioned by the government which in part addressed this possibility did include this recommendation, and is "currently being circulated for comment" ("National minorities", 2007).

Another right provided by recognition is that Sami must be available as mother-tongue education in schools. The situation on the ground has improved little, particularly in Southern Sweden, as Southern Sami speakers are rare and Sami language teachers rarer still (The Sami, 2005). Sami educational institutions, on the other hand, continue to be strong centers for maintaining, teaching, and developing traditions, as well other skills. In Sweden the Sami Education Centre in Jokkmokk is Sami run and teaches duodji (handicrafts), language, culture, business, and social studies (Sapmi, 2005). There is also a Sami program at Umeå University⁶. The overall importance of education is not only to strengthen Sami identity and reify the culture, but also to nurture more capable leaders in self-governance, particularly in developing a viable Sami economic base, for the future (Lars-Anders Baer, quoted in

⁶ See the Department of Archaeology and Sami Studies at Umea University:
<http://www.umu.se/samiska/kopia%20av%20index.htm>

The Sami, 2006).

International Partnerships Given Sweden's slow pace in advancing Sami rights to self-determination, the Sami political elite have, unsurprisingly, long employed a strategy of developing international partnerships as a way to exert pressure on their own governments (Sillanpää, 1994). There are multiple scales in which they are engaged: Scandinavia, Sapmi, nordic countries, and the European Union. There have also been international efforts through the United Nations, entrepreneurial activity, and a developing presence in international sports.

Hicks and Somby discussed how Sami have developed a pan-Sami identity which was not necessary previously. This collective identity continues to be reified by Sami in positions of authority to leverage greater political salience. The same chairman of the Gothenburg Sami Association quoted above states in *The Sami*: “I am a Sami among Swedes, but I do not feel the same sense of a common identity with them as I do together with other Sami among Norwegians or among Finns. National boundaries criss-cross our Sápmi, but what do we care, they’re not on our 'maps’” (p.18). All of the information put out by the Swedish Samitinget echoes the theme of “one people in four countries.” As another example, the Swedish Sami Education Board asserts “that Sami people are one people and that our ties cross national borders.” It even goes so far as to say that social dimensions of Sami tradition include “affinity between Sami people from different areas” (School Plan and Documents, 2006).

A strategy directed at Sweden employed by the information campaign which is enabled by this pan-Sami identity is to point to the example of Norway, which leads the Sápmi countries in Sami rights. In *The Sami*, which was co-developed by the Swedish Samitinget, Norway is exemplified as a role model several times, with the explicit assertion that “Norway is doing most to promote Sami rights” (p.7). The first profile in the book is not of a Swedish Sami but a Norwegian Sami with international status: Ole Henrik Magga, former chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Peoples. The narrative takes

particular note of how the Norwegian Parliament appointed Magga to a policy post which was not related to Sami issues, indicating a pioneering degree of political integration (p.8). Elsewhere, *The Sami* raises the example of Norwegian municipalities where Sami is spoken in places of business (banks) as well as leisure (cafés). Further, a highlight on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, points out that Norway has ratified ILO Convention 169 (p.8). In contrast, it is repeatedly highlighted that Sweden has yet to ratify Convention 169. Another example raised is that Norway has been more just in allocating responsibility for the burden of proof in land rights contests; “there, landowners must prove that immemorial rights do not exist” (p.33)⁷. More generally, the Sápmi website points out that “various UN bodies,” the Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development have all criticized Sweden for its policies and treatment of the Sami.

Sami across Scandinavia have worked together on pan-Sami legal rights, in particular through the Sami Parliamentary Council (which does not include Russian Sami, since they do not have a Sami parliament). In 2001, the ministers for Sami issues and the Sami parliament presidents in Sweden, Norway, and Finland appointed an “expert group” to investigate and draft a Nordic Sami Convention (Nystad, 2005). In late 2005, this group submitted its draft Convention to its conveners, which proposed establishment of minimum Sami rights across Scandinavia (“Common law’ nearer for Samis”, 2005). Although this approach does not circumvent existing concerns over autonomy and resource rights held by the governments of Sweden and Finland, the Convention focuses existing efforts to champion Sami rights on something concrete. The provisions with direct effects on Sweden are that Sami autonomy would be implemented by the Samitingets, and the Samitingets would have to be consulted before any decisions which affect the Sami could be made (“Land and water rights

⁷ For example, the Society for Threatened Peoples recently reported that Norway has seemingly violated the age-old treaty between Sweden and Norway which allows Sami to use their traditional reindeer wintering grounds across the border in Norway by removing their reindeer enclosures without consulting the Swedish Sami or the Swedish government beforehand (Gruda, 2006).

proposed for Sami people in Nordic countries”, 2005). The Swedish Government has not yet taken an official stance on the Convention. In December of 2006, the Government of Sweden included in its



Illustration 2: Sami Football uniform

annual report to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial

Discrimination the comment that the draft was still under consideration and would be addressed in a forum with political weight, i.e.

