

Indigenous Gender Justice with a Focus on Sámi Reindeer Herding in Sweden

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Abstract

This chapter provides an overview of gender research on Sámi reindeer herding in Sweden from the perspective of gender literature on family farms and agricultural transformation. The study focuses on three topics that have been central to the field: property transfer and succession, gendered division of labour and gendered identities. Using the (post)colonial perspective as a point of departure, this chapter highlights Sámi reindeer herders' experiences at the intersection of (post)colonial and gendered inequalities. It explores how gender and (post)colonial norms and identities are reproduced and challenged and how they constitute and are constituted by structural inequalities. The analysis highlights (post)colonial gender relations as the outcome of ongoing agentic processes.

Introduction

The rise of Sámi feminism has been connected to the emerging criticism of colonialisation. One of the key claims made is that Sámi women had a strong or even equal status among their families in precolonial society (Bäckman, 1982; Kuokkanen, 2009). This status was then weakened due to the interference of colonialism and Christianity (Nussbaumer, 2018; Roy, 2004). Especially during the first phase of feminism in the late 1960s and 70s, the image of Sámi women as powerful matriarchs of Sámi culture was influential in the creation of Sámi identity (Eikjok, 2004). This imaginary placed Sámi women under dual pressure since it did not correspond to their reality (Dumoulin, 2020). They felt themselves repressed by both the patriarchal structures present in Sámi communities and by their minority status as Indigenous Sámi (Eikjok, 2004; Kuokkanen, 2007).

Indigenous feminists differ in how they appraise the sufficiency of the struggle for Indigenous self-determination in order to achieve gender justice. Some project pre-colonial Indigenous cultures as examples for the realisation of gender justice and attribute the institutionalisation of the heteronormative patriarchy to colonial power. In this perception, restoration

of Indigenous culture would suffice to reinstate gender justice (Cunningham, 2006; Hart & Lowther, 2008). According to this view, the introduction of hetero-patriarchal relations has been the outcome of settler colonialisation.

In contrast, others do not see a return to Indigenous culture as a guarantee of gender justice. The expansion of self-determination for Indigenous communities would not by necessity bring with it the guarantee for individual autonomy and self-determination. Without critical reflection, 'Indigenous communities can, in the name of sovereignty and tradition, replicate and perpetuate heteropatriarchal neocolonial agendas and practices instead of decolonization' (Kuokkanen, 2019, p. 221).

Focusing on issues of women's reproductive rights and gender-based violence in Canada and Sweden, Kuokkanen (2019) argued that Indigenous women have been double victimised. She highlighted this by analysing child custody cases of battered mothers. In the studied cases, battered women were not only deprived of legal protection against violence, but they were also deprived – as unfit mothers – of their motherhood due to state violence in the name of child welfare, which displaced children to off-community foster care (Nanibush, 2014). The outcry of Indigenous peoples against the state's removal of children from their communities was met with ignorance and disrespect for Indigenous child-raising traditions. According to these traditions, the clan – rather than the nuclear family – is responsible for childcare.

Nonetheless, claims of Indigenous self-determination have not coincided with gender justice claims to secure women from violence. Thus, Kuokkanen (2019) argued, claims for community sovereignty and self-determination must be combined with claims for individual self-determination. Claims for self-determination and consensus over the use of land need to be combined with the same claims for the body: 'Without Indigenous gender justice, there is not Indigenous self-determination' (Kuokkanen, 2019, p. 222). Claims of justice for Indigenous communities by means of colonial dispossession need to be combined with gender justice claims against heteropatriarchal gender relations that displace Indigenous women and their children. Similar claims are due for those whose sexualities do not conform to the heteronormative patriarchy. Gender justice must be achieved through the rematriation of Indigenous governing structures to re-establish women's former association with leadership roles (Kuokkanen, 2019, p. 232).

Sámi and Indigenous women's double victimisation has been highlighted not only in cases of gendered violence but also in their subordinate position within reindeer herding

communities (RHCs), which prevent them from participating in reindeer herding on equal terms with men (Amft, 2000; Kuokkanen, 2009; Udén, 2007). Gender equality has been on the agenda for the Sami Parliament (Sametinget 2011) and SSR (Swedish Sami Association) (Wik Karlsson w.y.). While the focus of gender research has highlighted inequalities from the perspective of women, recent research has also shed light on the vulnerabilities of Sámi men. Sámi men have a lower level of education than Sámi women (Arora-Jonsson, 2017; Olsen, 2015). Further, among young Sámi men, reindeer herders have reported the highest level of discrimination based on ethnicity (Omma et al., 2011). Additionally, the rates of suicide in Sweden are highest among reindeer herders (Ahlm et al., 2010). Some researchers have found Indigeneity to be a more important issue than gender (Eikeland, 2003, Olsen, 2015) because addressing gender inequalities is perceived as being related to Swedishness (Ledman, 2009).

There is a clear relationship between injustice from the state and majority society on the one hand and gender relations on the other. As Crenshaw (1991) and other early proponents of an intersectional perspective have highlighted, the articulation of gender-based inequalities often faces opposition both within minority movements and within mainstream feminist movements due to fears of being discredited. Similar to black or Roma feminists (Asztalos Morell, 2016; Kóczé, 2011), Sámi feminists engage in recognition struggles both to establish claims within Sámi society and in relation to the majority society. To explore intersectional aspects of gender inequalities is of particular interest in the Fenno-Scandinavian context since these countries signify themselves as forerunners in gender equality struggles, which has resulted in political consensus about feminist political foundations. Therefore, this chapter focuses specifically on Sámi gender issues in the context of Fenno-Scandinavian gender regimes.

The following sections highlight some aspects of how gendered citizenship has been shaped in the (post)colonial context of reindeer herding in Sweden (Lundmark, 2012). Reindeer husbandry is a Sámi right and is seen as part of a lifestyle rooted in Indigenous practices. Reindeer husbandry must co-exist with and reproduce in the context of state regulations and market pressures, which have resulted in serious governance concerns by undermining the capacities of Indigenous actors for resilience (Löf, 2014). Despite these fundamental differences, reindeer husbandry is a livelihood that shares some common features with the conditions characterising family farming. Therefore, the study of gender literature concerning family farming can be used as a fruitful comparative lens to explore gender relations in the context of reindeer husbandry.

Gender and Citizenship

An analysis of the comparative welfare state gave new impetus to the theorisation of rural gender regimes by focusing on how gender inequalities are expressed in civil, political and social rights (Asztalos Morell & Bock, 2008a,b). Gender regimes are understood not only as regimes characterised by a set of rights and obligations but also as arenas for gender-differentiated participation, representation and power in social and political life. Political scientists see the rights and duties connected to citizenship as a vehicle for achieving social justice (Marshall, 1950, p. 10). Marshall (1950) envisaged the gradual emergence of three citizenship rights areas – civil, political and social rights – that are of key importance for social justice. Civil rights concern rights for individual freedom and liberty of the person, such as the right to own property, conclude contracts, obtain justice and exercise freedom of speech. Political citizenship is tied to participation in political life and the ability to be elected. Finally, social citizenship covers access to economic welfare and security, to full participation in the social heritage and to life as a civilised being according to prevailing societal standards (Olsson & Lewis, 1995). However, the formation of citizenship rights has emerged unevenly due to its close bonds to inequalities along the lines of social class, ethnicity and gender (Walby, 1997).

