

TRANSFORMATIONS OF CENTRE AND PERIPHERY FOR THE SAAMI IN NORWAY¹

Myrdene Anderson
Purdue University, Indiana

Abstract: The Saami minority in each of the Fennoscandian nation-states faces generalizable issues of articulation with national units. These issues also operate among and within national units. Historically, many Saami without a distinctive lifestyle such as reindeer breeding chose to assimilate into mainstream regional culture. As a consequence, Saami and non-Saami alike now tend to associate Saami culture with the reindeer-breeding minority within the Saami minority as a whole. Indeed, bureaucratic regulations and national measures impact differentially on various segments of the Saami population. This paper investigates repercussions for the Saami in North Norway who are simultaneously beneficiaries of national good intentions and victims of premeditated exploitation. All of this is exacerbated by the Saami minority's own faith in an eternal frontier and the policy makers' myth of a monolithic Saami culture.

Résumé: La minorité saami dans chacun des états-nations finoscandinaves est confrontée à des problèmes grandissants d'articulation aux unités nationales. Ces problèmes agissent aussi au sein des unités nationales et entre elles. Historiquement, plusieurs Saami, sans mode de vie distinct, comme l'élevage du renne, ont choisi de s'assimiler au courant dominant de la culture régionale. Par voie de conséquence, aussi bien les Saami que les non-Saami tendent maintenant à associer la culture saami avec les minorités où s'élève le renne à l'intérieur de la minorité saami entière. En effet, les règles bureaucratiques et les mesures nationales influent différemment sur les divers segments de la population saami. Cet article analyse les répercussions chez les Saami au nord de la Norvège en tant que bénéficiaires des bonnes intentions nationales mais aussi en tant que victimes d'une exploitation préméditée. Tout cela est exacerbé par la foi de la minorité saami en une éternelle frontière et de mythe d'une culture saami monolithique de ceux qui aménagent les politiques.

Introduction

This exploration of the social rhetoric in contemporary confrontations between Saami and other Norwegians transcends the detail of description to expose some of the numerous temporal and regional patterns in this rhetoric. To a considerable extent, this broad-brush outline applies to the evolution of relations in Fennoscandia as a whole, if not to other settings involving embedded indigenous minorities. Specifically, the heuristic of non-equilibrium dynamical systems (variously used by Boulding 1978; Jantsch 1980; Koestler 1978; Laszlo 1983; Maruyama 1976; Prigogine and Stengers 1984; and Simon 1969) will elucidate both data and analysis of specific case histories in this continual renegotiation of “centre” and “periphery” for minority and majority alike. This process sometimes condenses in nodes of patronage, clientism and brokerage (Amsbury 1979; Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981; Paine 1971), but should not simply be reduced to these networks.

In this scenario, I will argue that in prewar times—for all the sporadic proselytization, linguistic discrimination, taxation, trade, regulation, colonization, resource extraction and even out-migration—Saami society exhibited stronger centripetal than centrifugal ties. Even so, during this period, particularly in recent centuries, a number of Saami found it convenient to exchange ethnicity for nationality. These Saami tended to be or become sedentary. Those who remained in North Norway became dependent on coastal small stock raising, dairy farming and ocean fishing for subsistence. Throughout this period, the seasonally nomadic reindeer-breeding Saami, mostly residing on the inland tundra, embraced both ethnicity—identified with their livelihood and lifestyle—and nationality, associated with extrinsic emblems such as the monarchy.

To skip several transitional steps, we now find some Saami, usually emerging from the former group of sedentary Saami and assimilated Norwegians, who wish to exchange nationality for political ethnicity. This new ethnicity, for some, merges with another sort of nationality, carried by identification with some future (perhaps fanciful) autonomous, amorphous, pan-Saami territory we might call “Saamiland” (or *Samieatnam*, as Saami have always called their unbounded arctic home). Ethnic nationalism (Svrakov 1979) for Saamiland rarely emerges in the rhetoric, however, despite Saami being spread over and suspended between four contemporary countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland and the U.S.S.R.). Instead, the new ethnicity focusses on interlocking pragmatic and expressive issues, such as usufructory rights and cultural survival.

This has brought about new alignments—of persons, groups and symbols (Anderson 1981a, 1981b, 1982a, 1982b; Bjørklund and Brantenberg 1981; *Charta* 79 1982; Eidheim 1971; Kleivan 1978; Ottar 1981; Paine 1982,

1985; Thuen 1980). One consequence of this is a polarization on certain issues within as well as between ethnic groups and nationalities. When such polarization precipitates from complex, overlapping issues, contradictions with many permutations ensue. For example, when some Saami disapprove of the tactics used to oppose governmental resource extraction projects, by default they may be interpreted as being in favour of the projects simply because of their opposition to those who are against such projects. It is naïve to expect unambiguity or "rationality" in the political arena (Blair and Polak 1983; Claessen 1979; Huizer 1979; Kurtz 1979; Ross et al. 1980).

Demographic Overview

The Saami throughout the Fennoscandian Pan North number some 50 000, of which about 70 percent are Saami speakers (Aarseth 1975). The Saami-speaking segment comprises both sedentaries and nomads. Virtually all 10 percent of Saami engaging in seasonally nomadic reindeer breeding speak Saami as their first language. In the far north or in reindeer-breeding districts, sedentary Saami who farm and fish tend to retain the Saami language. Throughout recent centuries, Saami dispersed at a distance from these districts have been at risk for total assimilation into the national language and culture.

