



# Nordic Ruralities Book of Abstracts

3-5 December 2024  
Kiruna, Sweden



Uppdrag

landsbygd





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# Preface

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## The 6th Nordic Conference for Rural Research

The Nordic Ruralities Conference is arranged biannually, and its location alternate among the Nordic countries. Since its launch in 2010, this conference has provided a valuable platform for interdisciplinary discussions. The conference brings together researchers from various disciplines, interested in the Nordic context as an empirical field. Nordic Ruralities is an excellent environment in which to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and explore pressing issues in Nordic rural areas. This year's theme, *New Paths to Sustainable Transitions*, invites participants to explore innovative approaches and solutions for sustainable transition and societal development across rural communities. The conference has four subthemes:

1. Cultures and People, Places and Identities
2. Sustainable use of Natural Resources
3. Rural Economy and Entrepreneurship
4. Policies and Politics of the Rural

The conference is arranged by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the Department of Urban and Rural Development through the government assignment *Uppdrag landsbygd*. As part of the government assignment, Uppdrag landsbygd should support the dissemination of research results to strengthen the engagement and application of scientific knowledge and make scientific knowledge available to decision-makers and professionals in the field.

### Partners:

The Scientific Committee for the 6th Nordic Conference for Rural Research consists of:

- **Tuija Mononen**, University researcher, Department of geographical and historical studies, Joensuu, *University of Eastern Finland*.
- **Lise Byskov Herslund**, Associate professor, Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management (IGN), *University of Copenhagen*, Denmark.
- **Thoroddur Bjarnason**, Professor of Sociology, *University of Akureyri*, Iceland.
- **Maja Farstad**, Senior researcher, *Institute for rural and regional research (Ruralis)*, Trondheim, Norway.
- **Arvid Stiernström**, Researcher PhD, Department of Urban and Rural Development, *Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences*, Uppsala, Sweden.

### Funding:

Funding is provided by the Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation and the Division of Rural Development (SLU).



# Conference Programme

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## Day 1 – 3 December

09:00-10:15	<b>Registration</b>
10:15-10:30	<b>Welcome to Nordic Ruralities</b>
10:30-11:15	Plenary speaker - <b>Åsa Larsson Blind</b> , vice-president of the Saami Council
11:15-12:00	Plenary speaker - <b>Laura Junka-Aikio</b> , the University of Lapland
12:00-13:00	<b>Lunch</b>
13:00-15:00	<b>Parallel Session 1</b>
15:00-15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
15:30-17:30	<b>Parallel Session 2</b>
19:00-21:00	<b>Dinner</b>

## Day 2 – 4 December

08:00-08:30	<b>Registration</b>
08:30-10:30	<b>Parallel Session 3</b>
10:30-11:00	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:00-12:00	Plenary speaker - <b>Hanne Wittorff Tanvig</b> , the University of Copenhagen
12:00-13:00	<b>Lunch</b>
13:00-15:00	<b>Parallel Session 4</b>
15:00-15:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
15:30-17:30	<b>Parallel Session 5</b>
19:00-22:00	<b>Banquet</b>

## Day 3 – 5 December

09:30-10:00	<b>General Assembly: The future of Nordic Ruralities</b>
10:00-10:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
10:30-11:30	Plenary speaker - <b>Nils Björling</b> , Chalmers University of Technology
11:00-12:00	<b>Conference summary and farewells</b>
12:00-13:00	<b>Lunch</b>





# Parallel Sessions

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Theme 1: **Cultures and people, places and identities**

Theme 2: **Sustainable use of natural resources**

Theme 3: **Rural economy and entrepreneurship**

Theme 4: **Policies and politics of the rural**

Day 1 – 3 December						
	Dálvi B	Dálvi C	Producenten	The Hiker	The Trekker	The Climber
<b>13:00-15:00</b>	Theme 1 WG 1.4.1	Theme 2 WG 2.1.1	Theme 2 WG 2.6.3	Theme 1 WG 1.5.1	Theme 1 WG 1.2.1	Theme 2 WG 2.3.1
<b>15:30-17:30</b>	Theme 1 WG 1.1.1	Theme 2 WG 2.1.2	Theme 4 WG 4.1.2	Theme 1 WG 1.5.2	Theme 1 WG 1.2.2	Theme 3 WG 3.3
Day 2 – 4 December						
	Dálvi B	Dálvi C	Producenten	The Hiker	The Trekker	The Climber
<b>08:30-10:30</b>	Theme 1 WG 1.7.1	Theme 2 WG 2.4.1	Theme 2 WG 2.5.1	Theme 3 WG 3.1.1	Theme 4 WG 4.2.1	Theme 2 WG 2.2.1
<b>13:00-15:00</b>	Theme 1 WG 1.6.1	Theme 1 WG 19.2	Theme 2 WG 2.6.1	Theme 3 WG 3.2.1	Theme 4 WG 4.2.2	Theme 4 WG 4.5.2
<b>15:30-17:30</b>			Theme 2 WG 2.6.2	Theme 3 WG 3.2.2	Theme 4 WG 4.2.3	Theme 4 WG 4.4.1

Scan the QR-code below to get a visual and detailed schedule of the conference





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# 1. Cultures and People, Places and Identities

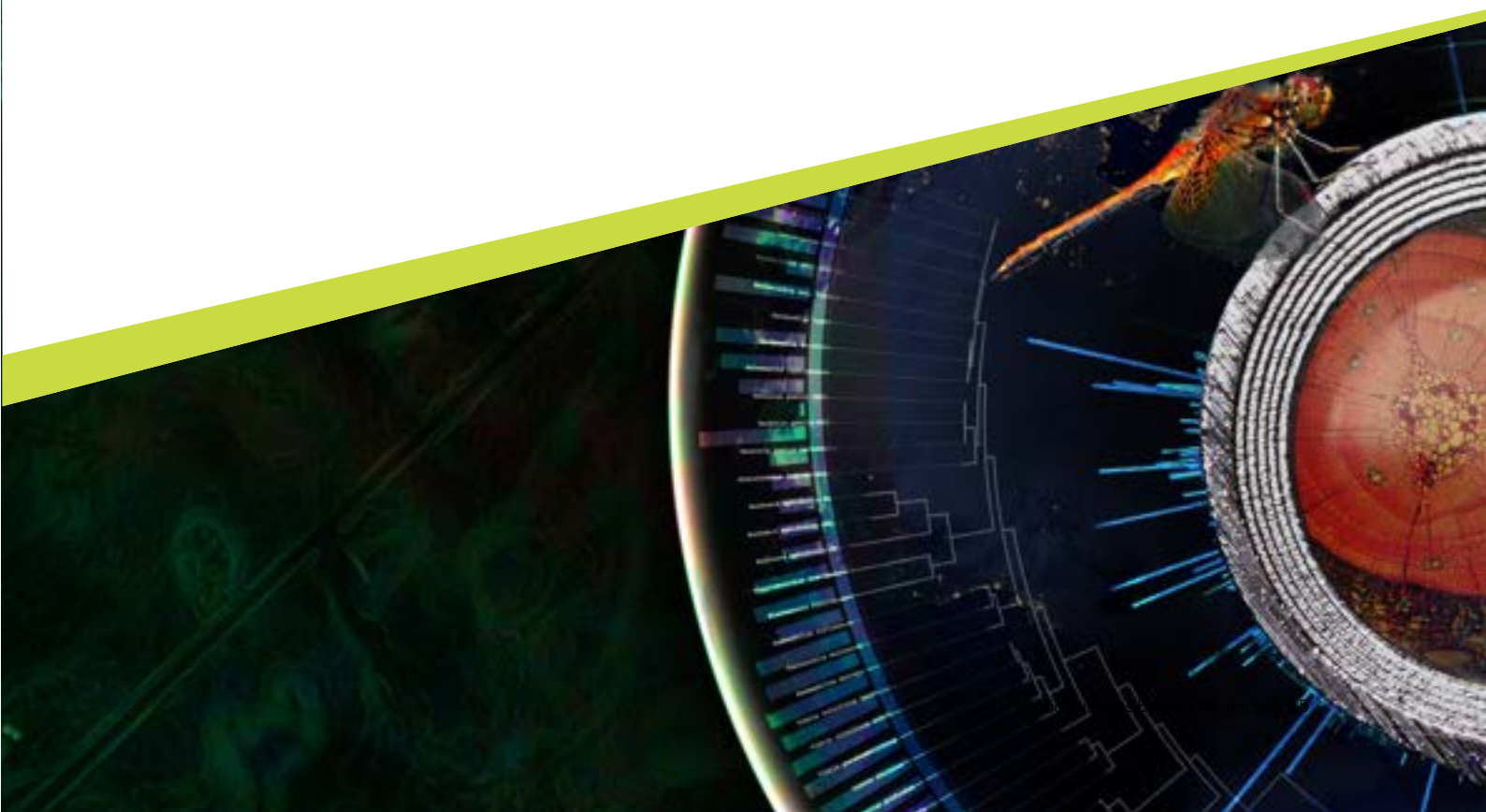
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# **The benefits of migration in Nordic rural areas**

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When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Moving from the City – What Drives Migration to Rural Areas?**

### **Cecilia Hammarlund**

The movement of people from rural areas to cities has long been viewed as a problem from a rural perspective. Often, it is young people who move to cities to pursue education and benefit from the higher salaries offered there. However, there are also people who move from cities to the countryside, a trend known as counter-urbanization. Using data from Statistics Sweden, we examine counter-urbanization in Sweden during the past 15 years. We investigate the characteristics of those who move to rural areas and explore how housing market factors have influenced their decisions. Preliminary results show that the number of people making counter-urban moves has increased. Most of these moves are to rural areas near urban centers, although there also has been an increase in

moves to more remote rural areas. Most counter-urban moves are within municipalities but the number of moves across municipality borders and across county borders have increased lately. Counter-urban movers tend to be younger, more often have a foreign background and have higher incomes than those who remain in rural areas. The most significant factors driving moves to rural areas are changes in household composition, such as transitioning from living alone to living with others or having children. Job market factors are less important. Regarding housing market factors, we find that most counter-urban movers live in rented accommodation before relocating to a rural area. However, the number of those moving from owner-occupied homes has increased over the past 15 years.

### **Cecilia Hammarlund<sup>1</sup>**

Martin Nordin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lund University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Rural adolescence and future plans for settlement – the role of network and belonging among village “insiders” and first generation incomers**

### **Mariann Villa**

The paper explores experiences of growing up in rural Norway and processes supporting rural leaving and rural living. Based on interviews with nine high school students we find that social networks and feelings of belonging influence upon future plans for leaving or staying. An upbringing characterized by active participation in activities and strong family ties in the village, called “rooted and active”, to the greatest extent generate plans for a future in the village. This is especially expressed by those with a farming background. These youths have social capital, strong social networks

and feel a strong sense of belonging, through activities and family. Youth without family roots in the village, first generation rural youth, to a greater extent are uncertain about their future in the village and express feelings of being outsiders due to an “internal migrant” status. While all the youths want to leave the village through “a trip out” for education and new experiences outside the village, the future returners base their plans on their own “idyllic rural upbringing”, with amazing nature, security, closeness to family, and participation in activities, and which they want to reproduce for a future family.

### **Mariann Villa<sup>1</sup>**

Åshild Lunestad<sup>1</sup>, Richard Hoberg<sup>2</sup>, Anna Cecilia Rapp<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian University of Science and Technology

<sup>2</sup> University of North Dakota

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Migration in coastal communities– myths, challenges and local policies**

### **Marit Aure**

Rural communities along the coast encourage international migrants to settle permanently to increase the declining number of inhabitants, fill vital positions in local labor markets and societies, and reduce the stress of temporary immigration in the communities. Traditionally, communities in Northern Norway are considered, and consider themselves, to be open-minded and welcoming to foreigners. Based on participatory qualitative studies in five communities in the regional collaborative “In-migration strategy” in Troms County (Tilflytterstrategi), this paper discusses ideas and experiences of rural migration and integration.

The In-migration project focuses on the benefits of migration to rural areas, and the analysis follows critical migration research in its emphasis on both the receiving communities and the relations between migrants and coastal industries and communities.

Qualitative interviews and participatory observations among local industrial and public leaders, local politicians, leaders in voluntary organizations, and international migrants, showed a cognitive dissonance between the ideas of the “friendly and open Northerners” and newly arrived migrants’ and employers’ experiences. This has led the In-migration project and the participants to develop a variety of local in-migration and integration strategies. However, the project has encountered barriers. Our analysis also requires new and diverse approaches to local (and national) policies and planning.

### **Marit Aure**

The Arctic University of Norway

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **The unequal social position of migrant women**

### **Runa Preeti Ísfeld**

The Faroe Islands are a small group of islands that belong to the Kingdom of Denmark. Situated in the North Atlantic Ocean, they heavily rely on the fishing industry. Due to a shortage of women of childbearing age, there has been an influx of women from Eastern Asian countries coming to the islands as brides. This migration is bringing significant demographic changes to the previously isolated and monocultural society, making it more diverse.

However, these women often face stereotyping and marginalization in society and the labour market. They find themselves working in unskilled jobs due to language barriers and credential issues and are stereotyped based on their country of origin. This marginalized position has created a

divide in the small island community, with migrants doing lower-paid jobs and not having equal opportunities as the natives. They are met with structures that force them into this marginalized position.

Gender equality is an ongoing discussion in the Faroe Islands in terms of how to apply policies to close the wage gap between men and women. Unfortunately, migrant women are left out of those policy discussions. Society needs to include the minority in those policies to meet their needs and to maximize the potential of minorities migrating to a new society. There is a need to discuss the marginalized and downward mobility position of migrant women in the Faroe Islands and the structures causing this unequal social positioning between native and migrant women.

### **Runa Preeti Ísfeld**

University of the Faroe Islands

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Importance of national and international mobility for the population turnover on the regional level in Sweden and selected other countries**

### **Timothy Heleniak**

According to projections, the EU population size will not change drastically in the next decades. However, we will probably observe significant changes in population and its concentration on a country and a regional level. Already now, it is visible that some regions, e.g., capital regions of the EU countries, are growing but others, like some small towns and villages, are experiencing depopulation and rapid ageing. One of the major causes of this process is mobility – national, the EU and international movements.

In this paper we want to explore differences and similarities in mobility patterns of native-born and selected foreign-born populations for all mobility types and propose the typology of regions (NUTS3) based on contribution of mobility and other demographic processes into population

reproduction. We apply modification of the method of measuring of impact of migration on population turnover using the detailed register data for Denmark, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

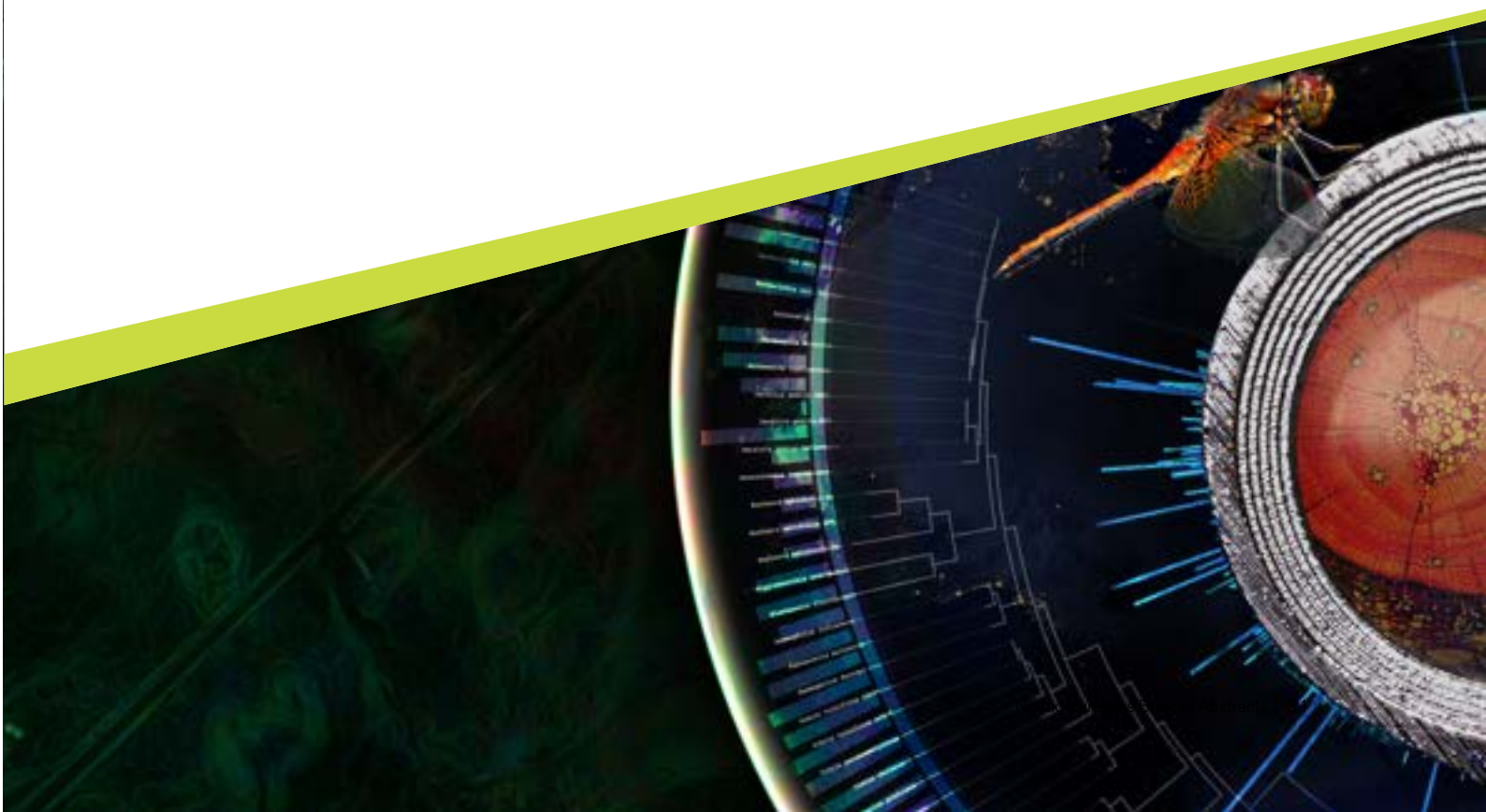
Our findings show significant temporal and spatial differences in importance of mobility for population reproduction. We distinguish regions that have positive or negative effect of different mobility movements and different subpopulations, for example population replacement in regions where natives migrated to large cities and were replaced first by migrants from the EU countries and then, when those left, by Third country nationals (e.g. in Spain). In the paper we also present our typology applied in the countries under consideration.