Feminist theory views gender as a social principle that is used to organise all fields of relations. Gender emerged as a concept signifying fundamental structures along which societies are organised by positioning women and men differentially in relations of public and private divisions of power and authority (Kay, 2007). According to Hirdman (1989), gender structures are based on two principles: one that differentiates between the categories of men and women and one that places men as a norm by ordering these differences into a hierarchal order. This order is constructed by the dichotomies of likeness – “A” (man) vs “a” (woman of less accomplishment) – or through difference – “A” (man) vs “B” (woman of different and less valuable art) – to create a power discrepancy between men and women (Hedenborg & Wikander, 2003; Hirdmann, 1989). As Connell (1987, pp. 98–99) argued, gender as a coherent system of organisation defines the relations of power between masculinities and femininities.

With emphases on male dominance, Walby (1997) identified six structures of patriarchal relations: family and household, paid work, state, culture, domestic violence and sexuality

(Table 1). From an historical perspective, gender regimes have been articulated along the public/private dichotomy (Walby, 1997). In the former, ‘household-based production is the main structure and site of women’s work activity and the exploitation of her labour and sexuality and upon the exclusion of women from the public’ (Walby, 1997, p. 6). In the latter, the means of subordination are not through exclusion but rather the ‘segregation and subordination of women within the structures of paid employment and the state, as well as within culture, sexuality and violence’ (Walby, 1997 p. 6).

Table 1. Patriarchal relations according Walby (1997)

Structure	Description
<i>Paid work</i>	Labour segregation, wage gaps, power gaps, part-time/full-time, formal/informal
<i>Family and household</i>	Care duties, lone mothers, feminisation of poverty
<i>Patriarchal relations of the state</i>	Women’s lack of/less political representation, women’s underrepresentation in state institutions
<i>Male violence against women</i>	Domestic violence, rape, sexual violence
<i>Forms of sexuality</i>	Sexual availability in the private sphere, sexualised public disclosure of women’s bodies
<i>Cultural institutions</i>	Underrepresentation in positions of power within media, media and cultural representations of women

The transition to public patriarchy emerges with women’s participation in *paid labour* and through the disadvantages along persistent structures of inequalities, such as labour segregation, wage gaps, power gaps and part-time/full-time work enforcing gender inequalities. Despite their increased labour force participation, women continue to bear major responsibility for the duties of caring for the *family and household*. Gender inequalities in the domestic and public spheres are co-constitutive of each other. State policies

and citizenship rights emerge along power struggles to reinforce alternatively challenging prevailing inequalities, including gender-based ones. Despite achieving legal rights, a gender gap prevails in women's participation, recognition and access to resources (Fraser, 1995).

Gender regimes take local and regional shape depending on the type of socio-economic setting (Forsberg, 1998; Forsberg & Lindgren, 2010). Rural and agrarian gender regimes constitute special conditions due to the historical roots in family farming and its gendered patterns (Asztalos Morell & Bock, 2008a, b). The basic unit of organisation within both reindeer husbandry and family farming is the household, which has become all the more multi-functional. Both activities play out in a rural context based on the utilisation of natural resources and dependencies on a capitalist food regime (McMichael, 2009). However, these activities also differ in the legal claims they have to natural resources, how they utilise these claims and in their relation to the majority society. To explore gender relations in the case of reindeer herding, the relation with the (post)colonial state as well as the economic forces of the dominant society, including those of the capitalist economy, need to be considered. As Kuokkanen (2019) highlighted, Indigenous claim-making in a (post)colonial context places women's issues in a complicit situation, where gender issues are deprioritised compared to claims made on grounds of Indigeneity. This leaves the voices of Indigenous women, just like women of colour in other contexts (Asztalos Morell, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991), unattended since gender-based conflicts within ethnic communities, such as domestic violence, are highly ethnically stigmatising issues. To explore intersecting inequalities is of great importance since gender equalities are co-constructed with race, class and age-based inequalities.

An intersectional perspective can also contribute to a better understanding of (post)colonial challenges for men's situations. Connell (1995) identified hegemonic masculinity as the institution for patriarchal relations. Hegemonic masculinity institutionalises men's dominant position through what he referred to as the 'patriarchal dividend', a benefit men enjoy in society as a group and individually in the private and public spheres. However, Connell also argued that not all men enjoy these benefits equally. While hegemonic masculinity is enforced by men's domination in corporate capitalism, there are marginalised categories of men who find themselves subordinated through other types of inequalities, such as those rooted in class or sexuality. Indigenous men find themselves in various marginalising positions due to the (post)colonial systems of subordination. Among others, Indigenous men's livelihoods are based on access to contested natural resources, and men embody Indigenous occupational identities with value systems challenged by the logic of hegemonic market

relations. Reindeer herding and other Indigenous livelihoods are under the ongoing threat of increased capitalist exploitation of the resources their existence is dependent upon, an exploitation that the national states are complicit of. Thus, exploring gender-based inequalities, from the perspectives of either women or men, needs to be contextualised in (post)colonial realities of Indigenous lives.

Structure and Agency

A gender equality approach with one-sided focus on structures has been challenged by various scholars. Most importantly, these critiques have highlighted the structure versus agency dilemma, which is rooted in the classical critique of how structures and material conditions determine the freedom of agents to act. Giddens (1984) proposed a dualism between agents and structures (Figure 1): ‘structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they organize. Structure is not external to individuals... it is in a sense more internal’ (p. 25). Thus, Giddens (1984) argued that structures are both ‘constraining and enabling’ (p. xvi). The initial focus in rural gender studies on women as victims of patriarchal oppression began to shift to examining women as actors in their own right, whose own actions contested but also reproduced gender relations (O’Hara, 1998).

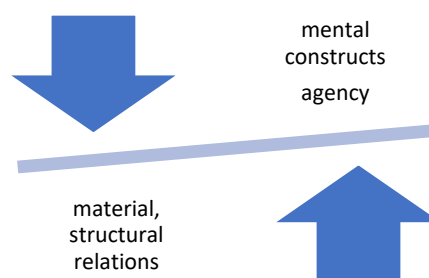


Figure 1. Dualism between structure and agency

A theoretical framework that unpacks the structure/agency interface in a manner well-suited to explore locally contextualised gender relations is the capability theory developed by Hobson (2011). Drawing on Sen’s (1999) theory, an individual’s freedom of agency depends upon the agency/capability gap they experience while attempting to achieve the goals they value.

For Sen, agency implies people's capabilities to reach the kind of functionings and achievements they desire given the capabilities they have. Achievements are who people can be (beings), while functionings are what people can do (doings). These beings and doings are ends to be achieved. Meanwhile, the means needed to achieve these depend on one's capabilities, which are one's possibilities or potentials to actualise them. In Sen's framework, choice and agency are central.

This notion was revised by Hobson (2011, p. 150), who argued that capabilities to achieve valued outcomes such as quality of life are contextual to social institutions and normative structures, some of which enable agency while others constrain choices and claims. Therefore, choices (freedoms) are constrained (Robeyns, 2005). Thus, agency is perceived as an exercise of choices limited by opportunity structures. A capability framework, using Hobson's (2011) formulation, 'is an evaluative space to assess well-being and quality of life and the freedom to pursue it' (p. 149). In her study on divorce, Hobson (1990) found that women who lack economic resources did not have the option to protest (i.e., to voice or divorce), hence the title of her work, 'No Exit, No Voice'. Thus, education, employment and access to economic resources provide them with a wider variety of choices.