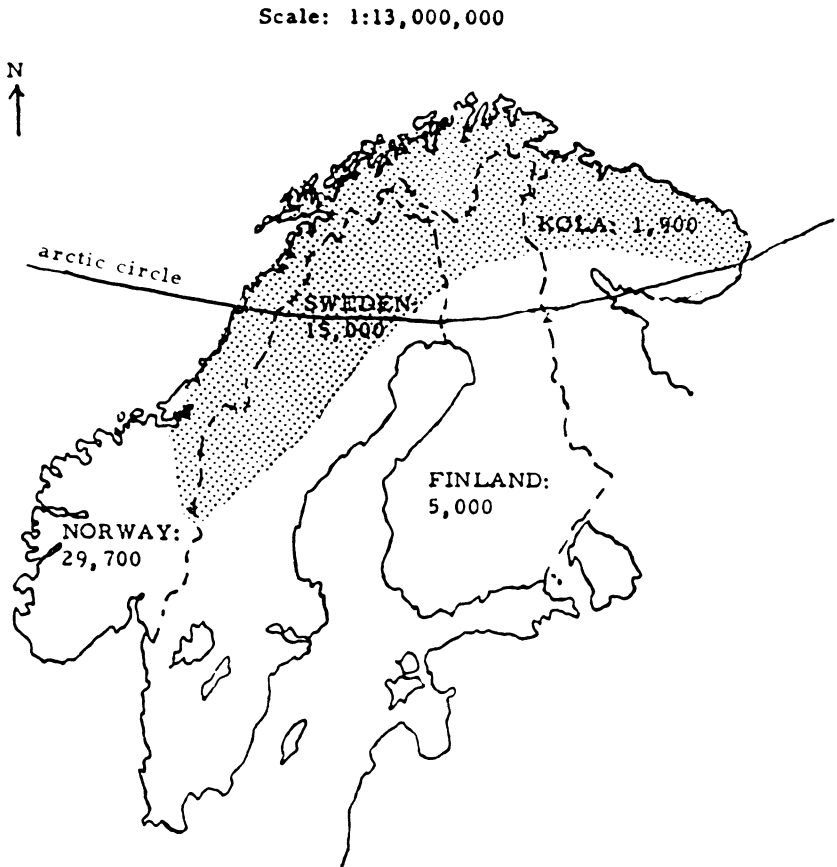
Saami constitute about one percent of the total population within their encompassing nation states, so that the 10 percent of Saami who are reindeer breeders are literally a minority within a minority. Nevertheless, until now this seasonally nomadic, reindeer-herding group has been the standard-bearer for Saami identity. Some of this detail appears in Table 1 and on the map (Figure 1).

Table 1
Distribution of Populations in Fennoscandia

	Population as of 1975 (thousands)				All
	Norway	Sweden	Finland	U.S.S.R.	
Total National	3998	8043	4695	500	17 236
Ethnically Saami	30	15	5	2	52
Saami speakers	22	10	4	1	37
Reindeer owners	2.5	2.5	1.5	0.5	7
Saami-managed Domestic Reindeer (thousands of head)					
	124	261	33	15	433

Sources listed in Anderson 1978.

Figure 1
Map of Fennoscandia



Saami populations in Norway, Sweden, Finland and on the Kola peninsula of the U.S.S.R. reside largely in the shaded areas. Populations circa 1975. Scale: 1:13 000 000

These figures and categories abstract a complex social and cultural landscape. First, self-disclosure of ethnicity equivocates culture, language, livelihood, identification, mood and awareness/acknowledgement of roots. Most of North Norway has been occupied by Saami, Finns and Swedes; most of the Finns and Swedes originated as Saami (or came from Saami areas in Finland and Sweden) and the majority in each group tended to become Norwegianized. When awareness of assimilation has not been totally suppressed in the oral tradition of a family or a region, some individuals predictably will rebel by literally flying or wearing the colours of Saamihood.

The various ethnic boundaries tended to be permeable and de-assimilation began before any explicit Fourth World ideology emerged. Now this movement, drawing on an international sensitivity to ecological and political issues, informs as well as generates events at the local level in Saamiland.

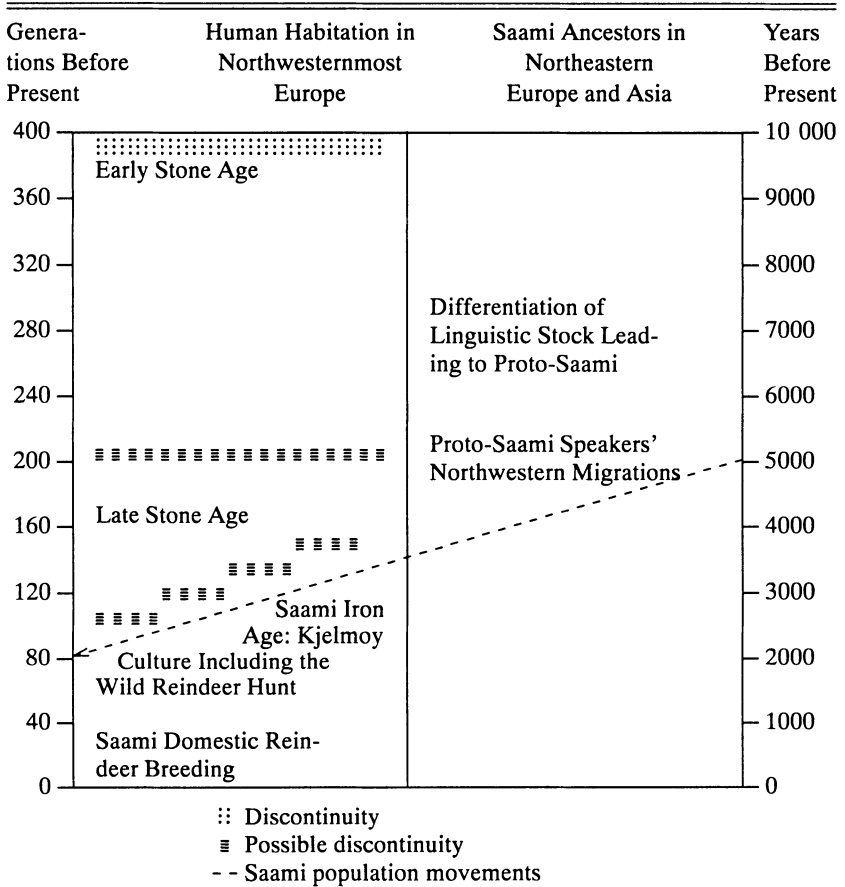
Historic Backdrop and the Generation of Ethnic Distinctions