### **Timothy Heleniak**

Nordregio

# Critical reflections on lifestyle migration and sustainable rural development

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When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **Governance of flows? Munulation challenges concerning part-time dwellers in full-time housing**

### **Rikke Brandt Broegaard**

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, rural outmigration increased in Denmark, leaving many houses empty and in decay. In response, the national government allowed municipalities, on a voluntary basis, to liberalise otherwise highly restrictive housing regulations, so previously full-time housing could be used as second homes. The policy-thinking perceived second homeowners as an asset to (inevitably) declining rural communities, as they would maintain the housing stock, perhaps engage themselves in local communities and potentially become full-time residents. If fully implemented, this deregulation could lead to the breaking down of long-standing segregated housing zones separating full-time residents in town centres from part-time dwellers in summer house enclaves.

This paper explores the long-term effects of the deregulation policy, which has been implemented in various forms in different municipalities.

The focus is three-fold. Firstly, to introduce a set of relevant analytical themes. Secondly, to analyse long-term effects of different municipal deregulation models related to differentiated contextually-dependant challenges. Finally, to use the housing deregulation policy as a lens through which to unfold and critically assess overriding planning implications when governing a flow of people, such as urban-rural relations, rural gentrification and uneven levels of influence.

The paper is based on an on-going study combining quantitative and qualitative methods. Danish registry data is used to construct an overview of socioeconomic and demographic changes related to municipal deregulation models. The qualitative analysis, based on interviews with municipal planning executives, aims to understand local regulation policies and their variegated effects.

Karin Topsø Larsen<sup>1</sup>

**Rikke Brandt Broegaard<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Centre for Regional and Tourism Research



When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **The many faces of rural multi-locality – exploring the development potential**

### **Kati Pitkänen**

In this presentation we approach rural lifestyle migration and rural mobilities from the perspective of multi-locality. Multi-locality is conceptualized as the diverse forms of temporary presences and absences of people spending time in rural areas without moving there permanently. We identify and concretise the many faces of rural multi-locality and explore what kind of development potential can be related to multi-locality. In particular, it will be explored how and if the many forms and faces of multi-locality can provide solutions or alleviate the effects of the multiple crises faced by many rural communities.

The presentation draws on experiences and data from a recent research and development project on rural multi-locality in North Karelia region in Eastern Finland. We carried out a second

home owner survey (N=588) and workshops with NGOs and public sector representatives in the region's all 13 municipalities. In the workshops, we shared the survey results and other research findings of multilocality encouraging the participants to reflect and interpret the results in their local context and come up with development ideas.

The results highlight potentials related to e.g. work and employment, inclusion and participation, multi-local care, environmental sustainability and security. These potentials are linked to the long-term demographic, economic and environmental trends common to many sparsely populated rural areas in different countries, but some also stem from the post-Covid and particular geopolitical developments in Finland. Our results reveal the increasing dependence of rural sparsely populated areas on second homes and multi-locality.

### **Kati Pitkänen<sup>1</sup>**

Mari Kattilakoski<sup>2</sup>, Pasi Saukkonen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Finnish Environment Institute

<sup>2</sup> University of Eastern Finland

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **Where can they live? Linking mobility challenges to sustainable development in rural areas**

### **Linda Lundmark**

Some of the greatest sustainability challenges of our time are both caused and addressed by migration and tourism. Extensive travel contributes to environmental problems and climate change. However, mobile populations also help solve some sustainability issues. For example, in rural areas of Northern Sweden, mobile populations are seen as the only way to address the lack of labor in green industries as well as in service and tourism sectors

From a critical perspective, it is difficult to ignore that mobility, in addition to being an environmental problem, also poses individual and spatial sustainability challenges, especially in the hyper-mobile manner suggested by the current fly-in/fly-out models seen in some northern regions and elsewhere. To create more sustainable

mobility solutions on the local and individual levels, one of the paramount questions lies in how municipalities and regions can meet the demand from new populations regarding non-labor market amenities and services, such as recreation and cultural embeddedness. All this, while struggling to provide basic services for current populations. Furthermore, a major challenge is how to supply housing in the future in vast municipalities with few inhabitants. The research presented here stems from a pilot interview study examining how these municipalities are equipped to handle the rapidly evolving management conditions characteristic of our era. Preliminary results show that while municipalities recognise the need to gain and sustain population there are not many options when it comes to investing into the future.

### **Linda Lundmark**

Umeå University

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **Assessing Roles and Strategies of public Sector Stakeholders in an evolving (lifestyle) Migration Industry: the Case of the Dutch Emigration Expo**

### **Marco Eimermann**

This study focuses on local and regional governments using place-branding strategies to attract intra-EU inward migration for demographic and/or economic purposes. This forms an important aspect of contemporary migration industries, whereby the interlinking of lifestyle, work and economic investment is pivotal. Taking the case of the Emigration Expo event in the Netherlands, it draws on interviews with the organizer and with public sector exhibitors to assess their purposes, roles and strategies when participating in the event. In addition, this paper examines to what extent public sector agents perceive this Expo as a viable physical event, contributing to a lifestyle

migration industry. Findings suggest a shift in public sector strategies from attracting residents to recruiting skilled workers or lifestyle entrepreneurs and businesses. Exhibitors that maintain a recurring presence at the Expo over several years can build meaningful relations with each other and with prospective migrant visitors, providing practical information and integrated 'packages' to promote their destination as an attractive place to work and live. This supports the idea that (e) migration expos remain relevant physical sites of an evolving branch of the migration industry, including public-private partnerships involved in place and relocation branding as part of spatial planning strategies beyond growth.

### **Marco Eimermann<sup>1</sup>**

Camille Hochedez<sup>2</sup>, Stefan Kordel<sup>3</sup>, Ricard Morén-Alegret<sup>4</sup>, Karijn Nijhoff<sup>5</sup>, Daniel Tomozeiu<sup>6</sup>, Kate Torkington<sup>7</sup>, Tobias Weidinger<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Umeå University

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<sup>5</sup> The Hague University of Applied Sciences

<sup>6</sup> University of London

<sup>7</sup> Universidade do Algarve

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Negotiating sustainability and place: migration to an ecovillage and local community**

### **Alana Lennon**

Lifestyle- and amenity migration have frequently resulted in socio-ecological changes to places through increased population and development. Where sustainability is often an after-thought to over-development this paper introduces 'sustainability-led migration', looking at migration to a newer ecovillage. I first ask how ecovillages fit within a migration framework. Secondly, using a case study of a 'new' ecovillage in Norway, I investigate how sustainability-led (voluntary) migration to a rural ecovillage impacts people-place relationships. Analysing in-depth interviews with ecovillagers, municipal authorities and other local

residents through the lens of 'throwntogetherness', reveals ongoing negotiations of sustainability and place in the process of 'making' attractive communities. For some, sustainability-led migration becomes *heroic* where migration of resourceful people with new ideas helped create a more open-minded society. For others, 'sustainability' became *the villain of the piece*, regarded as a negative or meaningless pejorative, unrepresentative of the place they know. Sustainability-led migration directly and indirectly facilitated changes to place identity, enabling both connection and disconnection to place narratives, implying 'caution' when using sustainability as a place-marketing strategy.

### **Alana Lennon**

Norwegian University of Science and Technology

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Radical criticism, rurality and gender in past and present Swedish back-to-the-land movements**

### **Emelie Pilflod Larsson**

In the last decade, we have seen an increased societal interest in agriculture and farming, manifested in a growing gardening movement, new tv shows and social media accounts on gardening and farming, and urban-rural migration. This tendency could be labelled a new 'agricultural turn' – a broader societal shift where relations between humans, nature and animals are again being rearranged. The 'turn' is also visible in contemporary social movements, such as the Transition Network, that commonly highlight the countryside as the center for long-term social change. This argument echoes many of the political ideas and criticism of the past Swedish green wave movement (gröna

vågen) when rural spaces also became sites for societal critique and alternative ways of living. However, although there are similarities regarding downshifting, anti-consumerist, community orientation and self-sufficiency there are significant differences regarding the character of their radical critique, for example manifested in their different understandings of family and food production. By analyzing interviews with representatives from the mentioned two back-to-the-land movements (the present transition movement and the past green wave movement) as well social media and newspaper material, our aim is to explore these differences and how they relate to rurality and gender.

### **Emelie Pilflod Larsson<sup>1</sup>**

Katarina Giritli Nygren<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mid Sweden University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Back-to-the-land practices and belonging in Southern Dalarna**

### **Nora Wahlström**

This article investigates how different agrarian practices enacted by back-to-the-land migrants in rural areas of Dalarna, Sweden, contributes to their sense of belonging, and discusses what this might imply for their partaking in the shaping of rural places. The belonging of lifestyle migrants has been discussed as a form of *elective belonging* where physical attributes such as beautiful surroundings of the chosen place of residence play a larger role for sense of belonging than social ties to people in the place. This article examines an elective belonging of back-to-the-landers but also draws on the more dynamic dwelling perspective inherent in Ingold's concept of *taskscape*, which allows to see the role of other-than human living and non-living things in the development of a sense of belonging to place through activities.

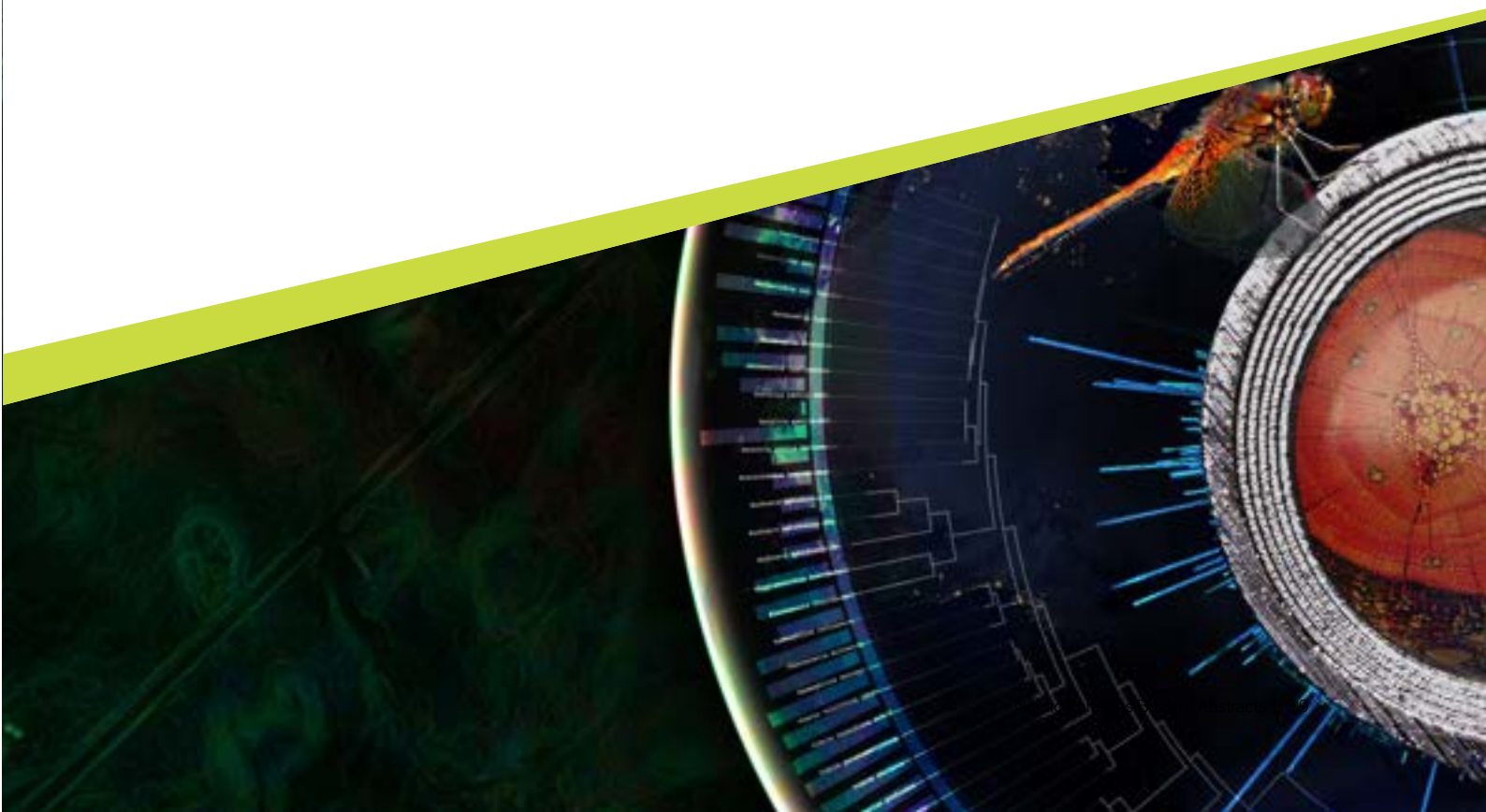
Through interviews and participant observations with back-to-the-landers in Southern Dalarna, Sweden, the article finds that back-to-the-landers develop particularly strong ties to their own land through engaging with other living and non-living things in their agrarian practices. Practices such as keeping animals, the upkeep of farm machinery and involvement in e.g. community supported agriculture are found to connect back-to-the-landers to other (non-urban) rural inhabitants and farmers. Permaculture, which a number of informants engage in, serves as a source of belonging not only to a community of people, but rather to a certain *taskscape* involving certain trees, plants and practices, but does however not provide the same connections and exchange with non-urban-origin local residents.

### **Nora Wahlström**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

# **Rural Education and its Role in the Sustainability of the Local Environment**

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When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi B

## **Youth Life Space in rural Norwegian Vocational Education**

### **Agneta Knutas**

In this paper we investigate the role of a rural vocational education and training (VET) and the ways education contributes to sustainability. A challenge for rural areas is the migration of rural youth to urban areas. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a social drain on local rural communities as young people leave for the cities (Kvalsund, 2019). VET is also affected by the leaving trend. In addition, VET is multifaceted, involving both educational institutions and businesses and as such VET demands extended resources. Internationally, neoliberal policies argue skills training in VET can overcome complexity and increase youth employability (OECD, 2023). The skills training rhetoric is troublesome since a one-sided knowledge construction focusing on specific skills in

VET undervalues the significance of youth transition, and socialisation (Rosvall & Nylund, 2022). In this paper, we take a critical stand and explore the life space of youth engaged in a rural VET field in Norway. Five group interviews with VET youth were completed. Utilizing theories of field and life space (Bourdieu & Apple) the result finds that youth in VET emphasize the significance of support from their environment. The complexity of the field of VET education involves casual loops of organizing wherein local businesses, and supportive teachers, enhance the progress of students and as well as enhance civic values which in turn contribute to upholding sustainability in the rural community.

Keywords: Youth, VET transition, field, life space, organizing.

### **Agneta Knutas<sup>1</sup>**

Anna Cecilia Rapp<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian University of Science and Technology



When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi B

## **Understanding Educations contribution to Sustainability in Rural Communities – a theoretical approach**

### **Anna Cecilia Rapp**

In times of economic, social, and environmental pressure, rural areas become essential for living, food- and energy production, and safety (UN, 2022). Sustainable rural development is vital to nations' economic, social, and environmental viability. It is essential for democratic equity. Rural education often faces a dilemma between short-term economic viability and long-term sustainability (Beach, et. al. 2019). Still, educational institutions seem to be important for the development of rural areas (Corbett, 2007; Villa & Knutas, 2020).

In this theoretical article, we draw on organizational theory and the concept of "action nets" (Czarniawska, 2014) together with Massey's (2005) concept of "space" to understand the intricate relationships between education, local labor markets, and political structures in rural areas. By addressing the research question, "How

can education contribute to sustainability in rural communities?" the article investigates the role of educational institutions in fostering economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

While Massey argues that space is not a static, inert container but is constantly being produced and reproduced through social interactions and shaped by the interrelations between different entities, making it inherently relational, Czarniawska (1997) contends that organizations are not just structures or systems but are also constructed through the stories people tell. These narratives shape the organization's identity, culture, and practices and are, therefore, tools for sensemaking in organizations in education, labor market, and politics.

Merging these two theoretical approaches gives us the opportunity to elaborate on education's contribution to sustainability in rural regions.

### **Anna Cecilia Rapp<sup>1</sup>**

Agneta Knutas<sup>1</sup>, Mariann Villa<sup>1</sup>, Richard Hoberg<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian University of Science and Technology

<sup>2</sup> University of North Dakota

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi B

## **Turning rural knowledge into “nothing” or “something”**

### **Christel Avendal**

From the perspective of the Swedish education system, rural knowledge does not seem to be particularly important. Many young people in rural areas have deep and important knowledge that is invisible in school and during school time, both to teachers and to the young people themselves. This paper examines knowledge used in agriculture and animal husbandry, a type of knowledge that is particularly useful in rural areas but mostly invisible in the education system. Through observations and interviews with students and their teachers in rural Sweden, the paper provides a detailed account of the everyday social processes by which such knowledge is produced as ‘nothing’

(cf. Scott 2019) and occasionally as ‘something’. The empirical basis of the paper is ethnographic data collected during a year and a half of fieldwork in a small village and village school in southern Sweden. The invisibility of young people’s knowledge is understood here as the result of active practices. Invisibility and nothingness are thus not properties, but outcomes of social processes (Scott 2019). Some knowledge is made invisible, unnecessary and unimportant, while other knowledge is made visible, necessary and important (Burke 2023; Lässig 2016; Proctor & Schiebinger 2008). This paper shows such social practices as they unfold in the everyday lives of young people in rural areas, in and out of school.

### **Christel Avendal**

Halmstad University

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Transforming educational leadership in Iceland: Decentralization and its effects on rural schooling**

### **Sigríður Margrét Sigurðardóttir**

Over the last three decades, decentralisation has shaped educational policies in the Nordic sphere and beyond, increasing local-level responsibilities. This study examines the impact of decentralisation on educational leadership in Iceland, focusing on changes since the transfer of compulsory schooling from state to municipal control in 1996. Educational research in the Nordic countries (Gunnulfsen et al., 2023) and beyond (Leithwood & Louis, 2012) has shown the importance of local educational leadership. However, few studies focus on rural contexts, where leadership roles differ from urban areas. This gap is notable in the Nordic countries, where many schools are in rural areas. In Iceland, 35% of municipalities have fewer than

100 children. This study explores the unique challenges of educational leadership in rural Iceland. Using an embedded single-case study design, it analyzes municipal leadership through document analysis, surveys, and interviews. The findings reveal that rural leaders in Iceland take on more extensive roles than their urban counterparts, often handling duties typically managed by superintendents in urban areas. The study underscores the need for structured, strategic leadership at the municipal level, emphasising coherent policy and governance. Strengthening leadership capacity in rural municipalities is crucial for improving education quality and ensuring equity. The Icelandic case provides valuable lessons for other Nordic ruralities undergoing similar reforms.