While other works focused on inequalities between men and women and unpacked women's subordinate position, West and Zimmermann (1987) and Butler (1990) emphasised the performative notion of gender. By doing so, they focused on the production of gender and the heteronormative matrix. Butler saw heteronormativity as the normative ground for heterosexual desire associated with masculinity and femininity. Thus, the binary system of gender is not a given; it is both constitutive and is constituted through ongoing processes and practices (Butler, 1990). Butler's notion of gender performativity closely examined how individuals are doing and undoing gender norms. Butler viewed gender as a performative process primarily in the sense that gender functions as a regime to regulate people's behaviours. Yet, she considered individuals to be not only docile products of gender norms but also actors with agency by illustrating the possibilities for subverting gender identities (Butler, 1990, p. 185). According to Butler, gender performativity lies within how individuals "cite" dominant discourses. This doing of gender is manifested in the choice of work, partner or bodily attributes, among others, which are performances of femininities and masculinities. In the performative construction of gender lies also the potential for undoing gender. By undoing gender, one can create subjectivities that 'enact gender in a way that goes beyond

conventional parameters' (Kelan, 2010, p. 190). Hence, doing as well as subversion of gender norms is accomplished performatively (Butler, 2004).

Gender Norms and Identities

Due to the roots of gender in heteronormativity and heterosexual desire, gender is inscribed in the body, with biological differences becoming incorporated into the symbolic representations of femininity and masculinity. The muscular male body and its fragile female counterpart are binary embodiments of the heterosexual desire (Lundgren & Kroon, 1996). Gender power relations become inscribed into the sexualised fragile female body (Smith, 1990). Meanwhile, work has been identified as one of the central areas for the construction and de-construction of gender (Billing & Alvesson, 2000; Harding, 1986; Johansson et al., 2020; Kelan, 2010; Lie, 1995; McDonald, 2013). In addition to work identities, gendered embodiments encompass features of the physical body and its secondary attributes – movements and clothing (Asztalos Morell, 2013). Physical power; imagery of warriors, fighters and adventurers who master nature; and the appropriation of technology are intimately associated with masculinity. Women, in contrast, are perceived as being close to nature and nurturing. Such binary symbolism is evoked to legitimate the exclusion of women from occupations dominated by men, such as the metal industry (Johansson et al., 2020). Exclusionary processes enforce privileges, such as favourable rewards or freedom from care duties (Asztalos Morell, 1999). This trend of thought views the gendered inscription of work as being deeply rooted in the gendering (and un/re-gendering) process and in the use of symbols in identity construction (Faulkner, 2009; Harding, 1986; Kelan, 2010; Lie, 1995; McDonald, 2013). Thus, gender is performative, and it is done through active appropriation of symbolic identity constructs.

It is also important to note that identity construction varies not only between men and women but also among women and men. Postmodernism provides insights into the formation of multiple identities, the notion of otherness (Brandth, 2002) and how identity is constructed and reflected through the body 'as an active agent in the construction of gendered selves' (Brandth, 2006, p. 17). While femininity and masculinity are realised through performance (Little, 2006), dominant discourses may be resisted and contested by the construction of alternative discourses.

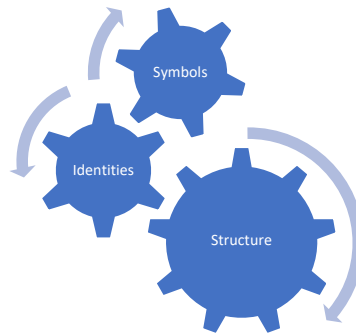


Figure 2. Harding's (1986) three levels of gender analysis

Therefore, it should not be forgotten that these discourses are embedded in structural realities and contexts (Asztalos Morell & Bock, 2008a). In this respect, it is important that rural gender studies maintain this critical perspective so as to continue to uncover the interests served by specific constructions and representations of 'reality'. Thus, a one-sided focus on symbols and identities as roots for the gender–technology association fails to acknowledge the importance of structural inequalities. Some researchers, such as Lie (1995), have sought distinct links between structures, symbols and identities in the gender–technology relation. Harding (1986) differentiated three levels of gender analysis: gender structure (grounded in the gender division of labour), symbolism and identity/behaviour (Figure 2). These three levels are intimately connected. Thus, if researchers focus on only one of these, gender relations seem distorted (Lie, 1995). Focusing only on the gender division of labour leaves important aspects of culture-bound thinking unattended. Structural inequalities of gender, for instance in technology, are intimately interconnected with the making and remaking of men (Cockburn, 1983). The monopolisation of knowhow is the arena for reinforcement of masculinity. Meanwhile, technological culture reinforces gender relations (Wajcman, 2010).

Research Questions

Using the agency freedom theory to unite structural and constructivist perspectives, this chapter provides a critical reflection on research on gender relations in Sámi RHCs. This chapter examines the following aspects:

- What are the institutional frameworks (e.g., concerning property rights, inheritance and succession) contextualising reindeer herding?
- How has the gender division of labour emerged, and how does it reflect changes in the conditions for the reproduction of reindeer herding households?
- How do intersectionally constituted norms and identity constructions emerge in reindeer herding and interact with the conditions for reproduction of reindeer herding households?

Property Rights, Inheritance and Succession

Sámi are the Indigenous population of Feno-Scandinavia. Their habitat has been pushed further north through subsequent colonisations. They have been subjected to the crown as taxpayers since 1547, and reindeer and fish began to be taxed in 1602 (Gallardo et al., 2017; Lundmark, 1998). While the general trend in property rights have been the dissolution of common property in agriculture, an opposite trend has occurred in Sámi Lappland (Larsson & Sjaunja, 2020). The previous system of individually assigned land was superseded by Sámi lawful common user's rights to reindeer herding areas. Rights as taxpayers were transformed to usufruct rights (Päiviö, 2011; Päivö, 2011). This system was consolidated in the 1886 New Pasture Law, through which Sámi were divided into communities, the membership of which became a prerequisite to practice family reindeer herding. Since pasture rights were not considered an economic asset, Sámi did not obtain the right to vote (Gallardo et al., 2017).

In the Swedish Reindeer Grazing Act of 1928 (Renbeteslag [SFS] 1928:309) (Swed.), the Swedish Government defined the Sámi people as reindeer herders, which excluded every other Sámi who did not performed reindeer herding. Today, only about 10% of Sámi are reindeer herders. Reindeer herding as a husbandry became the focus in politics, and those Sámi who did not perform herding were categorised as an 'other population' (Lundmark, 2012, pp. 210–211).

Colonial legislation, beyond its general function to restrain Sámi rights, has also adversely impacted women's position. Kuokkanen (2009) argued that similar to other Indigenous societies in Northern Eurasia, women in precolonial times had equal rights to men with 'symmetrical complementarity of domains, roles and tasks' (p. 500). Even if some of these domains were domestic while others were economic, women were independent and possessed

control over given areas. Reindeer herding women were traditionally in charge of the economy (Bäckman, 1982). Men and women owned separate property, with women owning all clothing they prepared, including their husband's, and they could take out independent loans (Paulaharju, 1921). Sámi could also be considered as having kept matrilineal and matrilocal order. This more equal gender status has undergone institutional pressure due to 'patriarchal ways of thinking and laws' (Kuokkanen, 2009, p. 501) introduced through legislation.