Ten thousand years ago, during the terminal phase of the last ice age, humans lived along the ice-free coast of North Norway. As indicated in Figure 2, the origin of this population or populations is unknown. They may not be ancestral to either the Saami or the Scandinavians. The records of habitation are discontinuous nearly to our era, when at last we can identify the language and cultural groups antecedent to those of today's Fennoscandia, namely, the Indo-European Scandinavian speakers, and the Finno-Ugric speaking Finns and Saami.

Contemporary Saami speak the Finno-Ugric language of the same name. The Saami language probably emerged from the prehistoric admixture of one Uralic language with another, the latter being a Finno-Ugric antecedent to Finnish. One millennium or more later, linguistic contact between Saami and Old Norse indicates that there were also extensive relations along that cultural boundary.

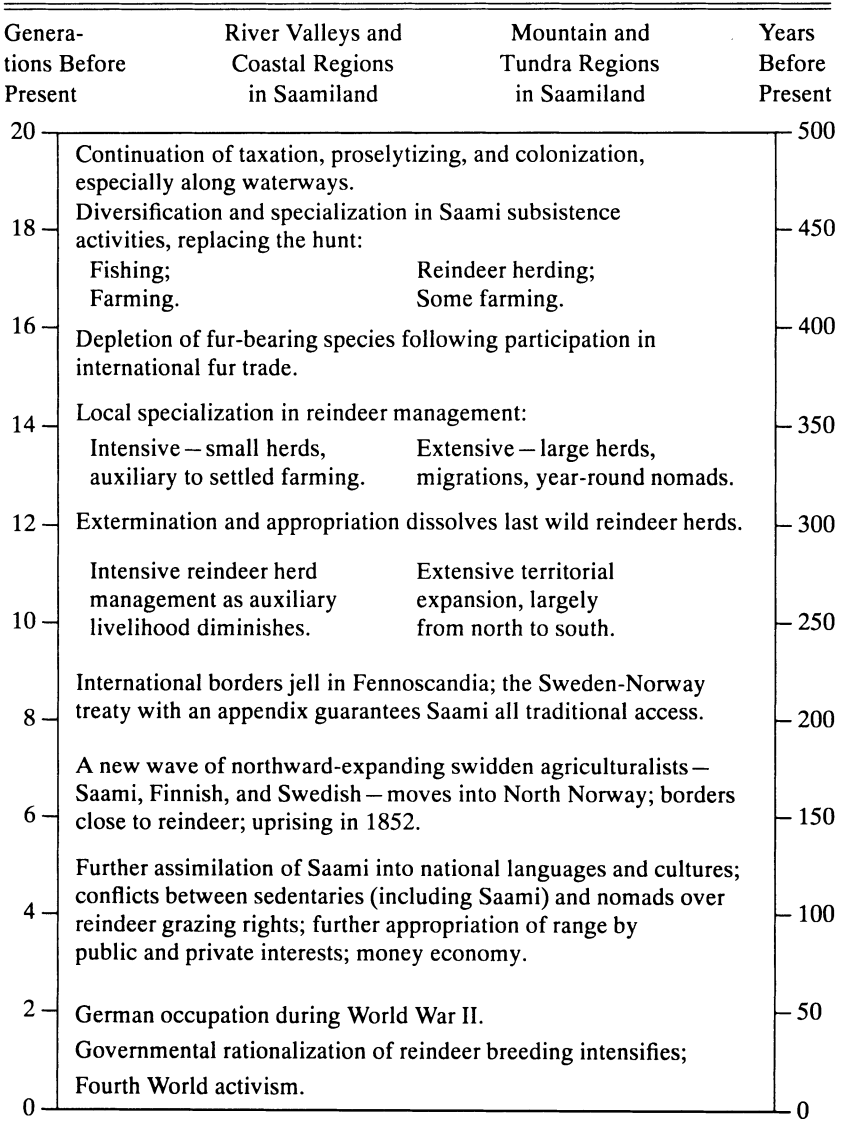
In prehistoric periods, long before we can ascertain the relationship of residents in the Pan North to present-day Saami, trade extended over thousands of kilometres. Thus it is not surprising that in historic times Saami were affected by the Black Death, that they decimated their own wildlife through participation in the fur trade and that their coastal regions were devastated by collapsing post-Reformation fish markets in Europe. Even though they were once dispersed hunters and gatherers at the very edge of Europe, the Saami appear in Tacitus' AD 92 account, in Ottar's AD 892 interview in the court of King Alfred and in Schefferus' widely translated cultural survey, first published in 1673. Meanwhile, from the early centuries of this millennium, Saami have been taxed, if not plundered, by representatives of the governments of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Novgorod, Russia and by smaller corporations as well (Holmsen 1977).

Figure 2
Ten Millennia of Saami Prehistory



As indicated in Figures 2 and 3, only four centuries ago some Saami became nomadic reindeer-breeding specialists while others became fishers and farmers (Vorren 1973). Before that time, specialization tended to be tied to locality and to season, with the wild reindeer hunt generally a common seasonal pursuit. The transition, by some, to domestic reindeer management was a consequence of the Saami's expanding fur trade and their participation in a global economy. To the present time, however, both the seasonally nomadic and the sedentary segments of the population have continued to extract natural resources—for household consumption, for barter and sale, and for sport. These traditional activities unite the Saami people, while primary subsistence habits, dress and even language can separate their two subgroups glossed as nomadic and sedentary.

