The Implication of "Neo Tribalism" in Minority Policy

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The North Calotte was created in the 1950s to manifest the northernmost dimension of the Nordic community. It has been known as a peace region, but in fact the North Calotte has not been as peaceful as stated. In the end of WW2 one of the biggest battles of the war took place at the North Calotte. After WW2, during the cold war, the Kola Peninsula became a strategic area of the nuclear marine of the Soviet Union.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the creation of the Barents Region, a new era has begun. The north west of Russia is more open to access for Western people, and vice versa. At the same time new kinds of conflicts have increased between different ethnic groups at the North Calotte.[1] They are new kind of conflicts that do not follow the borders of the nation state and do not follow class lines. These conflicts are the result of a global de-colonisation process with a focus on the new status of indigenous peoples. At the North Calotte the Sámi people are in focus.

The conflicts, involving the Sámi, are especially sharp in counties were the reindeer herding industry is using areas for reindeer breeding. In those areas the conflicts between reindeer owners and land owners have increased during the last decades, but in a post-colonial context the conflict is even wider (Rautio 2007). It is a general conflict about the right to use land and natural resources. A legal cornerstone of the issue is the International Labour Union convention 169 (ILO 169) within the UN. The ILO 169 convention states that indigenous people have special rights to land and water resources in the area were they earn their living.[2]

A new feature in ethnopolicy is what could be called, the coming of "new tribalism", represented at the North Calotte by some new ethnopolitical movements where Finnish speakers from the northern part of Sweden, Norway and Finland participate. They demand equal rights to land and water resources as the indigenous Sámi people. In this article, the way this kind of ethnopolitical organisation shall be interpreted in the context of post-colonial minority policy at the North Calotte for the legitimization of cultural, political and economical demands, especially in relation to the Sámi people, will be discussed. A closer look will be taken at the Swedish case in this matter.

The Post-Colonial Discourse

When examining the relations between ethnic groups in the Nordic countries one must take into consideration the global changes in the relations between colonies and colonial powers. A redefinition of the global legal system has taken place, which has made former colonised countries gain their independence. It has led to a de-construction of social hierarchies, a construction of new images of the nation, and a rewriting of the history of different indigenous groups; in short, to create a new conception of the world (Said 1997; Castells 1997; Childs & Williams 1997; Harrison 2003; Loomba 2006).

When examining the North Calotte in a post-colonial perspective it is obvious that the post-colonial approach is not a geographical perspective which separates the industrialised Western word from the rest of the former colonised world. The notion of "colonialism" denotes, in a post-colonial sense, how power structures have influenced the relations between dominating and subordinated groups in a worldwide economic, political, ideological and cultural coherent system. The de-colonisation process is, thus, the deconstruction of this system and the establishing of a new international order.

The Western national minorities were for a long period of time incorporated in different nation states whose changing borders also changed the belonging to certain states. The incorporation of minorities into nation

states is not a linear affair. It varies very much depending on the historical context. Some minorities were very fully integrated according to citizenship, others did not achieve such a full citizenship. Most of the minorities were culturally subordinated to the ethnic majority of the state. In this sense some Western minorities can be regarded as internally colonised.

The peripheral territories of the Western states, which in many cases were inhabited by ethnic minorities, were colonised by the majority of the population in the state. The minorities have more or less been integrated and assimilated into the political, cultural and economic framework of the majority population. In the discourse of internal colonialism one could call it a cognitive power system of dominating and sub-ordinate groups. In such a system the cultural norms of the dominant part of the population have been used for the creation of national identification.

Theories about internal colonialism have been used by Michael Hechter to explain how a cultural division of labour has occurred in the nation state, i.e. a system of stratification within the structure of professions, where objective cultural differences get an advantage before class differences. Hechter, and others with him, has further tried to qualify the theory by asserting that cultural division of labour leads to an ethnic mobilisation and revitalisation from below. The theory has been used to explain the ethnic revitalisation in Celtic territories, in the meaning of "ethnic class antagonism" (Hechter 1999). The model has, however, been criticised for territorial reductionism. Hechter later modified the model about cultural division of labour to a more "segmented" type, but even the latter model has been met with criticism (Smith 1981, p 32 ff.).