The 1928 act weakened the position of the Sámi people, especially Sámi women. The legal status of the act was linked with marital status; a woman who carried the right to perform reindeer herding lost that right if she married a man without it. At the same time, a man could marry whoever he wanted and keep his right. Upon losing this right, women had to leave the life of reindeer herding. This legal distinction was discriminatory against Sámi women (Ledman, 2009, p. 85) and promoted men in the transfer of Sámi rights attached to reindeer herding (Nordlund, 2020). Thus, Sámi women's traditional rights to own reindeer were erased (Kuokkanen, 2009, p. 501).

With the Reindeer Husbandry Act of 1971 (Rennäringslag ([SFS] 1971:437) (Swed.)), all Sámi people were given access to the same rights, reindeer herding included, that are described in the law on account of prescription from time immemorial. Time immemorial is defined as the distant past no longer remembered (Allard, 2011). According to the Reindeer Husbandry Act, being Sámi implies being a member of an RHC. Meanwhile, the 1928 act's direct discriminatory measures against Sámi women who married non-Sámi persons was removed. Nonetheless, indirect discriminatory features prevailed. For example, reindeer herding is restricted to those who are members of an RHC. Membership is based on fulfilling one of three premises (Figure 3): 1) Sámi who participate in reindeer herding within an RHC, 2) Sámi who have participated in activities in the RHC as work and not transferred to a different primary employment or 3) a person who is the spouse or resident child of a member referred to in 1 or 2 or who is the surviving spouse or minor child of a deceased member.

A family's right to own reindeer and reindeer marks requires that one family member be a full-time reindeer herder. As a rule, those in category 1 become group leaders, practice reindeer herding and represent the rest of the family in the RHC (Sametinget, 2019a). Only the group leaders have full voting rights within the RHC. The majority (88%) of reindeer husbandry companies are owned and operated by men (Sametinget, 2019a). Male-owned companies have a higher number of reindeer (243 on average) per company than companies headed by women

(136 on average) (Sametinget 2019b). There seems to be a relationship between the fact that Sámi women own a smaller number of reindeer and their lower likelihood of becoming group leaders for the family's herd. Since only group leaders have a direct voice in RHCs, Sámi women who are not group leaders become subordinated to their fathers or husbands (Amft, 2000, p. 190). This is an encroachment on Sámi women's ability to fully participate and have their voices heard in the RHC (Amft, 2000).

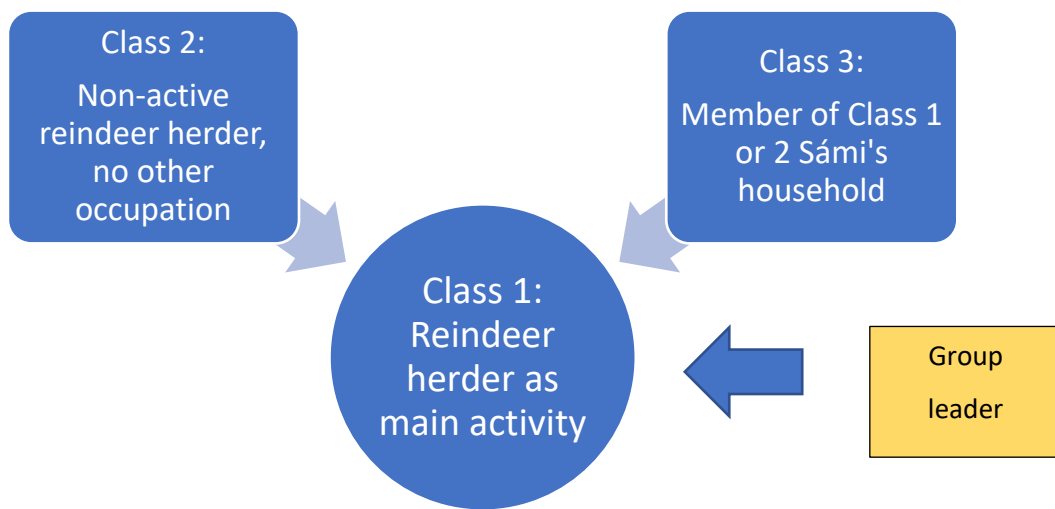


Figure 3. Different classes of rights to belong to an RHC according to the Rennäringslag ([SFS] 1971:437) (Swed.)

It has been argued (Buchanan et al., 2016) that Sámi women's subordinate situation is bound to the institutional framing of Sámi rights to pasture, which allocate the disposition over this right to RHCs (a common-pool resource practice), which in turn designates usufruct rights not to individual members but to heads of groups. This head of group is typically the male head of household. Such disposition stands in opposition to individual freedoms. The dependencies of women in such constructs become apparent in cases of divorce, since married women can face obstacles claiming their contribution to the wealth accumulated in the enterprise. Furthermore, for Sámi women as household members (*husfolk*), membership in the household remains the only way to access Sámi rights (Päivö, 2011).

Based on experiences from the collaborative project 'Kvinna i sameby' ('Woman in an RHC'), Udén concluded that connecting the right to own reindeer to being able to engage with reindeer herding full-time encroaches on Sámi women's ability to make their contributions visible. As Sámi women in the project argued, 'there are more people than the "reindeer herder" that

are involved in reindeer herding. Both on a practical production level, not to talk about the reproductive work and symbol production that keeps society together and provides identity a form' (Udén, 2004, p. 8). Another aspect raised was how wage-earning women – as wives and cohabiting partners – contribute to the economic stability of the household of a reindeer herder. The study elucidated that the praxis differs between RHCs; it is not common in all RHCs for a widow to take over the status of reindeer herder if her husband passes away. A *husbonde* (head of household) in the meaning of the reindeer herding law counts in certain respects as the legal representative for all the reindeer of his/her family, including his/her husband's or wife's private property. Similarly, wives who divorce their husbands and claim the right to be the *husbonde* over the family's joint reindeer cannot necessarily count on compensation for their contribution to the reindeer herding economy (Udén, 2004, p. 8). Being classified as household members not only limits civil and economic rights of Sámi women but also their ability to make social rights claims, such as pension entitlement or health insurance, based on their labour contribution to the household economy.

These conditions reflect legal standards that have been abandoned in Swedish law in favour of an individualistic legal subject. Sweden introduced gender equal inheritance rights in 1848 (Holmlund, 2008). However, until 1884, unmarried women were not legally capable of managing their property, and married women were represented by their husbands until 1920. Thus, Sámi women's dependency on their husbands as group leaders is a construct that sediments an anachronistic practice.

The gender inequalities inbuilt in the governance of reindeer herding stand also in conflict with the overall ideas expressed in the Swedish gender regime. Sweden, like the other Fenno-Scandinavian countries, is seen as a prime representation for the dual wage-earner (Sommestad, 1997), weak male bread-winner (Lewis, 1992) or gender-neutral (Asztalos Morell, 1999; Asztalos Morell & Brandt, 2007; Florin & Nilsson, 1997; Langan & Ostner, 1991; Sommestad, 1997) model. The above theories see gender neutrality as the qualifying specificity of the Swedish gender regime, where the unit of taxation as well as welfare transfers have the individual and not the household as their basic unit. Thus, the prevailing practices for reindeer herding/Sámi rights (with roots in colonial legislation), which connect economic agency to a group leader who typically corresponds to a head of household, are antagonistic with the spirit of the Scandinavian/Swedish welfare/gender regime.