Figure 3
Five Centuries of Saami History



Most remarkable is the fact that the Saami persisted and thrived throughout these millennia of intrusion and exploitation, capped off by several centuries of severe cultural and linguistic discrimination. This may be explained by the relative autonomy of the Saami social system at the periphery of contact with non-Saami. These Saami were cohesive and often incorporated

stray members of other groups with whom they came in contact. Extrinsic factors, including World War II and the welfare state, have resulted in considerable information dumping and energy extraction in Saamiland. Such a trade of information for energy is analogous to predator/prey relations, where energy accrues to the individual predator while information accrues to the *population* of prey. Saami culture as a whole has condensed the information from millennia of contact with extrinsic forces (Anderson 1978, 1981b; Ingold 1980).

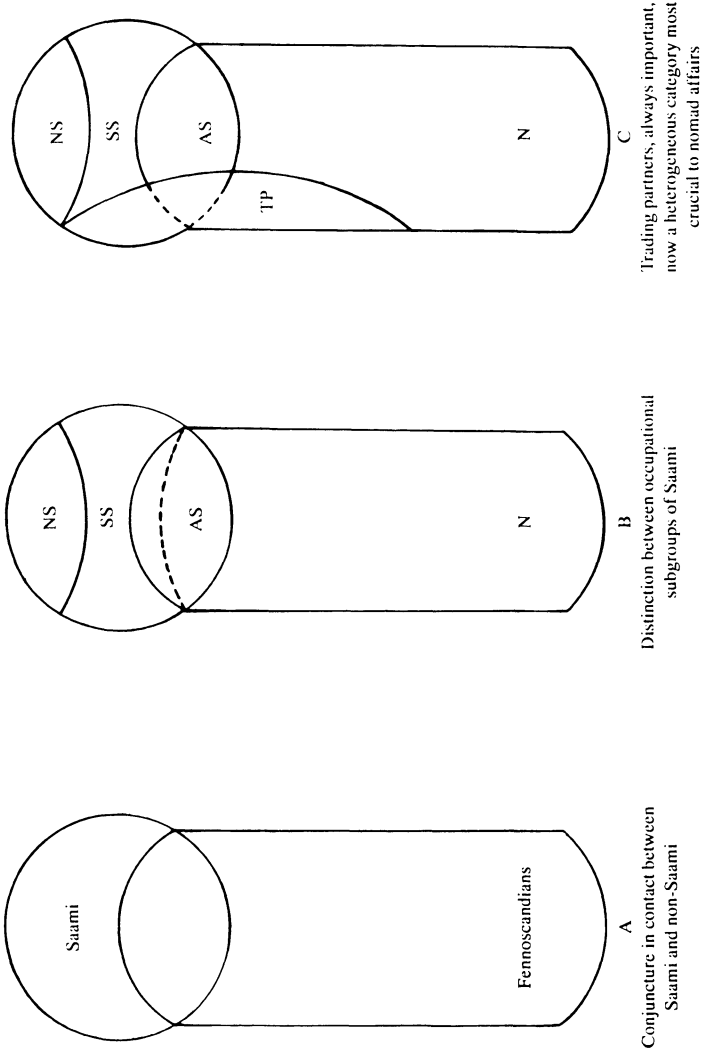
This Saami connection with hegemonies to the south has not seriously disrupted the dynamics of Saami culture. As long as the transactions of information and energy within Saami society surpassed those with the outside, exogenous problems did not magnify endogenous ones. Nevertheless, during this period when Saami identity was developing vis-à-vis the nation-state, the Saami were dividing internally along the lines of subsistence livelihood.

In Figure 4, events and processes generating the Fennoscandian ethnic landscape are summarized for the pre-confrontation period (a deliberately ambiguous term). Three stages are diagrammed. First, Saami contact with non-Saami brought about new ethnic, cultural and linguistic amalgams with their own negotiable boundaries. Secondly (but not simultaneously), specialized subsistence lifestyles developed, such as those of reindeer-breeding seasonal nomads, sedentary farmers and fishers, and Norwegianized segments of the sedentary population. Many Saami were thus assimilated. The final category is that of the trading partner. The hosting and trading partner had always been integral to the Saami lifestyle. Both the Saami and the Norwegian communities provided personnel essential to the operations of the nomads, based on reciprocal needs, resources and temperaments.

Thus far I have traced the genesis of some inclusive, exclusive and cross-cutting social categories and the permeability of their various boundaries. In pre-confrontation ethnic relations the nomad was the type specimen of the minority group, with the reindeer as its emblem. This stereotyping became a self-fulfilling prophecy, a dynamic increasingly understood by social scientists (e.g., Jones 1977).

Even today, non-Saami expect Saami to be reindeer breeders, and Saami oblige by claiming so to be (whether or not they are), at least when beyond their own communities. In the same situation, actual reindeer breeders considerably inflate their livestock holdings when given the opportunity. Within Saami communities, which almost always contain both nomadic and sedentary households, the nomad's lifestyle provokes envy and resentment among sedentary kin and neighbours. All seem to have agreed that there is something authentic and desirable about this occupation that has existed for half a millennium. For this reason, it is particularly interesting to witness a new as-

Figure 4
Prefrontation Differentiation of Ethnic Categories and Boundary Functions in North Norway



sertiveness developing among the sedentary segment, in part a product of a fresh confrontation with the national government.