The discourse of internal colonialism can also be applied to the national minorities in the Scandinavian countries. In regard to the Sámi people it has been done in many contexts, anywhere from religion and school policy to commercial and tax policy. Connected to this it is interesting to note, that in Sweden both the Sámi people and the Finnish speaking Torne Valley minority have raised protests against being regarded as colonised groups. They have dissociated themselves from different standpoints, but yet with a clear ethnopolitical indication that they regard themselves as citizens in democratically ruled countries.

Another feature of the post-colonial era is increased global migration on a mass scale, which has increased the variety of cultures and ethnic groups within the nation state. This mass migration started already in the wake of WW2. Sweden, with its favourable position after the war, had an intact infrastructure and an undestroyed industry. There were many needs in the bombed out Europe, and in Sweden there was a lack of workers for the big demands. Therefore the government encouraged workers from other countries to immigrate to Sweden.

In other Fennoscandinavian countries the situation was different. Both Finland and Norway had to rebuild the country after the war, especially at the North Calotte were German troops had burnt both the Finnish side of the Torne Valley and big parts of Northern Norway. Finland had no need for immigrant workers; on the contrary a mass migration of Finns to Sweden started. From the end of WW2 many hundred thousands of Finns moved over to Sweden. This was made easier through the creation of a Nordic political common with the aim of making it easier for citizens in Nordic countries to move between the countries. In 1954, for example, a common Nordic labour market was created (Sundelin & Wiklund 2000).

In the 20th century the power of the nation state has declined in favour of new transnational global structures. The North Calotte was an early regional experiment in the northernmost part of Europe, but during the initial stage of the European Common the nation states still had a strong independent role in politics. Within the community of the Nordic countries the Sámi people developed a trans-national co-operation, which started parallel to the trans-national region building of the Nordic countries. No such trans-national co-operation did occur among, or between, the Finnish speaking minorities. They were in the first half of the 20th century, in Sweden, Norway and Russia, regarded as a menace to the nation state, a kind of inner enemy. This "inner" image did follow both the Torne Valley people in Sweden and the Kven people in Norway until the beginning of the 1960s.

The image of an inner enemy was also, up to the Second World War, associated with the Finnish immigrants from Finland, both in Sweden and Norway. In Norway this image prevailed until the 1970s, but not in the same suspicious way as earlier. In Sweden the image of the Finns as a menace vanished from the middle of the 1930s when the two states negotiated about military co-operation. After the war the Finns were regarded more and more as important immigrant workers in the factories. They were a part of the new global immigration wave, which also moved them from a pure Nordic context to a new global context.

In this new context they were also transformed from the ethnonym *Finn*, in its old national context, to *Sweden-Finn*, in its new global context. The same happened to

the Sámi people, as mentioned, but much earlier. In their case they were transformed from the pejorative ethnonym *Lap*, in a Swedish context, to the self denominator *Sámi*. The Sámi people were regarded as an indigenous people, and the elite activists of the Nordic Sámi movement played an important role in the establishment of the World Council of Indigenous People (WCIP) (Minde 2005, p 18; Lantto 2003). In this way they came to be a direct part of the global de-colonisation movement.

No such transformation took place among the Finnish speaking minorities in the Swedish Torne Valley in northern Sweden, or in northern Norway. In the 1970s the Torne Valley people and the Kven people were still regarded as national minorities within single nation states. They were neither connected to the new global immigration movement, nor connected to the global indigenous movement. Even if the Kven people were an immigrant group, this did not count, because they had immigrated to northern Norway mostly in the 18th and 19th century (Niemi 1995).

The Finnish speaking minorities were also latecomers as ethnopolitical organisers. The national organisation for the Torne Valley people was, for example, not created before 1981, but a new element was added to the organisation. They used their own Finnish language to depict themselves as "Tornionlaaksolaiset", the Torne Valley people. They also distinguished their variety of Finnish, "Meänkieli", as a language in itself. [3]

The consequences of the de-colonisation are incalculable, but one obvious effect are the consequences for the national minorities in the European states. It is connected to two, between themselves, related processes. One is the deconstruction of the *ethnic content* of the nation-state, which has led to changed power relations between different ethnic groups. The other is the post-modern deconstruction of the *cultural content* of the state, which has opened up for recognition the nation-state as a multicultural unit. This has entailed cultures to be regarded as mixed cultures instead of monolithical units. In that way different kinds of hybrid identities have got normative status. At the same time the large narratives of the nation-state have been challenged by the accounts of ethnic groups and national minorities (Bhabha 1990; Young 2001; Harrison 2003, p. 99 ff.).