Meanwhile, despite equal legal gender rights in inheritance, a patriarchal order of succession and internal family relations still prevail in family farms. In this respect, two levels must be examined separately: the level of rights and legal regulation of inheritance and the level of the praxis of transfer of property. In Niskanen's (1998) view, 'men and women entered property relations on different conditions' (p. 7). The ideological goal of keeping family property together led to family practices, which typically favoured the oldest son in taking over the family farm (Flygare, 1999, Haugen, 1994; Melberg, 2008). Inheritance patterns were seen to play a key role in the construction of masculinity and femininity. As Niskanen (1998) summarised: 'The construction of "masculinities" and "femininities" has direct impact on the economic conditions for generational change, since they affect which property is distributed between male and female inheritors' (p. 6.). Thus, the ideas about the most suited successor of the farm influenced access to inherited property, which in turn has reaffirmed men's primacy in being farm heads. Access to land impacts the potential to run a farm enterprise cumulatively. Lack of it is an obstacle to access credits and subsidies and reproduces the exclusion of female farmers (Andersson & Lidestav, 2014; Andersson & Lundqvist, 2016; Holmquist, 2011; Shortall, 1999; 2015).

Male primacy secured through farm succession is further reaffirmed by excluding in-marrying wives from obtaining access to farm property. An in-marrying wife contributes in diverse ways to the maintenance of the family farm through their labour contribution (domestic work or helping with core farm activities), book-keeping or off-farm work. Still, as Hanrahan (2008) pointed out, farm wives have faced difficulties obtaining shares of their contribution to the property value of the farm in cases of divorce. These results show that despite equal inheritance rights, there are continued practices that enforce the preference of male succession and the weakness of women's economic citizenship.

However, the degree to which Sámi women feel themselves excluded from the possibility of engaging with reindeer herding varies between different RHCs. Gråik (2018), among others, argued that Sámi women 'do not believe it is a woman and man problem. We have colonization, history of oppression, declining pastures, and this has consequences on how badly both women and men feel, and this leads to frictions'. Thus, some Sámi feminists identify the (post)colonial policies as the root cause of Sámi women's subordinate situation.

Reindeer herding assumes the extensive utilisation of natural resources. It is conducted over an area that amounts to nearly half of Sweden's landmass (Löf, 2014, p. IX). Concerning

competitive land claims, Lof (2014) argued that weak governance and institutions, lack of arenas and unclear mandates given to reindeer herders have created failing governance mechanisms to secure reindeer herders' ability to access key land resources vital for traditional reindeer herding practices. This inhibits them from practicing their Indigenous livelihoods. To extrapolate the impact of the ongoing encroachment of alternative capital interests, which are directly or passively supported by the state, the hegemonic masculinities of state and capitalist agents are confronting the livelihoods of Sámi reindeer herders, who are primarily represented by men. The vulnerability related to the threat to continued access to land resources is seen as the underlying primary insecurity for RHCs, which creates loyalty conflicts for women struggling to achieve gender equality within RHCs and the households of reindeer herders. Nonetheless, gender equality is not simply underscored within RHCs. It is grounded in the legal frameworks regulating reindeer herding and perpetuated by external forces. Lacking the title of group leader or leader of an enterprise, women cannot act as independent economic agents representing reindeer husbandry units. Concerning the number of women who own reindeer as well as their proportion within reindeer herders, there has been a gradual increase since 1995 (Figs. 4 and 5).

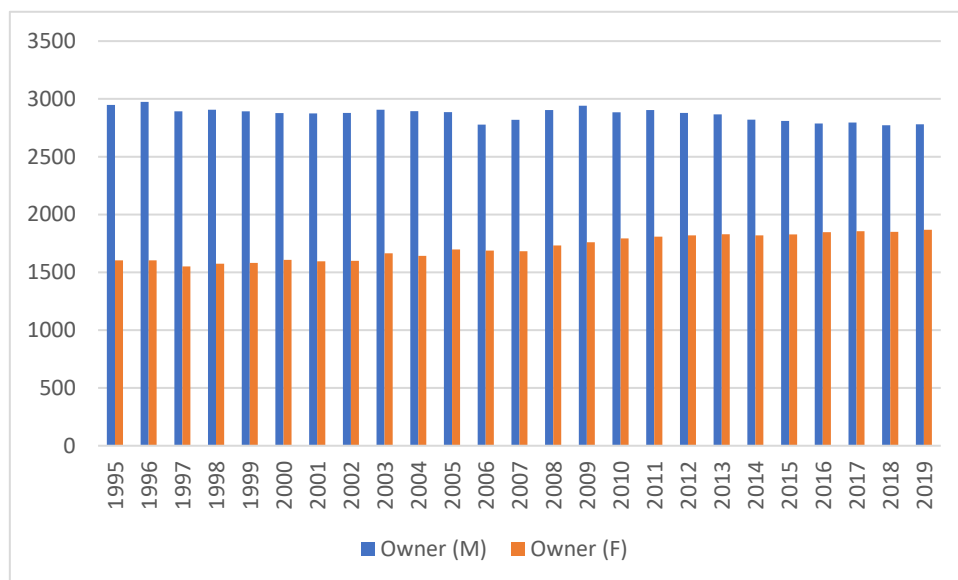


Figure 4. Gender division of reindeer owners (n = 4632; 35–40% women).

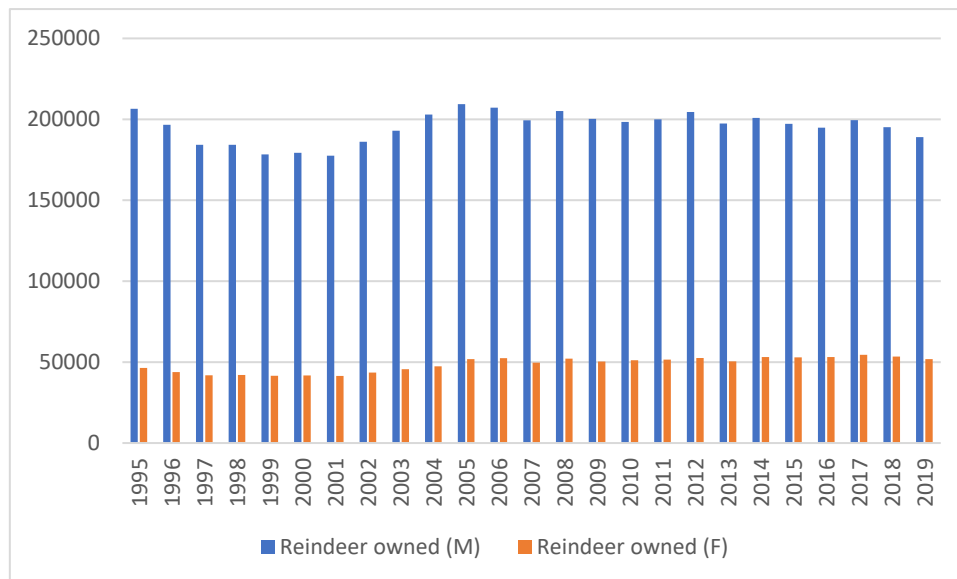


Figure 5. Number of reindeer owned by gender (n=241,013; 18–21% women).