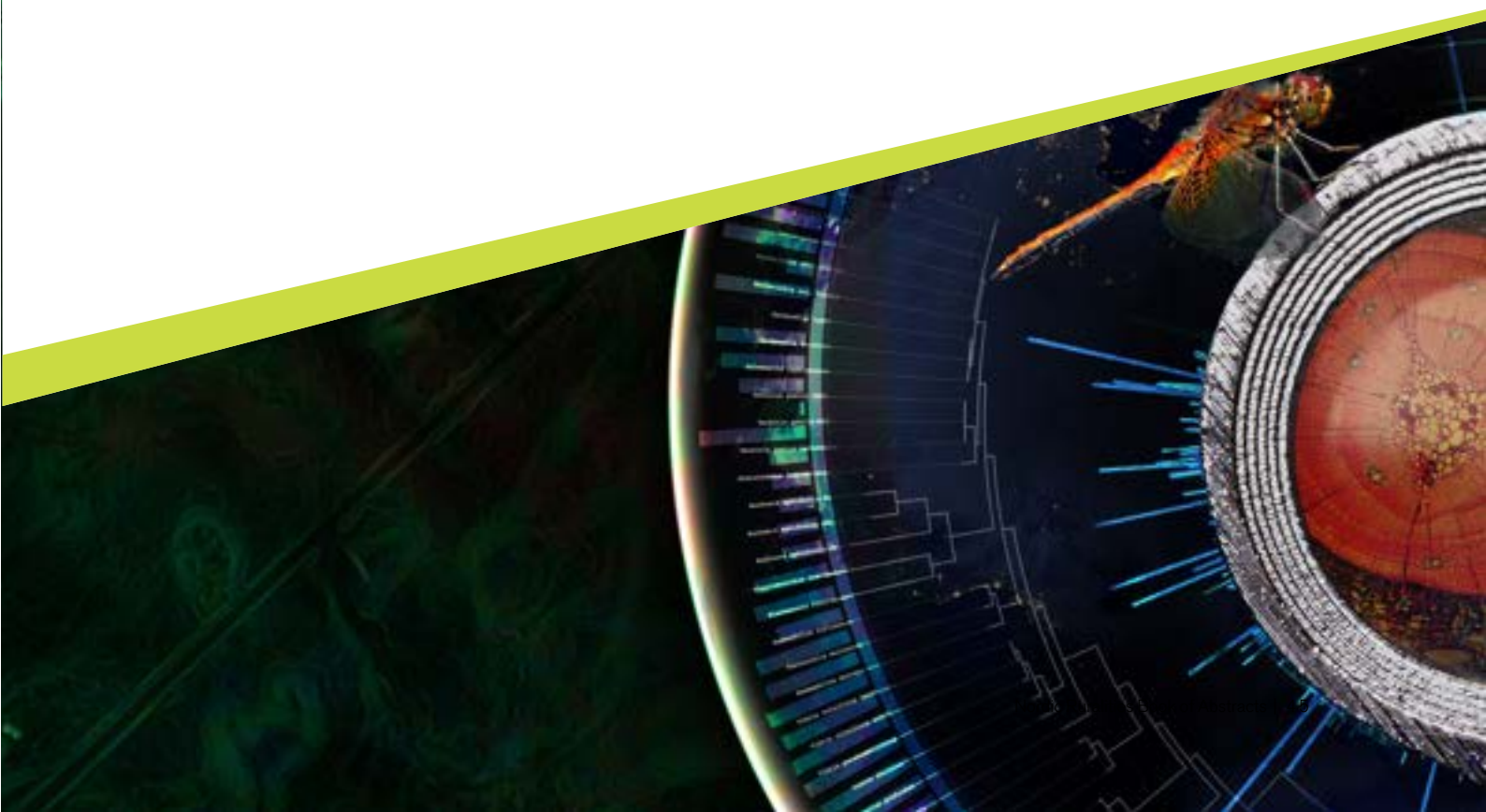
### **Sigríður Margrét Sigurðardóttir**

University of Akureyri



# **A history perspective to the people, places, resources, economies, and polices of rural regions**

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When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 – 15:00

Where: The Hiker

## **Cultural heritage and its restoration as a contributor to rural development**

### **Andres Rõigas**

There is a scarcity of studies on the disappearance of local cultural phenomena in late Estonian history. There is a lack of evaluations of how indigenous culture supports or influences regional development through the use of local development opportunities and the implementation of local marketing.

Everyday objects, skills, dialects and traditional ways of life are at risk of disappearing in the process of modernisation. The process began with the modernisation of society and the adoption of urban lifestyles. It continued during the Soviet period with the struggle against 'remnant' and culminated in a process of rapid globalisation. Culturally distinct areas are located on the periphery, and the 'touch of time' of location provides a unique opportunity to describe the recovery of

traditions and the contribution of the community or individual to it. In our study, we provide an overview of the factors that have underpinned the recovery of intangible culture in three examples: we analyse the cases of two intentional communities and the re-emergence and rise of a one-log boat culture.

Preliminary results suggest that both the persistence of heritage and the interest and need of newcomers for self-determination or identity creation provide an opportunity not only to save and restore heritage but also to create opportunities for further rural development. Intangible culture contributes to the development of tourism, the diversification of economic activities and the marketing of the region. The links and interactions between regional heritage and regional policy measures can also be assessed.

### **Andres Rõigas<sup>1</sup>**

Madis Rennu<sup>2</sup>, Aivar Ruukel<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Estonian University of Life Sciences; University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy

<sup>2</sup> University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy

<sup>3</sup> Estonian University of Life Sciences

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Hiker

## **Emotions of Property. An autoethnographic biography of a smallholding**

### **Frode Flemsæter**

This paper demonstrates how emotions play a crucial role when owning and managing property in rural Norway. While autoethnography systematically analyze personal experiences to understand social and cultural phenomena, house biography examines the life of a house focusing on physical as well as social and cultural dimensions. In the present paper these approaches are combined when I replace the “house” with a “smallholding” and write the biography of the smallholding I grew up and now manage, from my own personal viewpoint. When we talk about property and ownership it is often assumed that this is a one-to-

one relationship between the owner (the subject) and the thing owned (the object). However, a significant body of literature have in recent decades pointed out that property rather should be looked at as indeed social, and thus that property is just as much about relations between people, concerning the object owned. This paper supports this literature as I argue that when enacting properties, people may live in more complicated worlds than often assumed. Notions of owning a smallholding on behalf of past, present and future generations, as well as people’s emotional attachment to houses and landscapes, are part of this complexity.

### **Frode Flemsæter**

Norwegian University of Technology and Science

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Hiker

## **The Central Ostrobothnian broad house – An example of ecological Nordic building tradition**

### **Matti Mäkelä**

The most part of traditional houses in Finland, Sweden and Norway represent a long tradition of timber construction. These quality buildings have served several hundreds of years as people's homes. A vast amount of Nordic cultural heritage has been concentrated in the houses.

There are a lot of general technical and architectural features in traditional Nordic timber houses, but a notable regional variation can also be identified. A remarkable example of a regional style can be found from Central Ostrobothnia, Finland. The broad houses of the region were under examination in a research project accomplished by the University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute (*Broad houses in the stages of history*) in 2022–2023.

Central Ostrobothnian broad house (in Finnish: *sivukamaritupa*) originated in the 18th century. It is probably one of the oldest types of peasant timber house with broad timber frame in Nordic countries. The typical width is around 10 meters, but the largest exemplars of broad houses are real giants among the peasant houses of the world.

The prospects for broad houses are highly alarming. Only eight of the research areas 20 existing houses are still used all year round. Our built cultural heritage needs immediate actions on rural regions. Utilizing old traditional houses and increasing repair activities with old materials is ecologically reasonable. We need to find new use for our valuable buildings in all Nordic regions. Cultural tourism may offer some possibilities.

### **Matti Mäkelä**

University of Helsinki



When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

**“We’re not troublemakers, we’re just protesting”: Media representations of gender, class and place in the fight for northern industry jobs, 1970s**

**Johanna Overud**

The aim of this project is to explore the social and cultural significance of in processes of deindustrialization for peripheral places in northern Sweden. These consequences are both gender, class and place specific. Through media representations and interviews with seamstresses and 1970’s media I analyze the meanings of industrial transformation processes and local identity in both media and first person tellings. How are inequalities visualized, created and reproduced in these processes? What

images and concepts of time are involved in shaping media narratives about industrial workers and industrial places? Today, new generations are negotiating exploitation and industrial development in these areas in northern Sweden. Common to these large industrial investments is that they represent a turning point in time, which can be studied through experiences from former investments and their meanings for gender, place and identity.

**Johanna Overud**

Umeå University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Past and present roles of the civil society in northern Sweden's societal transformations**

### **Malin Lindberg**

As a result of the expansion of “green industry” in northern Sweden – with Northvolt’s battery factory in Skellefteå and fossil-free steel production at H2 Green Steel in Boden and Hybrit in Luleå and Gällivare – extensive societal transformation is underway. It is estimated that up to 100 000 new residents will be required, which in turn requires a sharp increase in housing, services, communications, etc. However, it is not the first time this region has undergone a major transformation because of industrialization. Northern Sweden was portrayed as a “land of the future” from the end of the 19th century where forestry industry, mining, and hydroelectric power expanded until the 1960s (Sörlin 1988/2023). But the industrial expansion also led to social problems with poor housing,

poverty, drunkenness and violence. In response to this, popular movements such as the labor movement, temperance movement and revivalist movement grew strong. Through their struggle for public health, and good living and working conditions, civil society initiatives laid the foundation for the emergence of the Swedish welfare state from the 1930s (Linde & Scaramuzzino 2017). Today, when public welfare is in a different situation, with reduced services and tighter safety nets, the question is whether the role of civil society in this kind of societal transformation looks different? At the conference, we want to present and discuss a planned study on this topic, where archival studies will be combined with a recently conducted survey among civil society organizations in northern Sweden.

### **Malin Lindberg<sup>1,2</sup>**

Roine Viklund<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luleå University of Technology

<sup>2</sup> Marie Cederschiöld University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Ukrainian immigrants in the long shadow of transgenerational memories of Russians in Kuortane, Finland**

### **Sulevi Riukulehto**

In the research data created in 2012–2013 by the University of Helsinki Ruralia Institute the ideas, views and feelings of home were collected in Kuortane, South Ostrobothnia, Finland. When the inhabitants of Kuortane talked about ethnic groups they most often talked about their relation to Russians.

Four layers of Russia narratives were differentiated in the data: 1. Kuortane during the Great Northern War (1714–1721), 2. the Finnish War (1808–1809), 3. the Era of Grand Duchy of Finland, and finally 4. the memories of the 20th century Finland including the Finnish Civil War (1918), the Winter War (1939–1940) and the Continuation War (1941–1944). The oldest layers of memories had already passed through 13 genera-

tions. Still, they seem to be as living or even more living than the newer ones.

Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022 caused an immediate wave of refugees in Europe. A number of Ukrainians settled in Finland as well, even in such small rural municipalities as Kuortane. After two years coexistence in the region, the local people's attitudes towards Ukrainian immigrants were investigated in group discussions held in autumn 2024 in order to find out how the treatment of Ukrainians is affected by the strong transgenerational memories of Russians in the region. This will be the first presentation of the research results.

Key words: Ukrainians, Russians, Kuortane, memories of war, narratives, elicitation method

### **Sulevi Riukulehto<sup>1,2</sup>**

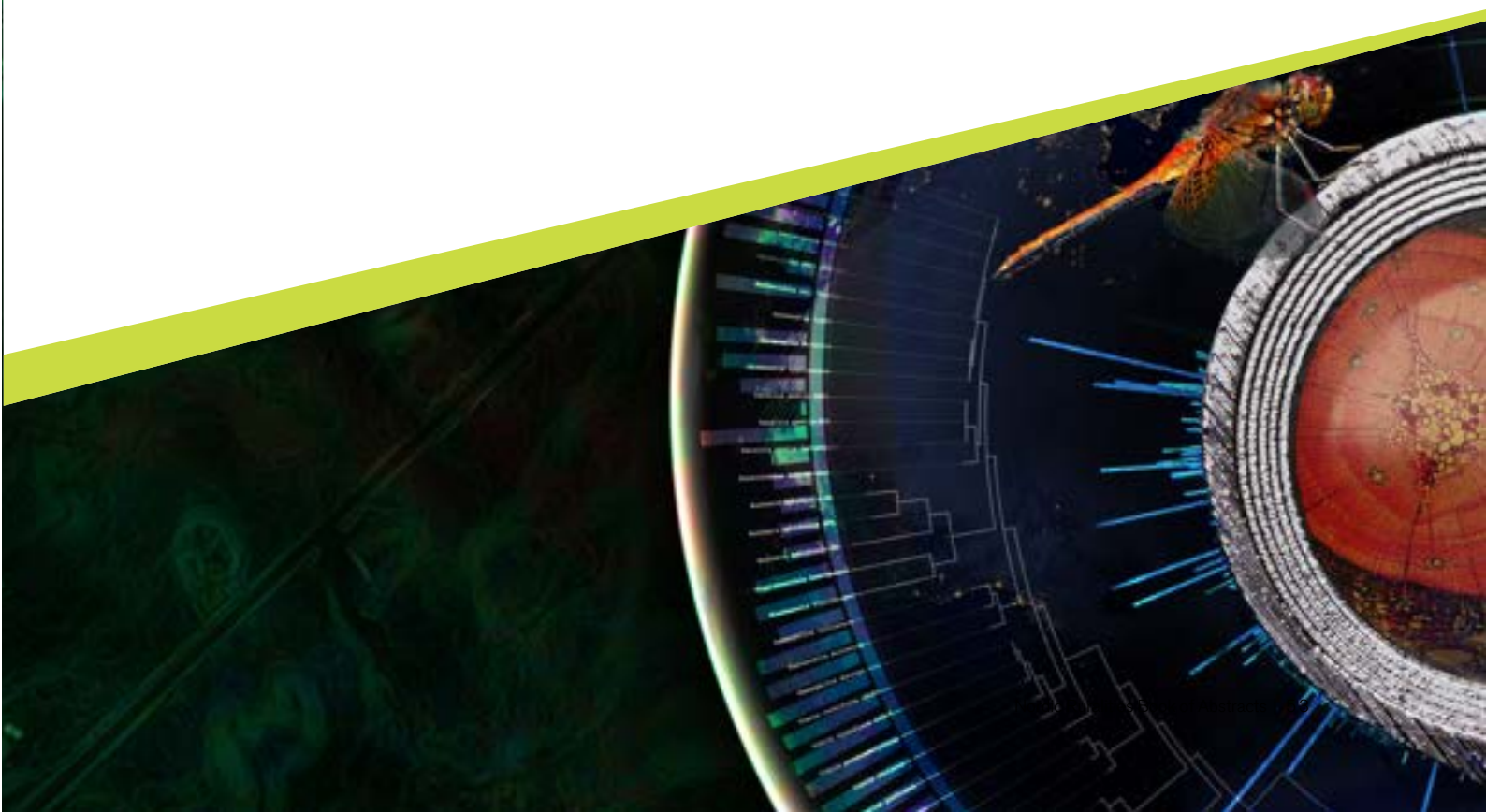
<sup>1</sup> University of Helsinki

<sup>2</sup> North-West University



# Stories of smoke: Rural ethnographies and landscapes in transition

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When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi B

## **Ethnography of getting lost and finding one's way: exploring the affordances of ethnography in rural research**

### **Eeva Uusitalo**

In rural research, as in research in general, it is worth reflecting on which methodologies are hegemonic in knowledge production which remain on the fringes. In order for the field of rural studies to realize the full potential of rurality, methodological diversity is essential.

Ethnographic research allows for the production of knowledge based on encounters and entanglements in the field. It brings into academic discourse things, relationships or points of view, human and more-than-human, that might otherwise remain in the shadows. For me, the attraction of ethnography is that the field almost always offers perspectives that cannot be anticipated, and that it is a site of constant exploration and experimentation. This sometimes leads to situations

where the researcher is left with material that does not initially seem interesting or useful, but whose value only becomes apparent later.

In the presentation I will talk about my field experience in the context of research project on the dynamics of enterprises and local communities. During a field trip I made video clips, which I initially considered as a failed experiment. While making the recordings, I got lost both literally and figuratively. My first impression was that, based on the videos, no significant knowledge about the subject could be gained from the videos. However, time and later experiences proved me wrong and I discovered the value of the material that was about to become doomed useless.

### **Eeva Uusitalo**

University of Helsinki

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi B

## **Mapping territorial narratives in rural Sweden – A methodological discussion on the visualization of the production of territory through GIS**

### **Arvid Stiernström**

Maps and mapping have long been part of how states lay claims to and assert control over land or, to put it another way, mapping is a method of state territorialization. Maps are used to visualize claims to land and make manifest rights to specific land use e.g., important archeological sites, mineral exploration and concession permits and agricultural land. This paper employs the use of GIS to visualize 'from below' and 'from above' processes of territorialization by mapping territorial narratives relating to a land use in a small rural village in the south of Sweden. Tracing the ways actors produce and mobilizes narratives about land and space helps us understand territorializing practices and see how territory is produced through intersecting actions of a multiplicity of actors. Rather

than focusing on territory as the outcome of state power acting on space or on the countermeasures taken by actors reacting to state territoriality, territorial narratives bring in a multiplicity of territorializers, joined in that they all make claims to space, or to be more precise, to land. I explore how GIS and ethnographic methods can be combined and used to relay or visualize territorial narratives that rarely are included in 'mapping from above' by bringing stories of belonging and ways of being with the land into GIS maps. Through GIS I attempt to make visible claims to land that otherwise might be hidden, ignored, or glossed over in formal deliberations over land use. In so doing, I investigate how GIS can be used to help us think about land rights in different and more just ways.

### **Arvid Stiernström**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi B

## **The language of the reindeer and the industry – the role of traditional Sáme knowledge**

### **Kajsa Kuoljok**

This presentation is based on an ongoing study conducted with reindeer herders in the regions of Norrbotten and Västerbotten, Sweden. Reindeer husbandry are impacted by global culture, still bound to traditional, land-based way of life. The title refers to the different worlds that the herders navigate within in their daily practice. The presentation explores an understanding of traditional Sáme knowledge; *árbbadiehto* from the perspective of reindeer herder's that is spatial, local and embodied. Despite its name, is not a static knowledge of the past, instead it is knowledge that are continuous updated and relevant. At the same time, husbandry is deeply linked to the surrounding society and views about *árbbadiehto* are in many cases entangled in a web containing culture, history and politics. Reindeer husbandry today

faces a turbulent time as the reindeer lands become an arena for forestry and industries that are changing to achieve global environmental goals. Reindeer herders meet representatives from different actors in different contexts, in office meetings and sometimes in court. In these meetings, the language of the external stakeholders dominates the conversations.

Highlighting the concept of *árbbadiehto* recognizes the importance of the knowledge system, while encouraging greater communication in research contexts about what it contains and how it is used. These issues, along with reflections on working with reindeer herding communities, will be highlighted from my position as a Sámi ethnological researcher.

