

# The Sami Representations Reflecting the Multi-Ethnic North of the Saga Literature

**ABSTRACT** This article focuses on contextualizing the Sami (*finnar*) representations in Old Norse saga literature. The purpose is to show that the Sami representations reflect multi-layered Old Norse textual and oral traditions, and complex interaction between the Sami and the Norwegians in the Middle Ages. The stereotypes of the Sami tell us more about the society that created them than about real, historical events. We can be sure that behind them lie very mundane phenomena such as trade and marriages.

The ultimate goal of the article is therefore to reveal the multi-ethnic North that provided the background for the saga sources, a North whose history is not as homogeneous as sources suggest and quite unlike the modified version which found its way into the histories of nation states. The literary conventions of sagas are not just imaginary tales—their use in various contexts can reveal something essential in otherwise schematic images or configurations. Even researchers of the sagas have certain personal conceptions of what the “real” lives of the Sami were like at the time, and how the sagas depict this. In fact, they participate in a continuum of saga literature that generates representations of the Sami in history.

**KEYWORDS** the Sami, migration, the Middle Ages, saga literature, Iceland, multi-ethnicity

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ANETTE EDIN-LILJEGREN, LAILA DAERGA,  
KLAS-GÖRAN SAHLÉN & LARS JACOBSSON

# Psychosocial Perspectives on Working Conditions among Men and Women in Reindeer Breeding in Sweden

**ABSTRACT Objective:** The aim of this project was to describe the work organisation in the Sami communities and in reindeer-herding work and to explore the range of female duties and compare how men and women experience their psychosocial working conditions.

**Design:** A kind of intervention study was performed by means of a questionnaire sent out to 200 individuals from seven Sami communities. Questions were asked about work organisation, communication, personal relations, solitary work, support, participation and appreciation from colleagues and women's tasks. Meetings and discussions were held about what was perceived as being important in the life of the Sami communities. Notes from 16 group discussions were written down and analysed according to themes of topics relating to how men and women in the Sami communities experience their lives.

**Results:** Communication and relations were described as being inadequate and some respondents experienced a heavy workload. The women reported more troubled relations, less participation in decision-making and less appreciation from colleagues. Positive issues reported were the Sami identity and a strong connection to the reindeer and to nature.

**Conclusions:** This study indicates a need for a more systematic study of the psychosocial work conditions in the Sami communities in Sweden. Measures should be taken to develop the organisation of work, e.g. through developing communication strategies and conflict management, which has been requested by several Sami communities.

**KEYWORDS** reindeer-herding Sami, work organisation, gender, social support, work demand

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ATINA NIHTINEN

# Åland as a Special Case

## From Monolith to Diverse?

**ABSTRACT** The present article discusses two sets of issues. On the one hand, I consider the different factors and circumstances which have influenced relations between Swedish and Finnish on Åland and the implications of political change. On the other hand, I discuss the ways in which these are understood and presented in history writing. By considering continuity and change in history writing and language discussions I argue that history writing has changed from a rather monolithic interpretation rooted in nationalism and the early decades of autonomy towards a more versatile interpretation (such as considering Åland as being connected to both east and west and ideas such as many Ålands). At the same time the role of Swedish remains important, both as a matter of continuity (history) and as a matter of its instrumental function.

**KEYWORDS** Åland, Finnish, Swedish, Finland, Sweden, history writing, language relations

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