Nonetheless, the portion of reindeer owned by women has been about the same since 1995. This is the consequence of women owning a lesser number of reindeer on average than men. However, the fact that the number of women owning reindeer has increased is surely the consequence of some kind of transition in the conditions of passing down reindeer from one generation to the other. These numbers require further research in order to understand the importance of this slow transition.

Gender Division of Labour

Thus far, the focus of this chapter has been on how reindeer herding rights, as civil rights connected to Sámi rights, are gendered. Furthermore, this chapter has discussed how these discriminatory institutional frameworks frame gender inequality within RHCs and within the households of reindeer herders. Thus, inequalities in terms of civil rights encroach on economic and social rights. While external (post)colonial institutional regulations explain the encroachment of women's equal citizenship, these discriminating relations form part of everyday practices in households and RHCs and gain expression among others through the gendered division of labour.

Kuokkanen (2009) argued that in traditional reindeer herding, there was a symmetrical complementarity. Amft (2000) reconstructed the gender division of labour in the nomadic reindeer herding society at the beginning of the 1900s. She viewed the tasks and roles of the married man as the most masculine and those of the married woman as the most feminine to stand as modal points of the gendered division of labour. Meanwhile, other members of the extended family household, including servants, acted as reserve labour, were designated by the husband or wife to carry out tasks and would find themselves in an intermediary sphere. Women would be more often expected to carry out the same tasks as men and men to do women's chores (Asztalos Morell, 1999; Flygare, 1999; Sireni, 2008). Thus, women were prepared to carry out core reindeer herding tasks. This flexible division of labour was a part of the survival strategy that was essential for the reindeer herding household.

Ongoing external pressures placed by colonial settlement – including alternative demands on land use, state regulations on the areas designated for reindeer herding, agricultural pursuits by settlers, mining, exploitation of water resources, wind power parks, tourism and climate change – have decreased the pastures available for reindeer herding. These changes have extensively altered reindeer herding practices. Such practices imply a semi-nomadic lifestyle, especially among the fell RHCs, and – to a lesser extent – a nomadic lifestyle among the forest RHCs. One important reason for the establishment of a semi-nomadic lifestyle is the desire to stay close to children attending schools in settlements. This has led to a division between men and women, with the former following the herds and the latter staying in settlements but joining their husbands in periods of need.

Pressure during the 1960s to make reindeer herding more profitable facilitated rationalisation and mechanisation. The mechanisation of reindeer herding implied the increased use of scooters, and later helicopters, a process that strengthened masculinisation (Amft, 2000; Buchanan et al., 2016). This push led to increased emphasis on the practical aspects of reindeer herding and the further marginalisation of women from core activities. One example is the abandonment of the earlier praxis of milking reindeer and the tasks connected to it. Thus, the need for women as a labour force reserve declined. Additionally, an increase in the purchase of ready-made clothing and food has further decreased their labour demand, even for tasks traditionally seen as women's duties. Amft (2000) also found that the masculinisation of reindeer herding implied that even at the turn of the century, reindeer herding was primarily carried out by bachelors. This would have been impossible as late as the 1930s and 40s, when reindeer herding assumed a tight collaboration between men

and women in the household. Therefore, the mechanisation and rationalisation of reindeer herding has exacerbated the marginalisation of women.

In Norway, the ongoing masculinisation of reindeer herding has been accompanied by the ongoing exodus of young women from reindeer herding, which has led to a surplus of older men (Hansen, 2012, p. 11). In Sweden, half of all reindeer herders are bachelors (Amft, 2000, SOU, 1975). While boys grow up with expectations to become reindeer herders or to take employment in resource industries that do not require higher education, girls see no future in reindeer herding. Thus, they choose further education (Arora-Jonsson, 2017), which is reflected in the higher level of education among girls, who then accumulate higher human capital (Olsen, 2016). This difference in human capital provides Sámi women an advantage to obtain paid labour (Arora-Jonsson, 2017). Women's income from outside the household is substantially higher compared to that of men (Andersson & Lidestav, 2014; Fig. 6). As a consequence, Sámi men have less flexibility on the labour market and are counted among the most marginalised (Hansen, 2012, pp. 21–23).

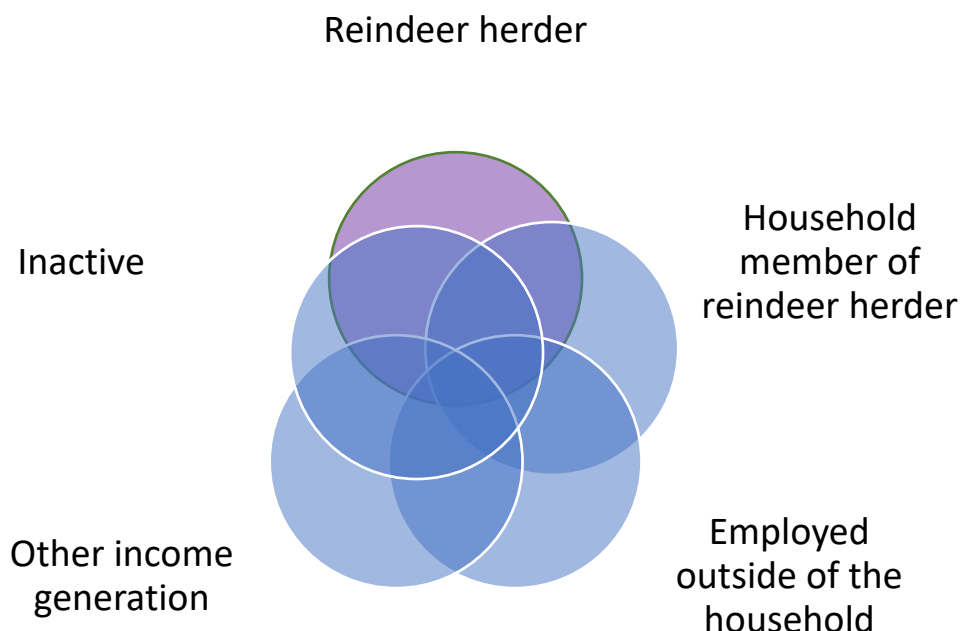


Figure 6. Composition of reindeer herder households and household incomes.

Despite these processes, a long-term perspective has shown a slight increase in the proportion of women group leaders. This is an important finding that could indicate positive transition towards gender justice and requires further research.

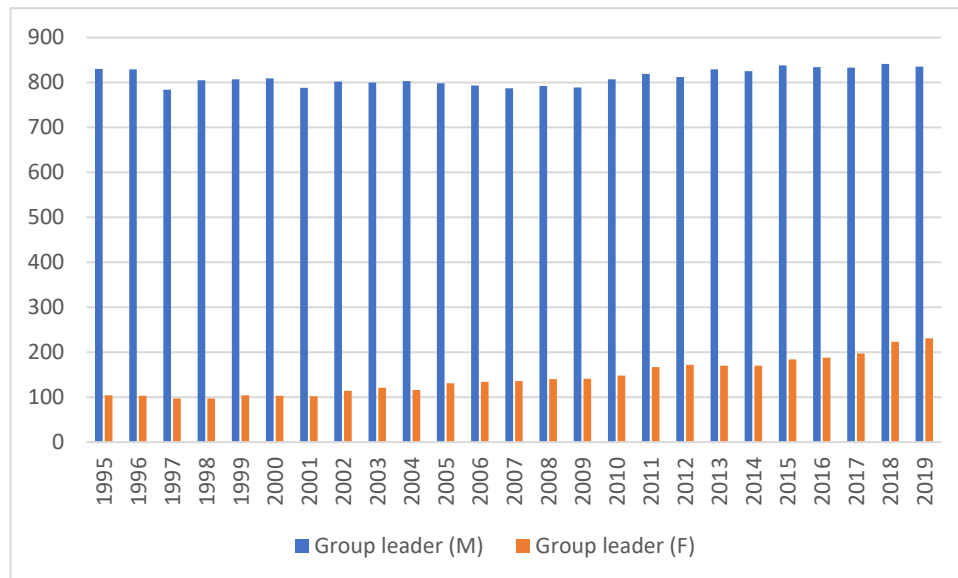


Figure 7. Number of group leaders by gender (n=1033) (11–21%).