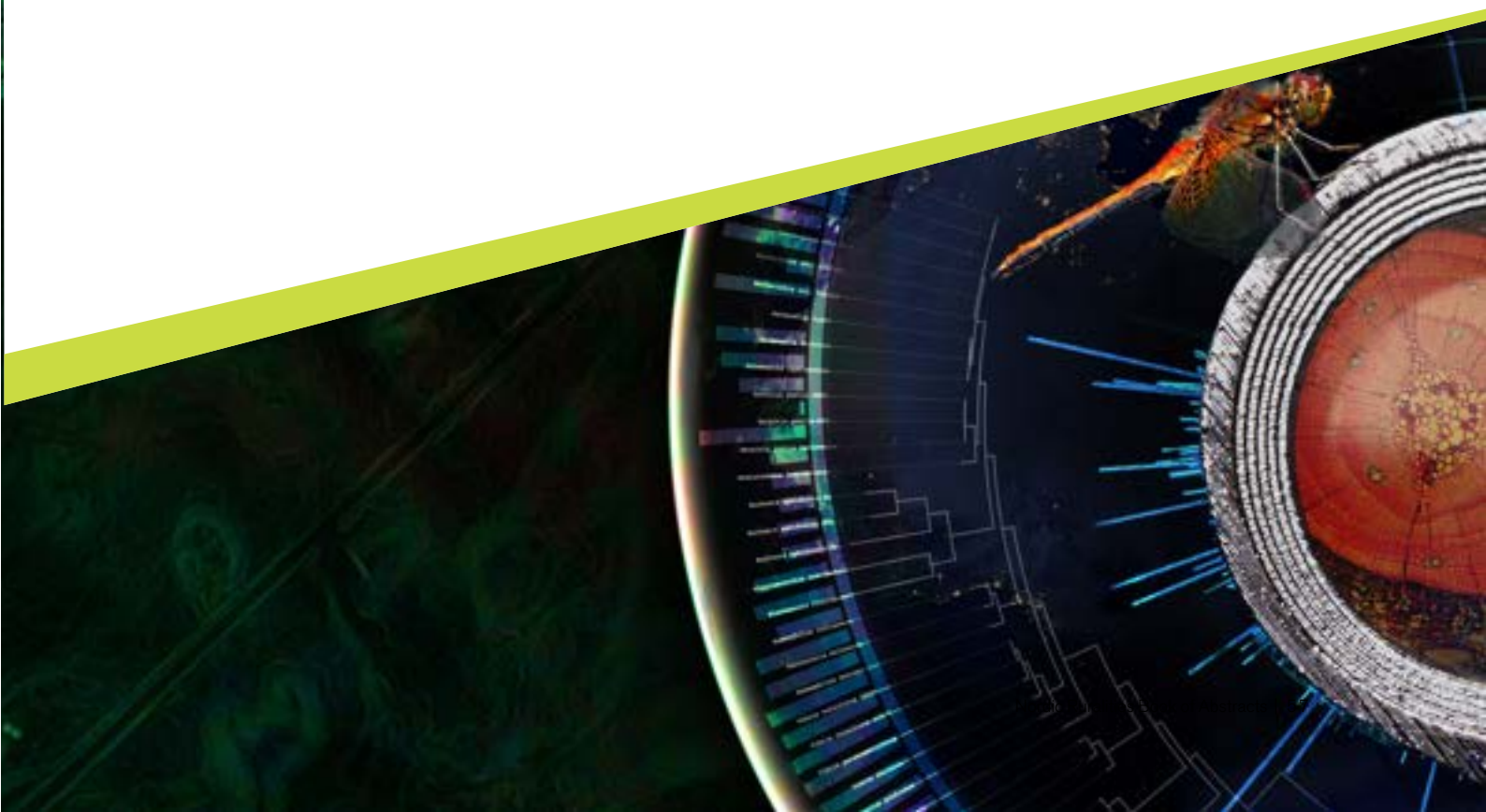
### **Kajsa Kuoljok**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences / Ájtte museum



# **Rural and regional universities: Doing big things in small places**

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When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **“We can arrange education regionally, but...” – Finnish university consortiums and the challenge of improving regional education level**

### **Aapo Jumppanen**

Finland has six university consortiums that supplement the Finnish University network. Their role is to gather regional university functions and university units under one umbrella. The profiles and resources of the consortiums vary, but they all offer different forms of education from master's degrees to single lectures.

This presentation is based on the interviews of directors and education specialists from all the Finnish university consortiums.

The results reveal that at the regional level university consortiums are expected to improve the education level and provide professionals such as social workers, teachers and engineers for the regional job markets. International degree programs are established to lure foreign talents.

The realities of higher education, are not, however, always favorable to the regional expectations. Most of the students in degree programs tend to come from other regions and many are already in working life there. The youth of the university consortium regions also favor the main campuses over the domestic ones. Especially foreign students find it hard to get traineeships or jobs from the SME dominated job markets. Many move to bigger cities even before graduation.

New ways of integrating domestic and international students into the region and the regional job markets, such as field courses and joint development projects with companies have been introduced with some success. Nevertheless, combining the international nature of research-based university education with the regional needs is not always easy. Innovative ideas are constantly needed.

### **Aapo Jumppanen**

University of Helsinki

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Moving to the 'Wild West' - Clarifying the First-hand Experiences and Second-hand Perceptions of a Danish University Town on the Periphery**

### **Anette Aagarrd Thuesen**

A country's internal migration is often explained using a life-course perspective. When a new academic year begins, study cities hope to attract a good portion of new students. In Denmark, the major trend is that young people leave the western part of the country to study in larger cities in the eastern part. This paper examines a much less extensive reverse flow of students who move to Esbjerg in western Denmark to study. Using interviews with 30 students, this paper analyses how this counter-movement is experienced by young students themselves and perceived by their friends. Based on the literature on the transfor

mation of places and regional representation and attractiveness, this study shows the concurrent presence of opposing trends. On the one hand, the interviewees describe Esbjerg as a great town with friendly people, good study opportunities, etc.; i.e., they experience the city positively. On the other hand, their friends disagree and criticize Esbjerg without having much substantive knowledge on which to base their negative perceptions. These findings are discussed in relation to value attached to places, views on the size of towns connected to life modes among students, and opportunities for places to transform their identity.

### **Anette Aagarrd Thuesen**

University of Southern Denmark

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 – 10:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Success Factors to Consider for Rural Municipalities when Establishing Large Scale Industrial Parks: The role of Education**

### **Anna Sörensson**

Large-scale industrial parks play a vital role in regional development in rural areas. Currently, there is a significant trend of industry parks. Highly qualified staff is needed, leading to an inflow of employees often from abroad. A major challenge for these industrial parks is finding qualified personnel. Part of the solution is to collaborate with existing educational systems at various levels within the region to create long-term solutions for workforce development. The purpose is to examine how rural regions are working with educational institutions to address the need for skilled labor in a sustainable and long-term manner. Five geographical areas with established industry parks were identified, in rural areas in Europe. Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with municipal officials and representatives from large-scale industries. The results show that col-

laboration should begin as early as preschool. As children grow older, these partnerships should deepen to foster interest in the industrial park's activities from a young age. Preschools organize field trips so they can participate in activities to spark interest in engineering. Deeper collaborations occur at the high school, vocational college and university levels. High school programs make schedule adjustments during breaks to accommodate peak work periods. Vocational colleges design programs tailored to the region's needs. Additionally, schools have adapted their language to accommodate children whose parents work at the industrial park, enabling families to relocate. Finally, there are partnerships like internship opportunities within university programs. There are also strategic initiatives to bring expertise from universities to the industrial parks for collaborations.

### **Anna Sörensson<sup>1,2</sup>**

Anna-Maria Jansson<sup>1</sup>, Charlotta Faith-Ell<sup>1</sup>, Marta Lindvert<sup>3</sup>, Maria Bogren<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mid Sweden University

<sup>2</sup> Inland Norway of Applied Science

<sup>3</sup> Nord University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Dálvi B

## **Higher education and regional structures of (im)mobility: The case of Orkney and Shetland**

### **Rosie Alexander**

Establishment of higher education in rural regions is often understood as a means of reducing youth outmigration and supporting development of local skills. However, in this paper I argue that thinking in these terms rests on an implicit sedentarism that overlooks the complex dynamics of youth mobilities, and higher education and occupational structures. In this paper, I draw on a recently completed PhD project with higher education students from the Scottish islands of Orkney and Shetland, to argue for a more complex understanding of the role of regional higher education. Highlighting the diversity of routes into and through higher education, and the ways that young people negotiate and renegotiate their

staying and leaving decisions, the paper argues that regional higher education has a role not just in youth retention but also in youth mobility. Further, the paper discusses how for rural communities themselves facilitating a level of outmigration is necessary in order to meet the diverse economic and skills needs of rural economies. The paper therefore argues that rural higher education provision should be thought of not in terms related only to the local economy and young people, but as a nexus within wider educational structures, that can support mobility flows out, in and through rural communities, and through these mobilities work to support local economic sustainability and rural young people's lives.

### **Rosie Alexander**

Aarhus University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **The Spatial Inequalities of Air Travel and Regional Development in Iceland**

### **Thoroddur Bjarnason**

For most of its history, Icelandic society was characterized by rather extreme geographical isolation. The two thousand-kilometer voyage from continental Europe took a week or two and was generally only undertaken by merchants, clergy, government officials, and their entourage during the summer months. Within the country, the population was scattered around the habitable coastline, isolated by high mountains, deep fjords, and rapid rivers. Without any roads, domestic travel by foot or by horse between isolated communities was precarious, particularly outside the summer months. While steam ships improved the speed, safety, and regularity of domestic and international transportation, air travel largely obliterated these geographical constraints. With most major cities in Northern Europe and the Eastern United States within a few hours of travel, about twenty

airlines currently offer scheduled passenger flights between Reykjavik and 57 destinations in Europe and North America. Domestically, most larger towns in the country are also within an hour's flight from the downtown airport in the capital of Reykjavik. The organization of international and domestic flights has however also created considerable spatial inequalities between the Reykjavik capital area and the peripheral rural regions. The quest to develop an alternative gateway to the outside world from Akureyri in Northern Iceland now spans more than forty years. This paper outlines this quest in the context of the evolving business models of international aviation and political and economic currents that have shaped Iceland over the past century. Various data sources are utilized, including official statistics and general population surveys.

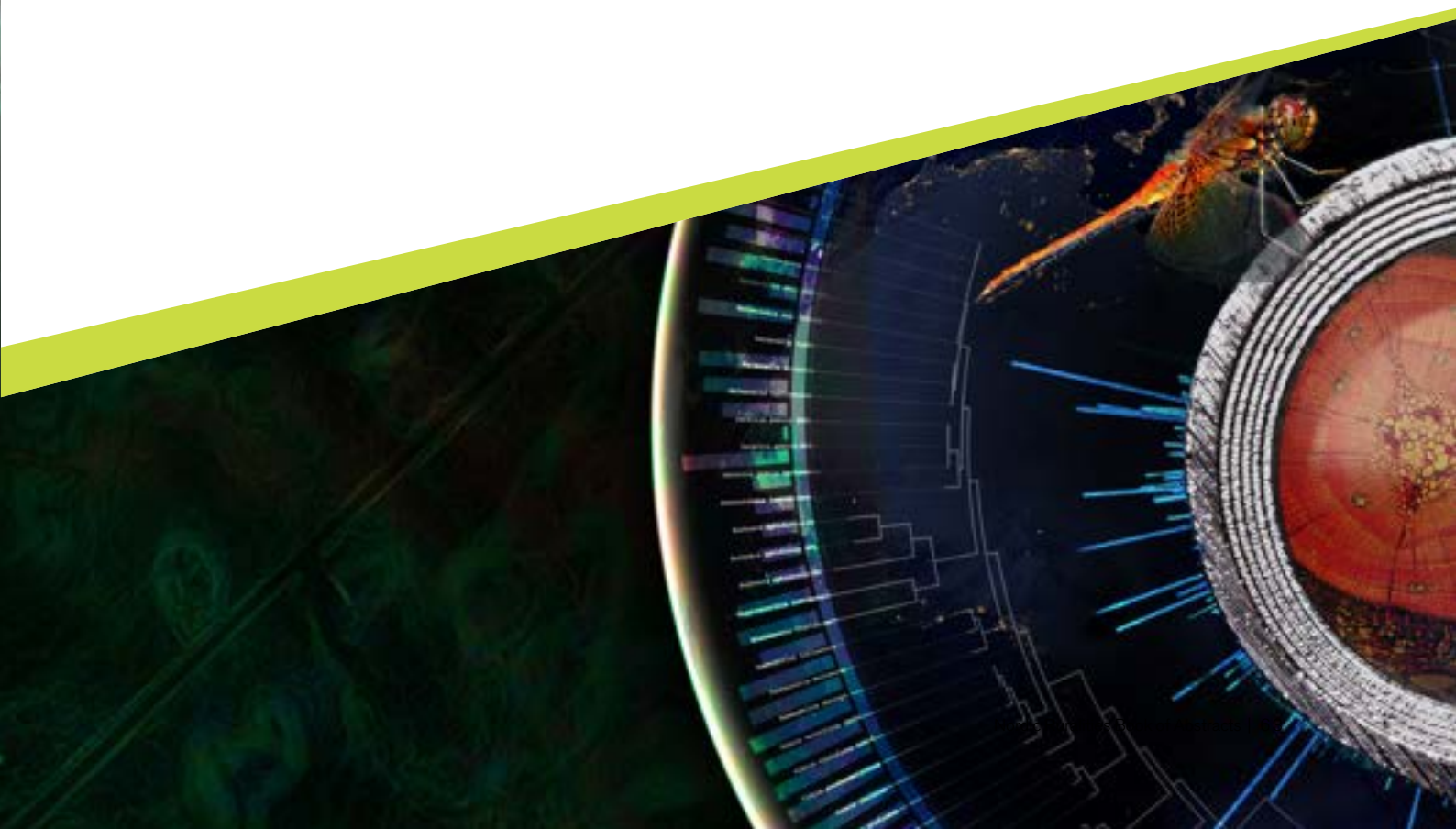
### **Thoroddur Bjarnason<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> University of Iceland

<sup>2</sup> University of Akureyri

# Open group theme 1: Cultures and people, places and identities

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When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **Rethinking rural class analysis: Reflections on dilemmas and challenges**

### **Lena Sohl**

Understandings of class in rural research is still in progress, even though class analysis has been present in the research field for a long time. This paper aims to explore how recent contributions in rural research have analysed class, with attention to how class has been conceptualised.

Pierre Bourdieu's relational understanding of class has long been influential in various research fields, including rural studies. However, scholars have highlighted the limitations of the Bourdieusian approach, especially for capturing the nuanced understandings of working-class lives, which is particularly relevant for rural studies.

Building on the critique in previous research of the dominant narratives on rurality as framed by white male working-class experiences, this paper argues that such perspectives limit the understanding of class in rural areas, emphasising certain aspects while others are left unnoticed.

Consequently, the paper argues that rural research needs to incorporate new perspectives on class, for instance intersectional dimensions, the everyday experiences of class, and the affective histories of class (Walkerline 2023) in rural areas.

### **Lena Sohl**

Mid Sweden University



When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **What will I do? Where will I do it? - Rural youth envisaging their future**

### **Christoffer Hornborg**

This presentation investigates how rural youth in southern Sweden envision their future life biographies in terms of occupation, place, and geographical mobility. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 participants in eighth grade. While some asserted a need to get away from the countryside in order to access a meaningful livelihood strategy, geographical orientation also depended on factors linked to lifestyle and leisure interests. Among those who expressed a desire to stay, rational considerations of work alternatives were downplayed in favor of an affective component relating to place attachment. Some imagined geographical mobility as an almost mandatory developmental course, after which they could return home and enter a new phase of life. These stories contained what I call a *developing imperative*, where norms about moving suggested

a kind of rite de passage, which transformed the youth's identity into one associated with notions of family formation. *Individual development* was hence perceived as dependent on mobility and urban experiences.

Despite living in a connected world where information is standardized, young people are molded by what they experience in local encounters, and place has implications for how youth make sense of the world and envisage their future prospects. Rather than only seeing place as an external enabling or constraining context in which young people's actions take place, it is important to be aware of how physical environments also are internalized and incorporated into self-images. This includes the beliefs, norms and values that underlie the rational and emotional considerations that young people make.

### **Christoffer Hornborg<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Campus Västervik

<sup>2</sup> University of Gothenburg

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **Families and youth in remote rural settings acting together in time-spatial organization of life using temporalities to construct rural identity**

### **Linda Fridén Syrjäpalo**

This paper draws on empirical data from a study with 36 participants, using ethnographically inspired methods including interviews, home visits and mobile methods. The Covid-19 pandemic and uncertain times has changed the life of families and young people living in remote rural settings. Mobility inequality, as a result of the lack of public transport and rapidly increasing fuel prices due to global events, is an everyday challenge. Examples from the time-spatial organisation of everyday life show how families and young people respond together as a community, by re-organizing their lives and their mobility through collaboration. This can be considered to be part of an experience of belonging and sense of place which in turn contributes to the formation of rural identities.

The paper also explores how temporalities including the rhythms of society, nature, and everyday life contribute to a sense of place and rural identity. Perceptions about how to spend one's time, what part of life is supposed to be carried out in stillness, and what activities and situations should be full of speed, are part of belonging and the notion of being in place. Children and young people create and reproduce rural identities through their daily rhythms and activities which creates collective meaning-making processes in rural areas. These engagements also display resistance to temporal hierarchies in society and the urban norm. I draw on the increased recognition of the interwoven and co-constitutive construction of rural spatiality through material and discursive phenomena, processes and practices (Heley et al., 2012).

### **Linda Fridén Syrjäpalo**

Stockholm university

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **Classed trajectories - Mobility and employment among rural youth**

### **Susanna Areschoug**

The issue of young people staying or leaving rural areas as they grow up is central to rural sustainability, to rural youth themselves, and to the field of rural youth studies. Previous research has shown that middle-class youth – particularly girls – are more inclined to move to cities for work and higher education while young people from the working-class – particularly boys – tend to stay in their hometowns and take up jobs in the local labor market (Svensson, 2006, 2012, 2017). Social class is, however, a contested concept and little consensus exists regarding its definition. Investigating the impact of class on people's lives and life decisions is further complicated in rural settings where complex labor markets and local culture can mean that common indicators of class, such as level of education, wage level, sector, and type of

employment correspond to economic, material and symbolic status in unique ways, not seldom differing from larger cities. This presentation furthers our understanding of the impact of social class on the trajectories of youth in rural areas. More specifically, it builds on material from an ethnographic fieldwork with high school youth in Värmland, and on follow-up interviews conducted when the youth were in their early twenties. Making new use of the Marxist concepts *use value* and *exchange value* (Stigendal, 2021), I showcase how the youth's different class backgrounds affected the investments that they made in different markets characterized by different value systems, impacting their transitions to employment and emplaced trajectories.