Emergent Patterns of Confrontation

In pre-confrontation times, the Saami participated in national and global economies actively, reluctantly and by default. In post-confrontation times, the Saami figure in national and international politics. This transformation of an embedded, indigenous ethnic minority into a politically salient body has irreversible consequences, as discussed below.

The early nationalism of the governments in Fennoscandia alternately preyed on and protected the Saami minority. Often these rationales were scrambled. With few exceptions, such as an 1852 uprising in Kautokeino (as it is spelled on Norwegian maps), the Saami did not individually or collectively resist the imposition of other systems. Instead, they were frequently able to sidestep or subvert imposed policies, buttressed by strong values of individuality, independence and innovation, and their confidence in an ever-present (if now tightening) frontier. Figure 5 summarizes recently experienced limits to this accommodation process.

The premeditated exploitation and good intentions of the nation-state accelerated following World War II. During the German occupation of Norway, all parties recognized the strategic value of North Norway. In their retreat at the close of the war, the Germans evacuated the citizenry and razed all structures in the north. It took more than five years to rebuild these northern communities. The regulation frame dwellings did not duplicate the tents, sod huts, log cabins and houses previously used, nor did they permit the same lifestyles for their inhabitants, whether they were of Saami, Norwegian or of Finnish extraction. Within 20 years, those frame dwellings were judged substandard by the Norwegian government, and another round of subsidization was launched. The new, ultra-modern homes demand even more upkeep.

In the past, schooling was tied to literacy in the catechism. Today, education is standardized nationwide. Saami students in Saami communities may receive instruction in their first language during the early grades. School attendance is compulsory for 10 months of the year. This interferes with the traditional integration of the young into household activities, particularly for Saami nomads with their extensive circuit of transhumance, trading and visiting. Nomad parents prefer not to place their children in school dormitories. The mother usually strives to live in a central community with a school for those 10 months, sacrificing her routines on the reindeer range. On the other hand, she may own a reliable road vehicle which can be used for long-distance visiting and trading, with or without her children in tow.

Figure 5
Norwegian Saami and the Nation-State as Transformed
by Events of the Past Fifty Years

Year	North Norway: Coastal Norwegian and Saami Sedentaries; Interior Saami Sedentaries and Reindeer-Breeders	Years Before Present
1935	Reindeer Law regulates pasture areas and livestock limits by season.	50
	Five years' seasonal education.	
1940	Regional economy; important links between coastal Saami and reindeer nomads.	45
1945	World War II; German occupation of Norway; construction of road system; appropriation of some reindeer and other livestock; evacuation of most residents preparatory to German retreat south and destruction of all buildings and works.	40
1950	National organization of reindeer owners. Reconstruction of North Norway. Family nomadism gives way to transhumance of herd with herding personnel; families based in seasonal hamlets, relocating overland by reindeer sled.	35
1955	Beginning of heavy out-migration to industrial south.	30
1960	Governmental research program on reindeer. Introduction of snowmobile.	25
1965	Herding carried out by snowmobile commuters from seasonal centre; families moving seasonally by motorized vehicles on roads. Compulsory schooling now nine ten-month years; introduction of Saami language.	20
1970	Dam threatens Saami settlement. Continual government-sponsored rationalization of reindeer management with emphasis on meat production; discouragement of small holders.	15
1975	Saami Institute, sponsored by Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Denmark. Beginning of Fourth-World conferences.	10
1980	1977 Reindeer Law intensifies regulation. Relocated dam threatens reindeer management and endangered species in canyon; demonstrations at site and in capitol. 1982 Supreme Court decision upholds dam.	5
1985	Contest continues on other fronts.	0

Government housing, schooling and the internal combustion engine have differentially affected the nomadic sector, for better and for worse. This underlines the perceived difference between nomadic and sedentary Saami at the local level. Subsidization of the reindeer industry and of reindeer-breeding households (which require several seasonal dwellings and snow-mobiles) exacerbates antagonism among sedentaries and non-Saami.

The pre-confrontation divergence between nomadic and sedentary sectors, illustrated in Figure 4, is also represented in the first diagram in Figure 6. The balance of this figure deals with the evolution of attitudes among and toward Saami before and since about 1970. In that year a protest began against a government-planned hydro-electric project on the Alta-Kautokeino river in North Norway. The local-level activism of 1970 marks a watershed between the pre-confrontation and post-confrontation periods. Confrontations between Saami and the state have continued since the completion of the dam, but are seen as the result of a social structure which exhibits some fragmentation and discontinuity.

