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For more information, see: www.barentsinfo.org/barentsstudies

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EDITORIAL

Barents in the air!

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This has been a good autumn for Barents Studies. The Barents Encyclopedia, a project which many of us know from years back, is now complete and has led to the recent publication of *The Barents Region: A transnational history of subarctic Northern Europe*. The book covers 1200 years of history in the region from different perspectives: state formation and borders, social history, economic systems and industrialization, regionalism, and globalisation. This history started with small local communities and hunting groups connected to networks of farmers and traders. The local networks still function today, but "now within the framework of global market and the unforeseen risks of remote powers that depopulate the countryside, environmental problems that defy management on either the local or national level, a mass media society that has moved from hegemony to autonomism, migrations and ethnic inter-marriages that threat minority cultures and languages,…" (Elenius 2015, 471).

Such current and future challenges in the region are discussed and assessed in another comprehensive and ambitious project. Under the Arctic Council and AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme), the project will assess climatic and socioeconomic changes, their impacts, ways of adaptation, and options for adaptation measures in the short term (2030) and the long term (2080) in the Arctic region in general and the Barents Region in particular. The aim of this project, Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA), is to "enable more informed, timely and responsive policy and decision making in a rapidly changing Arctic" and help local and decision-makers to develop adaptation measures and tools. The Barents Regional Integrated Report (BRIT), based on multidisciplinary and broad international collaboration by experts from different parts of the region, is due to be published in 2016.

Some of these questions are also covered in the new issue of Barents Studies, the first to come out – only electronically from now on – after project support ended from the Kolarctic CBC Programme 2013–2015. This issue features two peer-reviewed scientific articles, a research communication, a book review and introductions of young scholars

of the region. Collaboration between the partners – the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland, The Barents Institute at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø, and the Luzin Institute for Economic Studies of the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences – ensures the continuation of the journal while we are exploring funding opportunities also for a printed version of the journal. The journal has now been recognised (level 1) in the journal ranking system in Norway.

This issue of *Barents Studies* represents the diversity of questions and concerns in the region. Larsson and his colleagues investigate one of the mysteries of Barents Studies: the Swedish approach, or lack thereof, to its northern, Arctic region. The authors discuss Swedish territorial thinking with the concept of "scalar politics", which challenges set territorial boundaries and administrative responsibilities. The result is an analysis of complex associational relationships with varying spatial claims. After studying data from over 20 municipalities in the two northernmost counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, the article concludes that the most relevant scales for territorial thinking in Sweden relate to national and EU territorial policies rather than to competing constructs focused on Nordic, Barents and Arctic territorialization.

Our second research article, by Sander Goes, focuses on concepts of informal networks in higher education institutions (HEIs). The article highlights the differences in Western and especially Norwegian and Russian thinking on informal networks. The nature of the article is more theoretical, as it aims at a comparative conceptual analysis of understanding the informal networks. These informal networks operate in both public and private organizations, including socially based and employment-related networks within these organizations. Such networks are often the result of many years of close cooperation in student exchange, research projects, and joint academic programmes. The author claims that understanding both Western and Russian perspectives to informal networks is essential in order to describe them across different HEIs in the Barents Region and to study their impact on the formal decision-making process.

An extensive research communication informs us about the main findings of the SUMILCERE project (Sustainable Mining, Local Communities and Environmental Regulation). The authors tackle three dimensions of "sustainable mining": economic, social and environmental considerations, and identify factors relevant for it. In terms of environmental sustainability, protection of the environment calls for a framework and functionality of environmental regulation. To secure economic sustainability, one has to secure the competitiveness of the mining industry in light of environmental

regulation and its enforcement. And, finally, social sustainability hinges on public participation, social acceptance of mining projects in their different phases, and the protection of indigenous cultural rights. The authors conclude that "smart environmental regulation and minimum standards without compromises set the main boundaries for sustainable mining that leave no room for compromises and is essential for economic and social sustainability".

The end of summer vacations also brought some sad news. A colleague and a friend from years back, Vladimir Didyk, Research Director of the Luzin Institute of Economic Studies, Kola Science Centre of Russian Academy, died unexpectedly in the summer. As Larissa Riabova, his close colleague, says in the obituary, "since the early 1990s Vladimir participated in international scientific collaboration and was one of the enthusiastic Russian pioneers of research cooperation in the Barents Region and beyond". We miss Vladimir.

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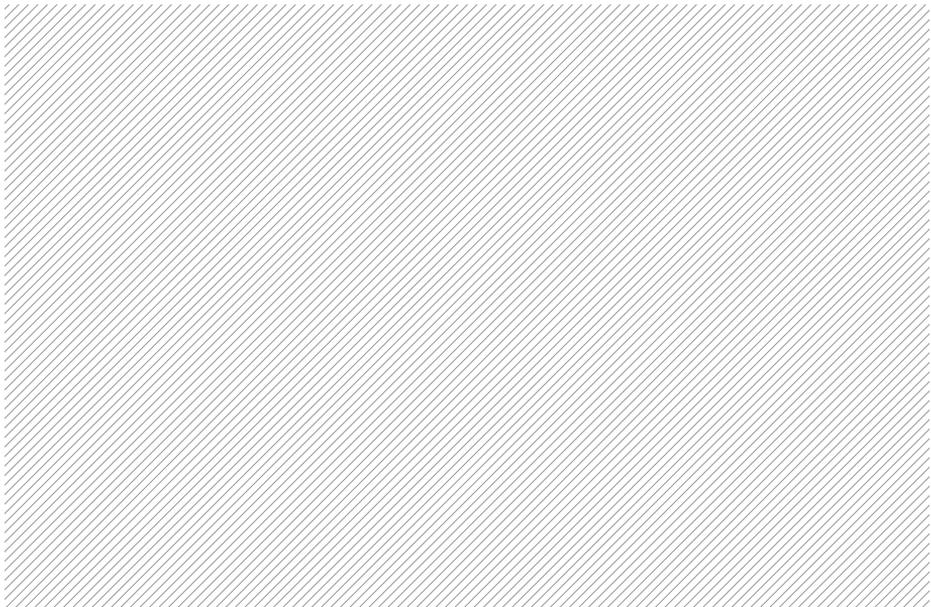
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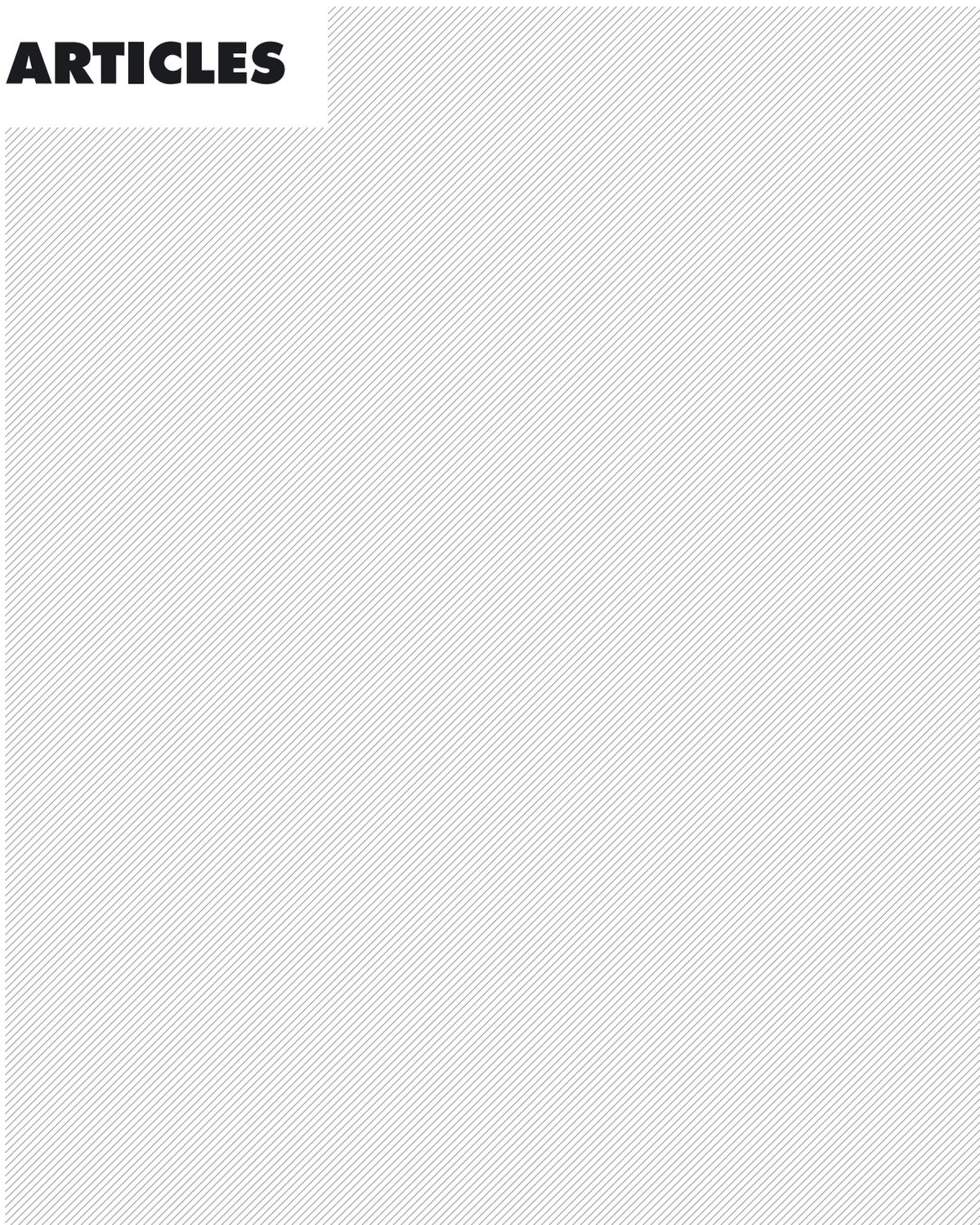
Contrasting territorial policy perspectives for Northern Sweden

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ABSTRACT

Northern Sweden is increasingly influenced by competing social interests striving for advantages and claiming territorial influence through "scalar politics". The strategic deployment of scalar conceptions is an integral part of policy making and implementation. Increasing use of varying scalar conceptions follows from "new spatial planning" practices. Set territorial delineations and administrative responsibilities are opened up to complex associational relationships with varying spatial claims.

Focusing on territorial policies, this paper examines what orientations there are in territorial policy development in and for northern Sweden. The 29 municipalities embraced by the two northernmost counties Norrbotten and Västerbotten are the geographical delimitation of the study. As the analysis shows, the dominating scalar constructs relate to national and EU territorial policies rather than to competing constructs focused on Nordic, Barents and Arctic territorialization.

Keywords: Territorial policy, scalar politics, spatial planning, northern Sweden, Arctic

INTRODUCTION AND AIM

The northern Swedish county of Västerbotten was established by the Swedish Government in 1638 in order to coordinate and implement state policies at regional level. Some 200 years later it was divided into the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, still with the same functions. While discussions on merging these and other northern counties have taken place during the last ten years, the counties still exist in their long-standing form (SOU 2007: 10). In the post-war period, however, a number of territorial policies have emerged claiming influence in these counties. National regional policies were introduced in the 1960s, and merged into European Union regional policy in the mid-1990s. Nordic regional cooperation was established in the 1970s, and 1996 saw the founding of the Arctic Council. No longer are attempts to exert influence on social processes through "scalar politics" (MacKinnon 2008) a state-run and Swedish affair only.

Rather, these changes are examples of "new spatial planning" where set territorial delineations and administrative responsibilities are opened up towards a "more complex relational world of associational relationships which stretch across a range of geographies" (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009, 619). These processes of (re)scaling, in turn, are consequences of new forms of neoliberal governance (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009; Brenner 2001), where a larger number of actors claim influence. Actors striving for social change can use scale as "a way of framing conceptions of reality" (Delaney and Leitner 1997, 94–95) through scalar politics (MacKinnon 2010). Importantly, these framings "can have both rhetorical and material consequences – [they] are often contradictory and contested and are not necessarily enduring" (Marston 2000, 221).

Actors engaged in scalar politics compete over influence. Those that are targeted and/or involved need to develop capacities to act within new and sometimes contradictory "spaces of engagement" (Cox 1998). At least since the mid-1990s, more intense scalar politics have challenged municipal actors' long-term ambitions in order to gain influence. Municipal land-use planning provides a long-term and increasingly strategic perspective which can be contrasted against external actors' ambitions to influence local territorial development. In this context, our study aims to examine scaling ambitions through territorial policies in northern Sweden. What are the orientations of territorial policy development in and for northern Sweden? And, what kind of influence on spatial organizing and hence planning have external policies been able to exert?

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This study focuses on the 29 municipalities embraced by the two northernmost coun-
ties in Sweden, Norrbotten and Västerbotten, and the territorial policies that the state
and other actors, nationally and internationally, impose on them (see map 1). In order
to better understand contrasting policy aspirations, this paper rests on an analysis of
policy documents representing local interests through municipal land-use plans, docu-
ments representing non-local interests through regional development policies, and
documents from the Nordic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the European
Union, and the Arctic Council.

*Map 1. The counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten and
29 municipalities included in the study.*

CONCEPTUALIZING SCALAR POLITICS IN AND FOR NORTHERN SWEDEN

From a close reading of scalar debates within human geography and related disciplines, MacKinnon proposes that "it is often not scale per se that is the prime object of contestation between social actors, but rather specific processes and institutionalized practices that are themselves differently scaled" (MacKinnon 2010, 22–23; see also Brenner 2001). Fraser (2010, 332) agrees, stating that human actors "'produce' or 'use' scale in all manner of attempts to create some sort of advantage, to establish associations, connections, or solidarities". Once established, they may bring material consequences. Interest-driven ambitions and aspirations hence make social actors engage in "scalar politics" (MacKinnon 2010) and "scalar practices" (Moore 2008; Fraser 2010).

MacKinnon (2010) suggests that scalar politics is defined through four elements. The first element is the comprehension that scale is an inherent quality in many political projects, especially those that opt for influencing territorial coordination and development. Political relations define the scalar construction. A second element is the realization that there is a "strategic deployment of scale by various actors, organizations and movements" (MacKinnon 2010, 29). This relates to the inclusion and exclusion of actors and interests through scaling practices. The third element concerns the recognition that these processes are not new, hence they are played out in a context with already existing scalar structures (see also Brenner 2001). The existing material and discursive structures do interact with new scalar constructs. This is, as a fourth element, where new scalar arrangements are created: "the interaction occurs between inherited scalar structures and emergent social and political projects, stressing that agency lies with the social forces advancing such projects (MacKinnon 2010, 31). Scalar practices then are those "processes through which specific scalar configurations solidify in consciousness and practice, and the effects these developments have upon social, political and cultural relations" (Moore 2008, 214).

One of the more prominent social forces in Sweden is municipalities (*kommuner* in Swedish). "Municipality" signifies both institutionalized territorial space at the local scale and the governing and managing organization of this territory. Understanding municipalities as "spaces of dependence" – those "more-or-less localized social relations upon which we depend for the realization of essential interests and for which there are no substitutes elsewhere; they define place-specific conditions for our material well-being and our sense of significance" (Cox 1998, 2) – points towards (municipal) agency. Municipal governments need to ensure material, social, and emotional well-being for their inhabitants, businesses, and organizations (Cox 1998; Luukkonen 2011). They need to deliver services.

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In striving to realize their interests, municipalities need to be in charge of capacities to exercise territorial power. Ambitions towards territorialization express political aims and assumptions, as part of "constant reconstruction as [territories] become more relational and characterized by different functionalities" (Luukkonen and Moilanen 2012, 485). In securing and strengthening that capacity, "actors seek to construct ties – or are constrained to engage – with other, variously scaled centres of social power" (Luukkonen 2011, 256). While establishing these ties, social actors "construct a different form of space which is called a space of engagement […]. This form of space is seen as providing a way of achieving resources or a justification for the existence of the spaces of dependence" (Luukkonen 2011, 256; Cox 1998). Resources flowing between territorially fixed spaces of dependence and spaces of engagement contribute to the associational establishment of "soft spaces" (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009) through scalar politics. Because territorial politics and land-use planning cross and merge policy sectors by their very nature, several and overlapping spaces of engagement are created by the actors involved. This is where "multiple spatial units are established, differentiated, hierarchized and, under certain conditions, rejigged, reorganized and recalibrated in relation to one another" (Brenner 2001, 600).

Of specific importance here are regional policy aims. Northern Sweden has experienced changes in its relative status in national politics, from positive expectations on northern development and growth in a number of interests, settlements, economic opportunities, and social functions, to decreasing expectations and growth. The downturn established a rationale for state intervention through regional policies during the 1960s and later through EU regional policies. These policies are not neutral but are rather, like any space of engagement, driven by interests. As such, regional policy needs to be reviewed with regard to the implications for territorialization, and with a consideration of the constructed and political nature of regional description (Haughton and Counsell 2004; Lagendijk and Cornford 2000).

Adding to this is the Arctic policy, which in Sweden is a recently established policy field. In relation to the conceptual division between spaces of dependence and spaces of engagement, the Arctic provokes a conceptual twist as there are no obvious localized interests: no state can as yet claim Arctic territorial sovereignty. Instead, geopolitical and climate-related changes have pushed the Arctic into a space of engagement. In other words, a great variety of interests are now positioning themselves in order to establish new or influence existing spaces of dependence (Dittmer et al. 2011). This resonates with the argument that there is so far no "single, discreet, geographically

knowable Arctic" (Depledge 2013, 164), but rather an interest-driven competition for the territorializing of various claims – be they related to international governance, strategic military ambitions, or economic opportunities (Keskitalo 2004; Dittmer et al. 2011; Depledge 2013).

Different internal (municipalities pursuing their own interests) and external interests from local to supraregional level are played out through scalar politics within the same geographic areas (Brenner 2001; MacKinnon 2010). They deserve to be contrasted in order to clarify the different uses and assumptions on the northern region and its development (Neumann 1999).

METHOD AND MATERIAL

As Albrechts et al. (2003, 128) note, strategic spatial plans and frameworks may in particular serve to "frame concepts and images to mobilize and fix attention", to create "policy discourses through which specific decisions and practices are focused", and eventually become territorialized (Allmendinger and Haughton 2009; Luukkonen 2011; Luukkonen and Moilanen 2012). In this analysis, 29 municipalities in the two northernmost counties of Sweden – Norrbotten and Västerbotten – are the main spaces of dependence analysed in relation to policy fields that make territorial claims on or within them. Including the spectrum from municipal land-use planning to supranational policy level makes it possible to comment on the relevance of the various spaces of engagement. Arguably, the most relevant interests will be those made manifest in various policy documents, i.e. where the policy, context, facts, theories, and interests are integrated to achieve explicit policy positions (Sharp and Richardson 2001).

This study is therefore based on an analysis of three categories of documents. The first – municipal planning documents – consists of two groups of documents. One group is municipal land-use plans. These plans were produced as an outcome of The Planning and Building Act (SFS 1987: 10), and were required to be regularly updated, but were often not. Therefore, the oldest plans included here date back to 1990. A new planning regulation came into force in 2011 (SFS 2010: 900), and plans produced after 2011 are omitted from this analysis. The other group consists of municipal policy documents on (economic) development, which are regularly less than ten years old. These policy documents are inspired by EU regional policies and are not mandatory, which means that some municipalities do not have them. Measures and actions until the year 2013 are included.

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The second category – policy documents related to the national and EU regional development contexts, from international to regional-municipal level – includes a set of documents produced after Sweden's entrance into the EU in 1995 until the end of the previous programming period in 2013. The third category of documents – policy statements and documents related to organizations targeting northern and Arctic issues – are included from 1993 until recently. The starting year 1993 indicates the launch of Barents Region cooperation.

Scalar politics includes a discursive dimension (Delaney and Leitner 1997; MacKinnon 2010, Marston 2000; Paasi 2004). Therefore, this analysis has drawn broadly on a discourse analytical approach inspired by Sharp and Richardson (2001). They identify several characteristics for analysis, three of which are especially important in this context in pointing towards the productive or transformative, change-focused, aspect of discourses. Sharp and Richardson note that social change through scalar politics is understood as 1) "shaped by and shaping changes in communication", as 2) "shaped by and shaping changes in practices", and as 3) "shaped by power, conceptualized as competition between differing systems of meaning or 'discourses'" (Sharp and Richardson 2001, 198). Along these understandings, each land-use plan has been analysed in terms of municipal aspirations and how they have changed over time. All other documents have been analysed in similar ways, but then resting on a more diverse set of documents and adding an actor focus, which indicates contrasting perspectives on territorial development in the 29 northern municipalities.

Where original sources are in Nordic languages, translations of quotations have been made by the authors.

CHANGES IN MUNICIPAL PLANNING IN NORTHERN SWEDEN

Swedish municipalities are governed by elected representatives and earn revenues from income taxation of their citizens. A second important source of income is transferred state funding for certain functions. Coupled with a wide range of responsibilities and a strong mandate in land-use planning, municipalities are important social actors. Once the Planning and Building Act (SFS 1987: 10) was adopted, comprehensive land-use plans were developed in the following years. Some of these first generation land-use plans in Norrbotten and Västerbotten are still valid, dating from 1990 and 1991. They follow the same structure. First, a description of basic characteristics of the municipality in terms of territorial and population size and structure, a brief mention of natural resources, and local industry and population structure. Second, a more detailed and

thematic account of planning preconditions within business sectors and societal functions – agriculture, forestry, mining, reindeer herding, fishing, aquatic production; and roads, railroads, airports, power lines, hydro-power, tourism and recreation, and settlements.