**Susanna Areschoug**

Stockholm University

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 – 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **Expanding rural youth's prospects in a digitized world for the benefit of individuals and community**

### **Ulrika Bossér**

The availability of skilled professionals is a challenge in many rural areas. At the same time, rural youth often view their prospects as limited and pursue higher education less frequently than urban youth. Students' future study and career choices are influenced by social or cultural background, geographic location, and community resources. Consequently, rural schools may face the challenge of providing opportunities for students to develop skills that enable them to contribute to their personal growth as well as the development of their community. This project, involving three rural municipalities and three elementary schools, focuses on the possibilities for rural schools to promote entrepreneurship in a digitized world. Here, entrepreneurship is based on the idea of relationships and mutual concerns as starting

points for developing and acting on opportunities in diverse contexts. Analyses of documents, field notes, and interviews reveal that municipal officials, principals, and teachers, are interested in using digital tools in education to enhance the connections between school, working life, and the surrounding community, which are limited by long distances. For instance, digital field trips to private and municipal enterprises and institutions have been tested as a method. The goal is to provide future-oriented education that highlights opportunities for digital location-independent occupations while also strengthening students' sense of connection to their local community. However, promoting entrepreneurship by fostering students' development of creativity and innovation remains a challenge for some schools.

### **Ulrika Bossér<sup>1</sup>**

Peter Erlandson<sup>2</sup>, Anne Kjellsdotter<sup>3</sup>, Ninni Wahlström<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Linnaeus University

<sup>2</sup> Linnaeus University

<sup>3</sup> Halmstad University

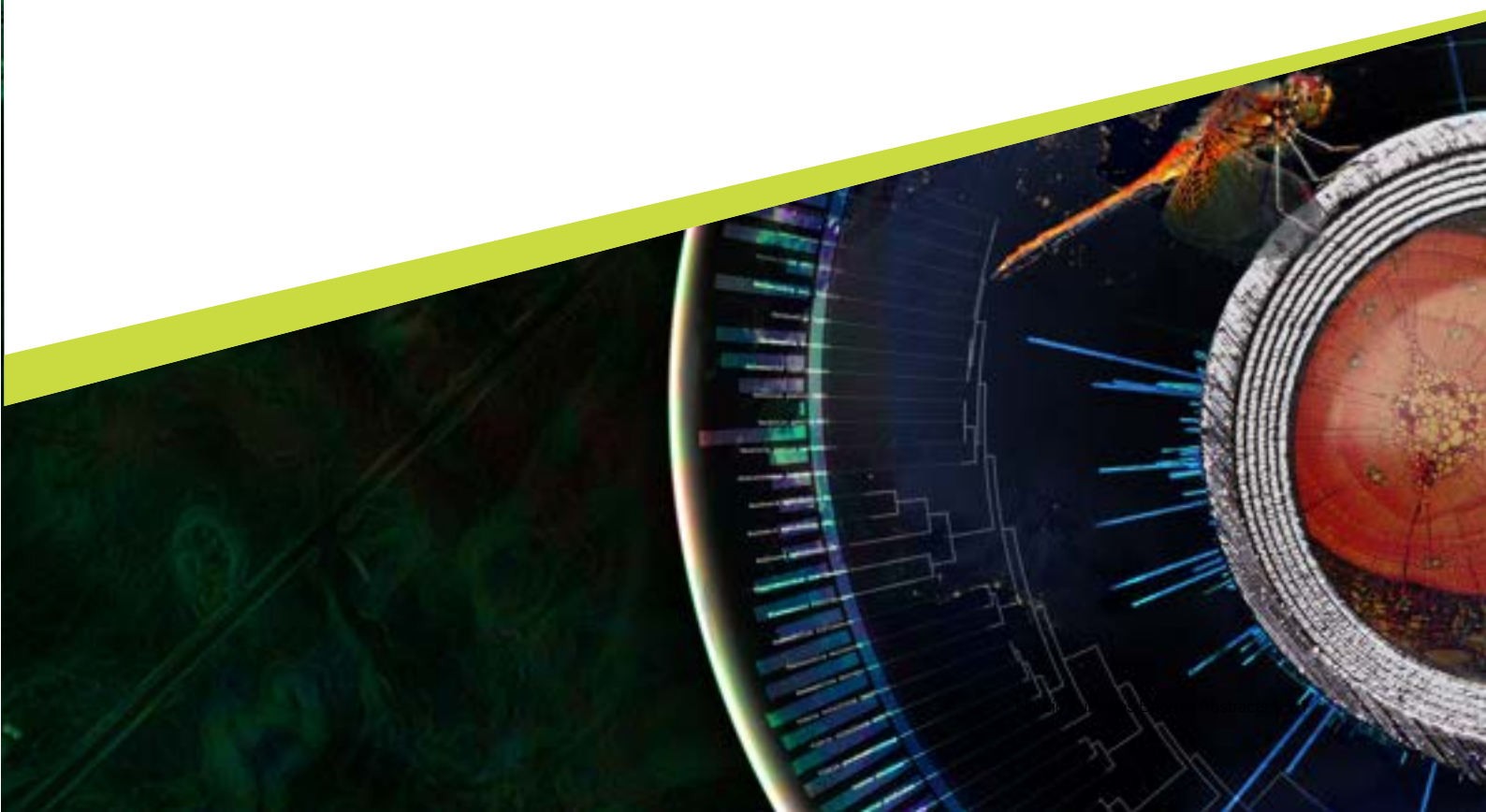
## **2. Sustainable use of Natural Resources**

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# Exploring social sustainability in the Nordic context

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When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi C

## **Invisible(?) hospitality workers at Arctic cruise destinations**

### **Albina Pashkevich**

Norwegian Arctic coastal communities are finding themselves under the pressure of unprecedented growth in cruise tourism arrivals. The focus on sustainable and responsible travel has become a motto for all national and regional Destination Management Organizations and tourism and hospitality businesses. However, these practices do not always consider the social sustainability of hospitality work on board cruise ships and the cruise ship workers themselves are an invisible group of visitors to Arctic destinations. Furthermore, their relation and connections these workers develop while onshore in Arctic communities deserve careful examination.

In this presentation we discuss the everyday practices of workers on board and the strategies they adopt to upkeep social and professional relations with co-workers and destinations on shore in trans-local networks. We shed light on the relations these workers are creating with other transnational migrants at the Arctic destinations through their time onshore and analyse possibilities for interaction and learnings. We use the results from participant observations and informal interviews in coastal communities in Northern Norway as a base for our research. This study offers a contribution to debates on decent work and social sustainability for workers who's contribution to the economic wealth of coastal communities in Nordic countries (in Norway in particular) is overlooked.

### **Albina Pashkevich<sup>1</sup>**

Hindertje Hoarau Heemstra<sup>1</sup>, Susanna Heldt-Cassel<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nord University

<sup>2</sup> Örebro University

<sup>3</sup> Halmstad University



When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi C

## **From Remoteness to marginalization? Questions of narratives of tourism development with a changing climate – Ummannaq and Ittoqqortoormiit (Greenland)**

### **Anna Karlsdottir**

The North is a complex space, comprised of various physical, cultural, and semiotic realities and heavily labelled by external and western discourse. The aforementioned tend to be renewed within the geopolitical framework or through the centrality of the Arctic in the recent development of climate sciences, moving the Arctic from the margins to the centre. Hence, we urge the need to associate this new centrality of the Arctic to the shaping of place-based narratives. In this article, we scrutinize the recent development of Arctic tourism to address the following questions: How is social sustainability of tourism development in a community perspective shaped by narratives that both are influenced by local and regional stakeholders, the broader national political discourse and strategies, and the international commercial environment shaping the tourism industry? What

constitutes resilience in times of climate change in the Arctic, for instance when Greenland is realizing plans for airport extensions preparing and experiencing increased inbound tourism by vacationing travellers? Arctic tourism is shaped by the geographical features of the region. It is characterized by large landscapes (at different scales) that attract visitors because they are so different to the tourists' regular city landscapes; very small populations; peripheral constraints (perceived or real); and historical narratives of exoticism and marginalisation. Effects of regional governance has impacted connectivity of the two different Greenlandic communities Ummannaq and Ittoqqortoormiit and affected their conditions to maintain resilience with the new tourism opportunities evolving.

### **Anna Karlsdottir**

University of Iceland

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi C

## **The fourth leg of the table: cultural sustainability**

### **Kerry Chipp**

Tourism has been offered as an industry which can sustain rural communities with less impact than the primary industries of logging and mining. It is, however, beset with issues around over-tourism, long distance travel and energy use. As a destination, Lapland, being in the Arctic is at the nexus of these questions. How do communities develop as a sustainable tourist destinations? Our research explored what sustainability means to tourism and hospitality operators and the umbrella bodies, governmental, civil and business, which serve them. A comparison of our research and extant literature, reveals our data is closer to conceptions of sustainability that include heritage. We find models delineating the pillars of sustainability for the arts and museums to be more applicable to Lapland. Similar to Stylianou-Lambert et. al.

(2014) and Pop et. al. (2019), we found four interrelated pillars of sustainability: environmental, economic and a social pillar overlaid with culture. In contrast to arts research, we actively defined the difference between social and cultural sustainability. Moreover, we unpack what cultural sustainability is for place management rather than the arts, particularly in terms of heritage preservation, cultural skills and knowledge, and local memory and identity and how this is deeply intertwined with Arctic ecological heritage. Social sustainability was revealed to be strong communities, networks, a sense of place, active citizenship and engagement, inclusive practices (a diversity of voices, particularly women and marginalised communities) and social infrastructure of amenities, from essentials, such as schools, to community, such as restaurants.

### **Kerry Chipp<sup>1</sup>**

Jeandri Robertson<sup>1</sup>, Tim Foster<sup>1</sup>, Helena Ranängen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luleå University of Technology

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Dálvi C

## **Migrant relations and Rural Environments: a neglected dimension in sustainable development**

### **Seema Arora-Jonsson**

Rural areas in Sweden are undergoing shifts in population with far-reaching impacts. This paper builds on past research, exploratory interviews and a quantitative analysis of demographic changes in rural Sweden to study environmental and justice implications of rural migration and reflect on the role of migration in rural sustainability. We study three migrant groups often largely disregarded in rural policymaking – 1) European ‘lifestyle’ migrants who have set up farms and nature-based activities, 2) asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East, the latter whom authorities have tried to involve in green industries or integrate through nature based programs and 3) seasonal workers, forest labor in particular. We reflect on how the different groups perceive their work and lives in rural areas and how public authorities, private companies and the civil society perceive them in relation to questions of sustainability.

Research so far indicates that deep rooted conceptions on nature and the ‘rural’ condition inhabitants’ relationships to the environment and to each that in turn how they relate to immigrants. All three migrant groups are outside conventional rural society – especially in relation to civil society participation and in some cases in relation to ownership of land. But also that, in different ways, as one migrant we interviewed, put it, they are ‘Shaking up the Sleeping Viking.’ Our intention is to understand how these heterogeneous groups together contribute to the changing demography and social (and environmental) relations in rural areas and with what implications for sustainability and social justice.

### **Seema Arora-Jonsson<sup>1</sup>**

Jan Amcoff<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

<sup>2</sup> Uppsala University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **Regional social indicator development for assessing impacts of expanding the blue economy in urban and rural Norway**

### **Anna Woodhouse**

In Norway, there is a continuous growing interest in exploiting the oceans to substitute fossil-based materials and ingredients for e.g. food and pharma with bio-based products. One such resource is the seaweed Brown macroalgae (*Laminaria Hyperborea*). The seaweed harvesting and cultivation is slowly becoming a driver for the Norwegian blue economy. According to the World Bank, the blue economy is the “sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.” However, a challenge remains how to quantify the sustainability of the growth of the Norwegian blue economy. The seaweed industry has the potential to bring about significant socio-economic development, providing jobs, better infrastructure, and improved living standards to rural areas. However, it also poses risks such as

social inequality, cultural erosion, environmental pollution, and resource depletion. Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment (LCSA) which includes quantitative evaluation of social, environmental and economic sustainability, can be used to assess the implications of the seaweed industry development. While environmental have been well researched and understood, indicators for social impact are still under development and may need to be adapted to regional situations. We investigate whether different social? indicators are important for urban versus rural locations when establishing nature-based resource industry as a case of seaweed harvesting and processing in Norway which aims to contribute to the development of a social sustainability framework adapted to the Nordic context.

### **Anna Woodhouse<sup>1</sup>**

Clara Valente<sup>1</sup>, Hanne Møller<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Institute for Sustainability Research

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **Social aspects and indicators for assessing the social sustainability of new biobased value chains for feed in Norway**

### **Gunn-Turid Kvam**

In Norway, as in many other countries, there is a big focus on replacing fossil energy and products with renewable resources. At the same time, the climate crisis, war and social unrest in the world has led to Norway, with a low degree of self-sufficiency in both food and feed, being more concerned with food security. As a result, the Norwegian Government has launched a Mission on increased sustainable Norwegian feed production. A main goal of the SUSFEED research project, of which this paper is a part, is to investigate the sustainability of new bio-based feed ingredients. This paper asks which social aspects and indicators are relevant and important for assessing the new feed value chains? The social dimension of sustainability

is generally less studied and developed than the other two dimensions. As theoretical perspective we use Janker et al.'s (2017) conceptual framework to evaluate social sustainability in the agricultural system. Regarding the methods, we have conducted a literature review, studied sustainability reports of actors in the established feed value chains, as well as conducted interviews with actors in the established and new feed value chains, and organized group interviews with actors who in various ways are connected to the feed sector to elicit their perceptions of social impact. Results show several categories for social sustainability as well as indicators that are relevant for evaluation of new value chains for feed.

### **Gunn-Turid Kvam<sup>1</sup>**

Egil Petter Stræte<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Rural and Regional Research

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **Social sustainability and the green transition in Norway**

### **Eirik Fuglestad**

Ensuring a sustainable green transition in agriculture and rural areas in Norway requires that all aspects of sustainability – environmental, economic and social – are addressed. There has been a tendency to focus research and policy on economic and environmental sustainability while, in contrast, there has been relatively little engagement with social sustainability. Recent events have suggested the social sustainability of Norway's rural communities is under threat. Besides the continued decline in the number of active farm holdings declining numbers of farm successors and continued rural out-migration, social unrest in rural areas in the form of The Rural Rebellion and The Farmer's Rebellion have drawn attention to the social and economic decline of rural communities and growing inequity concerns farmers

and the rest of society. The social sustainability of Norwegian rural areas requires urgent attention if we are to achieve a sustainable green transition. While the green transition creates opportunities to address these problems this is not assured. Indeed, the green transition can itself add to the problem. 'Win-win' environmental and economic activities can lead to greater farm workload and stress, eroding farmers' quality of life, while regulation of biodiversity and other environmental capital can make farming more difficult. This presentation discusses preliminary findings and reflections on how to achieve a socially sustainable green transition for rural areas in Norway. We present suggestions for indicators, farm succession strategies and policy measures.

### **Eirik Fuglestad<sup>1</sup>**

Bjørn Egil Flo<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Rural and Regional Research

<sup>2</sup> Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **Developing social indicators for sustainability scoring of food products**

### **Hanne Møller**

Food production varies widely across regions due to differences in resources, market dynamics, and politics, leading to diverse practices with potential negative impacts. It significantly contributes to environmental issues like greenhouse gas emissions, land use, and biodiversity loss, and also affects social factors such as health, employment, and equality. To create a more sustainable food system, collaboration among various stakeholders is essential. The Norwegian research project, NewTools, aims to develop a unified framework for assessing the social and environmental sustainability of food products, bringing together diverse perspectives across the food system.

The selection of social categories included in the framework was guided by a survey where stakeholders identified the most relevant categories

for the food value chain in combination with a social hotspot analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative data were assessed against a reference scale with four levels, where a score of 1 indicated low social performance and a score of 4 represented high performance, reflecting an ideal or target value. The results were then weighted to produce a single score. Two different weighting approaches were tested: (1) distance to target, using data from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and (2) stakeholder preferences gathered from a survey of project participants. The impact of different weighting approaches will be discussed. The final results will also be assessed based on Norway's SDG spillover score, which reflects how the country's actions can positively or negatively impact other countries' abilities to achieve the SDGs.

### **Hanne Møller<sup>1</sup>**

Anna Woodhouse<sup>1</sup>, Erik Svanes<sup>1</sup>, Hanne Fjerdingby Olsen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Institute for Sustainability Research

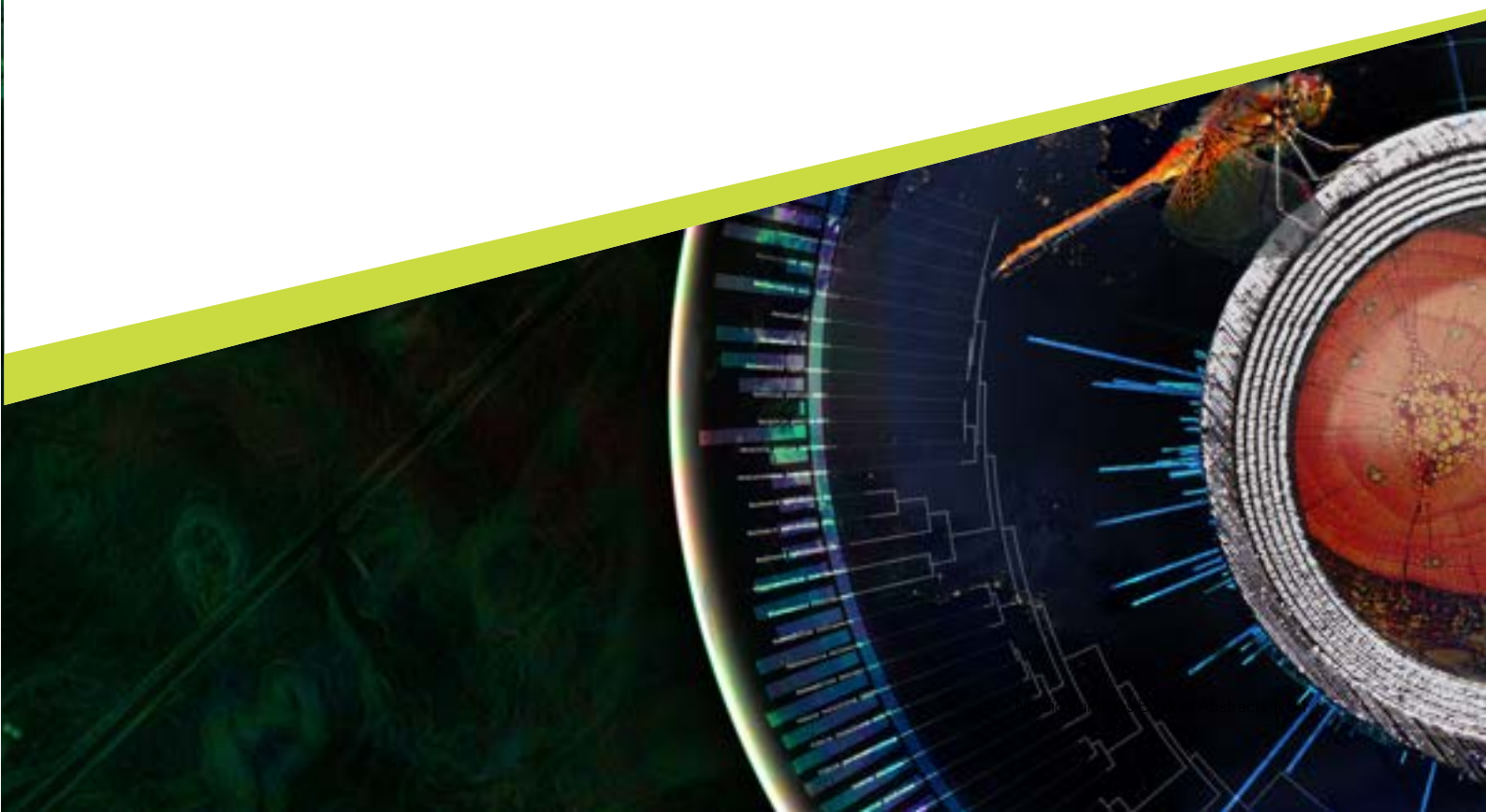
<sup>2</sup> Norwegian University of Life Sciences





# **Mining, minerals, and society in Nordic**

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When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **From recession to success. The effects of the ‘new industrialization’ in a small community in northern Sweden 2007-2026**

### **Eugenia Segerstedt**

What happens to a small community’s social cohesion, status system and behavioral patterns when extensive financial investments are carried out? The project focus is changes in attitudes and values, status alternations in working life and leisure, behavioral changes, changes in perceptions of the future during mining establishment in Pajala municipality of northern Sweden in 2007–2026.