How gender regimes are conceived has been contested even in the case of peasant societies. On the one hand, the complementarity of gender roles has been emphasised. Some scholars have argued that the division of roles between the male head of the household responsible for organising the activities in the field and the head of the domestic sphere demonstrate complementarity and a clear sphere of authority for the wife (Lövkrone, 1990).

Other researchers have criticised Lövkrone's (1990) view. According to Flygare (1999), men seldom crossed over into women's spheres, while women participated beyond the reproductive sphere as flexible labour. Typical female production areas were dairy, poultry and gardening (Niskanen, 1998). Often these areas were not considered core production spheres and were counted as women's household budget. With the modernisation and commodification of production, changes have occurred in the relative importance and meaning of various labour types. A gender pattern is of crucial importance even here. According to Sommestad (2020), for men to be integrated into the public sphere of the market, they had to embody economic rationality and risks, while women had to stand for care and the safety and stability

of the family. Men's monopolisation of technology has been identified as an important basis for the reproduction of patriarchal relations both in the global South (Boserup, 1970) and the North (Brandth, 2006).

Other scholars have highlighted the *exploitation* of women in family farms (Delphy & Leonard, 1992), the de-skilling of their labour and the devaluation of their position in modern farms (Rooij, 1994). Farm women gradually lost their autonomous domain in production and became assistants to the male farmer. Meanwhile women's responsibilities for reproductive tasks were justified by *ideologies of wifehood and motherhood* (Whatmore, 1990), underlying the devaluation of their productive contributions.

Similar to the construction of entrepreneurial masculinities and femininities (Pini, 2008), while women provided continuity and security, men could adventure in risk-taking activities with new forms of production rooted in the market economy. Thus, women's contributions – securing family subsistence – were fundamental to serve as a base during periods of rapid transition. However, following the increased capital intensification of farming, women were pushed out of productive roles, often leaving farms for external employment (Dixon, 1983; Djurfeldt & Waldenström, 1996). Meanwhile, women dominated in small-scale, low capital-intensive farms, leading even to trends of feminisation (Safilidou & Papadopoulos, 2004).

However, as gender research argues, it is not the increased capital intensity or the new technologies that have caused the gender differentiation. Rather, gender differentiation is an outcome of prevailing gendering processes that order labour categories in a hierarchical manner.

In the family farms of industrialised countries, the potential for the empowerment of farm women – a trend opposite to the one just described – came into the spotlight in recent years. This process was associated with changes on various levels of the agrarian field, such as legal changes in inheritance, professionalisation of women farmers and the evaluation of women's and men's roles in farming (Haugen, 1990). The spread of ecological and care farming, tourism and the horse leisure industry have provided new opportunities for women to expand their agency (Brandth and Haugen, 2011; Haugen & Vik, 2008; Hedenborg, 2009; Pettersson & Heldt-Cassel, 2014). Women farmers are overrepresented among labour-intensive and low-profit areas, such as dairy farming (Andersson & Lundqvist, 2016). Within multifunctional branches, they are concentrated in horse farms and farms with tourism. There is even an overrepresentation among organic farms pursuing ecological entrepreneurship (Stenbacka,

2017). Finally, women forest owners tend to attach more cultural value to forestry (Lidestav, 2010).

Research concerning reindeer husbandry has come to similar conclusions to the research on family farming: increased technological modernisation and incorporation with the market economy has been associated with increased masculinisation of the activity. These processes have been accompanied by a deskilling and marginalisation of women from core activities and the increase of the off-farm/reindeer husbandry work of women. Meanwhile, similar to women in family farms, Sámi women in reindeer herding households specialise in complementary activities, such as duodji or tourism.

Gender Norms and Identity

As Udén's (2004) collaborative case study indicated, Sámi women's efforts to become reindeer herders in RHCs are challenged by the images and expectations associated with a 'real' reindeer herder. This status assumes bodily strength, mobility, the use of new technology such as scooters and helicopters and a man as the 'bearer of meaning' (Udén, 2004, p. 6). The new technologies assume physical strength and technological skills. Being able to manoeuvre a scooter in harsh conditions or to deal with technical problems can provide an advantage compared to other reindeer herders using the same area. Arriving first to the pasture with a herd can give the herder an advantage. In contrast, arriving late may mean that the reindeer do not find sufficient feed. This becomes all the more important as pastures and grazing areas continue to decrease. Thus, the participants in the study argued that since women are perceived as being physically weaker and less apt to fix technical failures, a female operator is seen having a disadvantage when performing these duties. These arguments of women's disadvantages are powerful tools to disqualify women. Such categorisation supports men being classified as the 'real' reindeer herders, while women are marginalised and more likely to become a reserve labour force (Joks, 2001 in Udén, 2004). As shown earlier, these processes correspond to how technology and physical power are used to disqualify women in other occupations.

Looking at reindeer herders' livelihoods, the focus is commonly on the production of meat. While the group leader of the herd, most typically a man, is the main labour force for the enterprise (being the one who follows the reindeer's seasonal movements), his work

depends on the collaboration of other household members, among them the wives. Women make crucial contributions to maintain the economic stability of the household through wage labour incomes, participation in administration or by producing items used for reindeer herding and representing Sámi identity, such as duodji. As Udén (2004) emphasised, these activities have ‘practical, emotional, cultural and economic value’ (p. 6). However, the contribution of women’s work remains invisible and does not grant women access to arenas where decisions are made in RHCs or to make claims for their contributions (Udén, 2004).

At the turn of the century, the study of gender identity and the construction of femininity and masculinity was at the forefront of understanding agricultural and rural materialities and embodiments (see Asztalos Morell, 1999; Brandth, 1995; Little & Morris, 2005; Oldrup, 1999; Reed, 2002; Silvasti, 2002). This research shed new light on the complex interplay between technology and gender. A common ground to legitimate men’s association with technology has been their muscular strength. Sommestad (1992, 2020) unravelled how this gendered association of muscle power with certain occupations is an historical construct. Sommestad’s (1992, 2020) study on the gender division of labour in dairy production showed that although dairy production was physically demanding work prior to its mechanisation, dairy work had a very strong association with femininity. The processing of milk was a feminine occupation. With the modernisation of milk processing came the introduction of machines. This eased the physical burden of the work and promoted its professionalisation. Parallel to this transition, the gender coding of the occupation was reversed. As technology advanced, the professionalised dairy industry became associated with masculinity. Thus, the formation of gender identities evolves in a reflexive relation with cultural, economic and technological transition.