Typical pieces of information from these early plans – using Boden municipality as a representative case – include that "agriculture and forestry have been the dominating industries… [t]hrough rationalization within these industries, rural areas have suffered a relatively severe thinning out" (Boden 1990, 24); on business development, "the public sector is the dominating employer and the number of employment opportunities within the local industry is significantly lower" (Boden 1990, 91); and on reindeer herding, "The reindeer herding industry presupposes that reindeer herding on grounds defined by customary law shall be able to adjust to conflicting interests. Development within areas of interest for reindeer herding should be managed so as to not disadvantage Sami interests" (Boden 1990, 44). The approach is one of aligning land-use to social needs and changes. Strategic visioning is mostly absent. Altogether these early land-use plans describe and provide municipal guidance strictly on the use of land and water resources.

The second generation of land-use plans were introduced in 1998. The largest municipality, Umeå, came first. Most of the plans in this selection were revised and renewed from 2001 until 2011, when the new Planning and Building Act was put in place (SFS 2010: 900). Umeå's land-use plan from 1998 is a typical representative of the second generation of land-use planning, where land-use planning is complemented with sustainable development measures as a consequence of changes in planning regulations. The Government Bill 1994/95: 230 states that land-use planning shall be considered a part of Swedish environmental policy. It also states that all land-use plans need to be reviewed regularly, once each political term. These regulatory changes were put into effect in 1996, and consequently environmental concerns were included in comprehensive planning. Such concerns were further strengthened by the creation of the Environmental Code in national legislation (SFS 1998: 808).

Through the sustainability approach, Umeå's land-use plan relates to more visionary and strategic policy making. While the bulk of the plan is made up of 18 thematic sections covering municipal land and water use as well as basic functions for everyday life, the intention in the plan is to:

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> *… develop Umeå towards a good, equal and sustainable living en-*
> *vironment for people to settle and the local industry to develop; to*
> *strengthen Umeå as a centre for higher education, research, advanced*
> *health care, culture and communications, and as an innovator of*
> *Swedish industry; to strengthen Umeå's attractiveness and develop*
> *Umeå as one of the most dynamic municipalities in northern Europe.*
> *(Umeå 1998, 35, authors' translation).*

From these intentions follows one output objective: "Employment growth shall be such that women and men can work to the same extent and that employment levels can remain on a high level" (ibid., 35). A further change from previous land-use plans is that actors and factors outside the municipality are included in analyses and strategic agenda-setting. Swedish membership in the EU in 1995 is highly significant, not least because of the resulting access to development funds. For instance, relating to the policy change that the EU membership brought, it is noted that:

> *… national development planning has recently established [eco-*
> *nomic] growth as a central objective for measures on regional level.*
> *[…] To master this development a pooling of regional resources needs*
> *to take place in order to, through cooperation, use all available op-*
> *portunities in the inter-municipal competition for economic growth*
> *(Umeå 1998, 37, authors' translation).*

The most recent land-use plans show a more pronounced economistic and competitive approach in understanding municipal development opportunities. The ambition is to identify and promote certain strengths and specificities. Social aspects of municipal development are also clearly stated, over time presenting a stronger focus on inclusion and diversity. Visioning and visionary statements and communication of comprehensive planning processes are more prominent features. While the first generation land-use plans included fairly static descriptions of municipal land use, recent plans and complementary growth programmes always develop a much stronger strategic approach. Northern municipalities of today are aware of and identify important spaces of engagement where municipal ambitions and interests can be forwarded.

THE LOCAL–REGIONAL–EU LINKAGE

Applying a strategic approach in municipal planning allows linking municipal plans to new spaces of engagement, such as EU policy. The Regional Structural Fund Programme for Upper Norrland (Tillväxtverket 2011) is a key document in understanding EU influence on planning. The perhaps most decisive part of this influence is its provision of funding for development projects which should be co-funded by those actors that apply for project funding. The programme was produced through a partnership process where a wide set of actors from Västerbotten and Norrbotten counties influenced its contents. Guided by EU and national policies, the planning process identifies the following priority areas: winter testing of vehicles, safety and vulnerability; creative industries, experiences and tourism; energy and green technology; process industry – development of technology and services; information, communication and services; and biotechnology (Tillväxtverket 2011).

Norrbotten's Regional Growth Programme identifies preconditions and ambitions for Norrbotten only and acts as a prioritizing document in relation to the Regional Structural Fund Programme. The present situation is painted in broad and optimistic strokes, presenting regional aspirations as a "new" regional space:

In the new Norrbotten we shall fulfil the work by stimulating sustainable regional development and strong economic growth. The county now finds itself in a position where the economy grows and the labour market situation gets brighter in a number of areas. This does not mean that we can rest on our laurels. Rather, it gives us a solid ground for further intensifying the work with entrepreneurship, businesses and the ability for young people to participate (Länsstyrelsen Norrbotten 2007, 5, authors' translation). The Regional Growth Programme aligns itself neatly to the Structural Fund Programme in terms of focus areas (Länsstyrelsen Norrbotten 2007). Both the Structural Fund Programme for Upper Norrland and the Regional Growth Programme were managed and owned by the County Administrative board, a coordinating state actor.

Västerbotten's Regional Growth Programme (Region Västerbotten 2008), managed by a municipal cooperative organization, resembles that of Norrbotten, but aligns to the Regional Structural Fund Programme in a less straightforward way. Reference is rather made to the Västerbotten Regional Development Programme (Länsstyrelsen Västerbotten undated), although objectives are phrased in similar terms of economic growth. The Regional Development Programme thus provides a strategic framework for development activities in Västerbotten, aiming at guiding a somewhat wider set of activities than merely those for economic development:

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Västerbotten County is a leader among northern European regions in working towards sustainable development signified by knowledge-driven and competitive trade and industry. The county has northern Sweden's most attractive living environments with cultural diversity and access to work, housing, culture, leisure, studies, and care. Here, people feel included and involved (Länsstyrelsen Västerbotten 2008, 5, authors' translation).

The peripheral position has led to the municipalities in and county representatives of Norrbotten and Västerbotten to develop network relations among several societal sectors within each county and in the neighbouring county. They have also established relations with actors strategically positioned in new spaces of engagement. The most prominent of these is the EU. From territorial and cohesion points of view, the EU has responded to differing territorial capacities within the union. Frameworks for EU funding and its funding programmes are the most important spaces of engagement that Norrbotten and Västerbotten counties are eager to influence.

In order to better capitalize on localized assets, municipalities are not only formulating visionary planning statements or responding to EU and related policy initiatives. They also strive to secure resources within various other spaces of engagement, often through relating to EU ambitions. In various constellations, across regional and national borders, North Sweden, Europaforum Norra Sverige and Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) are the three most prominent network organizations. The North Sweden European Office was established in 1997 as an organizational framework for direct mutual links from the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten to the European Union. North Sweden's general mission has a proactive ambition in influencing the forming of "policy areas in the EU of importance for economic and sustainable growth in the region" (North Sweden 2013, 3). The task is strongly associated with regional development policy and includes influencing EU budget profiles through concerted actions with the organizations Europaforum and NSPA (see below). Another ambition is to support and encourage actors in the two counties – public, private, organizational – to make use of EU funding. Second, Europaforum Norra Sverige was launched in 2000 as a partnership of the four northernmost counties of Sweden – Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Västernorrland, and Jämtland. Its mission is to create a meeting place between actors on local, regional, national and EU levels for direct links into the decision systems of EU. This is because:

> [t]he present emphasis on exports of raw materials gives low regional value added which means that the natural resources in northern Sweden mainly generate wealth in other parts of Sweden and in the surrounding world. Through systems of innovation who stimulate refinement of natural resources and surrounding development of services create dynamics on local and regional level (Europaforum Norra Sverige 2013, 10, authors' translation).

The following six focus areas are identified to achieve this (Europaforum Norra Sverige 2013, 6): "infrastructure; energy, environment and climate; regional development/cohesion policy; attractive living conditions/demography; business policy; research and innovation". To strengthen its influence, Europaforum Norra Sverige coordinates proposals among the four counties as inputs to the NSPA network.

NSPA is a network organization of administrative regions in the north of Sweden, Finland and Norway, created in 2008. Similarly to Europaforum, it includes Sweden's four northernmost counties. NSPA expresses its policy aim as follows: "The NSPA network consists of 14 regions in three countries sharing common circumstances and objectives, working together to raise awareness of the region in the EU-institutions, influence EU policy and to provide a platform for best practice" (Northern Sparsely Populated Areas 2013, 1). The territorial context, i.e. the space of dependence, is presented thus:

> The NSPA region is rich on both renewable and non-renewable resources. Energy, fisheries, fish farming, mining, forestry and tourism are important industries. NSPA is also home to the Sámi, the only indigenous people in Europe. These two factors; the indigenous population and the richness of resources, are specific regional traits that provides unique opportunities for the region and Europe at large, but require policies dealing with these challenges (Northern Sparsely Populated Areas 2013, 3).

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Finally, policy development relevant to the regions also involve EU cohesion initiatives. These include:

- Interreg IVA North, which includes Norrbotten and the northern part of Västerbotten counties. It contains a sub-programme, Cross-border Sapmi, which follows the Swedish-Norwegian mountain ridge and covers the counties of Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Jämtland and parts of Dalarna further south (www. interregnord.com),
- Interreg Botnia-Atlantica, which includes Västerbotten and the northern part of its neighbouring county to the south Västernorrland (www.Botnia-Atlantica.eu), and
- Northern Periphery Programme, which includes Norrbotten and Västerbotten and the two bordering counties further south in Sweden – Västernorrland and Jämtland (www.northernperiphery.eu).

The territories for these programmes partly overlap, but all are cross-border organizations designed along established domestic administrative scales which fall within the scope of regional development. Typically, they focused on issues such as these from the Interreg IV North Programme 2007–2013: "the development of trade and industry; research, development and education; regional functionality and identity; Sápmi – borderless development; and technical assistance for programme delivery" (Interreg IV A North Programme, 42, authors' translation). Among these, a significant share of funding was devoted to development of trade and industry.

FROM NORDIC TO BARENTS TO ARCTIC COUNCILS, AND A NORTHERN DIMENSION

Whereas municipal and regional ambitions have fairly smoothly related to and partly merged with EU policies, a somewhat different perspective is apparent through territorial policies of an alternative international character. Rather than relating to the local geographies per se, these policies stem from insights pertaining to international matters, and where policy responses include northern Sweden.

NORDIC AND BARENTS COOPERATION

The Nordic countries have a long tradition of cooperation. The Nordic Council, which was established in 1952, at the start of the Cold War, is the official inter-parliamentary body representing the Nordic countries. An early outcome was the introduction of a

common labour market and free movement across borders for the citizens. In 1971, the Nordic Council of Ministers was set up for operative collaboration on the national level. The organization has to a large extent manifested a welfare state focus, with a particular focus on economic development and growth as well as collaboration in the Nordic region. This is exemplified by operative collaboration on the regional level, with eight cross-border organizations, two of which include the counties of Norrbotten and Västerbotten.

The first of these, the North Calotte Council was established in 1967 with Norrbotten County as the Swedish partner. It is steered by representatives from regional authorities, municipalities, and business interests in the participating regions. (www.nordkalottradet.nu)

A corresponding organization, including the county of Västerbotten, is the Kvarken Council, which was created in 1972 (www.kvarken.org). It is steered by representatives for the regional authorities and municipalities. The two Councils have similar aims, and they both target collaboration either for "shared service solutions across national borders" (North Calotte Council 2014) or to "encourage collaboration [and] reduce and eliminate border crossing obstacles" (Kvarken Council 2012, 2). Beyond this, focus is placed on "development of the economy and the infrastructure, communication and traffic services, research and educational cooperation" (North Calotte Council 2014), and to:

> … *utilize preconditions in the region and encourage development of the region within primarily the following fields: business, communications and transport infrastructure, research and development and education, culture, sustainable energy solutions, environment, waste management and recycling issues, tourism, sports, children and young people, public health and health care (Kvarkenrådet 2012, 2).*

The collaborative profiles are thus characterized by traditional regional policy dimensions with equalization of preconditions for development in mind and they therefore also address a wide range of welfare and related social issues.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region was established in 1993 as a Norwegian post-Cold War initiative to normalize and stabilize the relationships between the Nordic countries and Russia. The point of departure was a transnational geopolitical perspective, but the

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initiative became operationalized to also address regional development issues. Hence, the Barents Region operates both on national level as the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, and on regional level as the Barents Regional Council. The latter initially included Norrbotten as a partner in the already existing North Calotte cooperation described above. However, from 1998 neighbouring counties were included; Västerbotten in Sweden as well as regions in Finland and Russia. The Barents Regional Council of today thus has a wide east–west extension, including 13 administrative regions (Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2014).

Conceptually, the Barents Region initiative was characterized by a transnational region-building logic combined with a gateway dimension where both shared identity, with historical common roots, and proposals for functional links across borders were emphasized (The Kirkenes declaration 1993; Barents Programme 1994/95; Paasi 1996; Aalbu and Wiberg 1997). In the first generation of Barents programmes, reference was made to ongoing European debate on regionalization and region-building. Identity and functionality were explicitly stressed: "By basing co-existence in the Barents Region on a shared cultural heritage and common historical traditions and by bridging ethnic and religious differences, it is envisaged that a common identity and a stable situation will be created in the Region" (Barents Programme 1994/95, cited in Aalbu and Wiberg, 1997 84–85). At the same time, however, it was noted that "Industrial and economic development is necessary in order to create a peaceful and stable situation in the Barents Region. This requires a functional region where structures are developed to facilitate practical cooperation and reduce obstacles to communication and trade" (Barents Programme 1994/95, cited in Aalbu and Wiberg, 1997 84–85). Since then there have been several programme generations with changing priorities. The Barents Programme 2009–2013 argues that the "overall objective for the Barents cooperation is to generate social and economic growth through a knowledge driven economy and the sustainable development of the region's natural resources. Moreover, the objective is to make the Barents Region competitive on the world market" (Barents Programme 2009–2013, 5).

Following the entrance of Sweden and Finland into the EU in 1995, the generations of Barents programmes have been linked to both national funding and various funding options within the EU, especially the Interreg programmes. As for the North Calotte and Kvarken Councils, their activities are mainly carried out through projects co-financed by authorities in the trans-regional context and EU funding through Interreg IV A.

THE ARCTIC COUNCIL AND AN ARCTIC DIMENSION IN SWEDISH POLITICS

An initiative following the end of the Cold War was the Arctic Council, which was established in 1996 to cover Canada, the United States, Russia, Finland, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, and Sweden. Each member state provides funding for Council activities on a voluntary basis.

Council priorities notably diverge from a focus on economic development and growth regularly highlighted in regional development discourses. Emphasis is rather placed on environmental and indigenous issues, which aims at "the sustainable use of resources, economic development and environmental protection" (Kiruna Declaration 15 May, 2013, 1) as well as recognizing "the special relationship and unique contributions to the Arctic of indigenous people and their communities" (Arctic Council 1996, 1). In contrast to the more regional development-minded bodies described above, the operative work within the Arctic Council is divided into six working groups, of which five broadly centre on environmental protection. The groups are the Arctic Contaminants Action Programme; Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme; Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna; Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response; Protection of the Arctic Maritime Environment; and Sustainable Development (Arctic Council 2014). The goals for the one broader working group, on sustainable development, are formulated as follows:

> *… to propose and adopt steps to be taken by the Arctic States to advance sustainable development in the Arctic, including opportunities; to protect and enhance the environment and the economies, culture and health of Indigenous Peoples and Arctic communities, as well as to improve the environmental, economic and social conditions of Arctic communities as a whole. The guiding tenet running throughout the work of the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) is to pursue initiatives that provide practical knowledge and contribute to building the capacity of Indigenous Peoples and Arctic communities to respond to the challenges and benefit from the opportunities emerging in the Arctic Region (Arctic Council – Sustainable Development Working Group 2014).*

With regard to areas that are targeted in the Arctic Council and Council-related work, there is a difference between work in the Council itself, and in reports such as the Arctic Human Development Report (2004) developed in relation to the Council. While the

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Arctic Human Development Report analyses areas based on domestic county borders, including reference e.g. to Norrbotten and Västerbotten, Arctic Council work in general utilizes an external boundary not necessarily related to domestic territorial/administrative divisions.

Thus, in a comparison between these three Council orientations, North Calotte and Barents cooperation are similar in that they take their inception in existing administrative delineations in the areas, such as Norrbotten and Västerbotten (county level). The Arctic Council is an exception in that it takes as its delineation the Arctic Circle – which has no basis either at county or municipality level, and had until the Swedish Arctic Strategy (2011) not been used in domestic delineations. A further difference is that while the main aims in North Calotte/Nordic and Barents cooperation are within the regional development policy, Arctic Council aims target the environment (five working groups) and social development with a focus on indigenous people.

However, the Arctic Council initiative has over time, coinciding with the focus on the resources that will be made available due to climate change in the Arctic, gained further interest from other actors as a space of engagement, among them the EU applying to join the Arctic Council as an observer. A European Commission report notes that "[a]s climate change and economic development accelerate in the Arctic Region, the European Union should step up its engagement with its Arctic partners" (ibid., 2), and that the EU aims to link itself closer to the Arctic. Such developments may in the future further come to influence what has so far been a relatively structural fund-oriented approach. It has already influenced domestic policy development as can be seen in how Sweden related to these publications prior to developing the Swedish Arctic Strategy (Keskitalo 2014).

We should also take note of the Northern Dimension Policy, which seeks to enhance regional cooperation and improve synergies of regional organizations. This policy was initiated in 1999 and renewed in 2006, between mainly the EU, Russia, and Norway, and with a special focus on North West Russia. While an EU initiative, it is operated on a more conceptual level than that of the programmes, which carry with themselves funding to influence sub-regional priorities. Prioritized areas in the Northern Dimension Policy are more similar to Barents Council aims than to broader Arctic Council aims, and target economic and juridical cooperation, external security/civil protection, cooperation in research and culture, environmental protection, and social

welfare and health care (Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document, effective as of 1 January 2007). The priorities on environmental protection are formulated as follows:

> *Environment, nuclear safety and natural resources, including re-duction of the risk of nuclear and other pollution, maritime safety, protection of the marine environment in the Baltic and Barents Seas, biodiversity, forests, fish stocks and protection of the Arctic ecosystems; cooperation in the field of water policy, climate change, environmental legislation and administrative capacity building (Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document, effective as of 1 January 2007, 4).*

In 2006, the Northern Dimension Policy also made the Barents Region a priority, stressing that both sub-national and municipal authorities are regarded as actors of the Northern Dimension Policy (Barents Programme 2009–2013).

These developments fed into the formulation of a Swedish position in the Arctic context. Until 2011, when Sweden took over the chair for a two-year period, all states of the Arctic Council except Sweden had launched a national arctic strategy. The Swedish strategy was launched to coincide with Sweden's chair and followed upon the EU-level developments (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2011). The Swedish Arctic strategy report discusses the agreement on the territorial delimitation as follows: "In connection with the establishment of the Arctic Council its members adopted a common political definition. According to that definition the Arctic en-compasses all territory north of the Arctic Circle and the associated eight Arctic states" (ibid., 11). Thus, Sweden accepted a territorial projection and priority framework which is in contrast to the regional development and Russian-Nordic gateway cooperation logics applied by the Nordic Council's cross-border regional organizations. In Sweden this means inclusion of only the northernmost part of the county of Norrbotten.

The Swedish Arctic strategy states three priority areas; climate and environment, economic development, and the human dimension (ibid.). Economic development focuses on the potential for further business development in a collaborative Barents Region context, especially within mining, forestry, energy production and tourism in harmony with the ecosystems and with social responsibilities for the inhabitants

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in mind. Related to this, "the right of indigenous people to maintain and develop their identity, culture, knowledge transfer and traditional trades must be upheld" (ibid., 4). The Arctic Strategy document thus provides a stronger resemblance and reference to Arctic Council and related EU Arctic policies than to Barents and Northern Dimension policies, in particular in highlighting a bottom-up focus with special attention to the role of indigenous peoples. However, it also includes a part of the more growth- and economically-oriented agenda of the Barents and Northern Dimension policies. The document points in two directions. Parts of it target the north of Sweden from a bottom-up perspective, even if the accepted delineations only target very small parts of the area, such as reindeer husbandry. At the same time, parts of the strategy are oriented towards areas outside Sweden.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

An increasing number of actors claim territorial influence in northern Sweden. To better understand these interests and the scalar politics they involve, this paper has analysed territorial policies that include some or all of the 29 northernmost Swedish municipalities.

Regional development policies are the dominating spaces of engagement in terms of municipal attention. Since the 1960s, structural imbalances in the Swedish north have been addressed in national policy making, which has formed a well-anchored regional development discourse. Initially it emphasized needs to equalize welfare and business conditions across the country through redistributions and relocations, while in recent decades national policy making has turned towards exploitation of potentials for economic growth through mobilization of regional resources (SOU 1970: 3; Westholm 1998; Tillväxtverket 2011).

Scaling of regional development policies is a backbone of territorial policies in the north, but other constellations challenge and complement it. The municipalities in Norrbotten and Västerbotten are embedded in several national and trans-border organizational frameworks with overlapping elements, partly coordinated for reinforcement of each other.

Even though Nordic policies for collaboration and economic development have been created since the 1970s, they have left no traces in municipal planning. Especially from the mid-1990s and the second generation of land-use plans, one could have expected

to find evidence of Nordic scalar politics in land-use plans. There are none. Instead, and as indicated in the results section, Nordic and other regional collaborations in the north have been adjoined with EU policies, further strengthening the regional policy discourse.