#### **Research questions**

1. How have the demographics, economy, well-being, recreational use and general health of the local community changed as a consequence of the mine establishment?
2. How has social status changed between different groups during the mine establishment?
3. What significance does the establishment of the mining industry in Pajala have for young people’s perceptions of future career paths?
4. What possible “new” social problems have arisen as a consequence of the rapid local growth in the municipality?
5. What new future do people see in Pajala municipality?

Based on existing qualitative and quantitative data/surveys from 2008 and 2019/20, new data collection and public register data, the study provides knowledge on how industrial investments in a small community have altered a trend of emigration, health, and faith in the future. The research group has followed the mining establishment in Pajala municipality since the start in 2007/08, which provides opportunities to study changes during the new industrialization. The results can be scaled up to regional and national levels through empirically validated knowledge base for understanding the socio-economic and cultural effects of the new industrialization in the northern parts of Sweden – and Europe.

Peter Waara<sup>1</sup>

**Eugenia Segerstedt<sup>2</sup>**, Mats Jakobsson<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Uppsala University

<sup>2</sup> Luleå University of Technology

<sup>3</sup> Luleå University of Technology

When: 2024-12-04, 09:42 - 10:06

Where: The Climber

## **Virtuous extractivism: Claims for exceptionalism in Swedish mining and green steel**

### **Georgia De Leeuw**

Sweden is one of the countries heralded as the front riders of the steel transition, leading efforts to decarbonise steel production through a new hydrogen-based technology. Translating the decarbonization of the heavy industry into an upscaling of various forms of extraction and production, Sweden has pushed forth a narrative of extractive virtue and exceptionalism. Mining expertise, ore deposits and existing infrastructures are highlighted as making the North the ideal space for further extraction for the green transition. I show how this risks reinforcing the region as extractible, extraction as the only alternative and indigenous livelihoods as disposable. I problematize the steel transition's emphasis on an upscaling in production and the accompanied pressures on energy, land, biodiversity, and people. The steel transition

is situated in what has been framed as Sweden's mining mecca, a historically sacrificed space dedicated to industrial expansion. I see this transition to be anchored in earlier and related articulations of Swedish mining leadership and its iron ore persona. Alongside the green steel transition I therefore also study the case of planned iron ore extraction in Gällöck, Kallak to pinpoint the green transition's alignment with the logic of extractivism. I scrutinize the supposed rationality of this alignment, its commonsensical nature, and identify avenues of discomfort that may indeed incite a readjustment. I do this by juxtaposing industry and state notions of green steel and mining futures against local and indigenous 'misalignment' with the logic of extractivism in search for alternative transition trajectories.

### **Georgia De Leeuw**

Human Rights Studies, Lund University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **The Specter of Community: An ethnographic exploration of the local support for the Kaunisvaara mine**

### **Katarina Landström**

This paper explores the reasons behind local support for the opening of an iron ore mine in the village Kaunisvaara, Pajala municipality, Sweden. In contemporary research, mining conflicts are grasped as the result of conflicting values between mining proponents and mining opponents. Previous research links opposition to mining with valuation of a clean environment, local culture and livelihoods. Meanwhile, local support for mining is linked to a valuation of local economic and demographic growth. However, the notion of value employed in much research is insensitive to the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental values. This has left the values or ends of mining proponents, who see money and development as means to *something else*, unexplored. By taking a more precisely defined notion of value as its star

ting point, this paper offers a deeper understanding of the hopes, dreams and expectations underlying the explicitly stated economic rationales advanced in support for a mine. Empirically, the approach adds to the literature on mining conflicts through an ethnographic account of support, rather than resistance, to local mining operations. Theoretically, it offers a starting point for rethinking mining conflicts, and other natural resource conflicts, not primarily as the product of actual, clashing values between different local groups, but as struggles over the very definition of what value is. In that struggle, the main line of conflict runs not between members of the local community, but between local communities and actors driven by profit maximization.

### **Katarina Landström**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **Meaningfulness of place attachment and a sense of place in people's narratives towards mineral exploration in Northern Finland**

### **Sanna Ojalampi**

The study explores respondents' and interviewees' perceptions and emotions towards mining and mineral exploration and place attachments with sense of place in rural landscapes in two municipalities, Rovaniemi and Kuusamo, in Northern Finland. Using the concept of place attachment with sense of place, we aim to understand how attachment to places with nature, everyday life with livelihoods and property affects people's acceptance of mining due to environmental, economic and social impacts, and how people's concerns about the environment, sustainability and local development are highlighted in their perceptions towards mining. We use both qualitative and quantitative methods with large pilot surveys, interviews and map data, where attitudinal references to mining, mining exploration and attachments will be obtained from narratives and open-ended responses. The research shows how people are strongly

attached to their communities, where mining impacts are linked to people's daily lives and local politics. Mining often impacts include emotional attachments to land and property, with concerns about the potential risks of mining and mineral exploration to the environment, such as environmental degradation and exposure to environmental hazards and loss of property. Mining and mineral exploration also divide communities, with mining affecting social cohesion and local people either supporting or opposing mining. We explore the challenges of mining and mineral exploration in rural landscapes in Northern Finland and emphasize that people's perceptions, values and attachments with sense of place should be considered, as they strongly reflect connections to nature, ownership and place dependence (individual and collective) and influence attitudes towards mining.

### **Sanna Ojalampi<sup>1</sup>**

Leena Suopajarvi<sup>2</sup>, Sanna Petterson<sup>2</sup>, Ossi Kotavaara<sup>1</sup>, Jari Joutsenvaara<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Oulu

<sup>2</sup> University of Lapland

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Climber

## **Global needs, local pleas – perspectives on the green transition and mining**

### **Sanna Pettersson**

The European Union's Green Deal, and the aim for increased mineral self-sufficiency put pressure on remote communities to provide minerals to fuel the green transition. Northern Finland is currently a hot spot for mineral exploration for these reasons. We surveyed the residents of the north-eastern Kuusamo municipality in 2023 to find out what the locals think of these developments in light of a possible mining project in the area.

According to our survey data (N=116), the respondents share climate concern, criticize the volume of material consumption, and want human activity adapted to environmental carrying capacity. While the EU presents increased mining as a climate crisis solution, the respondents largely disagree with that conception and oppose mining in Kuusamo. They also report a lack of agency in

decision-making regarding mining. However, they are concerned over the viability of their communities as employment opportunities and the population dwindle.

Communities in Northern Finland share a history of resource peripherisation, with both state and private actors grabbing resources, while not providing sufficient long term benefit and leaving behind costs. At the time, these actions were justified by highlighting their necessity to the society at large. Local people are now faced with difficult decisions and an uncertain future. By ignoring locals' concerns, the unfolding green transition threatens to repeat the cycle of peripherisation, further marginalising the already marginalised communities. This research is funded by the Horizon Europe research and innovation programme.

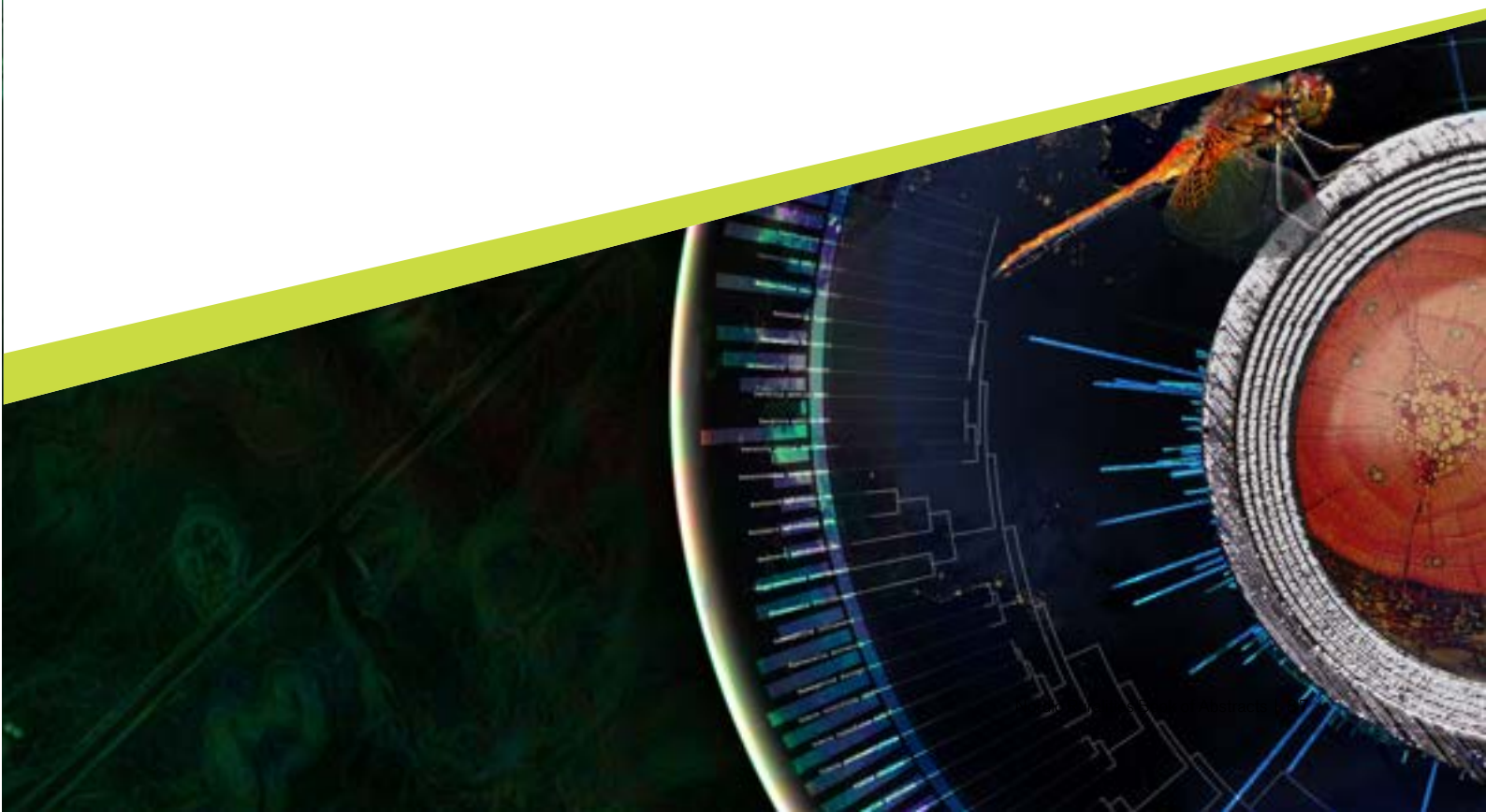
### **Sanna Pettersson<sup>1</sup>**

Leena Suopajarvi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Lapland

# Transitioning Nordic Ruralities: between extraction and care

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When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Climber

## **A discursive analysis of socioenvironmental and intersectional justice in the green energy industries of Northern Sweden**

### **Ingrid Altamirano**

Energy sufficiency and access to strategic minerals have been essential concerns ever since the European colonial expansion. National sovereignty, political stability, human health, and well-being are only a few categories that are directly and indirectly affected by energy supplies. While the overall energy supply was the main concern in the past, the need for less carbon intensive energy sources has become paramount in a world with finite natural resources and the ongoing ecological and climate crises.

Although the so-called green energy transition is today widely advocated, energy landscapes and their dynamics vary significantly across space. To date, the different aspects of what sustainable energy production entails for different geographical regions and marginalized groups of people has not been sufficiently examined.

Taking the cases of Northvolt (Skellefteå), SSAB (Boden), Regenergy (Gällivare) I analyze their discursive practices in terms of environmental sustainability, labour relations and living conditions of marginalized migrant workers. I discuss what these projects entail in terms of socioenvironmental and intersectional justice to show how social reproduction occurring in transitioning energy landscapes sustain capital accumulation rather than life on earth. I argue that empty corporate social responsibility policies conceal recurring and historical unjust socioenvironmental and intersectional relations.

### **Ingrid Altamirano**

Lund University



When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Climber

## **Work and housing - The labor regime of the green of the economy**

### **Madeleine Eriksson**

More than 2000 workers live in labor barracks hastily erected on empty land as numerous locations in northern Sweden have transformed into hubs for various megaprojects. These investments, known as “green” industrial investments, encompass, among other things, the establishment of Northvolt I, a new battery plant in the municipality of Skellefteå in 2017. The battery plant adheres to an exceptionally accelerated timetable, suggesting that the company sought preferential treatment in planning procedures and prioritization for environmental permit assessments. Nevertheless, for a small, economically stagnant northern municipality like Skellefteå with a population of merely 72,000, the prospect of 3,000

new job opportunities at the factory, along with numerous additional indirect jobs, presented an attractive opportunity. Yet, it has become increasingly evident that the companies’ demand for acceleration ignore the actual time needed for building sustainable housing, expanding welfare institutions and to build essential infrastructure for the expected population increase and industry. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork in the barrack villages in Skellefteå, this chapter examines workers accommodation in Sweden, Skellefteå. We explore the meanings and consequences of these, increasingly more common global workplace-landscapes, for the reproduction of labor subjects, and for the local community.

### **Madeleine Eriksson<sup>1</sup>**

Andreas Nuottaniemi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Umeå University

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Climber

## **How to plan and build a social sustainable society in a small community undergoing the green societal transition**

### **Magdalena Sjöberg**

Husum (Municipality of Örnsköldsvik) is one of several rural single-industry places in northern Sweden and around the world, that is enmeshed in a green transition (GT) and in need of competence supply to keep the green industrialization going. The GT in Husum is unique since they explicitly focus on social sustainability to build an inclusive and attractive Husum attracting people to move to/stay in Husum, thus ensuring the green industry's need for competence supply. Thus, social sustainability becomes a *necessity* to achieve economic and ecological sustainability. Aim: explore if and how “Collaborative artic planning” that gather all main stakeholders (industry, municipality, civic society, residents) in a co-creative process guided by program theory and formative evaluation, can be a tool for creating an

inclusive and attractive Husum? And if so, what are its merits and limitations? Methods: Through document analysis, interviews, observations and Living labs, the following factors were mapped up: the stakeholders common *Goal* with the GT and planning interventions, *Who(m)* will do *What*, *When and How* will planning interventions be implemented and *What* desirable results are each planning interventions supposed to lead to, and for *Which* social group(s)? Findings: Consultocracy and power structures were limitations for managing new and already known social problems. The structured form of Program theory as well as the practice-oriented approach provided by formative evaluation were merits. A form of Klondike-fever worked both as a merit and as a limitation.

### **Magdalena Sjöberg<sup>1</sup>**

Magnus Larsson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Umeå university

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Climber

## **Envisioning, understanding and approaching an equitable Blue Economy and how to build resilience in a climate-challenged world**

### **Marit Aure**

Governments and industries worldwide have ambitious plans for an expanding 'Blue Economy' which includes, for example, increasing production sites for aquaculture and ocean energy to ensure future prosperity of coastal and oceanic communities. At the same time, coastal communities are under pressure because of social change exacerbated by the exodus of women and young people, as well as climate change which is expected to have severe impacts in coastal spaces. Yet, as the Blue Economy creates space and opportunities for some, others may become disadvantaged or displaced.

The question is how can we make coastal communities resilient to future climate impacts at a time when the communities experience significant social and economic change? For a profound analysis about equality, fairness, sustainability and resilience, we need to address distribution of costs

and benefits from utilization of natural resources in the industrial developments and 'the green shift' in these coastal communities e.g. benefits for whom and at what costs for whom. This entails also the vulnerability and reduced resilience when relying upon only a few industries, e.g. aquaculture.

This paper builds on the ongoing Norwegian Research Council funded 'BluePlaces' project to explore the underlying economic and social dynamics of coastal communities. We ask how different actors (incl. women, youth, migrants, and indigenous groups) in local communities approach changes and who are allowed a position in these development processes? How can we address the importance of equity in building resilient coastal places – places that have positive outcomes for all of society.

### **Marit Aure<sup>1</sup>**

Madeleine Gustavsson<sup>2</sup>, Katrina Rønningen<sup>2</sup>, Frode Flemsæter<sup>3</sup>, Synne Movik<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Arctic University of Norway

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Rural and Regional Research

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Rural and Regional Research / Norwegian University of Science and Technology TNU, Trondheim, Norway

<sup>4</sup> Norwegian University of Life Science

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:30

Where: The Climber

## **A just green transition? A systematic literature review of gender, social reproduction and energy transition**

### **Martina Angela Caretta**

The ongoing energy transition in the Global North relies on resource extraction and the exploitation of human labor and nature in the Global South. Important questions remain on whether this transition can be considered “green” and “just” if it is dependent on cheap labor sources. It also ponders how the EU green energy transition is different from uneven labor and ecologically harmful energy systems of the past.