With the modernisation of agriculture, technological know-how has obtained an important position within farming and in the construction of the image of the farmer. Gender and technology researchers have argued (Faulkner, 2001) that the use of technology is never socially neutral; instead, technology is always gendered, to the extent that the understanding of how men and women use technology differently holds several socially accepted ‘truths’. For instance, female users of technology are often judged as less competent than male users. Moreover, the understanding of technology in itself holds a hierarchy as certain technologies are given higher shared social status than others (Cockburn & Ormrod, 1993). There is a perpetuation of the association between the mastery of nature, modern technology and hegemonic masculinity (Balsamo, 1998; Connell, 1987; Faulkner, 2001, 2009).

Technology is central in the construction of masculinity and masculine culture (Wajcman, 2010). This monopolisation is further perpetuated by the design of technology, which assumes men's bodies as the norm. Because men have greater muscle strength and are taller than women on average, the creation of technology that uses male bodies as the norm leads to physiological difficulties for women to perform labour tasks (Sachs, 1983).

In addition to the importance of bodily performance for the definition of masculinity in farming (Peter et al., 2000) and for men's monopolisation of technology, the transforming image of the female body (Somestad, 1992, 2020) prevents women from being recognised as capable of mastering the farm business (Saugeres, 2002; Silvasti, 2003) or machinery (Brandth, 2006). This is connected to how agricultural modernisation in a broader sense has become an arena for the materialisation of gender inequality (Osterud, 1993) and strengthened inequalities. As Niskanen (1998, p. 6) argued, men have appropriated the modernisation process and reformed their collective and agrarian identity towards a more individual-, market- and entrepreneurship-oriented one. In contrast, femininity has remained bound to women's roles as caretaker of the home and contributor to the local community. Researchers have explored how this has inhibited women's engagement in employment and politics (Little, 1997; Little & Jones, 2000).

In the agrarian context, the source of power was the head of family status. The construction of a farmer is a gendered construction. The basis of patriarchal power within the family farm was bound to control over the production assets and to economic power. The gender-differentiated division of tasks and power equipped men with various social and cultural assets that were preconditions to performing the farmer role (Asztalos Morell, 1999). Men's roles as farmers have been challenged by the forced collectivisation of farms in former state socialist countries, leading to the demasculinisation of farming. However, the powers to restore gender pride contributed to the resurgence of household-based farming and its marketisation in the 1970s, creating new grounds for men's improved status (Asztalos Morell, 1999). The masculinisation of reindeer herding may bear some similarities to these processes. The ability to master new technologies such as helicopters and scooters could be interpreted as an expression of Sámi men's resilience to countervail vulnerabilities experienced in encounters with the market and state authorities.

Discussion and Conclusion

Gender research on reindeer herding households has highlighted the interdependencies between the contributions of men and women to maintain reindeer herding as a livelihood and a business. Men engage in the core functional activities of reindeer herding, contributing with landscape knowledge, physical labour, technological skills and running the business. However, women contribute to reindeer herding activities during peak periods, maintain its logistics, such as transport of fodder, and engage with childcare. Furthermore, although women have fewer income-generating activities, they nonetheless contribute a substantially higher personal income to the household compared to men. Pluriactivity is an adaptational strategy in which women's wage labour contributes to the stability of the household's subsistence (Buchanan et al., 2016).

The focus of research concerning the situation of women in reindeer herding households is twofold. On the one hand, researchers have highlighted women's disadvantages, including institutional hindrances to women becoming reindeer herders and processes that render their contributions to the maintenance of the reindeer herding enterprise and household invisible (Amft, 2000; Udén, 2004). Meanwhile, women are also disadvantaged due to the legal constructs of the reindeer herding acts guiding RHC practices, such as assigning pasture rights to RHC members based on their ability to obtain a 'real' reindeer herder status by becoming a group leader.

On the other hand, research has also pinpointed that Indigenous women have a higher level of education (Arora-Jonsson, 2017; Buchanan et al., 2016) compared to men. Men are expected to fulfil community and locality-specific masculine roles, such as becoming a reindeer herder or gaining occupations in resource-based industries. Women, due to the aforementioned institutional hindrances and alternative cultural expectations, opt for alternative strategies that involve continued education and employment outside of reindeer herding. This in turn creates an imbalance in human capital to the advantage of women. Women's employment outside the reindeer herding household is not only a great contribution to its stability, but it also enhances women's personal human capital and income-earning capacity. As Buchanan et al. (2016) argued, this places Indigenous men at a disadvantage in situations of crises and can potentially lead to them abandoning the business activity.

There is a growing demand for documentation and planning in communication with authorities. Among these is the demand for reindeer herding plans that can be used to communicate

between different users as well as with authorities whose decisions influence the conditions for reindeer herding (Buchanan et al., 2016). As of today, it is mainly men engaged in these activities since men take responsibility for allocating grazing both within the household and the community. Since women have higher human capital, Buchanan et al. (2016) argued that RHCs should increase women's engagement and contact with institutions affecting reindeer. They could make use of their human capital and turn it into institutional capital, influencing policies and plans to support reindeer herding and associated cultural activities. Meanwhile, this would increase the visibility of women's roles in reindeer herding.

The introduction of chips to follow the movements of reindeer could enable women to monitor the reindeer from a distance and document their movements for RHCs (Udén, 2004). Thus, women could be more involved with daily activities of reindeer herding and combine these with home-based activities (Lindberg and Udén, 2010; Udén, 2008). Women are already involved with processing reindeer products, such as creating and selling *duodji* (Buchanan, 2014; Buchanan et al., 2016). Further engagement with processing could contribute to improving the economic conditions of the household and enterprise.

Women's complicit status in reindeer husbandry households has even affected their ability to obtain full social citizenship. Since most individualised social rights, such as security payments and work pensions, are based on work-related entitlements, women who work in the informal context of the household as *husfolk* lack entitlements to make claims for benefits. Little is known about women's eligibility to social rights in these households. Similar to on family farms, women reindeer herders also face difficulties claiming their contributions to the reindeer herding enterprise in cases of divorce or if the title holding head of the family passes away.

Meanwhile, there is an intersection between gender relations in reindeer herding and (post)colonial relations. Reindeer herding is under constant pressure due to conflicting demands on natural resources and state passivity. As a result of the diminishing economic base for reindeer herding, Indigenous men, who are the primary agents of reindeer herding, are subordinated to the (post)colonial conditions of expansive resource exploitation. Their livelihoods are intimately connected to multi-functional households where women's wage labour incomes are important revenues ensuring adaptability of the household to changing conditions. Under prevailing circumstances, women, by accumulating higher human capital, have been able to use their agency and, to use Hobson's (1990) term, exit

reindeer herding. In the long term, this will contribute to demographic challenges to the reproduction of reindeer herding as a livelihood and the survival of reindeer herding as an ethnic identity marker for Sámi. Therefore, improved conditions for reindeer herding as well as for women working within reindeer herding is crucial for the long-term sustainability of reindeer herding.

Finally, this chapter discussed the relevance of an intersectional approach to understand women's citizenship status in reindeer herding households. This analysis supports Kuokkanen's (2019) argument for the demands for Indigenous rights to be joined with those for gender justice. This chapter also pointed out numerous areas in need of further research, including the slow increase in the number of women reindeer herders as well as in the number and proportion of women owners of reindeer. There is also a research gap concerning the access of wives of reindeer herding men to social rights. Finally, more research is needed on the situation of reindeer herding men, especially those who are bachelors.

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