Scalar processes that are supported by EU and national regulations and funding gain momentum from the late 1990s on. EU, national and regional public actors establish ways to deploy scalar functions along established administrative delineations (such as Barents Regional Council, North Calotte cooperation and EU-funded schemes), hence strengthening the existing spatial organization. In some cases, as with the Structural Fund Programme for Upper Norrland, merging of existing scales occurs (Tillväxtverket 2011).

Documents and policies characterized by an Arctic discourse have a broader territorial perspective and a clearly contrasted view regarding regions in the north. The Arctic Council strives to establish the Arctic Circle as the territorial reference for its territorial claims, which most likely will gain limited municipal attention. The Arctic Circle has, as yet, no material effects on municipal functions and funding. No or few scalar practices have been established on municipal level.

Skilful interaction with existing scalar practices and thereby the reinforcing of existing spaces of dependence allows for successful territorialisation, as is the case with EU regional policy. The new approach to spatial planning has enabled new actors to seek influence through a large number of initiatives which have strategically included northern municipalities. None have been as successful as the EU. Supported by regulations and funding, and only to a minor extent challenging existing spatial delineations, EU regional policy has attracted attention among northern municipalities and influenced planning.

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Understanding informal networks in higher education institutions: Theoretical concepts from a Russian and Norwegian perspective

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ARSTRACT

This article discusses theoretical concepts with regard to informal networks in the Russian and Norwegian society and higher education institutions (HEI) in particular. Informal networks are operative in both public and private organizations criss-crossing social and job-related networks within these organizations. Formal and informal contacts between representatives of HEIs in the Barents region are often the result of years of close cooperation on student exchange, research projects and joint academic programmes. The aim of this study is to explain theoretical perspectives in relation to informal networks from a Norwegian and a Russian perspective. Understanding both perspectives is essential before describing informal networks across different HEIs in the Barents region and valuable if we seek to study the impact of informal networks on the formal decision-making process. Informal networks are perceived differently because the formal structure in which they operate is different. Analysing the formal structure is therefore suggested in order to better understand the different perspectives surrounding formal/informal networks.

Keywords: formal networks, informal networks, higher education institutions, formal structure, Barents region

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INTRODUCTION

This article contributes to the debate on challenges and opportunities faced by international higher education faces in the twenty-first century by analysing two theoretical perspectives on informal networks. Formal and informal contacts between representatives of higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Barents region – to be distinguished from informal networks – are often the result of years of close cooperation on student exchange, research projects and joint academic programmes. The primary intention of educational collaboration in the Barents region was initially to ensure good neighbourly relations, economic and social development, and stability (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2011–2012). International collaboration across this region is most extensive between Norway and the Russian Federation (Hønneland 2009, 36), and educational cooperation is among the sectors where cooperation has increased in recent years, despite different views with regard to the conflict in Ukraine. The increasing number of Russian students studying in Norway (NIFU 2015, 14) can be seen as a good indicator of this development. Moreover, the University of Nordland and seven Russian HEIs have established an international formal network to promote and develop a Bachelor's programme in Circumpolar Studies (BCS). Seven of the eight HEIs are located in North-west Russia while the leading HEI is located in northern Norway.

The focus in this article, however, is on informal networks, which are to be understood as personalized grids such as network groups and criss-cross job-related and social networks. Identifying informal networks between representatives of HEIs across Norway and Russia is also one of the aims of the NORRUSS project "Higher education in the High North: Regional restructuring through educational exchanges and student mobility". One of the research questions of the NORRUSS project is: What kind of informal networks are developed and maintained as a result of student exchange and by the educational institutions? (NORRUSS 2012, 6). The aim of this project is to study educational cooperation and student exchange between Norway and Russia through the context of the existing cooperation between the University of Nordland and seven institutions of higher education in Northwest Russia.

The term formal structure is used to distinguish public laws, organization charts, policy documents, regulations, and formal hierarchical procedures from more informal structures, such as norms, values, and social groups. Informal networks, crucially, are assumed to be understood differently in the Russian and Norwegian context. This article is an attempt to elaborate on this assumption by discussing two theoretical ap-

proaches with regard to informal networks in Russian and Norwegian society and HEIs in particular. Understanding both perspectives is essential before describing informal networks across different HEIs in the Barents region and valuable if we seek to identify the outcomes of such networks or examine the extent to which their power or influence is guided by formal structures. Hence, society – including the administration of HEIs – is regarded as a system of interconnected formal and informal levels. As this article illustrates, the relation between the formal structure and informal networks is perceived to be different in the Russian society compared to Norwegian society.

The article starts with a background on the need to analyse informal networks within HEIs. This is followed by a Western theoretical perspective on formal and informal networks, as Norwegian perspectives are assumed to be heavily influenced by Western approaches. In this paper I use "the West" and "the Western World" as referring to a group of states sharing a more or less similar political and economic ideology such as the United States, Canada, members of the European Union / European Economic Area, Australia and New Zealand. A similar analysis from a Russian perspective will be outlined in the third part. The Russian perspective discussed below provides a rather different understanding of what an outsider might regard as a similar phenomenon. In the final section, I return to the objective of this study and discuss the differences and similarities between both approaches in more detail.

INFORMAL NETWORKS WITHIN HEIS

Organizations consist of formal and informal networks. The latter are not limited to the public or private sector or to a specific industrial sector such as education. Informal networks are also characterized as unstable, non-transparent and frequently criss-crossing job-related and social networks. Although the impact of these networks on organizational performance can vary, they are assumed to play an important role in the formal decision-making process of organizations, including HEIs located in the Barents region. For instance, informal networks, can have an impact on the stability of policy, as in how internationalization and academic practices are valued by HEIs over time. Informal networks are also assumed to have an impact on the attrition of key personnel such as decision-makers, patrons or so-called liaisons. Liaisons are by Tichy, Tushman and Fombrun (1979, 508) defined as individuals linking two or more clusters. These individuals, often operating at the centre knot, are perceived to have great power and influence within the informal network, more than the formal structure would grant them. With regard to the BCS cooperation, Sundet (2015), for instance, emphasizes the high turnover among the Russian participants of the network responsible for the coordination of this programme.

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Hence, collaboration between HEIs can be affected if particular persons with a commitment to international cooperation leave – or are forced to leave – the institution as discussed above, especially if informal networks influence the outcome of the decision-making process to a larger extent than the formal ones. This is all the more urgent when these individuals are key persons with whom education institutions on the other side of the border over time have established good contact. In another example of the importance of individual contributions, Sokolov (2014, 10) argues that federal support for HEIs in Russia largely depends on the personal connections of the university's top management. Informal networks can also act as a bestowal of trust or as an alternative to time-consuming formal procedures. In the former, informal networks could be regarded as builders of trust between partners from different nation states in educational cooperation. Educational cooperation between individuals across different states can create social networks based on trust gained after a long relationship. When issues relating to admission rules, student requirements and approval of acquired credits need to be solved, trust can often be a decisive factor. However, as noted before, speaking of informal networks among representatives of Russian and Norwegian HEIs is problematic, as from a strictly theoretical perspective, the term is understood differently.

Also, identifying informal networks across Norwegian and Russian HEIs in the Barents region can be challenging. Besides issues of data collection – would people consider themselves to be members of an "informal network" and how are such shadow networks understood by staff across different levels of an organization – these "hidden" informal networks often leave no traces or track record (Ledeneva 2013, 16; Lauth 2010, 38). Furthermore, even if managers are often not even aware of the existence or the outcome of informal network(s) within their organization, organizations – whether private or state controlled – are often reluctant to provide relevant data on the performance and development of informal networks (Sanders, Snijders and Stokman 1998, 105). Rather than revealing informal networks as such, for example by identifying participants or discussing power structures, this article will therefore discuss the different theoretical concepts in relation to such networks. This will also illustrate how such concepts could have a different impact on the daily lives of people working at HEIs in the Barents region.

The main argument here is that describing or comparing informal networks across different states in the Barents region is challenging because of different theoretical understandings of these networks. Actors from different institutions interpret informal networks differently, not only from a theoretical point of view, but also from an

empirical vantage point as is illustrated by an analysis of the data collection in relation to the NORRUSS project. For example, when asked about the role of networks within educational collaboration, representatives of Russian HEIs frequently cited "trust" as a key concept whereas Norwegian interviewees would emphasize "personal commitment" and "knowing the right people". Interviews with representatives of Norwegian and Russian HEIs for the purpose of the NORRUSS project were conducted between January 2013 and February 2015. Summing up, from a Russian theoretical perspective, informal networks are understood to be more than personal contact during social activities between participants of formal meetings, as discussed below.

INFORMAL NETWORKS FROM A NORWEGIAN PERSPECTIVE

Before discussing informal networks from a Russian perspective, this section provides a brief overview of intra-organizational studies of informal networks by Western researchers. As "individual interest" was a rather insufficient explanation for the presence and development of informal networks over time, there emerged increasing scientific interest in contributing to the debate on informal networks (Reif, Monczka and Newstrom 1973, 389; Sanders, Snijders and Stokman 1998, 105; Stevenson and Bartunek 1996, 76).

Generally, research from a Western perspective on informal networks has two main concerns, one aiming to disclose informal networks, their members, roles, and power structures (see, for instance, Rigby for a detailed study of the network around Stalin) and the other studying the outcomes of these networks, including the effectiveness of informal power structures in organizational performance. Most of this intra-organizational research has been focused on private institutions – mainly operating in the Western world – whereas organizations largely controlled by the state such as HEIs, and especially organizations operating in Russia are underrepresented. Most of the studies discussed below are therefore based on organizations operating in the private sector and in a few cases state controlled enterprises.

Organizations can be understood as social groupings with relatively stable patterns of interaction over time. Social interaction may lead to the development of networks, for instance, between individuals sharing similar cultural viewpoints (Stevenson and Bartunek 1996, 76). Such networks are by Mitchell (1969, 2) defined as "a specific set of linkages among a defined set of persons, with the additional property that the characteristics of these linkages as a whole may be used to interpret the social behavior of the persons involved." The best example of a formal network within an organization

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is the organizational map, showing the relationship between a manager and his or her employees or between departments and divisions across an organization. In many classical works (especially within the positional tradition), networks or their outcomes are often studied by analysing the formal relations between different people and groups based on their formal positions or roles, for instance by reference to the organizational chart. The positional tradition has been criticized for neglecting individual contributions and for failure to grasp the ongoing process in organizations (Tichy, Tushman and Fombrun 1979, 511; Krackhardt and Hanson 1993, 111). Formal networks fail to grasp the ongoing process in organizations because power and influence are not necessarily exercised through formal networks (Cobb 1986, 234; Tichy, Tushman and Fombrun 1979, 511). Influential "hidden" networks are not visible on the organizational chart although studies explaining how the work actually gets done within an organization emphasize the importance of these networks (Flap, Bulder and Völker 1998, 131) and how power or influence is frequently channelled through them (Groat 1997, 41; Tichy, Fushman and Fombrun 1979, 511). These "hidden" networks or "informal organizations" often explained as alternative networks among employees from different levels in order to fulfil, for instance, unexpected complex or highly variable tasks (Krackhardt and Hanson 1993, 104). According to Groat (1997, 40), the informal organization encompasses all the channels of interaction and relationships that exist in an organization outside the organization's formal management structure. Tichy, Tushman and Fombrun (1979, 509-510) distinguish four types of such relations – exchange of affect, exchange of power and influence, exchange of information and exchange of goods or services – and argue that the dichotomy formal/informal is reflected in all these linkages. Thus, informal networks are understood as something more than "knowing the right people" or "personal contacts" based on a long-term relationship. Moreover, they should not be confused with the culture of an organization. Groat (1994, 40) argues that informal networks expand "quickly" and adapt to changing circumstances in contrast to the rather slower pace of an organization's culture. Stevenson and Bartunek (1996, 75) define organizational culture as "the meanings and understandings that members share about their work and the expression of these meanings in particular behaviours".

Informal networks are often associated with negative impact such as ineffectiveness, corruption, shadow deals, etc. Such networks, however, can also serve as a valuable resource for individual employees, for instance in finding solutions to satisfying individual needs (Reif, Monczka and Newstrom 1973, 389; Groat 1997, 41) and as a means of communication, cohesion, and protection of integrity (Barnard 1962). In fact, informal networks may counterbalance some of the presumably negative aspects. They can fight

corruption through internal systems of checks and balances (Ledeneva 2013, 249). In addition to the individual level, informal networks can be a major source of strength and added value for the organization as a whole (Groat 1997, 41). Flap, Bulder and Völker (1998, 109) even argue that informal networks are an equally important factor of production as the organizations' financial capital, buildings, and staff. Consequently, acquiring skills to understand and deal with informal networks becomes an essential part of the management practices for an organization's decision-makers.

Studies of informal networks were typically based on the idea that the informal organization is more effective in terms of organizational performance than the formal organization. In practice, formal hierarchies and informal networks can overlap and sometimes even be in conflict. As concluded before, increasing interest has since been shown in research to describe informal networks (for example by examining those who are included or who, in the words of Tichy, Tushman and Fombrun (1979, 508), is seen as "the liaison" or "the bridge" of the network – the individual who is a member of multiple clusters). Similarly, more research has been devoted to study the performance of informal networks (see, for instance, Reif, Monczka and Newstrom 1973, 390–391).

Instead of emphasizing the needs or benefits for the individual or organization, Argyris (1957), Groat (1997) and more recently Alena Ledeneva (2013) from a Russian perspective, seek to explain the development of informal networks from a different premise. They argue that complexities of the formal structure lead to the development of informal social groups that are necessary, as Groat (1997, 41) puts it, to "fill the gap". The formal structure, for instance, could include complicated and time-consuming internal reporting procedures or incoherent formal regulations enacted by the legislator. These internal procedures are then bypassed in order to ensure that a particular deadline is being met. Groat's perspective is strongly related to Ledeneva's Russian perspective that I will outline below. Groat (1997, 41) emphasizes the lack of formal structure in the following example:

> *Thus if a company has no proper system for staff development and appraisal, then when an internal transfer is being mooted, the only way information on the candidate can pass is by informal personal contacts between managers, and the only way internal candidates can find opportunities to move around is by keeping an ear to the ground on their "network".*

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Ledeneva emphasizes the absence of a well-functioning formal structure in her study of informal networks in Russian society. Her angle is slightly different from most of the perspectives discussed in this section where the main focus is on individual contributions or organizational performance as an explanation for the abundance or development of informal networks. Assuming that my interpretation of Ledeneva's work is correct, informal networks in Russian society are necessary to ensure the functioning of society. In line with Groat's perspective, she holds that the formal framework does not function sufficiently in practice, which forces individuals to find alternatives outside the formal hierarchy in order to deal with their daily issues. Ledeneva's approach fits neatly with the growing interest for research addressing the use of informal networks as a way of getting things done within an organization (Flap, Bulder and Völker 1998, 132). By explaining the relationship between the formal structure and informal networks in Russian society, Ledeneva offers a valuable element to the debate on the impact or outcome of informal networks. In her terms, these are "power" networks (Ledeneva 2013, 4) or "personal" networks (Ledeneva 2013, 30). My conclusion is that Ledeneva uses the term "power networks" to emphasize the influence these networks have on the decision-making process in Russian society.

INFORMAL NETWORKS FROM A RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Ledeneva is one of the few authors to explain the use of informal networks in Russian society from a Russian perspective (Ledeneva 2013, 50–84). Ledeneva – and to a certain degree Pastukhov (2002) – discuss values and barriers of informal networks in Russian society but also how informal networks are related to formal institutions. Their studies are more detailed than Groat's perspective especially in terms of how formal and informal networks can have an impact on the daily lives of individuals and formal organizations. The aim of this section is first to explain Russian perspectives of personalized networks and second to elaborate these perspectives to HEIs operating in Russia.

Ledeneva's (2013, 252–253) main argument is that informal practices such as the use of informal personal contacts in order to circumvent formal institutions such as bureaucratic procedures or regulations are an obstacle on Russia's path to modernization. Although the focus is on informal networks, informal practices can include a variety of activities from selective enforcement of formal rules to personalized networks. Selective enforcement, or custom law, is understood as the use or abuse of the legal framework to serve interests outside the legal domain, violating the spirit of the law, not its letter (Ledeneva 2006, 12–14; Pastukhov 2002, 71; Lauth 2000, 40). Before dealing with informal networks in Russian society in more detail, it is necessary to briefly

discuss some characteristics of the formal structure, such as formal laws and bureaucratic procedures but also hierarchical structures or procedures for internal reporting in Russia.

The formal framework is differently understood in Russia than in the West. In Russia there is a difference, for instance, between the written word and practical realities. Law and justice – to be understood as norms representing what is regarded as fair and not – are not necessarily the same. In the Western world and Northwest Europe in particular laws and formal systems are – at least by the majority of the population – regarded as fair and just.

A second explanation for the gap between formal structure and the situation in practice is that in Russia formal regulations and bureaucratic procedures can be difficult to comply with. Formal regulations can be complicated, not just because the text itself is unclear, but because of inconsistency between regulations from different governmental levels and because of the enforcement strategy of Russian regulatory agencies in general. The principle "everybody is guilty unless prove not guilty", which is embedded in the enforcement strategy outlined by Pastukhov (2002, 70–71), is a good example of this approach. The literature provides many examples of this (Pastukhov 2002; Gustafson 2012; Ledeneva 2006; 2008). The formal structure, such as law but also internal formal procedures can be so complex and demanding (requiring a new application procedure if there is any minor change or mistake in the initial version) that organizations or individuals have to consciously or unconsciously bypass the formal procedure, for instance, by faking the documents (Pastukhov 2002, 73). Relevant examples for the education sector can be found in Sandler (2014, 18), and Balzer (2010, 59–60), identifying the challenges of Russia's educational system in terms of visa requirements, registration procedures, and employment rules for foreign specialists.

The formal framework of Russian society is complicated, compared to that of Norway, for example, it was not created at once but was rather driven by changing political ideologies and economic development of a country which was first a prominent member of the Soviet Union and is now considered to be a country of rapid economic development. Since 2001, Russia has been counted as one of the four big emerging economies, so-called BRIC countries. The "BRIC countries" are Brazil, Russia, India and China, all seen as having reached a stage of rapid economic development (Goldman, Sachs & Co. 2001). Each period, from the ruling Communist Party through the Yeltsin years

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and later under Vladimir Putin's first two terms as president, introduced a new set of laws and policies, without necessarily replacing the ones that came before (Gustafson 2012, 385). A result of these complexities is that personal networks are valuable and sometimes even necessary to get things done, not only for officials but also for ordinary citizens (Ledeneva 2013, 253). In Russia, such networks are often taken for granted and hence differently understood than in Western societies where they are frequently associated with shadow deals, corruption, or bribes.

Informal practices such as personalized networks did not first emerge under Vladimir Putin's terms as president. During the Soviet Union formal laws, rules, and procedures were frequently bypassed to obtain particular goods and services in short supply, or simply in order to comply with the formal demands (Ledeneva 1998, 3). These practices were called *blat* and became a tradition in Russian society, perhaps even a part of Russian culture, and when Russia during the 1990s was in its first years of economic and social development, these practices that had been so useful during the Soviet period could and would not disappear overnight; and like most institutions in Russia during this particular period, HEIs faced financial and institutional difficulties (Androushchak 2014, 10).

Hence, informal practices such as personalized networks are a part of Russian society, or in Ledeneva's (2013, 50) terms, part of Russia's *sistema*. Ledeneva (2013, 81–83) describes these networks as channels of informal governance for allocating resources. "Useful friends" or "core contacts" gain such benefits as access to particular resources (ibid). In Ledeneva's view, informal networks are characterized by unwritten rules and informal codes, and are channelled by a power concentrated on the top (patron) or gatekeeper (ibid.). Ledeneva (2013, 83) argues that informal networks are frequently based on personal loyalty towards the patron and can have their own system of checks and balances regarding responsibility and punishment. Informal relationships of trust and alliances matter and provide, ironically enough, more "stability", "protection" and "predictability" than the formal institutions, which relates to the limited performance of the state in protecting individual rights (Ledeneva 2013, 83; Lauth 2000, 28). It is the patron or kinship structure rather than the formal structure that can provide "useful friends" or "core contacts" not only with stability, protection and predictability but also a helping hand to deal with the complicated formal structure. Using personal networks should not be regarded as an informal practice as such, but when personal networks are used – consciously or not – in order to circumvent formal procedures because the formal framework is not able to fulfil

the demand or is practically impossible to comply with, or when such networks are used to exercise power or influence rather than through the formal hierarchy, such practices are to be understood as informal practices.

Thus, according to a Russian perspective, belonging to a network community which builds on loyalty towards a patron, political party, or association could secure the opportunities or fulfil the needs that should be guaranteed by formal institutions "under normal circumstances". Examples are preferential appointments, state-support, business ventures, jobs, assistance in problem-solving, etc. This itself is not uniquely Russian and perhaps in some cases not even different from informal networks from a Western perspective as outlined above. What is different is the extent to which informal networks from a Russian perspective need to compensate for the weakness of the formal institutions. The need to provide trust and support in a relatively less stable environment is – from a Russian point of view – considered more significant.