To map existing scholarly work in relation to gender, social reproduction, and energy transition we carried out a systematic review of English and Spanish peer-reviewed literature published in Scopus, Web of Science, Scielo and Latindex between 2010 and 2024. We found 49 relevant articles, mostly focusing on the Global South and

relying on qualitative case study methodologies. These themes emerged: 1. The role of women as consumers in the energy transition; 2. The gendered consequences of energy poverty; 3. The role of the energy transition in worsening gender and intersectional vulnerabilities; 4. Gender blindness in energy transition planning; 5. Labor conditions in the energy transition.

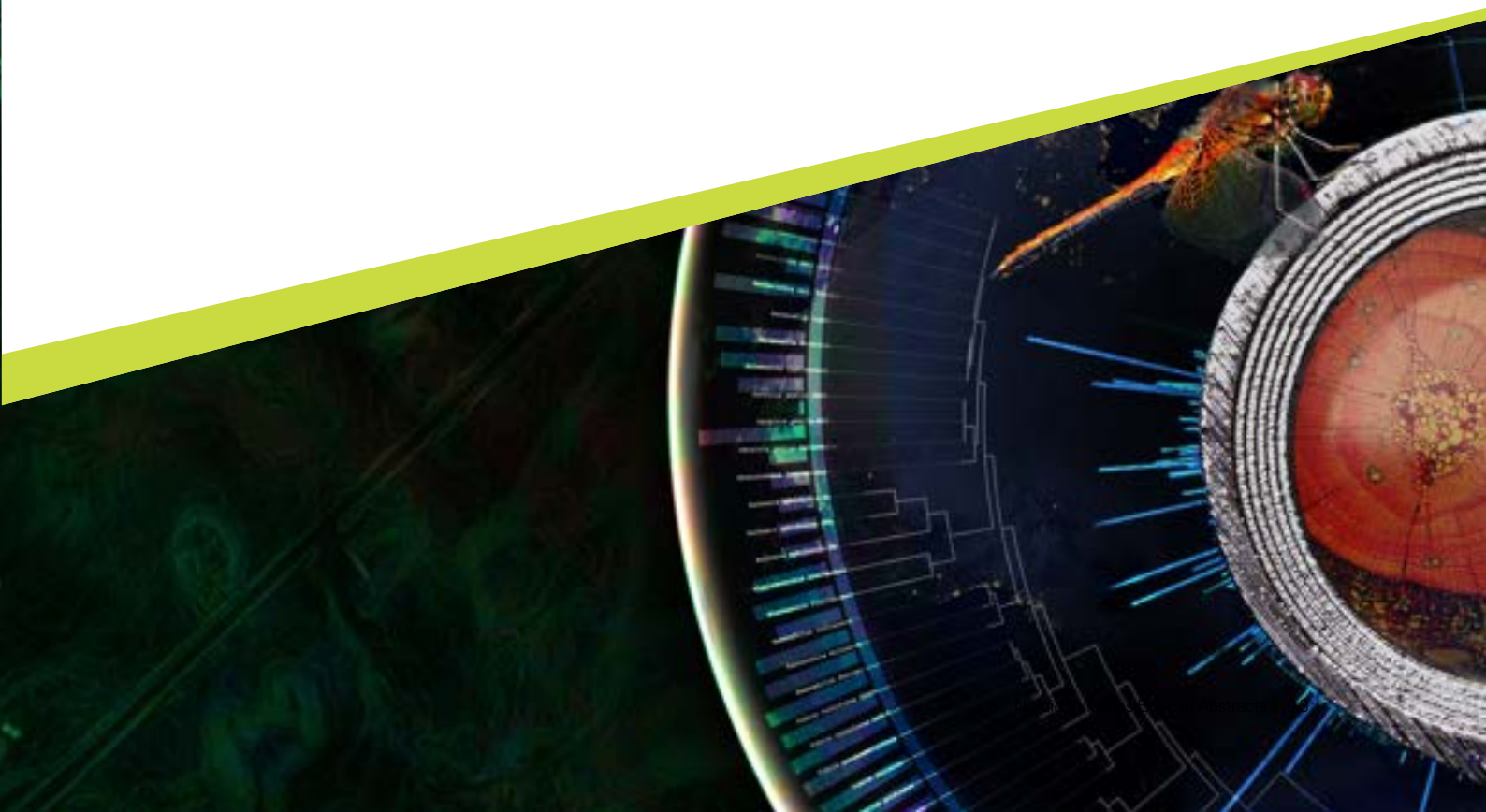
Giving the siloed nature of the ongoing scholarly debate, we argue that a feminist approach is highly relevant and timely to examine the gender relations and the reproductive work that are often disregarded and rendered invisible, but that sustain highly masculinized sectors, such as the mining sector and the automobile components industry.

### **Martina Angela Caretta**

Lund University

# **Micro-level actions and consequences related to green transitions in rural areas**

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When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **A global World Heritage status meets the local rural and archipelago reality —growing nature-based tourism in a context of pluralism and tension**

### **Ann-Sofi Backgren**

To achieve UNESCO World Heritage status is a privilege granted to few. The site must demonstrate universal value and can be either cultural, natural, or a combination of both. The Nordic countries have 42 World Heritage sites, including 8 natural sites and one that combines cultural and natural values. These sites are celebrated for their unique beauty and role in preserving essential ecological and geological phenomena.

One such natural heritage site is the High Coast (Sweden) and Kvarken Archipelago (Finland). The High Coast was designated a World Heritage site in 2000, already known as a tourist destination with Skuleskogen National Park. In 2006, when the Kvarken Archipelago received its designation, a journey of destination development began. This coincided with the implementation of the EU's NATURA 2000 nature conservation

program, causing concern and protests among locals. UNESCO status is expected to facilitate, even guarantee, sustainable development paths for these sites, balancing attraction with conservation.

However, this global status must align with the local reality of rural and coastal residents who continue to live and work in a World Heritage area. Conservation programs are often seen as intrusions into local ways of life, creating tensions. While a UNESCO designation can enhance a site's reputation and attractiveness, fostering authenticity and sustainable tourism requires engaging local communities. Could local storytelling provide a new platform for creating authentic, sustainable tourism experiences? The challenge lies in balancing a global context within a local environment, especially as interest in Nordic nature tourism grows amid climate change.

### **Ann-Sofi Backgren**

The University of Vaasa

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **Exploring the consequences of the developing bioeconomy for food system actors of various size and the dynamics between them**

### **Maja Farstad**

In Europe, bioeconomy visions and strategies constitute an essential part of the green transition. The development of a bioeconomy is therefore claimed as key for the development of sustainable food systems. But food systems are highly diverse, with regional and local food producers and processors operating alongside national and international food businesses. Understanding the potentially varied impacts of bioeconomic developments on these diverse food system actors is therefore important if we are to maintain the benefits, socially, economically and environmentally, of diverse modes and scales of food production and processing that exist in regional food systems. In this paper, we explore the potential consequences of the developing bioeconomy for different food system actors, and the relationship between these actors in Norway. The analysis is based on a desk study

of online and printed materials from relevant food system actors and the Norwegian government, semi-structured interviews conducted with representatives of relevant (regional and national) companies and organisations identified in the desk study, and 2 all-day focus group interviews/workshops, with actors operating at different scales within meat and cheese production, respectively. Our findings indicate that, although the larger actors are best placed to benefit from the opportunities provided by bioeconomic innovations, and are key drivers of these innovation activities, smaller actors occupy a specific market niche subject to quite different pressures and innovation demands. Bioeconomic development does not, as yet, appear to have led to a drawback for the smaller actors, whether it comes to cross-scale collaboration or position in the market.

### **Maja Farstad<sup>1</sup>**

Richard Helliwell<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Rural and Regional Research

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:38

Where: Dálvi C

## **To relocate, or not? The future of small and remote communities in the Nordic Countries facing natural hazards**

### **Matthias Kokorsch**

In light of the challenges posed by climate change, small and remote settlements in the Nordic countries are increasingly vulnerable to natural hazards such as avalanches, storms, and floods. These communities face unique challenges due to their nature-dependent livelihoods, distance from emergency services, and limited resources for climate adaptation. Despite these vulnerabilities, the option of relocating such communities is often avoided in Nordic contexts, largely due to strong place attachment, the cultural and social value of these areas, and the principle of providing state services to all citizens, regardless of location.

We aim to spark a debate on the controversial topic of relocation as a potential long-term solution for these at-risk communities. While

relocation is often politically undesirable, it may offer a more resilient and sustainable alternative to the ongoing efforts in capacity building and adaptation. As Nordic ruralities navigate the transition to a fossil-free economy and grapple with the impacts of climate change, it is crucial to consider whether maintaining settlements in high-risk areas is still viable. By engaging researchers, policymakers, and society at large, we hope to foster a more open and constructive discussion on whether relocation could be a necessary step towards sustainable transitions in the Nordic region. This dialogue is essential for ensuring just and fair climate transitions that respect the complex realities of rural communities and their connections to broader societal dynamics.

### **Matthias Kokorsch**

University Centre of the Westfjords



When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Dálvi C

## **From on-farm climate advice to climate change mitigation?**

### **Sunniva Solnør**

To meet the demands and challenges of climate change policy, farmers are expected to change their operations by reducing emissions and adapting to climate change.

Increased awareness and knowledge of the relationship between farm operations and the climate is seen as an important catalyst for changing behaviour at farm level, thereby contributing to reducing the climate impact of agricultural production.

In 2021, the Norwegian Agricultural Agency launched a three-year pilot where farmers could apply for climate advice from certified advisors and be reimbursed for the cost of the advice. The pilot aimed for several outcomes for farmers who received climate advice: increased knowledge of the farm's carbon footprint, an overview of potential operational changes, and a list of measures to reduce emissions, sequester carbon, and/or

adapt to climate-related changes. The advisors in the project were from the Norwegian Extension Service (NLR) and the dairy cooperative TINE. As part of an evaluation of the pilot, we conducted a nationwide farmer survey in 2022 and 2024 (part of the bi-annual survey Trends in Norwegian Agriculture), and interviewed advisors providing climate advice and farmers who had received advice. We ask: (i) to what extent has this measure (climate advice for farmers) increased climate awareness and knowledge among Norwegian farmers, and (ii) does increased climate knowledge automatically lead to new farming practices? Our analysis shows that climate advice e.g. gives farmers a comprehensive and holistic view of their farm, but that this knowledge not necessarily increases the likelihood of implementing the suggested measures.

### **Sunniva Solnør<sup>1</sup>**

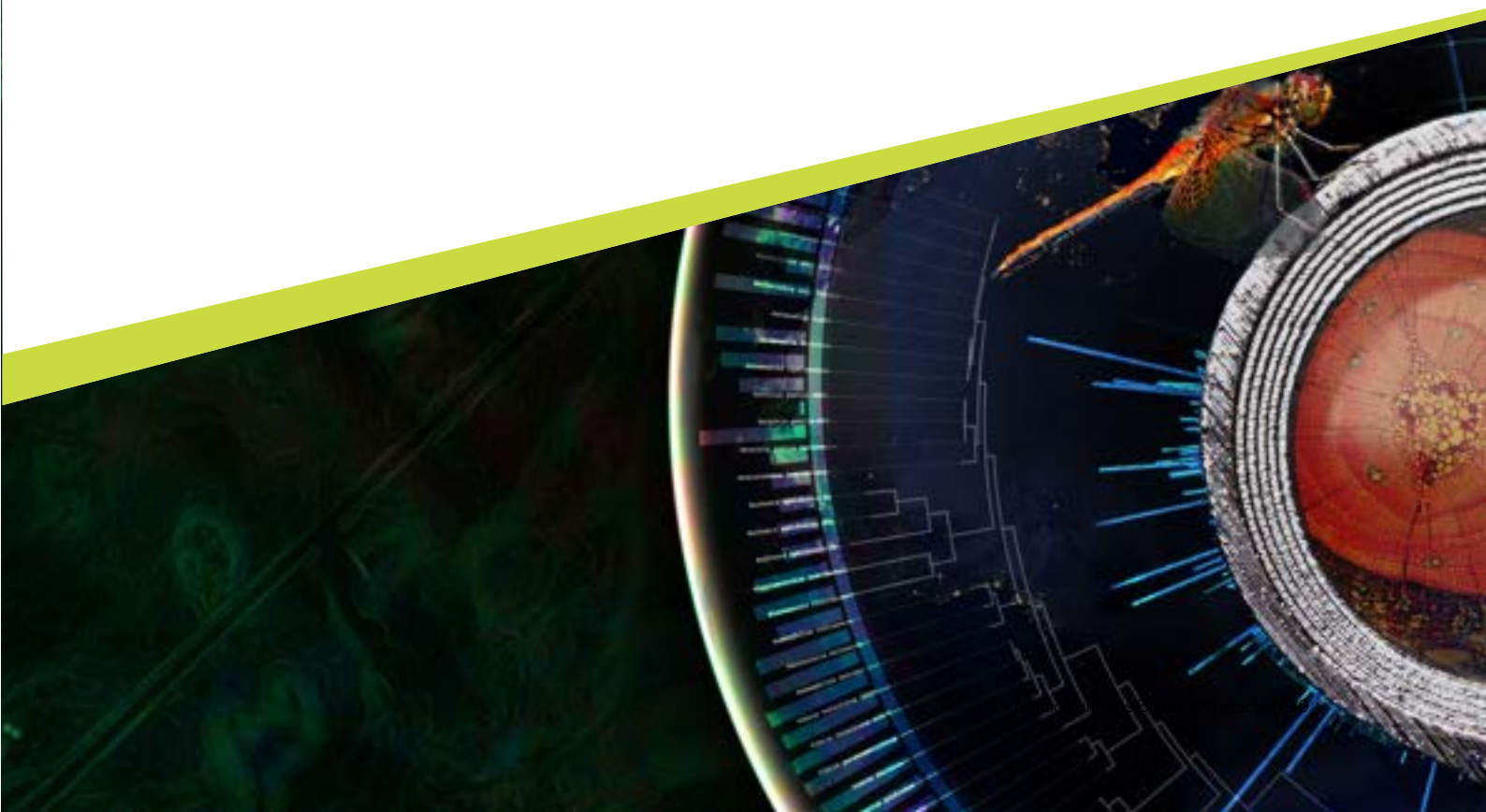
Jostein Brobakk<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Institute for Rural and Regional Research



# **Food security and preparedness of the Nordic region in times of the war in Europe**

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When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **Food security as a policy problem: long term developments in Sweden's parliamentary debates**

### **Johanna Pettersson Fürst**

Recent international events such as the Covid-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have put food security back on the agenda and highlighted the vulnerabilities of a global industrialized food system. In Sweden, this development stands in sharp contrast to the de-securitization of food policy that followed the 'end of history' at the end of the Cold War, which saw decades of emphasis on food as an integral part of preparedness replaced with food policies that emphasised international competitiveness in food production. This paper asks how food becomes part of and/or disappears from the security policy agenda and

what framings that contribute to this development. Using Swedish parliamentary data covering the last 100 years, the development of food as a security issue in the Swedish national context is analysed, capturing periods of both securitization and de-securitization of food. By understanding more about how food security has been part of defence and preparedness policy debates historically, we contribute to a better understanding of the conditions affecting the current state of food security and preparedness policy in Sweden, which hopefully can inform the broader understanding of this issue in the Nordic countries.

### **Johanna Pettersson Fürst**

Uppsala University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **Vulnerabilities and preparedness of Nordic food systems versus geopolitical and climate instability**

### **Katrina Rønningen**

Geopolitical pressures – including climate change and the war in Ukraine, have demonstrated the vulnerability of national and global food systems in terms of food security and risk resilience.

With starting point in the Norwegian case and the Nordic region, this paper addresses potential strategies and scenarios. What food systems and models are brought to the fore as materialized in ongoing political debates and discourses, and on the ground in terms of actual food production and land use?

Albeit its relatively strong rural and agricultural policies, with an objective of “viable agriculture all over the country”, Norway has seen a dramatic reduction by 2/3 of number of farms during the last decades (currently 36 500 farms). Norway’s food supply is based on approximately 40% self sufficiency in agrarian calories, 2% on nationally produced fish. However, large parts of the input

factors rely upon import (eg feed stuff – up to 70%). Strong economic pressures, conservation policies and need for investments to meet strengthened environmental and animal welfare requirements challenge especially small scale farmers in the uplands and northern Norway.

The recent experiences of smallholders importance in Ukraine for food supply, revitalizes the political debate concerning the relevance of structure and geographical distribution of various types of food production, distribution and the overall food systems.

On this background, the paper invites to a discussion on: What combinations of local, regional and international collaborations on food security are relevant under certain crisis scenarios? What is the relevance of a strengthened collaboration within the Nordic countries?

### **Katrina Rønningen**

Institute for Rural and Regional Research

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **Perserving costal heatlands for future food security: Insights from a Norwegian case study**

### **Kristin Sørheim**

We aimed to explore how farming communities at Norway's west coast may adapt to changing climate conditions. Coastal heathlands require mild winters, grazing animals and specific management. They have existed for thousands of years and provide humans a range of animal products. We selected Nerlandsøya, a small island in Herøy municipality for a multidisciplinary study, applying stakeholder interviews, farm inventory and biodiversity monitoring.

Stakeholders emphasised that maintaining an active farming community is essential for preserving heathlands, and conversely, the existence of heathlands is vital for maintaining agriculture in these marginal areas. We identified possible interest conflicts between agriculture, infrastructure building and tourism.

The main farming system on Nerlandsøya is sheep grazing in the heathlands. Farmers keep both modern and old Norwegian breeds. Tick-borne diseases, intestinal parasites and micro-

mineral deficiency are potential threats for sheep farming in coastal areas. However, our investigation revealed high production of meat and wool and healthy animals. Sheep farming contributed to maintain cultural landscape values and assure future food production.

The investigated heathlands had a large diversity of soil microorganisms and invertebrates. Although some species are unique to early stages of succession, most species that persist and thrive across all phases are key to maintaining the biodiversity and ecosystem stability. Soil carbon content was high.

Heathland is in general resilient to changes towards a wetter and warmer climate. We suggest increased attention to coastal regions regarding future food security. An active farmer community and local knowledge is necessary to maintain heathland grazing systems through adaptive management.

### **Kristin Sørheim**

Sara Hansdotter, Reidun Pommeresche, Tatiana Rittl

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

### **Food security in times of geopolitical crisis: what lessons can we learn from Ukrainian agriculture?**

#### **Natalia Mamonova**

Ukraine is often referred to as the breadbasket of Europe, as it is one of the world's largest grain exporters. Russia's war in Ukraine has had a severe impact on Ukrainian agricultural production and trade, leading to domestic food shortages and contributing to the global food crisis. In this presenta-

tion, Natalia will discuss the impact of the war on the global food system and key lessons that can be learned from Ukrainian food producers to make our food system more resilient to global shocks and disruptions.