This has opened ways for new kinds of identification and constructed identities for political purposes. An important part of this process is the use of history as collective memory for the purpose of ideological and moral aims, where present needs are, to a large extent, guided by the creation and formation of an historical consciousness of the goals of distinctive groups

(Hobsbawm 1992; Karlsson 1999; Hall 2000). In this regard the ethnic mobilisation at the North Calotte shows how influences from globalisation have had an effect on ethnic relations and collective memory production from below also in stable nation-states, as the Nordic ones.

The minority policy of Sweden and Norway

In a Nordic context the Finns in contemporary Finland were already directed both to the East and West in the medieval period. It is particularly so for the Karelian group, divided in its loyalty between the Grand Duchy of Novgorod and the Swedish kingdom. This led to the division of the Karelian culture into a Western and Eastern branch. The Western part became protestant Christian and the Eastern part became orthodox Christian.

In Sweden the Finnish tribes did already in the 13th century, during the formation of the nation state, represent a big minority group within the kingdom. It is not true, that which Swedish nationalistic historiography claims, that Finland was solely conquered through crusades and incorporated into a fulfilled Swedish kingdom. There was no fulfilled Swedish kingdom in the beginning of the 13th century.

The Finnish tribes were in a political position between Novgorod and Sweden, but also religiously between Constantinople and Rome. Nothing seems to prove that the Finnish tribes at this time had the strength to form a separate state. The desire to be incorporated into the Swedish kingdom was caused both by force and necessity. In the northern part of Sweden, along the Gulf of Bothnia, there was a settlement with elements of Finno-Ugric culture before the Swedish state colonised the area in the 14th century (Wallerström 1995).

The Swedes used an integration policy to incorporate the Finns, both politically and religiously, in the kingdom. Already in the middle of the 14th century the Finns had the same right to elect the king as other regions in the common kingdom. They obtained the same kind of representation in the Diet of the four Estates. As a consequence of the Reformation the Bible was translated almost at the same time into Finnish and Swedish. The same judicial system was in function in Finland as in Sweden as was the system of enrolment in the army.

When it came to education the Finns had the same rights and obligations in the Swedish kingdom. In 1686 an education system at the family level was launched in the Swedish kingdom, based on the Church law from that year. This law prescribed every master of the household to educate the servants and children in reading. The

vernacular language was instruction language, i.e. the language the head of the household talked. This is the background to the high level of literacy in Sweden and Finland before the primary school reforms. In cultural matters the Finns were subordinated to the Swedes, because the central political language was Swedish and the Swedes occupied most of the administrative appointments in Finland as well as in Sweden (Elenius 1999). During the long period from the 13th century until 1809 Finland was a buffer zone in the rivalry between the Swedish and Russian nation state. After that year the political centre turned from Stockholm to St. Petersburg. That was also the birth of a separate Finnish national movement.

In the case of Norway there was no Finnish- or Kven-question during the middle Ages. You can hardly talk about a Kven settlement in Northern Norway before the 18th century, and along the coast of the Arctic Ocean there was anyhow a very sparse and outspread population (Björklund 1985; Niemi 1995). From 1814 to 1905 Sweden and Norway formed a common union. During that time the foreign policies of the two countries were the same, but the inner national development had an independent national course.

This period saw a cultural polarisation between a Scandinavian culture on one hand, and a Finno-Ugric culture on the other hand. It took the shape of a both inner and outer frontier. The outer frontier was the border to Finland, which during that period was a Russian grand duchy. The Finns in Finland were regarded as the eastern Other, associated with the main enemy Russia. This did also spill over to the Finnish speaking Torne Valley people, at the border of Sweden-Finland, and Kven people, at the border of Norway-Finland. The two minorities were regarded as an inner enemy.