Informal networks, whether we call them power networks or personalized networks, are embedded in both public and private sectors and are therefore assumed to be part of the decision-making process in Russian HEIs as well. The administration of a federal or state university is perceived to face the same challenges as most other organizations, corporations, or individuals in terms of dealing with the challenges and opportunities of the formal structure, e.g. to comply with regulations and strategies, or to follow formal procedures. Although more research needs to be done on how informal networks influence the decision-making process of HEIs in Russia, it is – based on the theoretical overview discussed above – assumed that informal networks play an important role in the decision-making process of these institutions. This is not necessarily in terms of bypassing particular local or federal regulations or circumventing time-consuming bureaucratic procedures to ensure that a particular deadline is met, but in terms of personalized networks through which influence, power, or goods are channelled.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article has been to illustrate two different theoretical perspectives with regard to informal networks: a Norwegian (Western) and a Russian perspective. If we seek to study the outcome or importance of informal networks within educational institutions across different states – even if these institutions cooperate closely with each other within one geographical region as we have seen with educational cooperation in the Barents region – we first need to understand how such networks are understood in

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both states, and how they have a different impact on the daily lives of the citizens. Such different perspectives, as outlined in this study, make it challenging to argue for the existence of one common informal network, study the impact of informal networks on internationalization processes, or identify the participants of such networks.

Both theoretical perspectives emphasize the effectiveness of informal networks in achieving personal objectives or in circumventing formal procedures. Informal networks can often explain the discrepancy between actual behaviour and the formal framework – or formal institutions. While informal networks are publicly recognized both in Russian and Norwegian society – including HEIs – it is complicated to identify their outcomes because their configuration or development is difficult to observe empirically. Future research is therefore needed in order to determine the exact role of these networks with regard to decision-making processes in higher education. If we seek to understand the differences in both perspectives, however, we should analyse the formal structure rather than the informal network(s). Informal networks are perceived differently because the formal framework in which they operate is different. The complexities of the formal framework of Russian society is one of the main explanations for the formation of informal social groups, whereas from a Norwegian/Western perspective individual preferences or assumptions seeking to explain the role of informal networks in the formal decision-making process are seen as major contributors for the development of networks outside the formal structure.

As one of the few Western scholars Groat (1997, 40) emphasizes a link between the formal structure and the development of informal networks by arguing that the shortcomings of the formal "organization" result in the creation and shaping of informal networks. As concluded before, however, most research from a Western perspective is focused on the outcomes of informal networks or on the role of the individual within these networks (individual demands and needs as means to solving unexpected problems). Although Groat (1997, 41) addresses the weaknesses of the formal structure as an explanation for the development of informal networks, a broader study of Western literature with regard to these networks illustrates a different premise than Ledeneva's Russian perspective. Ledeneva and to a certain extent Groat suggest that when the formal structure does not function well enough in practice, individuals are basically forced to find alternatives outside the formal framework in order to fulfil their demands or deal with their daily issues. It is in the formal structure not being able to fulfil the demand for stability, protection, and predictability that we can find an explanation for why informal networks are perceived differently in Russia and the West. In Groat's

(1997, 41) words, "the formal gap that needs to be bridged" is simply bigger in Russian society and therefore, has a different impact on the employees' daily lives.

To illustrate some of these impacts – while also acknowledging that informal networks are extremely hard to monitor – let us assume that informal networks are operative among employees of a particular university in the Barents region, and that individuals within these networks have a substantial influence on the outcomes of the formal decision-making process. Such a network is obviously larger than one person – say the rector – and could include several people in key positions, for instance vice-rectors and coordinators of international cooperation. If, one network and its members (patron, liaisons and/or bow ties as "a network in which many players are dependent on a single employee but not on each other" defined by Krackhardt and Hanson 1993, 111) is substituted by another network with its own members, this could have an impact on the policy or strategy of the HEI in question, for instance in the field of internationalization, especially when the network swap affects individuals which whom foreign partner institutions have over time established good contact. Such an argument is based on the assumption that Russian society consists of several networks each with its own patron. In the alternative version people would compete with each other within *one* network, something that would be in conflict with the members' loyalty towards the patron, Ledeneva (2013, 38–39) describes this as an essential characteristic of these informal networks.

Further research is needed, however, to determine to what extent informal networks influence the outcomes of the decision-making process of HEIs in the Barents region, for example in terms of internationalization. Future research could also clarify whether we can identify an international informal network of representatives from different HEIs across the Barents region – as one of the questions surrounding the NORRUSS project suggests – and whether the theoretical perspectives outlined in this study are relevant and applicable to such a network.

Finally, as this article suggests, informal networks are not uniquely Russian. What is uniquely Russian, however, is their nature: the relationship of informal networks with the formal structure. Understanding this relationship is essential before identifying or comparing informal networks across different states in the Barents region and valuable if we seek to explore the outcomes of these networks, or examine the degree to which their actions are guided by formal structures.

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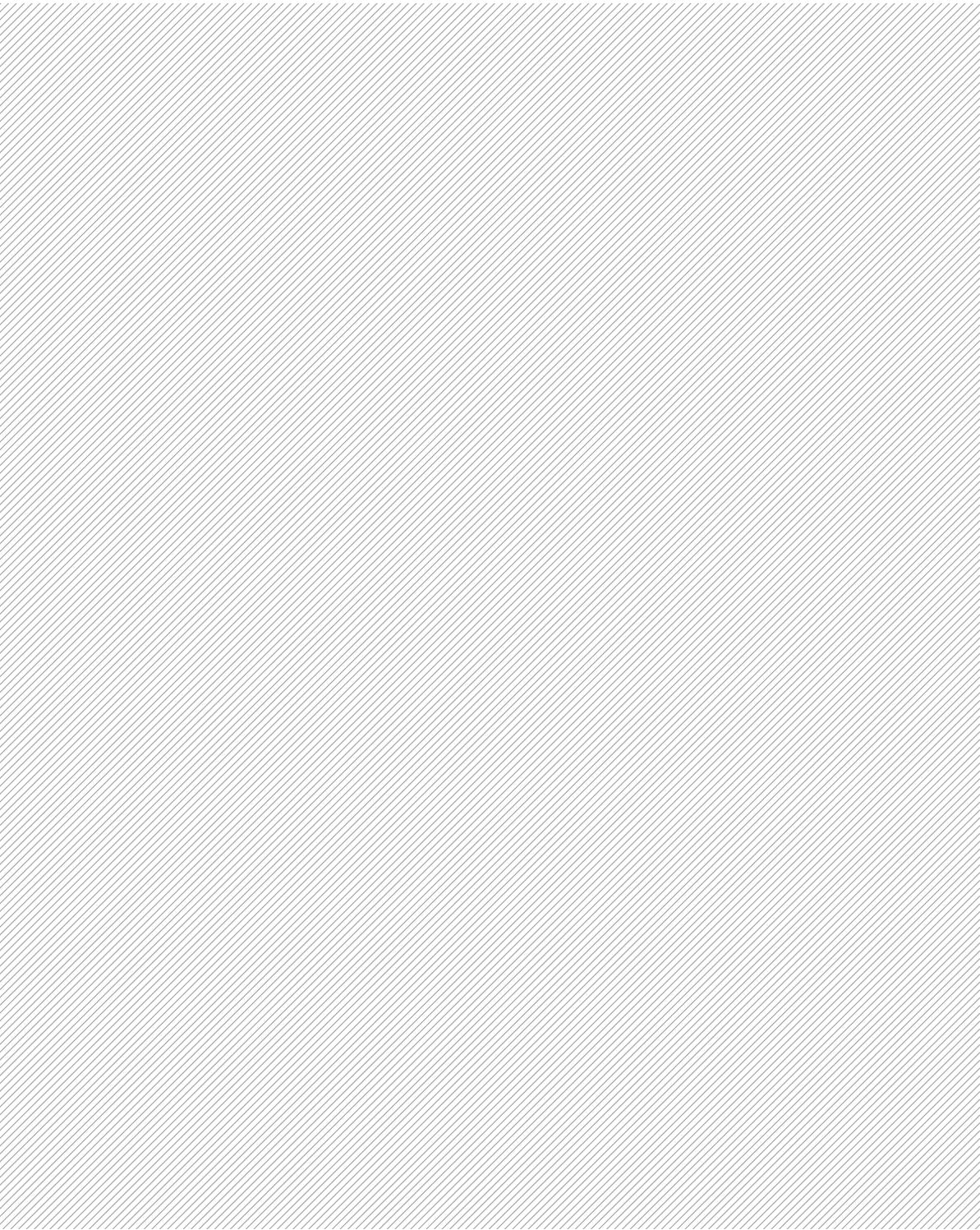
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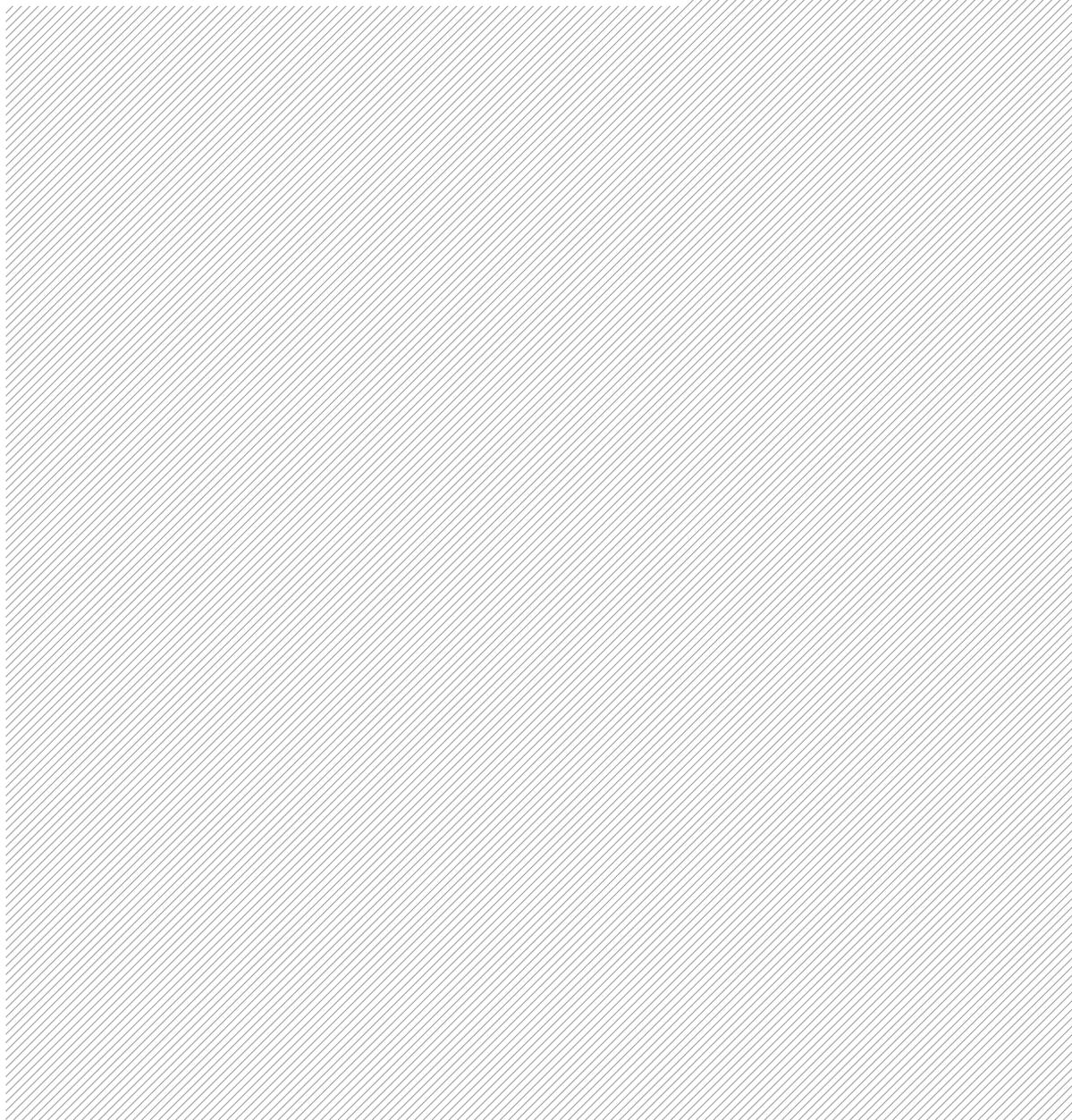
Sustainable mining, local communities and environmental regulation

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable mining is an objective as well as a tool for balancing economic, social, and environmental considerations. Each of these three dimensions of mining – and sustainable development – has many components, some of which were chosen for closer study in the SUMILCERE project. While there is no single component that in itself provides a definitive argument for or against sustainable mining, the research reveals some that have proven valuable in the process of balancing the different dimensions of sustainability.

In the SUMILCERE project, comparative studies enabled us to identify factors such as the following, which are essential when discussing the balancing in practice of the three dimensions of sustainable mining cited above: the framework and functionality of environmental regulation to protect the environment (environmental sustainability); the

competitiveness of the mining industry in light of environmental regulation and its enforcement (economic sustainability); public participation and the opportunities local communities have to influence their surroundings, as well as communities' acceptance of projects (social sustainability) before and during operations; and the protection of Sámi cultural rights in mining projects (social and cultural sustainability).

Although each of the three dimensions of sustainability leaves room for discretion in the weight assigned to it, ecological sustainability, protected by smart environmental regulation and minimum standards, sets essential boundaries that leave no room for compromises. Economic and social sustainability are possible only within these limits. Details of the analyses in the Kolarctic area and accounts of the methods used can be found in the cited SUMILCERE articles.

Keywords: sustainable mining, environmental regulation, local communities, Sámi people, social licence to operate, public participation, social impact assessment

INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABLE MINING
AND BACKGROUND STUDIES AND METHODS

"Sustainable development" is understood to mean development in which the needs of the present generation should be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development includes at least economic, social, and environmental dimensions. For example, these three dimensions are addressed in the Swedish Strategy (2003/04:129) for Sustainable Development.

As a concept, sustainable development sounds reasonably clear but is in fact very abstract. Indeed, one may question the extent to which this general objective is met in operative mining projects that make extensive use of raw material resources. This article, a synthesis of the research project Sustainable Mining, Local Communities and Environmental Regulation in the Kolarctic Area (SUMILCERE), examines mining with reference to different aspects of sustainable development in Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden, and in particular the Kolarctic areas of these countries.

The concept of sustainable development was originally defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) in 1987. The European Council in Gothenburg (2001) adopted the first EU Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) and the definition was confirmed in the renewed EU Sustainable Development

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Strategy (EU SDS) published in the year 2006. Moreover, sustainable development is mentioned as a part of the principle of integration in article 11 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU, OJ 26.10.2012 C 326/47) and in article 37 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (OJ 30.3.2010 C 83/389).

Finland and Sweden, as EU Member States, and Norway, as a party to the EEA, have each adopted their own strategies for sustainable development. The Finnish (2006), Norwegian (2002), and Swedish (2003) strategies have been completed under different action plans. According to Lukyanova (2010, 26), in Russia sustainable development is the focus of two presidential decrees: "Concerning the Russian State Strategy for Environmental Protection and Ensuring of Sustainable Development" (1994) and "Concept of the Transition of the Russian Federation to Sustainable Development" (1996). In another example from national legislation, the preamble of the Russian Federation Law on Environmental Protection (No. 7-FZ) from the year 2002 says:

> *In accordance with the Constitution of the Russian Federation everybody has a right to a favourable environment, everybody shall preserve the nature and the environment, carefully deal with the natural wealth being a basis for the sustainable development, life and activities of the peoples inhabiting the territory of the Russian Federation.*

In Finland and Sweden, sustainable development is also mentioned in the objectives of the environmental protection Acts (Finnish Environmental Protection Act 2014, section 1 and Swedish Environmental Code 1998, chapter 1, section 1). Moreover, Norway's action plan for sustainable development, a chapter in the 2004 National Budget, notes, among other things, that the Pollution Control Act and the Planning and Building Act govern matters of central importance for the use of natural resources and the environment and are thus relevant administrative instruments for sustainable development (Norway's action plan for sustainable development 24–25). In sum, sustainable development has strong support on the strategic and regulatory level in all the countries studied.

Environmental sustainability, and especially the protection of ecological processes for that purpose, is a "tough nut" in the extractive industries. In particular, open-pit mines always change the environment and an area's ecological conditions. Although technical solutions and different standards in environmental regulation can diminish harmful environmental impacts by the extractive industries and an area can recover ecologi-

cally to some extent in due course, the industries still cause substantial changes in the natural conditions. Although ecological constraints set particular limits on social and economic development in society, the sustainability of mining is ultimately a matter of balancing environmental, economic, and social dimensions.

The overall objective of the SUMILCERE project was to study the extent to which sustainable mining is promoted (and hindered), and on this basis offer a set of tools and recommendations for the mining industry, local communities, and public authorities. The comparative studies enabled us to identify issues such as the following, which are essential when discussing the balancing in practice of the three dimensions of sustainable mining:

- the framework and functionality of environmental regulation to protect the environment (environmental sustainability);
- the competitiveness of the mining industry in light of environmental regulation and its enforcement (economic sustainability);
- public participation and the opportunities local communities have to influence their surroundings, as well as communities' acceptance of projects (social sustainability) before and during operations; and
- the protection of Sámi cultural rights in mining projects (social and cultural sustainability).

All four issues are interlinked and their roles in the context of sustainable mining are examined in detail in the peer-reviewed scientific articles written in conjunction with SUMILCERE:

1. Transboundary EIA in the Barents region (Koivurova et al. 2014),
2. License to mine: A comparison of the scope of the environmental assessment in Sweden, Finland and Russia (Pettersson et al. 2015),
3. Law and self-regulation (Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015),
4. Environmental regulation and competitiveness in the mining industry (Söderholm et al. 2015),
5. Social sustainability of mining in the northern communities (Suopajärvi et al. 2015),
6. Social licence to operate (Koivurova et al. 2015c),
7. Social licence to operate for mining companies in the Russian Arctic (Riabova and Didyk 2014), and
8. Legal protection of Sámi traditional livelihoods from adverse impacts of mining (Koivurova et al. 2015a).

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The articles draw on research methods from the legal and social sciences as well as economics and include a number of comparative studies. Koivurova et al. 2014 (number 1), Pettersson et al. 2015 (number 2), Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015 (number 3) and Koivurova et al. 2015a (number 8) combine legal dogmatics, regulation theory, legal sociology, and legal comparison in different ways (Kokko 2014, 289–297, 300–311). Söderholm et al. 2015 (number 4) explore an analytical framework based on a review of the existing empirical literature and on a conceptual analysis of the environment–competitiveness trade-off. Suopajärvi et al. 2015 (number 5) employ a qualitative and data-driven approach drawing on 85 semi-structured, thematic interviews. Literature reviews and case study analyses feature in the articles about social licence to operate (numbers 6 and 7). The sections to follow highlight the results of the research programme, albeit with no intention of being exhaustive.

FRAMEWORK AND FUNCTIONALITY OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION IN MINING PROJECTS

Binding environmental regulation sets minimum standards for controlling pollution from mines. The formal institutional framework for mining and mining activities was studied in Sweden (as the main focus of the study) and in Finland and Russia (as comparative sites). Although the comparative study was done at the national level, it is noteworthy that Sweden and Finland, as EU Member States, have transposed Directive 2010/75/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 on industrial emissions (integrated pollution prevention and control) as well as other relevant environmental directives, into their national legislation (Söderholm et al. 2015, 136).

Of particular interest were the licensing process and the extent to which environmental considerations were incorporated into it; that is, the focus was trained on administrative legislation. The licensing, or permitting, process was presumed to be an important factor for controlling the use of natural resources and limiting harmful environmental impacts of mining activities. Generally speaking, the principle is that environmental impacts should be assessed before a permit is granted and should be limited by the permit conditions (Pettersson et al. 2015, 238). During the operation phase of a mine, compliance with the conditions should be ensured by supervision, carried out by public authorities, for example.

In Sweden, mining-related activities are controlled using a concession-based system and typically require the following permits: a) an exploration permit, which is granted for the purpose of exploring an area for the presence of concession minerals. The permit gives the

permit holder an exclusive right to search the area and precedence in receiving a mining concession; b) a mining concession, which determines the area in which the concessionaire has a fundamental right to explore and exploit deposits covered by the concession. The decision to grant a mining concession must be preceded by an environmental impact assessment (EIA), in which the impacts of the concession on different land-use interests, including reindeer herding, are assessed; c) an environmental permit, in which the conditions for the activity in terms of emission limits, for example, are established. An EIA describing the environmental impacts of the activity and setting out appropriate measures to reduce the adverse environmental effects must accompany the application for an environmental permit; d) building permits for all adjoining buildings; and e) a land allocation decision determining what land within the concession area can be used for processing the ore deposit. The spatial planning system also constitutes an important part of the licensing process as a whole. The main policy instruments are found in the Minerals Act (1991:45), the Environmental Code (1998:808), and the Planning and Building Act (2010:900). The public authorities using the instruments are primarily the Mining Inspectorate of Sweden, the land and environmental courts, the county administrative boards, and the municipalities (Pettersson et al. 2015, 239–242; Bäckström 2012, 185).

In brief, the regulatory framework for mining in Sweden follows a hierarchical order in which the mining interest has precedence. While the licensing process primarily aims to establish rights and set conditions for the activity, the influence of the environmental assessment – for example its potential to actually prevent mining operations by preserving the status quo (zero option) – is limited in theory and virtually non-existent in practice (Pettersson et al. 2015, 243–244).