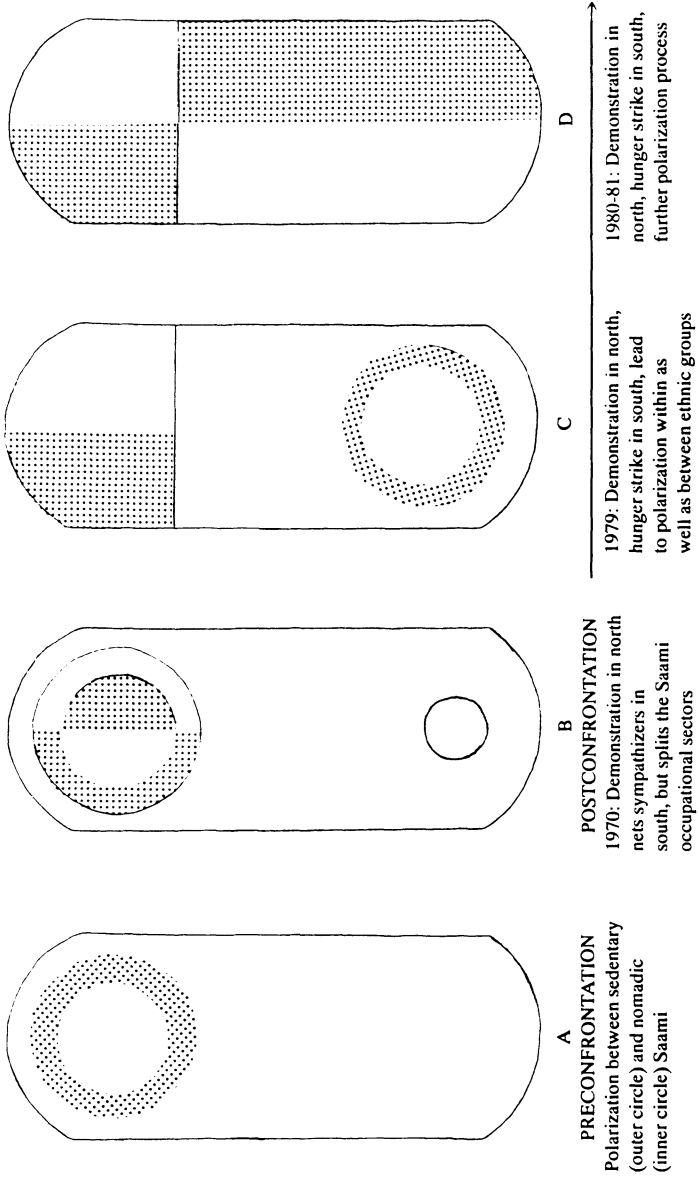
The initial blueprints of this dam called for flooding a Saami village, Masi, and displacing its 500 inhabitants, many of them farmers. Townspeople staged a demonstration, with banners written in Norwegian. Neither demonstrations nor public written messages are indigenous modes of communication. This demonstration was clearly modelled after other mass actions elsewhere in the world. It gained publicity, and it was successful. The engineers redrew their plans to tap this power source without flooding the town.

As shown in Figure 6, some local opinion criticized the resistance and the demonstration, and thus appeared to favour the dam. Differences of opinion did exist about the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed dam, but some who seemed to be for the dam were actually just against the demonstration. However, the demonstration sensitized some southern Norwegians to issues of ethnicity and resource management in the north.

By the summer of 1979, the government and its corporation, Norwegian Hydro, found an apparently viable site much farther downstream, and began preparing an access road to it. The manoeuvre did not go unnoticed. During that summer, many people, mostly young conservationists and/or foreigners, camped out and blocked the work crews and their equipment. A small number of Saami were involved in this demonstration, but official Saami organizations were ambiguous in their support.

This demonstration also appeared to succeed, at least as a stalling tactic until winter arrived. By October, however, it was clear that the government did not intend to honour its promise to investigate possible damages to reindeer pasturage and sensitive wildlife areas. A half-dozen Saami from different districts announced that they would stage a hunger strike in a traditional

Figure 6
Increasing Polarization of Sympathies in Norway Regarding Resource Management in the North



Legend: Enclosed space — expectations of and sympathy with Saami rights in natural resource management
 Hashed space — resistance to Saami rights to manage natural resources

tent, right outside the Parliament building in Oslo. This was also inspired by other international events, particularly those in Ireland. The week-long fast ended with apparent concessions by the Prime Minister.

The grass-roots Saami reaction to the strike was first incredulity, and then shame and criticism of the hunger strikers. Celtic fasting has no counterpart in Saami culture. The hunger strike was clearly in an international, political idiom and further complicated the crosscutting factions in the north. In the south, the Saami or conservationist cause (as it was variously rendered) gained a sizeable and vocal following. At the same time, these unprecedented acts of defiance predictably aroused other citizens, sometimes along party lines.

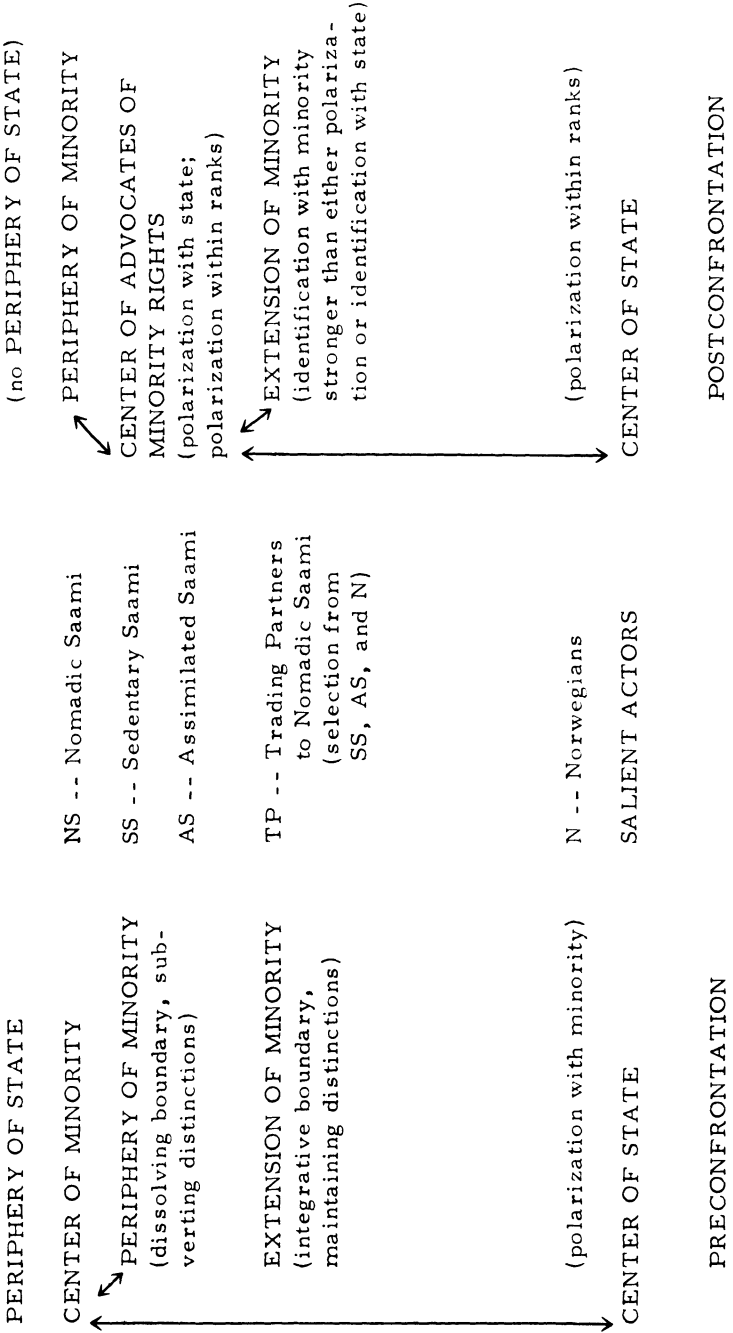
The next summer, in 1980, the threat of access road construction resumed and a mass encampment of largely non-Saami demonstrators appeared at the construction site. Finally, in harsh midwinter conditions, the remaining 100 demonstrators were forcibly removed and arrested by 700 police and military personnel; none were injured. Despite the harsh weather, the government resumed construction. It intended both to make a statement and to make up for lost time on the project. These events triggered a longer, less dramatic, yet more serious hunger strike. There had been almost a carnival-like atmosphere at the first fast, in which both men and women participated. The second hunger strike involved only five men. It was again held in the nation's capital, but in an institution rather than on public grounds. The men fasted for a month without the government capitulating to their demands, as had ostensibly happened a year before. The image of overkill in the government's dismantling of the on-site demonstration, and the serious second hunger strike, finally polarized most of the remaining undecided public into pro- and anti-construction camps.