The polarisation did not only include the Finnish speaking minorities, but also the Sámi people on the North Calotte. Before the middle of the 19th century there was, both in Norway and Sweden, an allowing policy towards Finno-Ugric minorities. When this policy turned into an assimilation policy in Norway in the middle of the century, the Sámi people were also involved. Sweden turned to an assimilation policy towards the Torne Valley people in the middle of the 1870s, but not towards the Sámi people. The policy towards the Sámi people was in the beginning of the 20th century differentiated into two directions. A segregation policy was launched towards the reindeer herding Sámi people, both in cultural and trade matters. An assimilation policy was launched in language matters (Elenius 2006).

There are many factors which can explain the similari-

ties in the Swedish and Norwegian minority policy during the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. An obvious similarity is that the two countries were in union with each other. This implied that they had separate national parliaments for the inner policy, but a common security- and foreign policy and a common head of state.

Through this arrangement Sweden and Norway came to share a similar conception of an international menace during the union time, even if this could be interpreted in somewhat different ways in the two countries. In the conception of an international menace the Russian great power played an all-pervasive role. As both the Finnish speakers and the Sámi people were border populations near the border to the Russian Empire, they came to play an important role in the discussion of security policy. They were regarded as a national threat at the border. The fact that language, culture and history were so closely connected in Sweden and Norway did also to some extent work as a unifying factor. In the Social Darwinist ideas of the time the fight between people, race and language played an important role. A prevalent European trend was the effort to unify language families in a common movement. Pan Slavism, Scandinavism and the Fennoman movement in Finland were expressions of the striving for cultural and linguistic unity.

In the cultural polarization between different kinds of people in the end of the 19th century, Norwegians and Swedes had an idea about a linguistic and cultural fellowship to be defended towards the Finno-Ugric family i.e. the Sámi people and the Finns. To the pure cultural striving must be added the political ambition to unify people talking the same language, or belonging to the same language group, in a greater political unity (Elenius 2002).

The assimilation policy released little by little during the 1960s and 1970s, under the influence of the immigration policy. In this way the Finnish immigrants from Finland, now called Sweden-Finns, paved the way for a new way of recognising national minorities with a historical connection to the Swedish nation state. During the last two decades of the 20th century a strong revitalisation among the Torne Valley people and the Sámi people took place. As mentioned above, the first national organisation for the Torne Valley people was created in 1981. In Norway a similar organisation for the Kven people was launched in 1987. Some years later the Sámi people were officially recognised as an indigenous people.

The Notion of Neo-Tribes

Both the creation of ethnic organisations among the Finnish speaking minorities and the recognition of the Sámi people as an indigenous people are caused by the globalisation process in its post-colonial shape. In this development the state is no longer in the centre, rather the state is marginalised within new kinds of global and international power structures. At the same time life has become more fragmented among ordinary people.

The development of an urban, post-modern society of masses has come to a point where we see a presence of deliberately formed micro-groups in everyday life. They are, in sociological terms, called new-tribes. New-tribes are not rational groups in a normative modern way. They are driven by the aim to socialise in local and sub-cultural contexts. They are motivated by empathetic, more than rational arguments. They are called neo-tribes because they tend to be counterparts to the organisational, national projects of the Enlightenment era, based on individuation and separation (Maffesoli 1996; Tierny 2002).

An important means in this ethnopolitical mobilisation has been the use of the Internet as a means of a fast and effective communication outside the established media channels. With the Internet both a globally effective and decentralised communication system has been created, which in a dramatic way has contributed to undermining centralised communication structures. It has also led to a democratisation of the media structure, which has at the same time created a forum for undemocratic forces (Burkhalter 1999; Svenningsson 2003). Parallel to this development, the influence of the nation-state has declined in favour of transnational macro regions, such as the EU and the Barents region.

Different kinds of small political groups have, within this communication revolution, and in the new decentralised political room, mobilised around specific demands. These new kinds of pressure groups, or "neo tribes", are very local in their context, taking their arguments from everyday life, but using the Internet as a tool of mobilisation across national boundaries. They are creating new types of political and mental spaces and challenge the official minority policy, which is actually, from the beginning, based on the ground of a paternalistic view of the Sámi people and other native minorities.