The main weakness of the Swedish legal framework for mining is probably that the two main laws in the area have different purposes. While the Environmental Code is clearly guided by the objective of sustainability, the Minerals Act has the explicit purpose of resource exploitation. Accordingly, since the function of the Code is primarily to control the environmental impacts of an activity and not to assess its permissibility, a licence is typically granted despite the intention that the laws should all apply in parallel. The legal framework for mining in Sweden is thus basically characterized by a hierarchical order in which environmental interests play second fiddle (Pettersson et al. 2015, 251). In Finland, the implementation of a mining project requires several permits in keeping with several different environmental laws. Prospecting, exploration, and the exploitation of minerals are subject to the provisions of the Mining Act (621/2011). Before a decision on a mining permit can be made, the environmental impacts of the project

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must be assessed in a particular procedure prescribed by the Act on the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (468/1994). In addition, a project needs at least environmental protection and building permits. As a rule, spatial plans are also needed in order to reconcile mining-related land use with that of other livelihoods or housing. The statutes governing these permits and plans are the Environmental Protection Act (527/2014) and the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999). The mining permit is usually granted by the mining authority, the environmental permit by the regional state administrative agencies, and the building permit by municipal authorities. The environmental impact assessment is carried out by the project developer and coordinated by the responsible Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (Pettersson et al. 2015, 245–247; Kokko et al. 2014, 28).

In Finland, the recent revisions of the Mining Act and the Environmental Protection Act appear to have enhanced the coherence between the different laws that govern the licensing of mining operations (Pettersson et al. 2015, 251). However, each of the administrative procedures involved usually has a public participation phase of its own, whereby joining these as far as possible would lighten the licensing process overall. Owing to various factors, the procedures do not always progress linearly or according to schedule, meaning that the legislation should provide some flexibility; it could even be disadvantageous to the overall schedule of a project to be forced to wait for each sub-process to finish and to have to follow a possible predetermined set of rules if and when changes occur during project planning and different administration processes. In this perspective, concurrent processes that are not precisely tied beforehand to a set of orders are justifiable and reasonable. The complex whole currently in place, however, tends to cause confusion and uncertainty among the public and the industry, and does not always serve the desired purpose of the regulation. It is therefore useful to continue looking for ways to coordinate and integrate mine-related permit and other administrative procedures (Kokko et al. 2014, 33).

In Russia the exploration and production of subsoil resources, including minerals, also require a sort of mining licence. The main statutes are the Subsoil Law of the Russian Federation (1992) and the regulations on the Licensing of Subsoil Use issued under this Act. The legislation distinguishes three types of subsoil use licences: licences for exploring, production, and enlargement (these can be then combined into a single licence). The licensing system is implemented and licence applications granted using a uniform procedure administered by the Federal Subsoil Resources Management Agency (Pettersson et al. 2015, 248–249).

The potential environmental impacts of a mining project are assessed in the planning stage by implementing several laws, most notably the Law on Environmental Protection (2002) and the above-mentioned Subsoil Law. The laws require that an environmental impact assessment be carried out in accordance with the Law on Ecological Expertise (1995 No. 174-FZ). However, following the partial dismantling of Russian environmental law, the scope of application of the Law on Ecological Expertise has been limited with respect to EIA. First, the possibility for the public to confer in due course on revising scientific requirements in what are known as environmental expert reviews has been revoked and, second, the law only applies to a restricted number of mining projects, such as those located on the continental shelf or in conservation areas. The overwhelming majority of mining projects are therefore not covered by the provisions of the law (Pettersson et al. 2015, 249–250). This deregulation clearly jeopardizes the legitimacy of decisions on mining in the eyes of the public, and self-regulation of the companies is needed to advance EIA in mining projects.

At first glance, the legal framework for mining in Russia appears to be rather modern, with declarations of sustainable resource management and environmental laws including EIA rules that, it is claimed, are applicable to mining operations. "In practice, however, significant weaknesses can be detected; the declarative character of Russian environmental law is not followed up by substantive rules and both the application and the implementation seem to suggest that proper environmental concerns cannot be guaranteed" (Pettersson et al. 2015, 251–252).

In all the countries studied, the minimum level of environmental protection for mining activities is set by binding legal rules and is guided by considerations of sustainable development. The primary regulative objective is to seek a balance between the exploitation and preservation interests and to achieve sustainable resource management. In spite of this, serious implementation gaps seem to exist. This can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that institutional change is typically hampered by the path dependence that characterizes existing systems and that makes implementation dependent on existing policy and practice (see Pettersson et al. 2015, 252–253).

The challenges for the environmental regulation system are linked, on the one hand, to its coherence and consistency and, on the other, to the legitimacy of the relevant legal processes. The results of the project indicate that proper interaction and equability

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between mining laws and environmental laws are very important for environmentally sustainable mining and that the legal framework should provide room for adequate public participation in mining projects to enhance social and cultural sustainability. At the same time, public participation should be coordinated and integrated in the administrative processes so that the results are economically and socially sustainable. Smart environmental regulation alone cannot guarantee ecological sustainability; institutional changes in both governance and management are needed.

ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION AND COMPETITIVENESS IN THE MINING INDUSTRY

As part of the practical implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, the EU launched a BEST project in 2004 that made a series of recommendations to the Member States and the Commission on how to reduce administrative burdens on businesses that are subject to environmental regulation. The EU Member States have developed national programmes for reducing those burdens by simplifying legislation and the framework for its implementation. In practical examples of such actions, Finland has informed the BEST project expert group of the country's comprehensive reassessment of permitting requirements, a development linked with extensive administrative structural reform in the country, and Sweden has undertaken an initiative to simplify permit schemes by introducing notification (BEST project expert group 2006, 21–22). The BEST project was problematic in its overlooking the fact that sustainable industries entail other considerations than merely economic ones. Moreover, if, with a view to industrial competitiveness, the BEST project sees economic factors solely as a matter of tempered administrative burdens, that understanding is oversimplified.

This section describes the main results of the SUMILCERE study on Finland, Russia, and Sweden dealing with environmental regulation and competitiveness in the mining industry. Balancing environmental and economic sustainability was an express objective of the study, as the research undertook to investigate to what extent and under what circumstances industrial pollution regulations can be designed to achieve positive environmental outcomes as well as sustained competitive strength in the mining industry (Söderholm et al. 2015, 131).

In fact, the argument that environmental regulation has negative impacts on industrial competitiveness is not strong, and it has been challenged, for example, in the Porter

hypothesis. The weak version of the hypothesis essentially argues that "properly-designed" environmental regulations will stimulate environmental innovation, and the strong version that such regulations will increase not only the environmental but also the economic performance (e.g. profits and productivity) of industries (Porter and van der Linde 1995; Söderholm et al. 2015, 134). The SUMILCERE study did not explicitly test the Porter hypotheses; rather, it addressed the issue of how environmental regulations should be properly designed (Porter's criteria) and implemented to ease tension (if any) between regulatory demands and competitiveness (Söderholm et al. 2015, 135).

Environmental regulation is a factor usually taken into consideration before foreign direct investments in the mining industry are allowed. An EIA, for example, may already be considered a precondition for foreign direct investments that will have an effect on the environment (Pohjanpalo 2015, 242).

The results of the SUMILCERE study support the empirical research showing that geological potential and political stability are the most important factors in mining companies' choice of location for development. While mineral policies also matter, in general environmental regulations have not constituted a major impediment to investment. In fact, politically stable countries tend to be those with the strictest environmental regulations (Söderholm et al. 2015, 132). It can be concluded that it is not strict standards as such in environmental regulation that pose an obstacle to foreign direct mining investments but uncertainties in that regulation and its enforcement.

In the Fraser Institute's ranking of mining countries, Sweden and Finland are at the top, while Russia is not perceived as offering particularly stable regulatory conditions for mining companies (Wilson and Cervantes 2014, 32, 72). Uncertainties regarding the stability and consistency of environmental regulation and the timeliness of the regulatory processes decrease the propensity to invest in potential target areas. Whether regulations appear to be based on scientific knowledge or not is also important in this respect. The uncertainties facing mining companies thus stem not only from the time it takes to get a permit (ex ante), but also – and not least – the nature of the conditions laid down in the permit (if granted, ex post). For instance, in Sweden today there is no re-assessment of permits, and the country, as well as Finland, suffers from a lack of administrative resources; in Russia one generally does not see strict monitoring and enforcement activities taking place. In both Finland and Sweden, industry representatives frequently request a more expert-based and consensus-seeking regulatory approach (Söderholm et al. 2015, 140).

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The empirical investigations of the SUMILCERE study show that overall in all three countries – regardless of some important differences across them – a lack of timeliness and predictability in environmental regulations has constituted a significant obstacle to, or at least a limitation on, investments in new (or expanding existent) mining operations (see Söderholm et al. 2015, 140). Figure 1 below describes the terms "timeliness", "predictability", "flexibility", and "stringency" as understood in this study. Thus, for example, strict standards are not the problematic consideration for foreign direct investments. Such standards can even increase the competitiveness of the mining industry if their being tightened is predictable and the industry is allowed some flexibility in timetables and performance where compliance is concerned. The study suggests that there is a need to extend the time horizons of regulations as well as to emphasize a simple, rule-based process for granting permits that, as far as possible, minimizes investor uncertainty and enhances predictability (Söderholm et al. 2015, 140).

EX ANTE REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT	EX POST PERMIT CONDITIONS
Timelessness and predictability, implying for instance - adequate resources and competence at the relevant authorities to permit the issuing of timely regulatory decisions; and - limited uncertainty about how to interpret the legal rules (also making late appeals less likely to take place).	**Flexibility**, in terms of for instance, - the choice of compliance measures at the mine (e.g., performance standards); and - the use of extended compliance periods. **Stringency**, in terms of - the amount of pollution reduction required, and the anticipated tightening of these requirements over time.

Figure 1. Environmental permits and competitiveness: Critical issues (Söderholm et al. 2015, 135).

In conclusion, the SUMILCERE study recognized some need for improvement in the Swedish and Finnish permitting processes. The study calls for measures (a) to allocate more resources and competence to the administrative authorities, (b) to introduce new governance and administrative tools for improving cooperation and information exchange between the industry and the authorities, (c) to apply stringent performance standards in a more consistent way but at the same time in combination with extended compliance periods, and (d) to introduce more standardized procedures and road maps for EIAs and permit applications as well as for interpreting specific legal rules. These general recommendations are likely to prove fruitful in other developed mining countries as well (Söderholm et al. 2015, 140).

In the case of a sustainable mining industry, economic and environmental considerations form an intricate web. Oversimplification and inaptitude in the clarification of legislation may lead to perverse results. If, for example, the so-called reduction of administrative burdens on industry leads to weaker monitoring and enforcement by the environmental authorities after saving labour costs in administration, the result can be slower administrative decisions and processes. Where this occurs, the "clarification of legislation" ultimately decreases the competitiveness of the mining industry and the amount of foreign direct investments. In fact, a sustainable mining industry can be competitive with strict environmental standards when the regulatory framework is predictable and stable, flexible as regards compliance, and sufficiently consistent without compromising environmental protection for future generations.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION, PUBLIC PARTICIPATION, AND SOCIAL IMPACTS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF MINING PROJECTS

Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a central policy tool for sustainable development (Wilkins 2003, 413; Kokko 2008, 9). Sweden, Finland, and Norway – all Nordic countries – share the same international background as regards EIA regulation. As members of the EU (Finland and Sweden) or the European Economic Area (EEA) (Norway), the three countries all have implemented the EIA Directive. Together with the EU they have also ratified the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention 1991). Russia has EIA legislation of its own and is a signatory to the Espoo Convention but has not ratified it (Koivurova et al. 2014, 46). An obligatory EIA can provide a framework for public participation and, in principle, also for assessing social impact and balancing out asymmetric informa-

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tion about a mining project before administrative decisions are made (Söderholm et al. 2015, 135; Kokko 2013, 296).

Environmental sustainability is the objective at issue when an EIA collects environmental information for project planning and administrative decision making. The main informational sources in the EIA procedure are the project developers, who are in charge of collecting environmental information, for example with the aid of private environmental consulting companies. The opinions of the public concerned and the statements of municipalities, other public authorities, or experts can also provide information for the coordinating and other public authorities. The quality of information can be tested in discussions during the compilation of the EIA as well as by public authorities for example. In the Finnish EIA procedure it is the coordinating authorities' task to ensure the quality of the information in the EIA reports (Kokko 2013, 296).

The environmental information in EIA reports is not mere data; it also constitutes evidence put forward by project developers that seeks to convince public authorities and the public that the environmental impacts will remain within the limits set by environmental regulations (Kokko 2013, 296). In this light, one might ask how the EIA procedure, even with public participation and EIA documents, can reduce information asymmetries between project developers and the administrative authorities in the case of issues such as industry-specific pollution abatement technology. The role of the EIA as an information source in permitting also depends on how it is connected to the permit procedures. In Finland, for example, EIA is still a separate, obligatory procedure that provides at least two possibilities for public participation and two EIA documents to be taken into account by the permit authorities, while in Sweden EIA is directly integrated into permit procedures (Pettersson et al. 2015, 243, 246, 251). If regulations are to foster continuous environmental improvements, reducing informational asymmetry is an important consideration. This is especially the case where regulatory stringency has a dynamic perspective, as recommended by the SUMILCERE study in the context of Porter's criterion, mentioned above (Söderholm et al. 2015, 134–135).

When a proposed mining activity is likely to have significant transboundary effects, the nationally regulated procedure for studying the social and environmental impacts usually includes an international hearing. In a transboundary context, the Espoo Convention is the main international instrument that applies to the countries studied in the North Calotte/Kola Peninsula area. Of the focal states, Sweden, Finland, and Norway are parties to the Convention; the Russian Federation has signed the

Convention but not yet ratified it. Hence, if a proposed mining activity is likely to cause transboundary impacts between these three parties, a transboundary EIA procedure must be organized. Although Russia is not legally obligated to organise such a procedure, it is of course desirable to have such a procedure in place. Moreover, the Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment in the Arctic, as well as the more general guidance of the International Association for Impact Assessment (IAIA), provide important recommendations on how to conduct more effective and equitable transboundary EIA in the region (Koivurova et al. 2014, 46). Drawing on these and certain other international documents, as well as on the case studies conducted as part of the project, SUMILCERE has produced a guidebook of its own on how to carry out effective transboundary EIA at the beginning of mining projects in the North Calotte/ Kola Peninsula region (Koivurova et al. 2015b). One particular instance of best practice for transboundary EIA identified in SUMILCERE case studies was that seen when Sweden and Finland, upon a request by Finland, carried out a joint environmental impact assessment of the Kaunisvaara mining development (Koivurova et al. 2014, 60).

Social sustainability is also a key factor for the development of the mining industry (Suopajärvi et al. 2015, 1). Environmental impact assessments in the countries studied differ both in scope and in their requirements when it comes to assessing the social impacts of mining projects. However, before describing the relevant SUMILCERE studies, it should be pointed out that social effects are understood variously in different circumstances. According to the International Principles for Social Impact Assessment, such effects are intended or unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of planned interventions (policies, programmes, plans, projects) and any processes of social change initiated by those interventions (Vanclay 2003, 6). Actual social impact on local communities is also related to the very nature of the mining industry. For example, construction and the start of production not only require extensive investments, but also involve a rapid growth spike in the number of employees. The people with the competence required for mining operations may not live in the local community and will thus have to be recruited from the outside (Suopajärvi et al. 2015, 9).

In Finland, Norway, and Sweden, quarries and open-cast mines where the surface of the site exceeds 25 hectares should in practice be assessed using EIA procedures (EIA Directive article 4 (1) and annex 1 (19)). EU Member States should also specify the other circumstances under which extractive industries are subject to assessment (EIA Directive article 4 (2) and annex 2 (2)). According to the Finnish Act on the Environmental Impact Assessment Procedure (EIA Act 468/1994), which implements

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the EIA Directive, certain (larger) mining developments fulfil the particular criteria of listed projects and thus fall within the scope of the Act (the EIA Decree 713/2006, section 6). In addition, other mining projects that, after due consideration, are likely to have significant environmental impacts can be required to undergo the EIA procedure (EIA Act, section 4.2).

In Norway, "environmental impact assessment" as defined internationally has its legal basis in the Planning and Building Act (2008). Mining projects fulfilling the particular listed criteria always require an EIA. Smaller projects than those listed can also be assessed using the EIA procedure if, for example, they are located in especially valuable landscapes, natural surroundings, or cultural heritage areas or if they conflict with Sámi nature-based industries or reindeer herding (Planning and Building Act, section 4). In practice, most economically viable mineral projects will be of such magnitude/character that they require an EIA (Buanes 2014).

In Russia, most mining projects do not fall within the scope of the country's EIA legislation. Earlier, the relevant procedure had two stages: an environmental impact assessment with a public hearing and an environmental expert review. Both of the stages were required by the Federal Law (No. 174-FZ dd. November 23, 1995) "On Environmental Expert Review" sometimes also called "On Ecological Expertise". Later, pursuant to the federal law (No. 232-FZ dd. December 18, 2006) which amended Law No. 174, the general list has been sharply reduced, and most mining projects have been excluded from the scope of the law. For example, the law can be applied in cases where the mining project is located on the continental shelf, in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone, in the national waters of the Russian Federation, or when it affects conservation areas. However, the provisions of the Law on Environmental Expert Review do not apply to the overwhelming majority of mining projects. Since the law came into effect, only a general expert review conducted by the state has been required for these projects. Expert reviews should consider environmental issues, but no EIA and public hearings on its results are required (Pettersson et al. 2015, 250). Thus, in Russia an improvement in the EIA legislation is needed in regard to both the scope of EIA procedures and public participation in mining projects.

In Sweden, EIA is integrated into the different permit procedures. The EIA procedure for a new mine in Sweden differs between the two main permits that must be obtained in order to take a mine into production. The main legal acts are the Minerals Act (1991:45) and the Environmental Code (1998:808). An EIA is not usually required

in order to apply for a permit for exploration work. However, if the work includes test mining with an environmentally hazardous activity as described in the Environmental Code, an EIA must be carried out before an environmental permit can be applied for. The Minerals Act, chapter 4, section 2 requires that an EIA be submitted as part of the application for an exploitation concession (mining permit) from the Mining Inspectorate.

Environmental impact can be understood as it is defined in article 3 of the EIA Directive, that is, as the direct and indirect effects of a project on the following factors:

a *human beings, fauna, and flora;*
b *soil, water, air, climate, and the landscape;*
c *material assets and the cultural heritage;*
d *the interaction between the factors referred to in points (a), (b), and (c).*

However, does this definition include social impact? In the Finnish implementation of the Directive, "environmental impact" is taken to mean direct and indirect effects of a project or operation, on and outside Finnish territory, on:

a *human health, living conditions, and amenity;*
b *soil, water, air, climate, vegetation, organisms, and biological diversity;*
c *the community structure, buildings, landscape, townscape, and the cultural heritage;*
d *the utilisation of natural resources; and*
e *interaction between the factors stated in points a–d above*
   (EIA Act 468/1994, section 1).

Under the Finnish definition of effects, social impact, as a concept, falls under point a. However, the importance attached to social effects in the EIA procedure needs to be substantially increased. Moreover, social impact assessment (SIA) should be considered as a separate part of EIA and as a tool for voluntary self-regulation in mining companies, one that should be located, in different phases of mining projects (Kokko et al. 2014, 21, 38–39). SIA based on voluntary self-regulation can have broader content than that required in the obligatory EIA process. For instance, during the EIA process for the Hannukainen project, Northland Mines also carried out an SIA. It was a normal procedure in the international context of the industry, but the scope of the assessment in the case of Hannukainen was not required by Finnish law. The company reported that it would include the monitoring of social impacts in its monitoring plan

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of the environmental permit. The EIA included the obligatory hearing procedure, but at stakeholders' request the company also held information meetings (Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015, 57).

Although environmental impacts loom large on the list of considerations that should be included, it should be noted that the Norwegian term for EIA is the broader "impact assessment", which encompasses both environmental and social conditions (Buanes 2014). Thus, in principle the interpretation of the term "assessment" leaves some room for analysing social impacts in the obligatory EIA process. However, voluntary and complementary SIA is needed where the legislation has no clear provisions making it mandatory.

In Russia, the EIA regulation does not require a special study of a project's social impacts, but it does include requirements involving some elements of SIA. These relate only to those socio-economic impacts of planned activities that result from the effect of the projects on the environment (Buanes 2014). Hence, SIA is mainly a matter of self-regulation.

The Swedish EIA process has traditionally focused on the biophysical aspects of the environment, while the Environmental Code provides for a wide definition of "environment", one including socio-economic as well as cultural elements. Although an SIA is only allowed – not clearly required – by law, its popularity appears to be increasing voluntarily. Thus, some companies conduct SIAs on their own initiative, while others do not. This creates an unequal situation for some of the communities affected by mining operations (Pettersson et al. 2014, 238).

Social impact assessment is more than a facet of the obligatory EIA procedure. Minimum-level EIA in mining projects does not give any guarantees to the mining companies that their projects have earned acceptance by local communities. As Bastida (2006, 405) remarks: "Difficulties are compounded if the limited staff and resources available to deal with and decide on environmental impact assessments of mega-projects and the limited administrative time they have to study and take decisions on them, are taken into account". The same kind of conclusion has been reached in the SUMILCERE study on environmental permits: "For mining companies it has over time become increasingly important to acknowledge that the permitting process must take a certain amount of time in order to establish good relations with local stakeholders and address any related concerns." (Söderholm et al. 2015, 140). Generally speaking, it is not sufficient for social acceptance that mineral rights and the relevant environmental permits and authorizations for operating are granted, that an agreement is made with

the landowner, or that other mechanisms provided by the law to enter the land are invoked (Bastida 2006, 404–405). Thus, self-regulation is needed on the part of mining companies whereby they conduct social impact assessments and ensure the interaction with local communities that is necessary to earn social licence to operate throughout the lifecycle of mining projects.

