

# Being a Young Sami in Sweden

## Living Conditions, Identity and Life Satisfaction

**ABSTRACT Objective:** The aim of the present study was to illuminate the contemporary cultural reality of being a young Sami in Sweden, with special reference to issues such as identity/self-perception, autonomy, and experiences of being ill treated and discrimination.

**Design:** The study comprises a qualitative and a quantitative part. The qualitative part includes meetings, discussions and dialogues with young Sami and others. The quantitative part includes a questionnaire on socioeconomic conditions, Sami ethnicity, experiences of being ill-treated because of a Sami background, specific questions on identity and self-perception, questions about self-determination, and thoughts and expectations of the future. The sample consists of 876 young Sami aged 18–28, of whom 516 (59 per cent) responded to the questionnaire.

**Results:** A majority are proud to be Sami and wish to preserve their culture. 71 per cent have a close connection to a Sami community. Most of the young Sami have had to explain and defend their culture and way of life. Nearly half had perceived discrimination or ill-treatment because of their ethnicity, with reindeer herders reporting a higher degree of ill-treatment (70 per cent). Reindeer herders exist in a severe environment with an insecure legacy. Most of the young Sami in this study have a positive self-perception and think that their lives are meaningful. Very few dropped out of school and very few are unemployed.

**Conclusion:** We believe that there are protective factors that potentially explain the well-being of this group; a strong feeling of belonging among the Sami, strong connections to family, relatives and friends and good socio-cultural adaptation (to have a job, completed school).<sup>1</sup>

JAN RAGNAR HAGLAND

# Literacy and Trade in Late Medieval Norway

**ABSTRACT** Only faint traces can be observed of literacy connected to domains other than the legal sphere in late medieval Norway. This may be the result of poor archival practices for keeping written material not strictly connected to legal matters, such as the activities carried out by merchants and tradesmen. The present article tries nonetheless to study whether or not it is possible to relate the notion of literacy to trade in this period of time. The lack of evidence written in Roman letters may, it seems, to some extent be remedied by runic inscriptions excavated in medieval Norwegian towns. We must assume that the use of runes within the domain of trade grew out of an increasingly more complex organisation of mercantile activities which we see especially in an important port such as Bergen in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is, perhaps, not only due to chance that the discovered evidence seems to reflect the situation before the middle of the fourteenth century, when Bergen in particular was struck by the Great Plague. Whether the dramatic events caused by the Black Death did create a discontinuity in runic literacy connected to trade, we do not know.

# „[A]lles öde und kahl, und somit echt isländisch“

## Ein Reisebericht aus dem Jahr 1846 oder die Anfänge des Island-Tourismus

**ABSTRACT** Der Artikel stellt einen Reisebericht der Österreicherin Ida Pfeifferin den Mittelpunkt, die im Jahr 1845 Island besuchte. Da Tourismus als ein Phänomen und Charakteristikum der Moderne gilt, lädt Pfeiffers Islandreise zu Fragen bezüglich der Anfänge touristischen und einer möglichen Authentizität frühmodernen Reisens ein. Der Authentizitätsbegriff, der heute oft im Zentrum neuer Tourismusforschung steht, stellt einen Einfallswinkel für die Analyse dar. Während die Autorin selbst die Ursprünglichkeit des Landes und die Echtheit ihres Erlebens hervorhebt, wird deutlich, dass sie eben diese Authentizität durch bestimmte Inszenierungsverfahren hervorbringt. So ist es nicht erstaunlich, dass – wie eine zeitgenössische Karikatur belegt – die Autorin schon in der Mitte des 19. Jh. in einen Tourismuskursus eingeschrieben wird.

STEPHEN PAX LEONARD

# Ethnolinguistic Identities and Language Revitalisation in a Small Society

## The Case of the Faroe Islands

**ABSTRACT** This article explores how Faroese managed to be revitalised from a threatened, minority language to become the main language of 45,000 people living on seventeen islands in the North Atlantic. The Faroese language was coupled with a rich oral literature and was spoken in a very narrow and well-defined diglossic context which localised a Faroese linguistic identity. The social space of the homestead was not linguistically infringed upon by the colonial language, Danish, and was left in fact to survive in an environment of thriving spoken traditions. It is argued that these factors and the choice of an orthography quite distinct from the competing variety, enabled the language to survive. Faroese shows us that a tiny language can survive for centuries against the odds, providing certain conditions are in place. It is also evidence of how a low variety in a stable diglossic situation can flourish when the linguistic status quo is dismantled. Faroese has gradually moved into the high variety domain, squeezing Danish out. In theory, the revitalisation of Faroese would appear to be a model of success. Regrettably, the ingredients of language planning success are complex, culture-specific and do not seem to lend themselves to broad reapplication.