The Common Denominator of the Pan-Kven Movement.

The creation of new kinds of ethnic organisations at the North Calotte, claiming that they are indigenous peoples, must be regarded in the discourse of globalisation, post-colonialism and neo-tribes. The years in the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, were a turning point in the relations between Finno-Ugric people of the North Calotte. Until that point there had been no strong tensions between the Finnish speaking minorities and the Sámi people, but with the new ethnic power balance within the nation state, new conflicts grew.

Only some months after the resolution of a Sámi Parliament in Sweden, in 1993, a new ethnopolitical movement saw the light of day. They were Finnish speakers in northern Sweden, Norway and Finland, and they called themselves *Kven people*, claiming a long historical heritage, before the establishment of the nation state. They used old ambiguous historical sources, claiming to be indigenous people with the same rights as the Sámi people.

The new thing is that these persons belong to the traditional national minorities, defined by the state as Kven people and Torne Valley people, but in the new post-colonial context they have defined themselves as ancient "Kven people". The obvious goal has been to be regarded as an indigenous people, or at least to block the recognition of the Sámi people as the only indigenous people. The ground for the conflict is the legislation considering the Sámi people as an indigenous people, especially the UN-convention ILO 169, which regulates their right to self determination, as an indigenous people, over the natural resources within their area of residence (SOU 1999:25).

One striking feature of the pan-Kven movement is that the Finnish speakers involved are organised across the national boundaries of Sweden, Finland and Norway. Another feature is that mobilisation is achieved through home pages on the Internet, or through web-based discussion forums. This means that the pattern of organisation brakes with the traditional pattern of political minority organisations.

The Response from Political Parties in Sweden

Political parties in Sweden have also been committed both on the local and the national level. Kirunapartiet is a local party in Kiruna in northern Sweden. It is an opportunistic political party, known for its commitment

in medical treatment, but also for its resistance towards a Swedish ratification of ILO 169 (http://www.kiruna.se/~kip/). On a national level the Swedish Christian Democrats have engaged in the issue as a political party. In 2003 the party proposed a motion, in which they demanded an analysis of the consequences of a ratification of ILO 169. They argued that allowances must be made for trade and industry when considering ratification, and also that the changed relations between the Sámi people and "other indigenous peoples" must be analysed before ratification (Motion 2003/04:K287).

Two years later the Swedish Christian Democrats proposed a new motion on the subject. The same arguments were used as before, but now with the addition of it being unclear whether there are other people, for example the Kven people, who are indigenous (Motion 2005/06: K308). Both motions were rejected by the Parliament. Within the Sámi parliament there is also great tension between non-reindeer and reindeer Sámi, a tension that has been hidden under the surface before. All in all, the development, carried out through globalisation processes, has totally changed the inter-ethnic relations in the field of minority policy and the minorities' policies at the North Calotte. These new kinds of neo-tribes have changed the conditions of the state to carry out a minority policy.

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http://www.kiruna.se/~kip/

Notes

[1] A research project, concerning ethno political creation of identities at the North Calotte 1960-2000, is carried out at the department of Social Sciences at Luleå University of Technology. It is financed by the Swedish Research Council and will continue 2006-2009. The article is partly built on my articles: "Kväner – en föränderlig identitet på Nordkalotten" in (red. Inga Lundström) *Historisk rätt och historiens sprängkraft*. Riksantikvarieämbetete: Stockholm and "Memory Politics and the Use of History: Finnish-speaking Minorities at the North Calotte", in *Historical Writing and Politics and Practices of Remembrance* (ed. Bo Stråth & Gosia Pakier) The European University Institute: Florence.

[2] The convention 169 within the UN-organ *International Labour Organization* (ILO), about aboriginal and tribal people in self dependent countries, came into existence in 1991. The convention adjudge special rights to indigenous people, for example the right to keep ones own language and institutions, and the right to, during certain circumstances, solve internal conflicts in accordance with one owns customs. It was ratified by Norway in 1991 and Denmark in 1996 (SOU 1999:25).

[3] The meaning of "Meänkieli" is, in English, "Our language".