SOCIAL LICENCE TO OPERATE AND OTHER FORMS OF SELF-REGULATION AS THEY RELATE TO ACCEPTANCE OF MINING PROJECTS

The term "social licence to operate" (SLO) has several conceptual roots. Sustainable development is among them, as is corporate social responsibility (Koivurova et al. 2015c, 3–5). The latter is widely understood as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2015) has defined it: "the continuing commitment by business to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the community and society at large" (Riabova and Didyk 2014, 2). When a mine is in operation, social impact assessments should be made regularly and with rather consistent content to get reference data on the various phases of the mining.

Social impact assessment can be used to analyse the acceptability of a mining project among the local community. Thus, rather than viewing SIA merely as a component of the EIA procedure, assessments of the operation phase of a mine should focus on how the terms of "acceptability" (Kokko et al. 2014, 39–40) – and information gained from an SIA about those terms – form the conceptual basis for a SLO.

According to the pyramid model proposed by Thomson and Boutilier (2011), the lowest level of social licence is withheld or withdrawn licence and the highest psychological identification; between them lie acceptance and approval. The levels of SLO represent how the community views the company (Boutilier and Thomson 2011, 2). The normative components (legitimacy, credibility, and trust) serve as the boundary criteria when the levels are distinguished (Boutilier and Thomson 2011, 2; Riabova and Didyk 2014, 3). A recent breakdown of SLO into levels as an arrowhead comprises economic legitimacy at the base; socio-political legitimacy and interactional trust in the middle tier; and institutionalized trust as the highest level (Boutilier and Thomson 2011, 5; Williams and Walton 2013, 4). Riabova and Didyk (2014) took this conception of SLO as the basis for the SUMILCERE case studies of two mining and processing companies operating in the Kirovsk and Apatity municipalities of the Murmansk region in Russia (see Table 1).

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LEVEL AND LABEL	DESCRIPTION	ROLE IN DETERMINING SLO LEVELS*
1. Economic legitimacy	The perception that the project/company offers a benefit to the perceiver.	If lacking, most stakeholders will withhold or withdraw SLO. If present, many will grant an acceptance level of SLO.
2a. Socio-political legitimacy	The perception that the project/company contributes to the well-being of the region, respects the local way of life, meets expectations about its role in society, and acts in accordance with stakeholders' views of fairness.	If lacking, approval level of SLO is less likely. If both this and interactional trust (2a & 2b) are lacking, approval level is rarely granted by any stakeholder.
2b. Interactional trust	The perception that the company and its management listen, respond, keep promises, engage in mutual dialogue, and exhibit reciprocity in their interactions.	If lacking, approval level of SLO is less likely. If both this and socio-political legitimacy (2a & 2b) are lacking, approval level is rarely granted.
3. Institutionalized trust	The perception that relations between the stakeholders' institutions (e.g., the community's representative organizations) and the project/company are based on an enduring regard for each other's interests.	If lacking, psychological identification is unlikely. If lacking but both socio-political legitimacy and interactional trust are present (2a & 2b), most stakeholders will grant approval level of SLO.

* as described in Thomson and Boutilier's pyramid model

Table 1. Four factors constituting three levels of SLO (Boutilier and Thomson 2011, 4; Williams and Walton 2013, 4).

The concept of an informal social licence is probably, as Thomson and Boutilier state (2011, 1780), "comfortably compatible with legal norms in the countries that operate under the principles of common law". The research done as part of SUMILCERE focused particular attention on Thomson and Boutilier's argument that "the concept runs into difficulties" in countries with legislatures operating under the principles of civil law (ibid.); this can be confirmed to some extent in the case of Finland, Russia, Norway, and Sweden (Riabova and Didyk 2014, 4).

The difficulties are related to the legal norms (culture) in these countries, which prescribe that only the official public authorities can grant an (administrative) licence, and thus many companies equate that licence with formal permission to operate. For example, in Norway, due in large part to the stringent regulatory arrangements, SLO as a term has not yet entered the mining discourse; the logic still seems to be "if a company follows the formal rules, it is then seen as fulfilling its duties also toward the local community" (Koivurova et al. 2015c, 8). However, the granting of SLO is not, and could not even be, an aspect of obligatory administrative regulation governing the legal relationship between a company and the public authorities; rather, SLO involves voluntary self-regulation on the part of a company as regards its social relationship with the local community.

Incentive to use SLO comes partly from the financial sector, for example in the form of the Equator Principles (III – 2013). As a tool of that sector, the main premise of SLO is that both financing and lending companies are privately owned. However, in the Nordic countries and Russia the state may be a shareholder in a (totally or partly publicly owned) mining company, and thus the operating company does not necessarily need funding from the private financial sector. In such cases, other possible incentives should be strong enough to prompt mining companies to use SLO as part of their self-regulation.

The SUMILCERE case studies in Russia show that SLO is not a familiar concept in the country, whereas the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) – one of the pillars of the concept of social licensing – is used widely. The main motives for the mining companies' social activities include a desire to project a good image to the authorities at all levels (federal, regional, and local) and to the local community; the desire to establish a good reputation in the domestic and international business arenas; the desire to support the town that is home to the company's employees (as the case of the Apatit company demonstrates); and the long-standing tradition, going back to the Soviet

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era, of CSR (Riabova and Didyk 2014, 9; Koivurova et al. 2015c, 19–20 and 24–25). The last of these, known as path dependence, is also strong in the Swedish mining industry (Pettersson et al. 2015, 252), whereas in Finland, especially in the northern parts of the country, domestic mining companies ceased operations almost completely during economic crisis in the 1990s. The mining industry has only recently started again with multinational companies entering the industry (Heikkinen et al. 2013, 2; Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015, 53).

One SUMILCERE case study on six different mining companies in Finland, Russia, and Sweden shows that adjustment to local circumstances is emphasized in the mining sector of the Kolarctic area. Taking into account local circumstances means not only that an international company has to adjust to national regulation, but that it has to go further with self-regulation, network itself with local businesses and meet the needs of all kinds of stakeholders. Mining companies like to emphasize the role of their own policies and abilities to cooperate, although they may borrow some examples from other companies' and global standards (Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015, 62–63).

In fact, speaking of a social licence as granted by a community is a simplification of a more complex situation, one marked by different political interests. In addition, local communities vary and have their own expectations of cooperation with mining projects for socially sustainable development. Thomson and Boutilier prefer to speak of stakeholder networks rather than communities and have adopted a definition of stakeholders as those who could be affected by the actions of a company or who could have an effect on a company (Boutilier and Thomson 2011, 2). Our research focus, however, has been on local communities in a generic sense.

Another SUMILCERE study has identified four main themes relating to local communities. First, the conditions for social sustainability are met if the living environment remains enjoyable and safe; this shows a particular concern for people living in close proximity to the mine. Second, a project is felt to have social sustainability if continuous, open, and reliable information about environmental monitoring is reported to the local community. Third, the mining company should be seen as acting transparently and engaging in a dialogue with different interest groups so that their concerns are identified and met. Finally, local communities are seen to benefit from the mining industry such that environmental justice is realized. Local expectations of the mining companies are that the mines should operate on a solid economic foundation and that

the companies should manage environmental risks, because materialization of risks is seen as a burden for coming generations. Thus, from the local perspective, the interconnectivity of environmental, economic, and social sustainability is underscored (Suopajärvi et al. 2015, 13).

PROTECTION OF SÁMI CULTURE IN MINING PROJECTS

An important part of social sustainability is the protection of the cultural and other rights of the Sámi, an indigenous people living in the European High North and often referred to as "one people" in four countries. One of the SUMILCERE studies focused on the Sámi, examining how their rights as a people are protected against adverse impacts of mining activities and how national legislation and, in particular, mining codes take cultural rights and traditional livelihoods into account. The research focuses on the legal protection of reindeer herding (Koivurova et al. 2015a, 12).

The term "livelihood" refers to activities that involve primary production as the source of income. While traditionally the Sámi have pursued a variety of nature-based livelihoods connected to their lands and territories, such as fishing, small-scale family forestry, agriculture, gathering of wild berries and other natural products, as well as handicraft-like manufacture of traditional articles, the most common means of livelihood has been semi-nomadic reindeer herding. The traditional livelihoods of the Sámi, especially reindeer herding, enjoy various kinds of protection in the four respective legal systems. The protection of Sámi traditional livelihoods takes place via different legal means in the different systems (Koivurova et al. 2015a, 12, 15; Kokko 2010, 265–267).

A realistic view of Sámi livelihoods and, for example, reindeer herding, reveals stark differences between the four legal systems as to how much protection they provide for Sámi traditional livelihoods against adverse mining impacts. Closer analysis shows limits in protection. In Finland, for example, the protection of Sámi reindeer herding is closely related to the cultural protection which the Sámi homeland region enjoys. It is Sámi reindeer herders in the Sámi homeland who enjoy the most protection from adverse impacts of mining (Koivurova et al. 2015a, 19).

In Sweden and Norway, reindeer herding is based on customary law and can be practised only by Sámi. Yet, even though reindeer herding enjoys this protection, its legal protection differs in Norway between different regions. The protection of Sámi inter-

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ests in Finnmark seems to be the strongest. Reindeer husbandry in Norway enjoys fairly strong protection, guaranteed by ILO Convention no. 169 not only within the Finnmark area, but also in other relevant territories. Since reindeer herding is practised over vast tracts of land in Sweden, land-use conflicts inevitably arise, as mining interests are protected as well. Swedish land and water areas that contain valuable minerals enjoy the same kind of protection as those used for reindeer herding. Areas can thus be of local as well as national interest for both activities, in which case the activity that best promotes sustainable development should be "granted" the area (if a combination of uses is not possible) (Koivurova et al. 2015a, 15–16, 23). When mining gets priority, a discussion usually ensues about compensation for reindeer husbandry. The mining company LKAB, for example, has established steering committees with Sámi villages for that purpose relating to the Gruvberget and Mertainen deposits (Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015, 55).

If mining rights supersede traditional Sámi livelihoods that are based on the Sámi people's cultural rights, mining companies can make private agreements with Sámi communities and/or reindeer herders for earning SLO. These kinds of private contracts can be viewed as voluntary company-based self-regulation and they form an alternative legal tool to obligatory legislation on compensation for damage (Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015, 62–63).

In Russia, indigenous Sámi traditional livelihoods are given strong protection in principle. Reindeer herding, as a branch of agriculture, is regulated by the relevant legislation. However, according to Professor Vladimir Kryazhkov, the Russian legislation is immensely inadequate when it comes to relations between mining companies and numerically small indigenous peoples in practice. The SUMILCERE study on Russia shows that in fact "Russian mining legislation does not regulate Sámi relationships and these issues are regulated by special federal legislation. In general, the Sámi consider federal legislation to be sufficient, but they note that local legislation works poorly in practice". When discussing Russian Sámi livelihoods, it is crucial to mention the obshchina, a traditional form of organization for indigenous peoples in Russia that allows them to revive and develop their culture, traditions, and traditional nature-based livelihoods (Koivurova et al. 2015a, 14, 22, 41).

In Russia there may be historical reasons preventing compensation being given to Sámi people for harm to cultural rights. For example, in the 1920s the Apatit mining company began operations in the Khibiny Mountains, which are considered sacred by

the Sámi. Around that same time, however, the nomadic Sámi of the Kola Peninsula were resettled in several villages as part of a forced collectivization, the result being that they no longer live in the area where the mine operates. During the Soviet era, it was impossible for the Sámi to get any compensation for harm to reindeer herding as a traditional livelihood. The Sámi living in the towns of Apatity and Kirovsk today are not entitled to compensation either, because they have not continued their traditional way of living, which is a requirement under Russian law if indigenous peoples are to receive any special economic rights (Nystén-Haarala et al. 2015, 59).

The SUMILCERE studies show that the legal protection that the Sámi people now enjoy against mining and its adverse impacts is relatively strong, although very different in the four countries with Sámi populations. The effectiveness of protection was tested and compared by conducting interviews with mining companies, consultants, authorities, experts, and representatives of the Sámi. Obviously, none of the legislation in the four countries is what might be considered ideal, whereby one can hardly decide which gives the most protection (Koivurova et al. 2015a, 42). Clearly, improvements in the law and company self-regulation are still needed to reconcile the economic interests of the mining industry with indigenous rights in a socially sustainable way. An important initiative in this regard is the Nordic Sámi Convention.

CONCLUSIONS

Sustainable mining is an objective as well as a tool for balancing economic, social, and environmental considerations. Each of these three dimensions of mining – and sustainable development – has many components, some of which were chosen for closer study in the SUMILCERE project. While there is no single component that in itself provides a definitive argument for or against sustainable mining, the research has revealed some that have proven valuable in the process of balancing the different dimensions of sustainability.

This hermeneutic process can be described using the sustainable development circle (Figure 2). In the centre of this circle is public participation for identifying the different components and balancing the different aspects of sustainability. In empirical studies, local people underscored the interconnectivity of environmental, economic, and social sustainability. Local residents – the public – can bring in new information about local considerations during participation arranged by the mining companies as required by regulation and/or as part of voluntary self-regulation.

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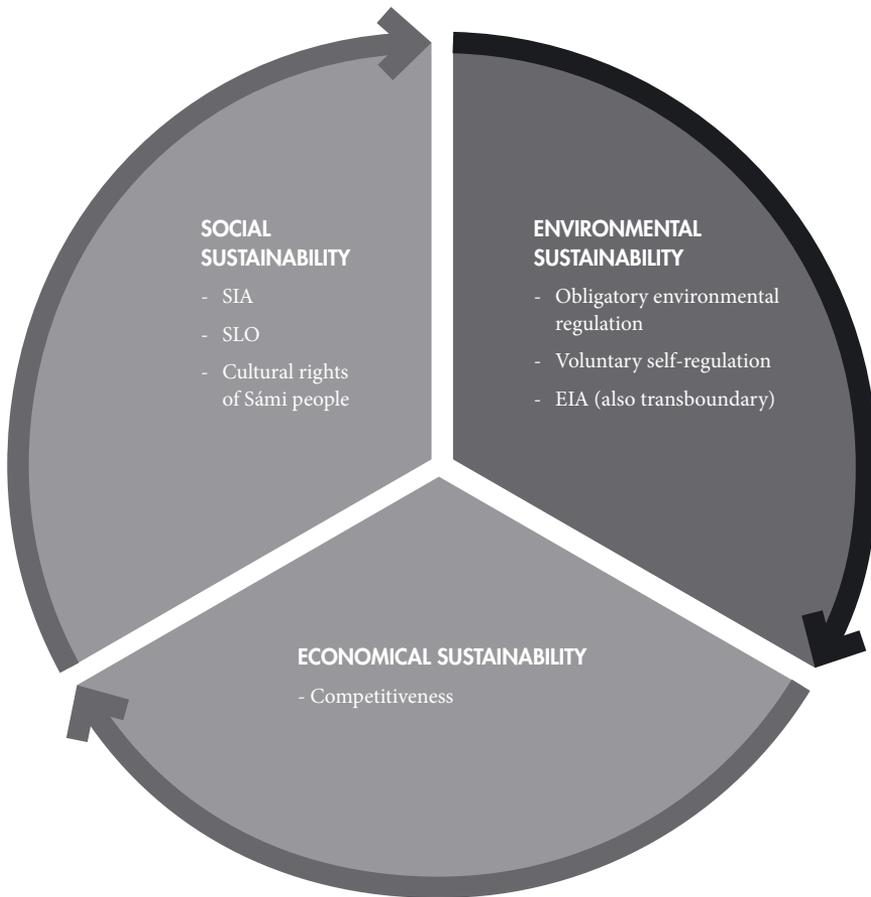
Figure 2. Sustainable development circle.

Public involvement before and during mining projects also affords mining companies an opportunity to increase trust and acceptability among local communities and thus to earn an SLO. The concept of SLO is not yet well known in the countries studied. Only in Finland has there been some discussion about the use of SLO. CSR is, however, a better-known concept in mining companies, and public participation is also a tool of CSR.

SLO cannot be seen simplistically as merely a matter of acceptance by people at the local or even national level. In fact, it is fundamentally a tool for self-regulation of a three-way relation: that between the mining project developer, the financing sector, and the local communities. The fundamental idea behind SLO is that the private financing sector needs

guarantees of local acceptance of private projects in order to minimize social risks to its funding. If a particular mining project, and the responsible company, has not gained local acceptance, it is not possible, or at least not easy, to get private funding for operations in that area. However, this kind of financial incentive for earning local acceptance may not function if the state is one of the mining company shareholders. In Finland, Russia, and Sweden the states actually have the role of shareholder in some mining companies. The state's role can constitute a factor in project financing, which, in addition to some of the above-mentioned legal and cultural considerations, may diminish the use of SLO as a self-regulation tool in these countries alongside the widely known CSR.

The weight of the different factors constituting sustainable development varies in different circumstances. Sometimes ecological or cultural considerations, for example, can be so significant that there is no room for mining. Sometimes the mineral resource can be so rich that other aspects of sustainability receive lesser weight in the balancing of sustainability dimensions. In the SUMILCERE project the aspects of social sustainability given closer scrutiny were SIA, SLO, and the cultural rights of the Sámi. Economic sustainability was analysed in the light of competitiveness and environmental regulation. Possibilities to promote environmental sustainability were canvassed from the obligatory regulation and self-regulation; they have also been identified in the policy instruments, in EIA, and in environmental protection permits. When the policy instruments were analysed in greater depth (Table 2), particular issues could be found in their implementation that may expedite or hamper mining activities in making progress towards sustainability.

Table 2 clearly indicates some need to improve policy instruments. The current environmental/mining regulation and its enforcement may limit some possibilities for sustainable mining. SIA, for example, could be better regulated in all the countries studied.

Although public regulation is assumed to be a more effective way to control environmental pollution than private-law instruments (Faure 2012), private law and self-regulation can, in fact, round out the regulation found in public law. For example, private agreements with Sámi communities and/or reindeer herders were seen as useful

Table 2. Implementation for sustainable development of some policy instruments studied.

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	FINLAND	NORWAY	RUSSIA	SWEDEN
EIA	National legislation based on EU EIA Directive and ratified Espoo Convention	National legislation based on EU EIA Directive and ratified Espoo Convention	National legislation (signatory of but has not yet ratified Espoo Convention)	National legislation based on EU EIA Directive and ratified Espoo Convention
Scope for mining	Yes	Yes	Limited to some valuable areas	Yes
Transboundary assessment	Obligatory	Obligatory	Voluntary	Obligatory
SIA as a part of obligatory EIA	Yes, quite limited	Yes, although open to interpretation	Unclear	Unclear
Wider SIA voluntarily as a part of EIA	Yes, done	Possible	Possible	Possible
Public participation	Yes	Yes	Limited	Limited in some processes
Environmental permit	National legislation based on EU Industrial Emissions Directive	No analysis (no Norwegian legal scholars involved)	National legislation	National legislation e.g. based on EU Industrial Emissions Directive
Performance standards	Yes	No analysis	Yes	Yes
Public participation	Yes	No analysis	Limited	Yes
Coherence and consistency with other environmental regulation	Improvements needed	No analysis	Improvements needed	Improvements needed
Enforcement and competitiveness	Certain and quite clear but could be more flexible in the case of compliance	No analysis	Administrative uncertaities are weakening compliance	Certain and quite clear but could be more flexible in the case of compliance

instruments in determining compensation even in cases where public law had some regulation for the purpose. Likewise, the FSC standard in the forest sector is a good example of how NGOs and companies can cooperate and share responsibility. At least in Finland, one hears discussion by the Network for Sustainable Mining that cooperative self-regulation should be strengthened in the mining sector.

With regard to competitiveness, the SUMILCERE study calls for four improvements in environmental/mining regulation and management:

a   improved resources and competence of the authorities,
b   new governance and administrative tools,
c   stringent performance standards in combination with extended compliance periods, and
d   more standardized procedures and road maps for EIAs and permit applications and for the interpretation of specific legal provisions.

When considering social and cultural sustainability in mining projects in the countries studied, in principle Sámi cultural rights are quite well protected in legislation. However, in practice particular problems appear in enforcement. Thus, improvements are still needed in both the environmental/mining regulation and management. In addition, it is hoped that self-regulation by mining companies will introduce new tools for taking cultural rights into account as part of CSR.

Sustainable mining calls for balancing economic, social, and environmental factors when seeking the best environmental regulation and practice. Between the dimensions of sustainability lies a grey area for balancing the factors against each other. However, ecological sustainability protected by smart environmental regulation and minimum standards sets an essential boundary that leaves no space for compromises without endangering the whole idea of sustainability. Economic and social sustainability are ultimately possible only within ecological limits. In this synthesis, particular components of sustainable mining have been described based on the results of the SUMILCERE project. Details of the analyses in the Kolarctic area and accounts of the methods used can be found in the cited articles. Moreover, the separate SUMILCERE toolkit collects and introduces some examples of best practices. In general, the SUMILCERE studies show that all aspects of sustainability are deeply interconnected in terms of SIA, SLO, CSR, and the cultural rights of Sámi as well as in the policy instruments relating to environmental regulation.