The final diagram in Figure 6 condenses this picture to illustrate the polarization within as well as between ethnic groups and regional populations.

The pre-confrontation opposition between state and minority could also be seen as one between centre and periphery. The periphery had a focal symbol, that of the reindeer-breeding nomad. After the past 14 confrontational years, the minority has been represented not by a symbol, but by self-appointed advocates. These tend to come from the sedentary group. Their rhetoric includes a concern for reindeer pasturage, but also emphasizes the rights of the minority's sedentary majority. Crosscutting distinctions have emerged, some of them congruent with national and international political currents.

At the same time, as illustrated in Figure 7, the state has effectively swallowed its own periphery. Now there is only state or non-state. There are now no exceptions to parliamentary edict, as confirmed in a unanimous 1982 Supreme Court ruling supporting the controversial dam project. A 1751 codi-

Figure 7
Transformations of Focal Ethnic Categories from Preconfrontation to Postconfrontation Times



cil, guaranteeing traditional rights to Saami in Norway and Sweden, has in effect been repudiated. Because their culture pivots on the relation of Saami to the environment, Saami not dependent on primary subsistence occupations are also at risk.

Periphery of State

Increasing awareness of Saami rights and obligations (seen as bilateral) and their privileges (perceived as unilaterally conferred by the state) can be felt throughout Norway. As neither Saami nor Norwegian seem to weigh heavily the consequences of unilateral conferral of privilege (in contrast to areas subject to negotiation), this point will not be developed further. However, a strong current of opinion among the national majority considers social services in the north a costly gift, or a generous privilege, rather than a right conferred by citizenship. The Saami tend to regard citizenship as a diffuse privilege rather than a right. Of more significance than the state to many Saami is the Crown.

Saami have regularly turned to the church or state for litigation, welfare and sanctification, when this seemed more propitious than using their own systems, particularly if it could extend their networks of influence. During the dramatic 1980-1981 confrontation, for instance, two Saami women personally represented the Saami cause to the Pope and the United Nations. Saami are eclectic in dealings with church, state, colonists, traders, tourists and even ethnographers. This testifies to their toleration and incorporation of foreign agents into interdependent relationships, and precludes certainties about either control or subjugation.

Saami individuals continue to be more attracted by manipulation than by confrontation. In confrontation, it is easiest to tap the cultural style of the actor rather than formal group channels. This has been analyzed elsewhere by a number of scholars. The next and final section will summarize, analyze and synthesize the data.

On Being, Becoming and Unbecoming Saami

The Saami regions of Fennoscandia have been preyed on and protected by the southern hegemonies, by taxation, in trade, through colonization and as an investment. Most of North Norway consists of crown lands. Much of the contemporary confrontation involves ethical and legal questions of Saami aboriginal, usufructory rights in this largely unpartitioned area. (Generic issues of such rights are discussed in Bennett 1978 and Paine 1985.) From earliest historic times to the present, natural resources (hides, fish, ores, water power and now oil) and human labour have moved from this arctic periphery to the south—benefiting entrepreneurs in traditional times and now

the nation-state. The dominant south/north transfer was church and state propaganda. Very little reliable information about the Saami has moved southward.

Given contemporary media and the popularity of ethnic roots, information now surges in both directions between centre/periphery, majority/minority, decision maker/executor and ethnic group/ethnic group. However, this communication is illusory and has little information value. The channels are saturated with redundancy and tedious predictability. Almost every adult and child in Saamiland has been on radio or television at least once. All are experienced at playing a media role.

An interesting issue arises with respect to the self-selected Saami advocates for ethnic rights. These politicized Saami emphasize that they act as individuals, and exhibit an independence appropriate to Saami behaviour. Yet they are necessarily atypical, and their credentials are contested at the grass-roots level. Local Saami attentively follow the careers of well-known Saami – for example, yoikers or soccer players. But Saami who “perform” instrumentally outside the community receive no accolades, and may even be ostracized.