“by the responsible ministers at the next Nordic meeting between the ministers and presidents of

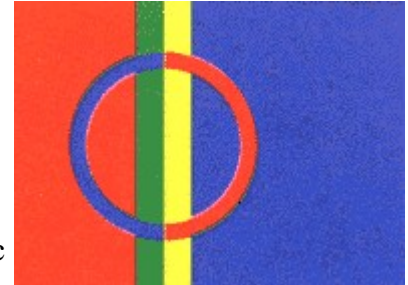


Illustration 3: Sápmi flag

the Sami Parliaments” (p.17). The president of the Swedish Samitinget has

expressed optimism that the government will conclude its deliberations within four years, given that recommendations are for an improved process, rather than blanket rights or other proposals that would have de facto repercussions (Nystad, 2005). The Sami elite continue to deny any unified desire for an independent Sami state (Sápmi, 2006). The stated reasons are that international law on self-determination for indigenous peoples respect state sovereignty and territorial integrity. A less explicit reason can be inferred, that autonomy would not be economically feasible: “...the Sami have stressed that they see their rights and identity as a people being looked after within existing borders.” (Sapmi, 2006)

Through the Sami Council (which includes Russian Sami), Sami elite have also forged non-governmental partnerships which serve as broader sources of international pressure through “shaming”⁸. Its efforts have led to audiences at the level of the European Union (The Sami, 2005).

Sami strategy for international recognition of them as a people as extends beyond legal arenas. For example Sami tourism enterprises recently had an exhibition at the Swedish embassy in London,

⁸ Lawrence Susskind, the internationally noted mediator and researcher, has noted that the desire to 'save face' in the international arena has been an effective inducement for sovereign nations to abide by otherwise non-binding treaties.

helping raise awareness of their culture, taking a direct hand an alternative mode of economic development by into the growing interest in Sami culture (Sapmi 2005, p.27). In another sphere altogether is through sports, for example the 'national' Sami Football Association, which was formed in 2003 and seeks “to strengthen the fellowship about Samis all across our land. Through the football, we would like to raise the international knowledge about Sápmi, visible and respected and show that the Sami people is an indigenous people”, as stated on their website called Sapmifootball.com (2006). This named in itself is notable, as it indicates the Sami homeland rather than simply the Sami, invoking a strong unity concept. The league's uniform (see illustration at left) is evocative of the Sami flag (see illustration at right), another symbol that, as Hicks and Somby note, has become a widely-recognized rallying emblem for all Sami. The Sami Football Association is now member of a new international football association, the N.F. Board (comprised of countries not connected to the normative Fédération Internationale de Football Association), bringing the Sami as a people a small step closer to international recognition. Individual athletes also have a role to play in raising awareness. For example, alpine skiing champion Anja Pärson commissioned and wore a Sami-styled dress made by Sami designers to a Sports Gala and thus garnered wide media attention (The Sami 2005, p43). This particular association with skiing for awareness-raising, though perhaps trivial, holds potential over time; the Swedish Association for the Promotion of Outdoor Life has given the Sami credit for having “popularized skiing” (The Sami, 2005). It represents an as-yet untapped avenue for diversification of Sami identity branding.

Lessons

Evidently, an important current theme of Sami politics in Sweden is that of negotiating a more diverse identity. This strategy appears to be a result of several different factors: there is a push from Sami who have felt disenfranchised by the previous approach identified by Hicks and Somby which created a monistic, reindeer-centered identity; there is also a drive to reflect the increasingly salient reality that

the vast majority of Sami are not involved in reindeer husbandry. Adding their interests also are the 'integrated' Sami, who are in need of not so much poverty-reducing strategies, as improved access to their own culture. These Sami have an interest in cultural survival; in strengthening their own identities and improving the viability of their culture in modern Sweden.

From their own point of view, those Sami who *are* involved in reindeer husbandry are well aware of the probability that this occupation as a sole means of livelihood is not viable in the long term. Therefore representations which enfold other characteristics into their recognized identity must be deployed in order to make access to a more diverse range of 'Sami economic opportunities' politically possible. Examples of this include diversification of tradition-based market ventures, such as emphasizing the aesthetic value of duodji and marketing them as art, and capturing tourist markets via cultural tourism. Reindeer-focused advocacy has been successful in advancing reindeer related policy which benefit Sami, but these policies do not contain enough flexibility for herders to pursue a diverse enough economic strategy to live on. Reindeer herding is not uncommonly a marginal livelihood, whether due to land use conflicts or climate change. But by law, samebys (reindeer cooperatives) cannot engage in other kinds of income generation (The Sami 2005, p26). Diversifying the Sami image also diversifies the types of Samitinget proposals for development assistance that can be justified. The two demands, to improve access to and viability of Sami culture in southern Sweden, and to legitimize a wider variety of Sami livelihood strategies in northern Sweden, combined hold the potential to truly diversify the viable strategies for Sami throughout Sweden.

Sami in Scandinavia are in an unusual position in the context of indigenous peoples worldwide. As a whole, the people has been so integrated and even miscegenated into the dominant Swedish society that the majority of Sami have comparable socioeconomic and health indicators to that of other Swedes. For some populations of endemic Sami, particularly in the south, their demands are more similar to that of

ethnic minorities in western states, which is for cultural survival in the context of a history of destructive racism. For other Sami, cultural survival *is* linked to traditional means of livelihood. In either case, diversifying the representations of Sami has enabled broader political inclusion of non “reindeer Sami”. If the Sametinget can rise above factioning within its parliamentary body, there is promise that this improved cultural and political representation of the Sami culture will result in improved political ability to garner economically strategic policies.

Insofar as other indigenous people are in a similar position of partial representation and integrated population, there are some lessons to be gleaned from the Sami experience. Focused advocacy on particular aspects of one's culture may improve the viability of that aspect, but if the policies only result in welfare-type assistance, viability will only improve temporarily. Acknowledging change and enabling diverse representations not only will reflect the reality of the indigenous experience more accurately, this diversity can also assist in the development of more economic options if and when development is desirable. As a political tool, creating an easily identifiable (i.e. simplistic) identity can be effective in garnering recognition, but the strategy will only work as far as individuals feel represented within that identity and will suffer setbacks once divisions split political focus.

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