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BOOK REVIEW
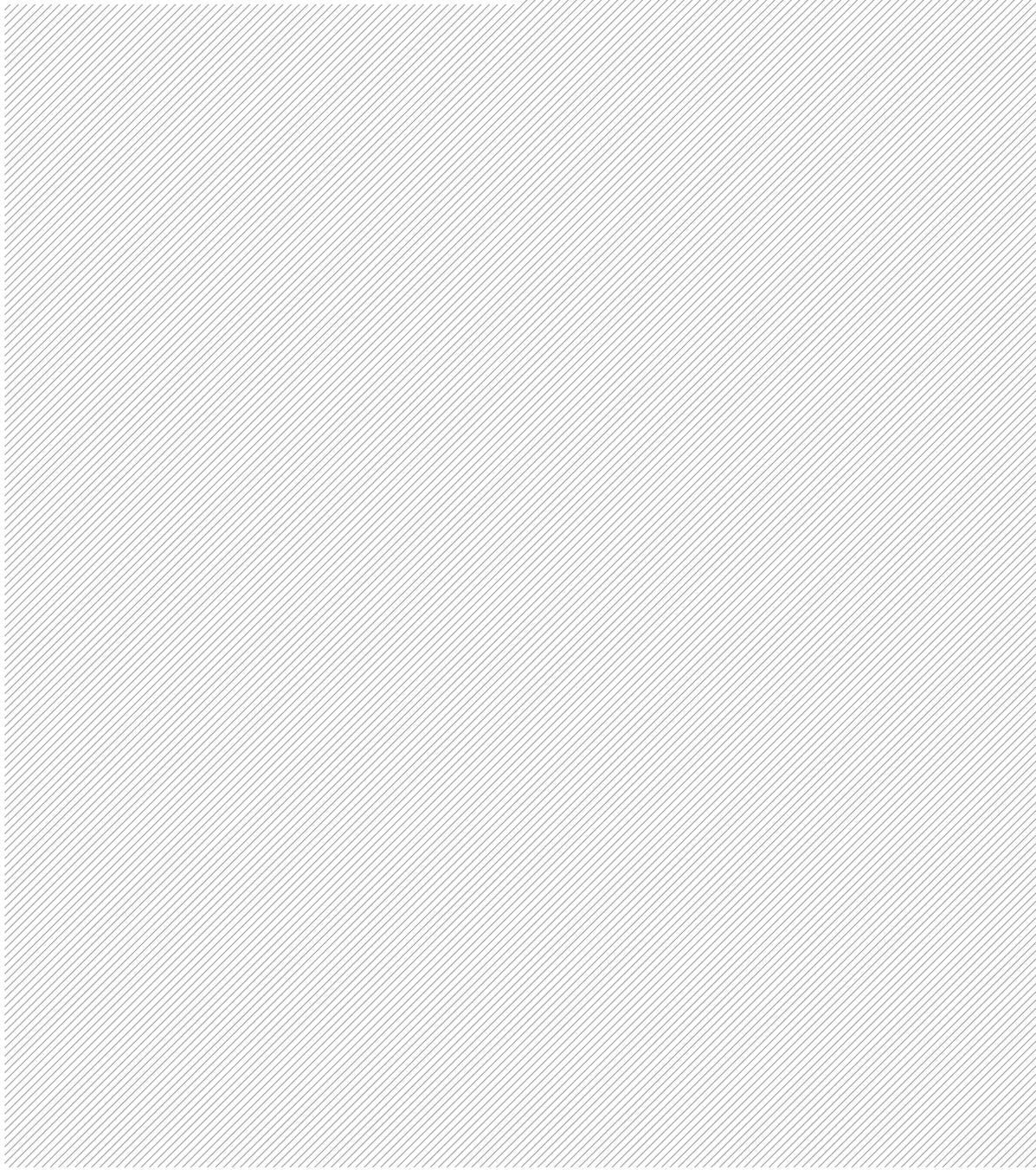
Russian Arctic Politics After 2010

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Geir Hønneland
Arctic Politics, the Law of the Sea and Russian identity:
The Barents Sea Delimitation Agreement in Russian Public Debate. Basingstoke:
Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. 212p.

Geir Hønneland, research director at Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Norway, has written extensively on international relations in the European North, Barents Sea fisheries, and Russian-Norwegian relations in the Arctic. His book A*rctic Politics, the Law of the Sea and Russian identity* is a collection of articles based on media analysis and Hønneland's long experience of cooperation with Russians. Hønneland says in the preface that the book is a revised and extended version of his previous book *Hvordan skal Putin ta Barentshavet tilbake?* [What can Putin do to take the Barents Sea back?], published in Norwegian in 2013 (Akademika). His idea was to analyse the shift in Russia's politics after the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev (2008–2012), given that Medvedev was the president who signed the delimitation agreement with Norway in 2010. The treaty created vehement debate and opposition in Russia, not least among local fishery organizations and trade unions from Northwest Russia, who criticized the treaty for not protecting the rights of Russian fisheries. Hønneland's main thesis is to show "that the agreement's critics and proponents both inscribe themselves into different Russian narratives of Russia's rightful place in the world" (p. 8).

Hønneland started his career as an interpreter for the Norwegian Coast Guard and fisheries authorities (p. 6). In this position he got acquainted with the Joint Norwegian-Soviet Fisheries Commission, established in 1976. The second chapter of the book leans on his work in the coastguard vessels in the Barents Sea. Hønneland thus examines the Barents Sea jurisdiction and fisheries management with Russia, focusing especially on the Svalbard treaty and the problems it has caused. Namely, the 200-mile fisheries pro-

tection zone around Svalbard is not a clearly defined category under the Law of the Sea. Geir Hønneland does not confine himself to the Delimitation Agreement alone, but also tackles relations between Russia and the West. His is using an interesting approach, including media analysis, his own experiences, and interviews (some dating to his previous book). Hønneland approaches the Russia–West relations through the history of Westernizers and "introverts", which refers to the slavophile tradition and the Eurasian movement. He claims that contemporary Russian foreign policy follows the main cleavages in Russian intellectual history (p. 78).

The other side of the coin is the everyday perspective to the reactions of Russia and Russians to cooperation with the West (in this case Norway). Chapter five is based on Hønneland's book *Borderland Russians: Identity, narrative and international relations* (Palgrave Macmillan 2013). Here he examines the narrative resources that ordinary Northwest Russians use when they speak about themselves as northerners, as opposed to Russian southerners or Scandinavians. Hønneland refers to the "region building" of the Barents area from the early 1990s, which aimed at creating a common political region without borders and cultural differences (p. 87). The "region building" project, to put it mildly, came to grief, but fostered Hønneland's interest in studying the identities of the North. The interviews included in this chapter were done in Murmansk already in 2004. They may be few in number, but the interviews give an interesting perspective to the Russians' narrative juggling (p. 103) in the Kola Peninsula. All the same, I found this chapter too loosely connected with the delimitation treaty and the discussion around it.

As a whole, Hønneland's book provides valuable insights into the delimitation agreement, Russian foreign policy, and Russian identity. The management of Norwegian and Russian fisheries and the process leading to the signing of the delimitation treaty make interesting reading for observers also outside Norway. Russian reactions to the treaty are intriguing and may reveal something about Russian identity, but I sometimes found it difficult to follow the text, as it was not obvious whether the text or quotation came from a newspaper, interview, or scholarly literature. The topic of Geir Hønneland's book is nevertheless current in many ways. Since the re-annexation of Crimea to Russia, the narratives of Russia–West relations have changed drastically. There is Russia's renewed continental shelf submission to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea UNCLOS – representing juridical and peaceful cooperation in the Arctic – but there is also the Western concern about Russia's growing military presence in the Arctic.

Arctic Politics, the Law of the Sea and Russian identity is a welcome contribution to all those who wish to know more about the local aspects of the cooperation in the Arctic and to gain some more background into the current situation. The Barents Sea delimitation treaty and the long process may not be very well-known outside Norway. I recommend this book to all students and scholars interested in the Barents region and the control over the Arctic seas.
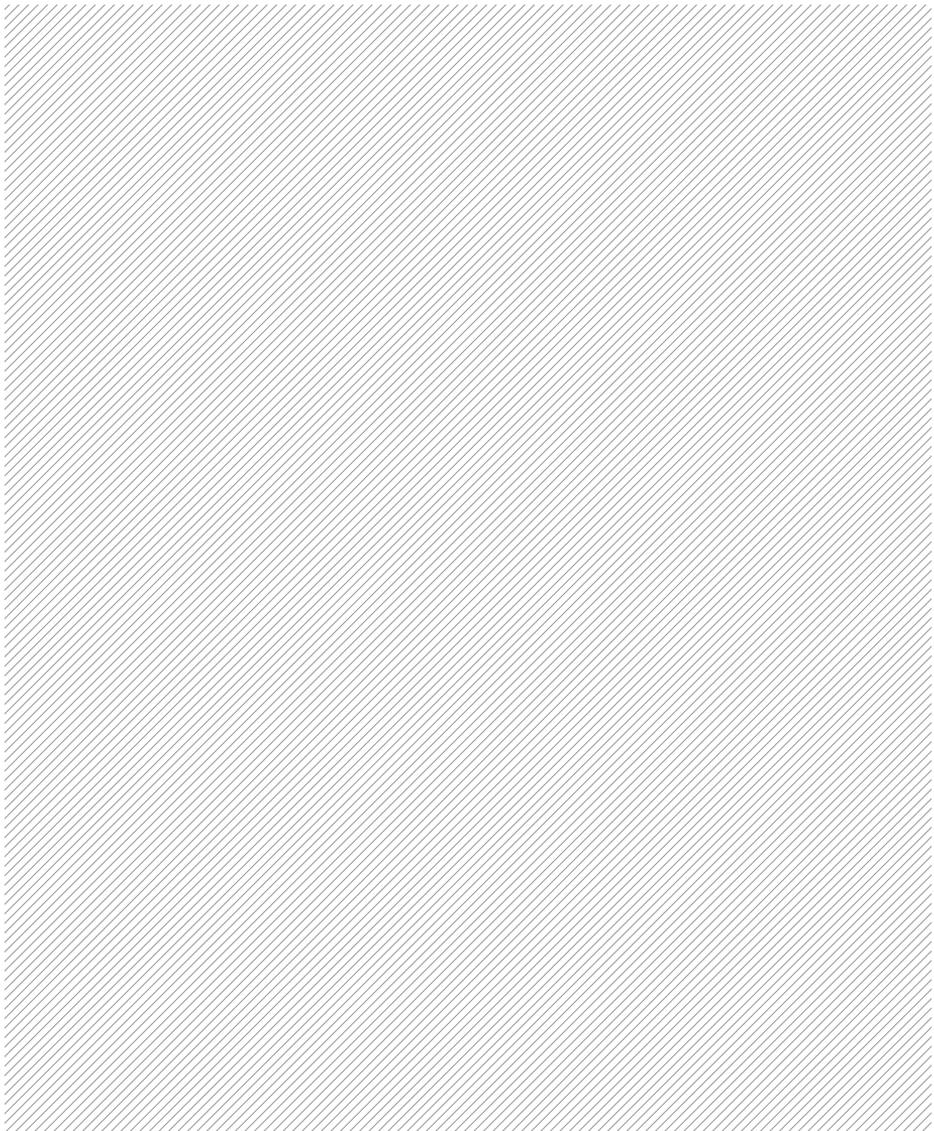
In memoriam

In memory of Vladimir Didyk

We write these words to honour the memory of Vladimir Didyk, Research Director of the Institute for Economic Studies at the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Our colleague and friend, he suddenly passed away all too young on 10 July, 2015. Since the early 1990s, Vladimir participated in international scientific collaboration and was one of the enthusiastic Russian pioneers of research cooperation in the Barents Region and beyond. He was the leader and a participant of a large number of joint research projects with researchers from Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the United States, Finland, and Sweden. We express our gratitude to all our colleagues from these countries who sent us letters of condolence and support. The more than 50 letters show that Vladimir had many colleagues and friends in the international research community working with him for many years.

Vladimir Didyk was born on 29 March, 1957 in the L'vov region in Ukraine. From 1963 to 1974 he studied in secondary school, which he finished with a gold medal, and entered the economic faculty of L'vov Polytechnic Institute. In 1979 he graduated from the Institute with honours, qualifying as an engineer-economist (in economy and organization of construction) and worked for three years in road construction organizations of the Ministry of Road Construction of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1979–1982).

In 1982 he came to the Kola North and the town of Apatity in the Murmansk region to work at the construction company Apatitstroy, a construction giant in the field of civil and industrial construction in the region. He worked there until 1989 as an economist and senior engineer on labour and wage issues. Vladimir started working in the Institute for Economic Studies of the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IES KSC RAS) in 1989 and rose professionally from junior researcher to a prominent scientist and respected leader (junior researcher, head of department, scientific secretary, research director, director).

His whole career was devoted to the prosperity of the far northern part of Russia, but he never forgot his roots in Ukraine. With great warmth he spoke about Ukraine, took time to meet his classmates, cherished his mother tongue, and enjoyed doing the Ukrainian folk dance *hopak* at corporate parties, impressing guests of the Institute along the way. After entering the world of science in 1989, Vladimir defended his PhD thesis in 1995 on "The principles and methods of forming organizational structures of management of construction firms under the market conditions". In 2004 he was awarded the academic title of associate professor in "Economics and management of national economy". His professional interests included investment activities, and in recent years, problems of socio-economic development of municipalities in the North and the Arctic, where he stood out as a specialist of the regional economy, and problems of the North and the Arctic. He was one of the leading developers of the draft strategy of socio-economic development of the Murmansk region until 2025.

Vladimir is the author of over 100 scientific publications, including five monographs, and many of his articles and reports were published internationally. He was the scientific leader and an executive in charge of research carried out under contract with Russian state authorities and organizations as well as with foreign universities and research organizations. He contributed to the development of analytical reports and expert evaluations of drafts laws, legal acts, and other federal and regional documents.

For many years Vladimir participated actively in international scientific cooperation. He was one of the first Russian students in the Arctic Study Programme at the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland in 1993, and, as Dr Lassi Heininen, coordinator of the Program at the time, wrote in his letter of condolence, "Vladimir was both clever and worked hard and never gave up easily". He was also a visiting researcher at the University of Tromsø, Department of Economics, in 1995 and in the Centre for Regional Science (CERUM) at the University of Umeå in 1996. These first international cooperation experiences were very important for him. He recalled with gratitude his colleagues from Rovaniemi, Tromsø and Umeå who involved Russian researchers in cooperation in the early 1990s and who gave a lot of attention and support to the newcomers. He always remembered the invaluable support which he received from his foreign colleagues after the car accident where he was injured in 2000.

Vladimir was the leader and a participant of more than 20 joint international research projects. He always understood and stressed the importance of international scientific cooperation in the development of Russian science and our Institute. He was open and interested in new knowledge, and international research cooperation inspired him to implement new ideas in his organizational and research work. He gave his last presentation "*Development challenges of a mining single-industry town in the Russian Arctic: the case of Kirovsk, Murmansk region*" on 5 June, 2015 at George Washington University (Washington, USA), at the conference "Promoting Arctic Urban Sustainability in Russia" in the framework of the international research project ARCSUS (Arctic Urban Sustainability), of which he was part since 2013.

Vladimir Didyk realized his talent as an academic and as an organizer. His research, international collaboration, and educational work showed him to be an erudite and active manager, who skilfully combined scholarly pursuits and educational activities and thereby contributed to the prosperity of the Murmansk region and the Russian North. Taking an active part in educating professional staff, he was a lecturer of economic disciplines and supervised diploma work in the branches of St. Petersburg State Economic University (Apatity) and Kostroma State University (Kirovsk). Vladimir participated in establishing the international organization of the University of the Arctic and was a member of the Board of the International University of the Arctic. He was a scientific adviser to postgraduate students, a member of the Dissertation Council of IEP KSC RAS, and willingly promoted talented young people. His professionalism, diligence, and sense of responsibility earned him collegial respect and recognition both in the Russian and international scientific communities. Throughout his career, Vladimir was honoured with diplomas and awards of municipal administrations, the Government of the Murmansk Region and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Vladimir was the head of a large and happy family. He was a wonderful family man. Together with his wife Ludmila, he brought up three good children, who received an excellent education in leading universities of Russia and abroad.

Vladimir was attentive to everybody and always ready to help. On the wall above the desk in his office he kept a note with the words of N. Shmelev, Russian economist and Director of the Institute of Europe of Russian Academy of Sciences:

"To build a normal, human, socially oriented society we do not need any special theories… We need something else: mere common sense, plus the four rules of arithmetic, plus a bit of compassion for the people".

We will remember Vladimir as
an open-minded researcher,
hard-working man, faithful friend
and as an exceptionally kind person.

*Vladimir Didyk's colleagues and friends
at the Institute for Economic Studies,
Kola Science Centre RAS*

Larissa Riabova, Ludmila Ivanova and Nina Rumyantseva

YOUNG RESEARCHERS
OF THE BARENTS REGION
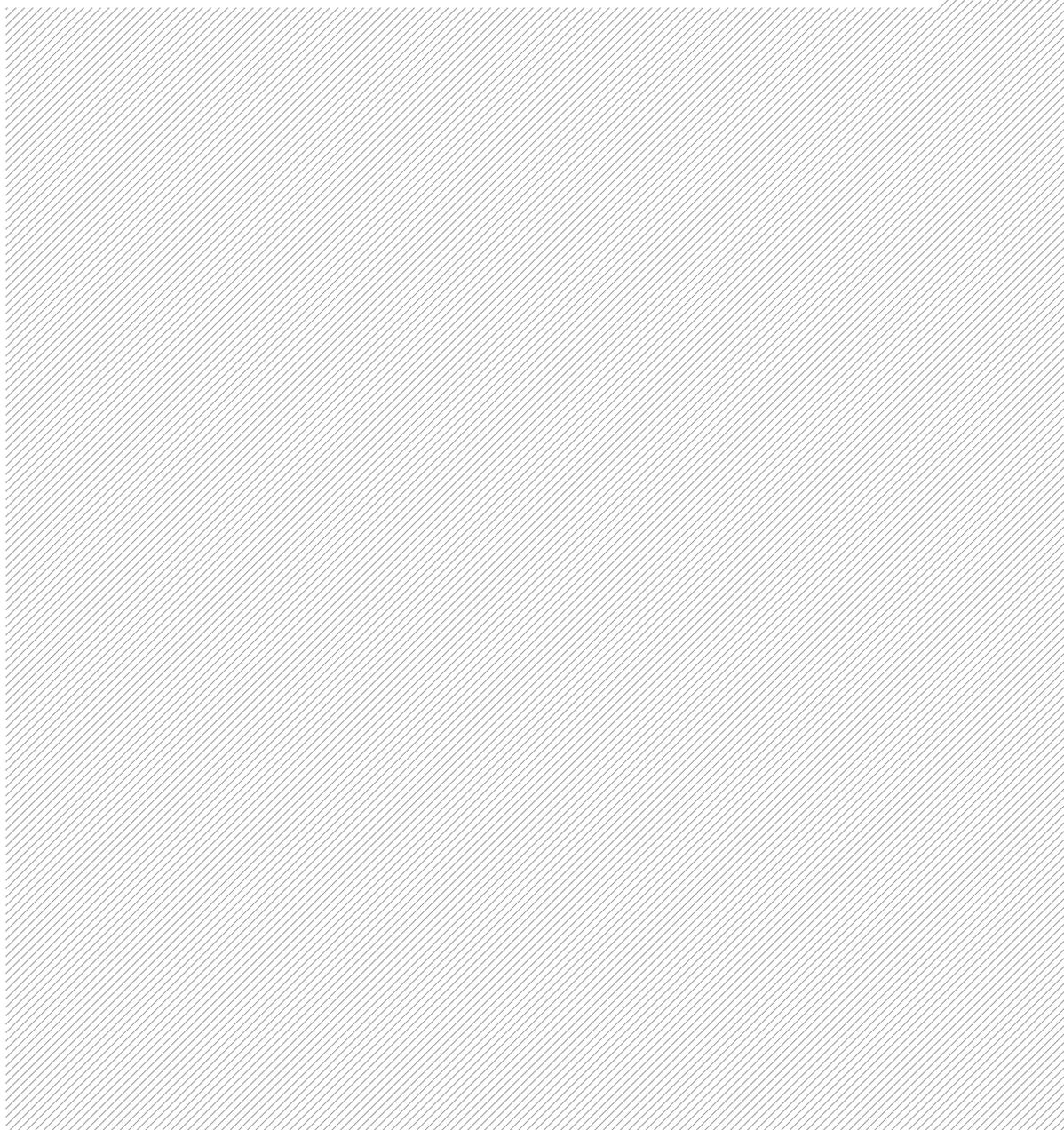
"From climate and environmental justice in India to indigenous rights in Sápmi"

Annette Löf

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Narratives and stories are powerful things. We use them in our everyday life, we use them professionally whether in academia, politics, business, or in the civil society. They can be used to create meaning and context, to analyze complexities or to raise awareness and push for change by creating alternative futures. My own story, as all narratives, is constantly evolving and its meaning often created in retrospect. Some components have nonetheless been relatively fixed and have played a significant part as my journey has slowly unfolded: a curious student has become an equally curious researcher and lecturer. Justice and fairness are two examples of values that have always remained significant and which have in one way or another defined my interests and path. Even today, few things provoke me as much as injustice or ill treatment.

Where did it all start, the beginning of where I am today? Already in high school I developed a particular interest in environmental justice, environmental degradation, and sustainability. I soon realized that the key to environmental degradation and hence to environmental problems, injustices, and loss of both ecosystems and livelihoods is more than anything a product of social and political processes. Consequently, I enrolled in political science at the university with a "green" conviction, a choice I have never regretted. The study of political science, together with a range of courses in, for example, ecology, geography, sociology, and law, gave me a platform from which to address the questions that really lay close to my heart, such as natural resource management, environmental governance, and climate change. As a master's student I had the good fortune to be able to travel to Gujarat, India, to

work together with rural communities. My thesis work sought to understand how adaptation to climate extremes was conditioned by political and social structures, rather than by mere access to technologies and aid. I found that certain social constructions, based on gender, class, and caste, effectively limited individuals' action opportunities with the most tangible consequences. While emergency centres were being built, lives were nevertheless being lost. It was not practical access to shelters that was the major issue, but access of the socio-political kind. Global environmental change, and meeting face to face those suffering its most severe consequences, had never before been so real to me.