Ethnic identity has been manipulated in many ways both by Saami and by the state. With social and political discrimination and reverse discrimination, individuals can attain alternating or serial identities. The state reduces its Saami population to a balance sheet of costs and benefits. Perhaps the most detrimental aspect of state policies is that which dictates Saami status. It either assumes a monolithic “Saami culture” or erroneously regards some sector (once nomads, now activists) as prototypic. Reindeer breeding, for example, is not a right but a restricted, legislated privilege for the few descendants of active breeders. This privilege may be either a wedge into the Saami minority, or pacification, or protection of a tourist commodity. It may expiate collective colonial guilt, or it may effectively regulate and finally phase out this livelihood. Whether the regulation of reindeer-breeding is to be judged benevolent or malevolent in intent(s) or outcome(s) is moot. The thrust of my argument is that all these processes have an inherent complexity that refuses to be reduced below a certain level of qualitative analysis (see also Huizer 1979).

The increasing awareness of all ethnicity, not just that of indigenous minorities, may mean some convergence between the Norwegian and Saami attitudes about the nature of their relationships. At the same time, Saami representing their own culture, nationally or internationally, converge with other politicians and transnational societies. As such, their behaviour is regulated by rules independent of Saami culture. Such larger systems are unlikely to reflect or enhance smaller ones, particularly when the smaller systems are self-generating. Like academicians, politicians function in diverse

satellite guilds; both are selected, educated and sustained by the state. Both may thus be regarded with disdain at the grass-roots level.

In pre-confrontation times, the internal dynamics of Saami culture could disregard exogenous forces by virtue of the "frontier." Now that geographic frontier has been obliterated by population increase among all segments and by irreversible expectations from a monetized, industrial economy. There are other frontiers in Saami culture, however. One of them is the toleration of unique, mobile members, qualities that rank high in Saami values. Hence, the agent of the nation-state, the jet-setter and the professional advocate of ethnic claims to land and water, can be embraced as modern tricksters and cultural mediators (e.g., Boulding 1978; Prigogine and Stengers 1984).

The relegation of Saami individuals to this international fellowship is both fortuitous and problematic. It confers the mobility necessary to participate in Fourth World politics. Mobility is not just a feature of "nomadic" life; it permeates all of Saami culture to the extent that even furniture, utensils and buildings "migrate." The problematic aspect relates to the importance of autonomy, individuality and unique personality within Saami social life. Participants in Fourth World politics should ideally behave as replaceable parts. This poses a problem for individuals, who may feel as dissatisfied with this constraint as they are stimulated by possibilities for mobility (Jantsch 1980; Maruyama 1976).

Such Fourth-World Saami politicians are not seen as trading partners by the state. Rather, they play a role in an irreversible game, in an international field unconstrained by the space, time or resources of Saami culture. The players are similarly suspended individuals from this and other cultures.

Although the Fourth-World movement is subsidized by various governments with various rationales, it is not a "conspiracy" in either direction. Increased order is common to maturing systems, and is evident in all of politics. Tokens of such increased order tend to be self-organizing and persistent. The cleavage within and between state and minority, and between minority and its advocates, may widen.

Fourth-World momentum can only be sustained through investment of human time and energy and by means of government financing. A new coordinate guild within the larger system has developed. Its external relations are more salient than its relations with either higher- or lower-level systems. This guild has not evolved, but rather has crystallized from conditions in dissipating structures. Its connection with the ethnic setting, which is its rationale for existence, is tenuous. Fourth-World dynamics are a window into generic processes of regulation, control, exacerbation, integration and articulation. All have been woefully handled in political analyses to date.

Saami culture now has many centres and many spokespersons, some of

them not even ethnic. One centre is in the transnational networks and international organizations that represent Saami interests. While advocacy is crucial, cultural survival rests with the local societies, with all their contradictions, incessant change and indifference to global processes.

Afterword

Since 1983, when this article first took shape, perhaps the most noteworthy event (and certainly the most newsworthy one) involving Saami and their environs has been Chernobyl, the Soviet nuclear accident of late April of 1986. During the ensuing days the disaster dumped significant amounts of radioactive elements over Fennoscandia. The pattern and intensity of fallout varies with the wind and precipitation prevailing at the time. Of course the layperson must depend on scientific means to assess the radioactivity, and on governmental means to integrate this information with social action through regulative policy. The stress on citizens due to such serious contaminants has been exacerbated by uncertainty in all quarters. Consequently, since Chernobyl Saami and non-Saami alike have not only had to cope with levels of pollution that can soar above the national (scientific-cum-policy) thresholds for safe consumption, but have also been subjected to (sometimes inevitable) arbitrariness, inconsistencies and modifications in the policies themselves (Beach 1990). Reindeer-managing Saami and persons engaging in hunting and gathering may be most at risk for both contamination and confusion. Especially for domesticated species or wildlife frequenting a number of habitats, potential consumers can not make educated guesses about radioactivity, but must have their meat screened; for sessile plant life, such as berries and mushrooms, one can sometimes make judgements based on earlier assays done in a given area. More troublesome, though, is the fact that policy has varied from country to country, from time to time and even from individual to individual, just since 1986. While the media have elaborated on the fallout threat to Saami reindeer management, it appears that this sector of the Saami population will endure. In fact, in certain regions spared fallout, including northern Norway, reindeer-management continues to thrive, perhaps even to the extent of pressing the limits of local forage resources. Hence, Chernobyl has clearly intensified the distinctions among and between the various occupational and regional lifestyles characterizing the Saami population.

Note

1. An earlier version of part of this paper was presented in the symposium on *The Fourth World: Relations Between Minority Indigenous Peoples and Nation-States* at the 11th International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Vancouver, British Columbia, in August 1983.

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