On my return I applied for positions and projects related to the work I had done on climate adaptation in India, but without much luck. In 2008, when I accepted the offer to become a PhD student in Political Science at Umeå University, in a project on climate impacts and adaptation in reindeer herding, I thought my story was taking a definitive new turn. Except it did not, not really. Even though the contexts were worlds apart, many experiences were in fact similar. I was once again reminded of the significance of power and how relations are (unequally) structured. Once more, it became obvious how differentiated the impacts of global environmental change processes are and how they tend to aggravate already existing imbalances. Whether a Sami reindeer herder or a rural farmer in India, the abilities to deal with externally induced change and extreme events is profoundly dependent on the socio-political context in which they are embedded, how relationships are structured and how rights to participate, influence, and have a say in matters impacting their lives are formulated and can be realised. In other words, being able to adapt has much to do with how governance is structured and plays out. In the current situation in Sweden, governance structures are not working favourably for the position of Sami reindeer herders. Their rights are in many aspects violated. This was one of the key conclusions from my PhD thesis.

After six years of working in the field of reindeer herding, I of course bring with me many other lessons and insights. In a way, the world now feels both smaller and larger. I did not need to go to India to work with issues that are meaningful. Much research can be done on topics many people in the Baltic region have limited knowledge about. One of the most valuable experiences has been my close collaboration with the Vilhelmina North reindeer herding community in Västerbotten County. Even though I have always been inclined to collaborative forms of research, I am now even more convinced that collaborating throughout the research process is invaluable for making research worthwhile and useful and for developing an understanding of the challenges confronting the people whose lives we take an interest in.

After defending my PhD I have started yet another chapter of my story. I have continued working with Sami and indigenous rights, examining self-determination, land, and cultural rights. The more I work with these issues, the more I realise that Sweden has a long way to go before our image as human rights defender is matched by government action on Sami indigenous people. Most Swedes know little about Sápmi and the Sami people, or what it means to be a people living as a minority among a majority society. They know little of Sami rights and what struggles play out every day in protecting these rights. Paradoxically, with an increasing interest in Sápmi or the Sami traditional homeland, its natural resources, lands, and the Sami culture, these challenges are becoming greater rather than mitigated. This was showcased, when Umeå was appointed European Cultural Capital in 2014, largely thanks to the Sami presence. However, the Sami cultural expressions of the official inauguration were followed by a fierce and at times racist debate. Many of Umeå's locals questioned what the Sami had to do with Umeå, ignorant of the fact that Umeå lies right in Sápmi.

This short text and introductory profile on my research background and current interest tells not only my own story, but also another that I see unfolding but which is rarely publicly acknowledged. It shows that while worlds apart, worlds can also be close together. It demonstrates the massive challenge before us, right here at home too, if we are to move towards more just and fair development. In my role as researcher, I find that my personal conviction and passion are among my greatest capital. Being passionate about what we do in research, and aware of why we do it, is not at odds with doing good research. On the contrary, if we seek out the fixed signifiers in our own stories, perhaps we thereby can contribute to the meaning-making of grander narratives as well.
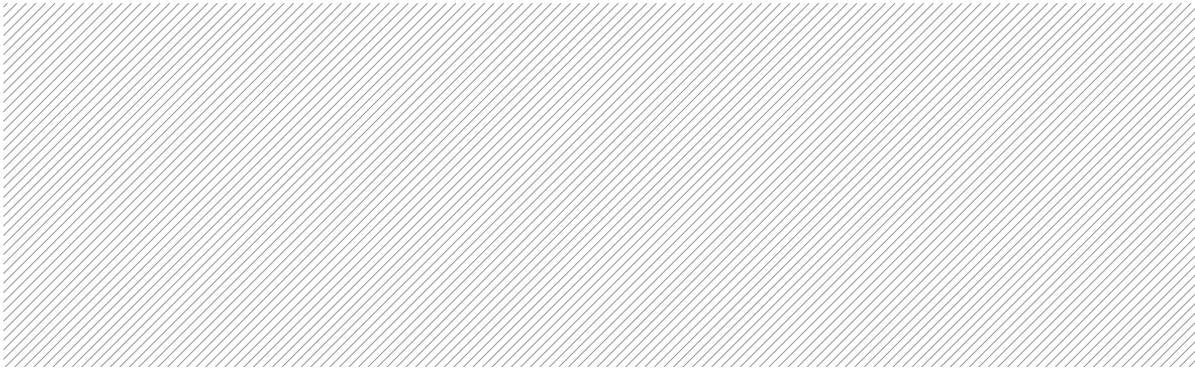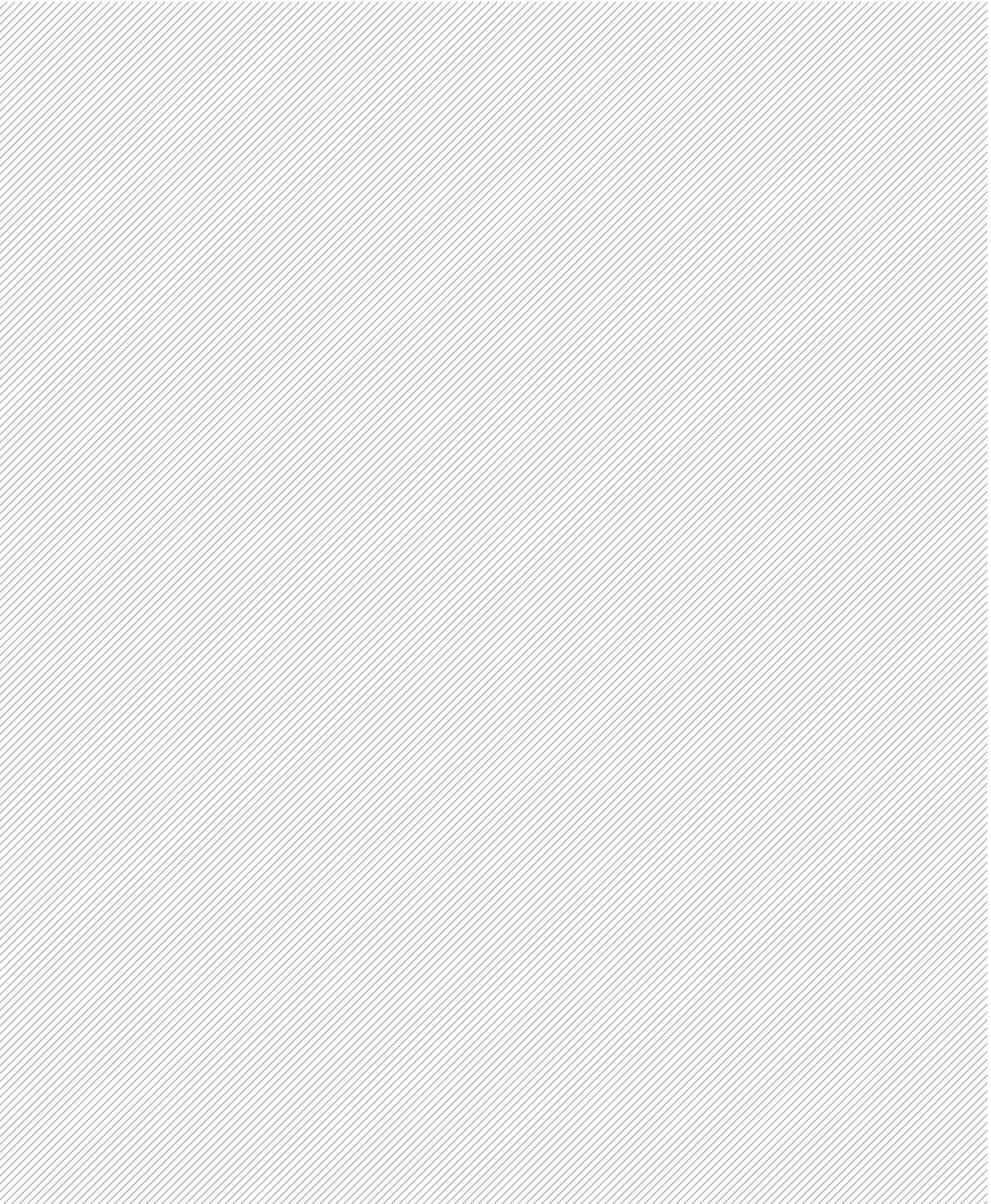
"The changing Arctic: Impacts on elderly human rights"

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My principal research interest is multidisciplinary study of the elderly in the context of change in the Arctic, with a particular focus on gender and human rights. With a Master of Laws, Bachelor of Laws, and a Bachelor of Social Science, I have specialized in human ageing and elderly services. I worked for six years (2004 to 2010) for the City of Helsinki on the planning and implementation of elderly care and on issues relating to elderly well-being. Since 2012, I have been working as a researcher in the Unit for Gender Studies at the University of Lapland, in the Doctoral Programme on Northern Cultures and Sustainable Natural Resources Politics. Alongside my research, I have coordinated two projects funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The first, still in progress, deals with elderly exclusion in the context of Arctic change, highlighting gender in particular. The project will culminate in an edited volume, to be published by Routledge (UK) in 2016, to which I have contributed a chapter entitled "Gender positioning of older people in the changing Arctic". The second project, successfully completed in January 2015, examined changes affecting livelihoods in the Nordic Arctic, also with a special focus on gender. The project included a number of network activities in 2014, which enabled me to write an article entitled "Livelihood transformation in the Nordic Arctic: Effects on older people from a gender-based perspective". The article is being reviewed and is expected to be published (in Polar Record) in late 2015.

My doctoral dissertation will be based on four scientific articles which have been or will be published in recognized international journals or chapters in edited volumes. The dissertation will also include an introductory chapter on the findings of the articles, which I plan to publish as an article in its own right at a later date. While the Arctic is the general focus of my doctoral studies, my research foregrounds the Barents region in particular.

My research to date indicates that the ageing population has already become a demographic challenge in many parts of the Nordic countries and the Arctic at large. The transformation of the Arctic by climate change affects the lives and livelihoods of the region's population. Crucially, the consequences of climate change pose numerous threats to elderly residents. For example, the increase of several viral diseases in the region has put elderly people's health at risk. To address such challenges and responses to them, my PhD research will highlight the importance of promoting the human rights and well-being of the region's elderly. In one facet of this focus, I plan to investigate how perspectives on old age are influenced by gender-based positioning. The main research questions of my PhD are the following: How does the elderly population in the Arctic generally, and in Lapland particularly, experience climate change and other associated changes? What consequences do these changes have? Do the currently applicable human rights instruments address the specific regional challenges that the elderly face? How is gender positioning (gender disparity) manifested among the elderly population and what implications does it have for the realization of elderly persons' human rights? How do the changes in livelihoods affect the well-being of the elderly? How do regional institutions, such as the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and others, address the concerns facing the elderly and salient aspects of their human rights, including equality and well-being? In exploring these questions I have taken a two-pronged approach comprising an extensive literature review and field studies. The latter have been carried out in the city of Rovaniemi (2012) and rural areas in Inari, Angeli and Ivalo in Finland (2012 and 2013), and in Jokkmok in Sweden (2014). My informants are members of the local community, elderly persons, health professionals, social workers, and academics from Finland, Sweden, and Norway. It should also be noted that the body of research applying gender perspectives on the elderly in the Arctic is still very limited.

"The transformation of the Arctic by climate change affects the lives and livelihoods of the region's population. Crucially, the consequences of climate change pose numerous threats to elderly residents"
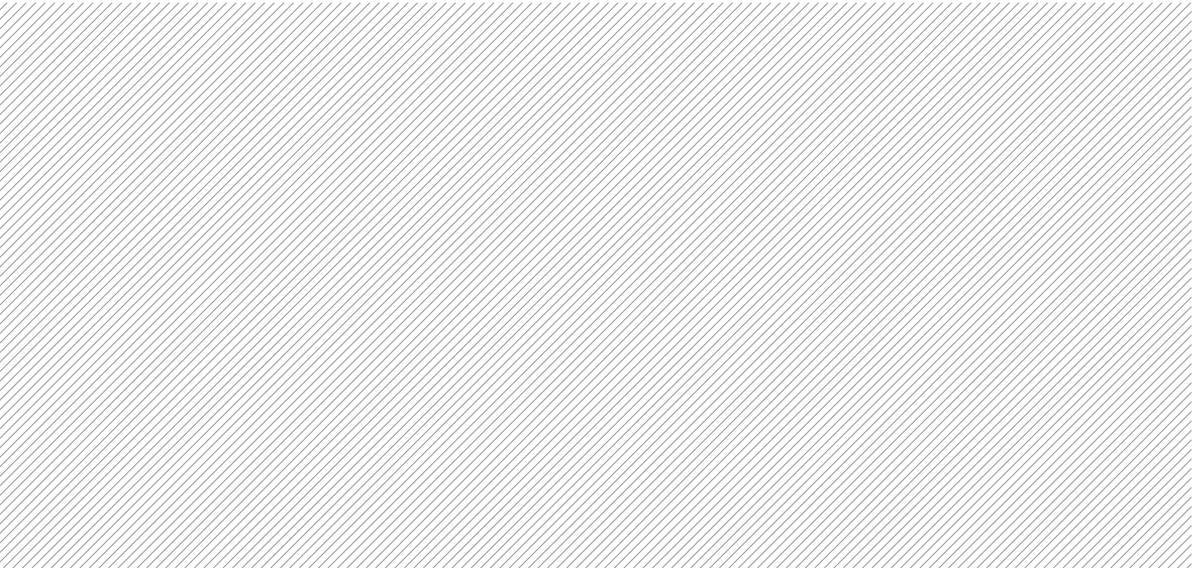
Bjarge Schwenke Fors

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I live in Tromsø and work as a researcher at the Barents Institute at UiT, the Arctic University of Norway. My current research focuses on international borders and borderlands in the Barents Region and beyond.

Kent C. Ryden, in "Mapping the Invisible Landscape", notes that borders are particular places as they "imply a transition between realms of experience, states of being; they draw an ineffable line between life lived in place and life as lived in another". Borders offer a maximum distinction on a minimum of space. This unique feature may explain why many people, including myself, find them so intriguing. Borders have fascinated me since I was very young. In my childhood I used to travel the world with my grandparents every summer. Border-crossings were always memorable highlights of these trips. As I grew older, I started to visit borders on my own, on purpose – seeking thrill and adventure.
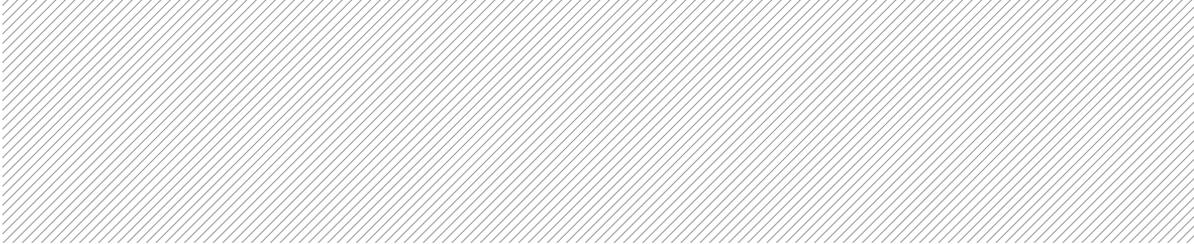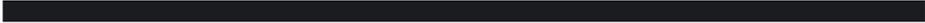
"Border studies are outstandingly international and cross-disciplinary, bringing together researchers from many parts of the world with quite different scholarly backgrounds"
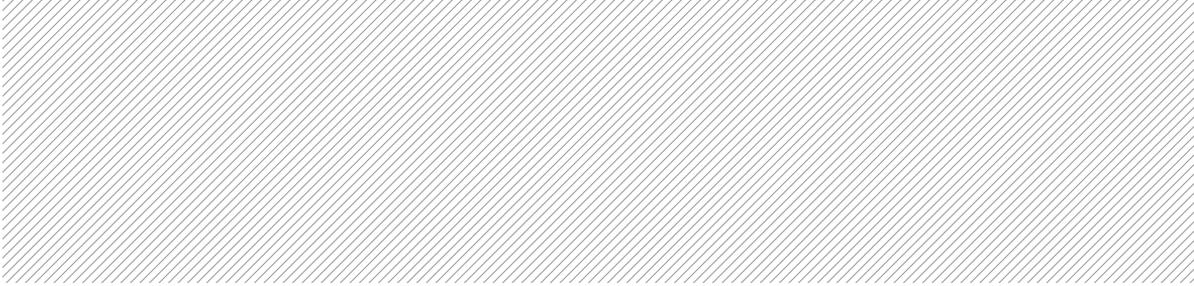
While working on my master's degree in social anthropology, I first began to approach borders in a more scholarly way. In my master's thesis I investigated the complex interplay between territorial, national, and religious borders in the autonomous republic of Ajaria, on Georgia's frontier with Turkey. Later, in my PhD project, I explored the symbolic significance of the Russian-Norwegian border within the fields of politics, art, and tourism.

As a PhD student I was lucky enough to get invited into the first ever Norwegian border research project "The Construction and Negotiation of Borders: Discourses related to the border between Norway and Russia". The project was financed by the Research Council of Norway and brought together several researchers from Finnmark University College and the Barents Institute. I also joined the UiT research group Border Culture/Border Poetics, which has explored the intersection between territorial borders and aesthetic works; art, literature, and film. I learnt a lot from participating in both these networks. A semester-long sojourn at the Karelian Institute in Joensuu, Finland, in 2010 was similarly valuable. This institute is well-known for its high level of expertise in border studies, and its researchers willingly shared their experiences with me while I was there.

For the last three years I have been working as a researcher at the Barents Institute, mainly within the FP7 research project EUBORDERREGIONS (2011–2015). The objective of this project, which involved fourteen research institutions from fourteen different countries, was to identify challenges to economic, social, and territorial cohesion as well as regional development potentials in various borderlands along the external borders of the EU. My task in the project was to carry out research on the borders between Norway and Russia, and Norway and Sweden together with colleagues from the Barents Institute and Nordregio in Sweden. The research was extensive. We conducted more than one hundred in-depth interviews with people who in some way or another relate to the borders privately or professionally; from border guards to artists involved in cross-border cooperation. The data provided us with substantive and up-to-date knowledge about the life and challenges of people living along the two borders.

In the future I would like to continue my research in border studies. Two reasons stand out: first, it is a relatively new research area marked by vigour and vitality. And second, the field is outstandingly international and cross-disciplinary, bringing together researchers from many parts of the world with quite different scholarly backgrounds.

Irina Zhilina

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How did I find my way from Baku in Azerbaijan to Murmansk in the north of Russia to Tromsø in the Arctic University of Norway, where I am currently a PhD candidate in resource management?

Like many stories of Russian families, mine also starts with the phrase "After the collapse of the Soviet Union …" Throughout the 1990s my parents kept moving from one city to another in pursuit of career opportunities until we ended up in Murmansk. This city became the place where I lived the longest, from 1999 to 2011. When I introduce myself, I say that I am from Murmansk, because I grew up there and consider myself a Northerner.

In 2010 I headed for Norway on a student exchange and have since travelled around the North, pursuing my own research career. Before settling in Tromsø I got a degree in International Relations from Murmansk State Technical University, graduated from the University of Akureyri in Iceland with an MA degree in Polar Law, after which I started working at the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi in Finland.

The topic of my dissertation is New Patterns of Cross-Border Cooperation and Conflict between Norway and Russia in the Field of Oil and Gas. More specifically my work is devoted to Russian-Norwegian relations with regard to oil and gas activities in the Barents Region, including Barents, Pechora and Kara seas as well as onshore projects. I aim at mapping the collaboration projects in the field of oil and gas development at three levels: public sector (including federal and regional levels), business sector (cooperation models of Russian companies and the foreign partners/investors), and education and research. I want to study if and how these levels overlap and will later compare oil and gas cooperation with the Russian-Norwegian cooperation in fisheries, oil spill response, and search and rescue. The overall objective is to gain a better understanding of how a new petroleum province emerges and what can be done to promote an integrated petroleum province and to mitigate a fragmented province marked by increasing disparities.

As a researcher, I am very lucky to witness first-hand many critical events occurring in the Arctic oil and gas development: the euphoria over the Barents cooperation and the opening of the Russian market to international business; the birth and failure of the Shtokman project; the signing of the Russian-Norwegian Delimitation agreement and joint exploration agreements of Rosneft and Statoil in the Barents sea; Russian companies entering the Norwegian Continental shelf, and many more. The Arctic may be a very remote region, but over the last years the influence of globalization and pressure of international politics has grown here, too.

The current pivotal events that I focus my research on are the US/EU-led sanctions targeting international cooperation in Russian Arctic offshore projects and the dramatic collapse of global oil prices. I am analyzing which of these two factors is decisive in the future of the Arctic hydrocarbon development in the mid- and long-term perspective. I look at these events in the context of contemporary geopolitical shifts in global energy supply and demand.

The environmental perspective is also a part of my research. I study how global energy demand pushes the extraction further up North to the Arctic seabed, and how climate change makes accessible more distant and hard-to-recover fossil fuels. There is a temptation to assume almost unconditional oil and gas development in the Arctic. However, more and more scientists confirm that putting new hydrocarbon fields into operation is incompatible with international commitments to limit global warming below 2 °C degrees.

"The Arctic may be a very remote region, but over the last years the influence of globalization and pressure of international politics has grown here, too."

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