#### **Natalia Mamonova**

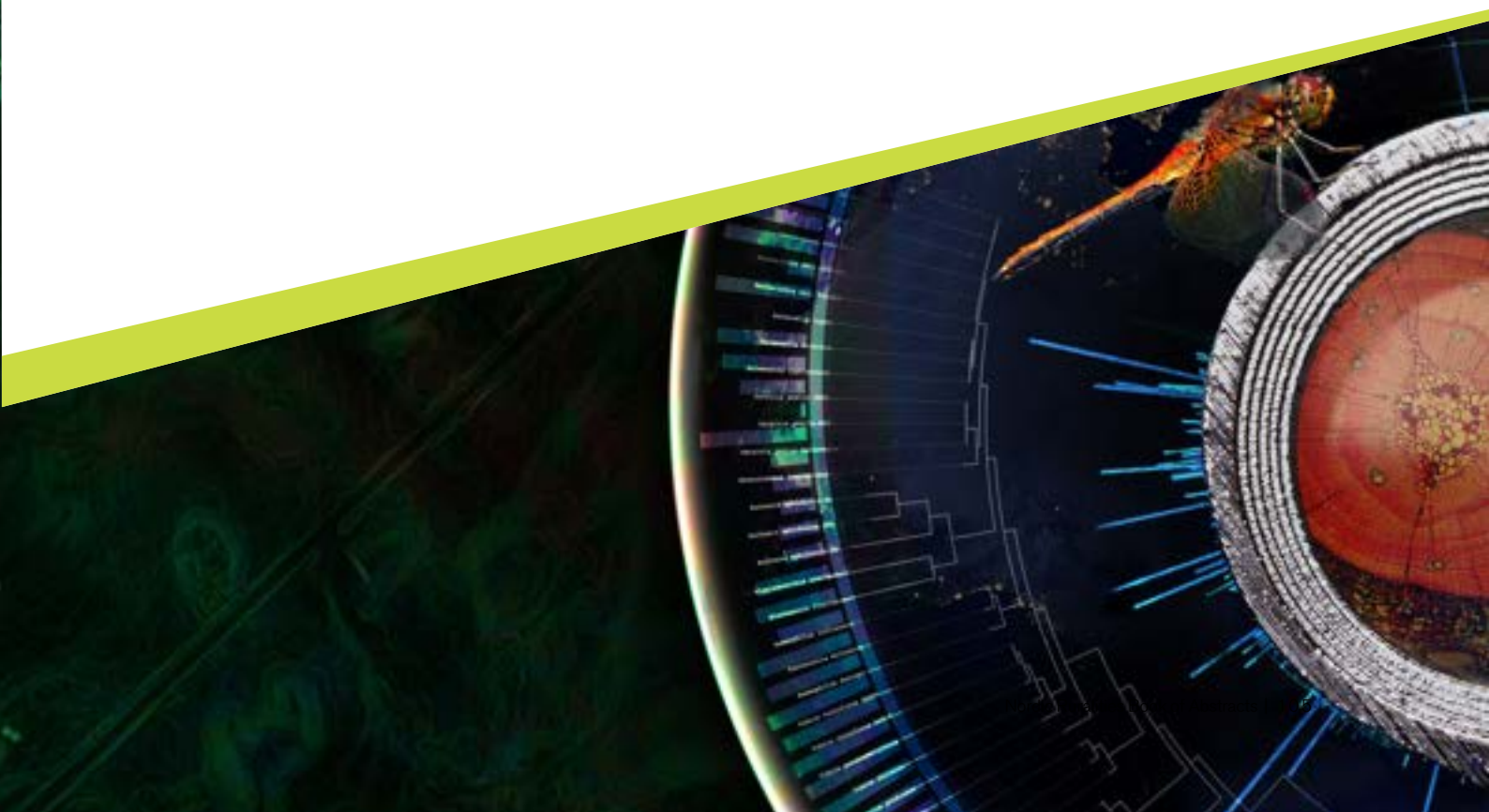
Institute for Rural and Regional Research





# Open group theme 2: Sustainable use of natural resources

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When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Beyond landscape divides - what determines multifunctional forestry?**

### **Lara Tickle**

The concept of multifunctionality is emerging as a key idea in landscape planning, management, and evaluation, aiming to align these practices with modern objectives such as biodiversity conservation, food security, and public health. Despite its potential, multifunctionality has been critiqued for its ambiguity, although it remains a significant ambition to re-conceptualize landscapes as supporting a broader range of functions than traditionally recognized. The lack of consensus on what multifunctionality entails has led to multiple interpretations, and applications of the concept, particularly in forest landscapes. The challenge lies not only in defining multifunctionality but also in its practical application, as varying interpretations and operationalization strategies can lead to fragmented landscape management. While this management fragmentation might enable local hotspots for biodiversity, on a wider scale it might foster

barriers to biodiversity as connections and green infrastructures become disrupted. In this paper, we map different definitions and operationalizations of multifunctionality by reviewing scientific literature on multifunctionality in Swedish forest landscapes. Our analysis scrutinizes if, and how, definitions and operationalizations of multifunctionality vary between different landscape types and scales, potentially leading to fragmented biodiversity outcomes. Tentative results point towards a potential urban-rural gradient, where urban forestry practices may support higher biodiversity compared to production-focused rural forestry. Bringing the spatial distribution of multifunctionality and biodiversity to light has great value for policymakers and politicians, especially if the aim is to counteract landscape fragmentation and enable well-integrated green infrastructures.

### **Lara Tickle<sup>1</sup>**

Amalia Engström<sup>1</sup>, Alejandra Figueredo<sup>1</sup>, Sara Holmgren<sup>1</sup>, Marcus Hedblom<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Constructing and enacting multifunctional forest landscapes – An exploration of methods and tools for diversification in Swedish forests**

### **Amalia Engström**

Worldwide, reforestation and forest restoration are increasingly seen as key measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change and curb biodiversity loss. In Sweden, forest restoration is primarily associated with diversification. Concepts like ‘multifunctional’ forestry and landscape management, ‘nature-based’ and ‘continuous cover forestry’ all signal ambitions to transform the current forest management regime, which has left Sweden’s forest landscapes homogenous and poor in biodiversity. There is little political support for forest restoration, but no legal obstacles for diversification and less intensive management methods among forest owners, including municipalities. However, in the process of translating ambitions to practice, these actors face challenges of safeguarding multifunctionality from a landscape perspective. Previous research has identified how dominant planning regimes obstruct management diversification.

Focusing on planning tools and methods, this study explores possibilities and challenges associated with constructing and enacting diversification of Sweden’s forest landscapes. Methods resting on bounded and fragmented landscapes, on quantification, and on ontological prepositions of forests as timber reserves do not suffice.

Empirically, we follow a set of municipalities in central Sweden, currently embarking on transitioning their forest planning and management, through analysis of planning and policy documents and interviews with elected representatives, planners, and forest entrepreneurs. Methodologically, we deploy a relational landscape perspective and lean on STS scholars to investigate ambitions and experiences of using measures aiming to account for relations, complexity and qualitative aspects of forest landscapes. The analysis is expected to provide insights to factors that enable and hamper the enactment of more multifunctional forest landscapes.

### **Amalia Engström<sup>1</sup>**

Sara Holmgren<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish university of Agricultural Sciences,

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Sustainable management of agricultural land in Arctic Norway – resource barriers in public management**

### **Hilde Halland**

Agricultural land, which include fields, meadows and pastures is a limited resource. To ensure that future generations have sufficient access to land suitable for food production, land management must contribute to the sustainable management and use of agricultural land. In 2023, the Norwegian National Audit Office concluded that agricultural land resources are not managed in a fully sustainable manner.

In Northern Norway, the biggest challenges for sustainable land use are to maintain agricultural production to avoid overgrowth, and to limit conversion of agricultural land to avoid permanent loss. Public land management is governed through legislation and public plans with set goals and policy instruments, and is managed locally in the municipalities across the country. The municipalities therefore play a key role in ensuring sustainable land use. To strengthen land management,

it is important to know what the resource-related barriers are in public management in municipalities, and how any challenging areas can be strengthened.

This study examines the municipal administration's perspective on resources related to public sustainable land management of agriculture's land needs. Theoretically, the study uses a public policy approaches framework. The study is based on a case study in three northern Norwegian municipalities, Alta, Tromsø and Vestvågøy, which all have agricultural areas under pressure. Group interviews with public administrators in the three municipalities will be conducted at the turn of August/September 2024. The study is part of a larger regional project concerning sustainable production of more local, healthy food, along the coast of northern Norway (CoastShift).

### **Hilde Halland<sup>1</sup>**

Frøydis Gillund<sup>1</sup>, Linda Aune-Lundberg<sup>1</sup>, Marianne Vileid Uleberg<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Exploring social learning networks for enhancing multi-use forestry and rural development in Sweden**

### **Jenny Friman**

Alternative forest stewardship methods have the potential to diversify primary production and provide a wider variety of income opportunities in rural regions while also improving a range of environmental services. In this study, we focus on family forest owners in Sweden and their social learning networks as representing a potential fulcrum on which the adoption of multi-use and alternative forest management practices may hinge. The aim of the study is to investigate how social learning networks can facilitate forest owners multi-use of forests in rural Sweden. More precisely the study pays attention to the underlying policies that enable and hinders how forest owners can utilize multiple uses and draw economic benefits from their forest, apart from selling timber to the large-scale industry. The study moreover pays attention to what this can

entail for the forest owners forest management. The study has explored these relations through in-depth interviews with forest owners in the southern, middle and northern parts of Sweden. The study addresses the possibilities and limitations of leveraging the existing social learning networks and underlying policies of family forest owners engaged in multi-use forestry. In doing so, we can better understand how social learning in forestry can support the implementation of multi-use forestry methods in Sweden. We argue that such insights have the potential to improve policy interventions that enable the processes of learning and innovation among key actors to accelerate the implementation of more sustainable forest use and management while also contributing to rural development.

### **Jenny Friman**

Uppsala University

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Tiveden's Tightrope: Balancing Local Action and Larger Forces in Sweden's Green Forest Transition**

### **Jonathan Rahn**

This work examines the creation of a clear-cut-free buffer zone around Tiveden National Park, a case of successful grassroots environmental advocacy against state-owned logging interests in Sweden. The case is distinctive in its lack of legislative backing of participative processes and the conflation of state interests as corporate, reflecting a governance approach where state power is delegated to state-private hybrid entities.

I argue that this participative governance process "from below" shares characteristics with multi-level governance (MLG) - originating in a EU governance context - both in merits and drawbacks. Through a deconfrontational, consensus-seeking approach, municipal support, and exceptionally resourceful local residents, significant concessions were reached. Tiveden became a laboratory for developing new forms of Swedish forestry and supporting infrastructure such as tooling and expertise, showcasing

MLG's potential for innovation. However, the collaboration's informal nature creates precarity and its dependence on key individuals limits broader applicability. Importantly, its teachings cannot be implemented on a large scale without significant reconfigurations of national and European politics of the "green transition" and is subjected to larger-scale geopolitics and market pressures. Ongoing centralisation may also suppress the emergence of such projects in the future.

This case contributes to understanding the challenges and opportunities of sustainable forest management amidst climate and biodiversity crises, highlighting the role of local communities in shaping environmental policies. It demonstrates the potential and limitations of collaborative governance in natural resource management, offering lessons for Sweden's forestry sustainability transition.

### **Jonathan Rahn**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **Necessary management competences to set management decision triggers for the transition to the circular economy in Estonian food production companies**

### **Kristiina Kerge**

The EU has targets regarding circular economy, many of which require practical implementation on a company level. Food is one of the main areas that is the core of the European Commission Circular Economy Action Plan. According to the latest study of food waste and food loss in the Estonian food supply chain 82% of food waste is generated during the production process. Moving towards a circular economy is a major change for companies. In food production it is important to have a clear understanding of differences between waste and by-products to make changes in the production process to minimize waste and use by-products as a resource and avoid other resource losses.

We have analyzed the current situation among Estonian food producers regarding measuring the carbon footprint and finalized the media analysis to find out what topics are covered, what recommendations are made and what knowledge is shared, and what aspects are missing. The latter is the most important thing to know.

The aim of the next step in this study is to investigate what is the current state of knowledge of circular economy principles among companies' management and what metrics are used in the fields of environmental sustainability to provide guidelines to influence management decisions. We will collect data from semi-structured interviews with food producers.

The result of my PhD study is scenarios that support the transition to the circular economy. Which, when validated in focus groups, could be a base of micro degrees for food production companies' management.

### **Kristiina Kerge<sup>1</sup>**

Rando Värnik<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Estonian University of Life Sciences

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **Understanding the current state and future potential of the Food System in Northern Sweden and Finland**

### **Pauliina Björk**

This presentation provides selected results from an ongoing project which addresses the prospects for resilient and climate-smart food production in northern Finland and Sweden. The project is underpinned by the notions that food systems (producers, processors and technology producers) in this area share similar challenges and that there is an untapped potential for increased collaboration and cross-border exchange of not only goods, but also of climate smart technology and practices. Increasing such exchange can accelerate 'climate smartness' in food production and it also has implications for the area's food system resilience and security of supply. The project combines quantitative and qualitative approaches to gathering and

analyzing relevant data to understand the opportunities and foster collaboration. An interactive dashboard is being developed that visualizes the area's food system in terms of current production, industry structure and trends over time. Through qualitative case studies with food system actors including primary producers, processors and technology providers, the project seeks to complement the quantitative information with an in depth perspective on challenges, opportunities and needs in terms of climate smartness and collaboration.

Supplementary material:

<https://www oulu.fi/my/climatefood>

### **Pauliina Björk<sup>1</sup>**

Thomas Ejdemo<sup>2</sup>, Peetu Virkkala<sup>1</sup>, Nerine Mary George<sup>2</sup>, Ossi Kotavaara<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Oulu

<sup>2</sup> Luleå University of Technology



When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **The Future of Farmland Biodiversity from the Finnish Farmers' and Farm Advisors' Perspective**

### **Tiia Kolari**

Agricultural production is a driver of biodiversity loss globally. The European Union's (EU) Biodiversity Strategy aims to "put biodiversity on the road to recovery" by 2030, and the policy strongly acknowledges the role of agriculture and agrobiodiversity. However, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy has failed to stop the loss of agrobiodiversity in Europe. As farmers and farm advisors are the key stakeholder groups at the farm level, we studied their perceptions of the future regarding biodiversity and farming. We conducted Finnish farmer-advisor focus groups with a total of 21 participants in five focus groups representing different production sectors. Our approach draws loosely from the post-humanist and socio-ecological transition frameworks. We used data-led qualitative content analysis in creating codes, categories,

and themes from the data. Preliminary results show that the participants discussed four general themes divided into 12 categories. *Constant change and need to adapt* (crises, self-sufficiency, global trends and subsidise system changes) emphasised proactive attitudes whereas *biodiversity in agriculture* (biodiversity as an integral part of agriculture and preservation of landscapes and habitats) called for concentration to natural processes. *The future of agricultural production* (forms of agriculture, future of livestock production and profitability of agriculture) was a source for insecurity whereas comments emphasising *the position of various actors* (consumers, active civil society actors and respect for farmers) stressed the societal side of farming. According to the participants, the future of farmland biodiversity hinges also on climate change and the practical application of the sustainability measures.

### **Tiia Kolari<sup>1</sup>**

Traci Birge<sup>1</sup>, Toni Ryyänen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Helsinki

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **Lands of Sacrifice? A critical analysis of industrial-scale windfarm projects in rural areas of Norway and Spain**

### **Cristóbal Mora Bieli-Bianchi**

As global temperatures, fuel emissions, and energy consumption continue to rise, the “green shift” has been hailed by diverse organizations as a solution to the climate crisis. However, what were once considered to be “green” forms of energy production are increasingly showing their true colors.

European energy consumption is predicted to double in the next 20 years. The green shift, as proposed by The EU’s “Green Deal”, intends to cut EU “emissions 55% by 2030” before reaching carbon neutrality by 2050. To meet these ambitious targets, industrial-scale projects are being developed across the continent to produce renewable energy. Skepticism regarding the profit-centered intentions of many of these projects, along with the rapidly increasing rhythm in which they are being developed, poses the question of whether the “green shift” can truly be enacted in a transparent and ethical way.

Moreover, the “sustainability” of these projects is often in contrast to the realities of those dwelling near them. Rural areas are often considered ‘lands of sacrifice’ by national governments and stakeholders, who exploit the land with little regard for the needs of the small rural communities whose culture and livelihoods depend on it.

This paper seeks to develop a deeper understanding of how large-scale windfarm projects impact rural communities in Norway and Spain, as well as their effects on Norway’s indigenous Sámi population—without suggesting that rurality and indigeneity are incompatible. The differences in how rurality is experienced in these areas provide a unique starting point from which we seek to draw comparisons.

### **Cristóbal Mora Bieli-Bianchi<sup>1</sup>**

Rory James Cassie<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PhD Researcher in Sociology at Nord Universitet, Department of Journalism and Creative Media (Bodø, Norway)

<sup>2</sup> PhD Researcher in Social Anthropology at University of St. Andrews, Center for Minorities Research (St. Andrews, Scotland)

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **Climate interventions and private interests: Wind power, forestry and reindeer herding in Härjedalen**

### **Emil Planting Mollaoglu**

The role of Swedish forests in the climate transition is widely debated in media, in politics and among academics. The claims on Swedish forests for a variety of purposes (such as bioenergy, timber and raw material, reindeer husbandry, carbon storage, biodiversity and conservation, tourism and recreation) are also projected to increase. This calls for exploring new forms of governance and collaboration, new ways of approaching conflicting interests, goals and rights, and for investigating how synergies can be amplified. In a case study of Glötesvålen in Härjedalen municipality, I will study forest- and land use by different actors. Conflicts between reindeer herders and forest owners have a long history in this area. In a notable court case in 2004, the rights of five Sami Reindeer Herding Communities (SRHCs) to use

private forest land for reindeer herding was restricted. Since then, lease agreements have been entered between three SRHCs and 80-85% of the private landowners in the municipality. A wind farm owned by Ikea has complicated the situation further, especially for one of the SRHCs. Reindeer herders are increasingly suffering from the cumulative effects of the claims on forest lands. At the same time, the need to replace fossil fuels is clear. What is less apparent is how to address conflicts that arise when wind farms are planned or established. In my thesis, the issue of diverging rights to forest land in the era of climate change will be problematized, based on environmental, economic and social dimensions of sustainable development.

### **Emil Planting Mollaoglu**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **The forest reporting and the polarized debate of Swedish forests – understanding the role of the forest journalist**

### **Kornelia Johansson**

As the climate and biodiversity crisis rapidly evolves, the forest has become a site where different positions on how we best address the issue of climate change whilst providing necessary commodities for the society, are on display. Swedish media reporting about forest provides an interesting case to explore in order to understand the role of different actors, and specifically the journalist's role, in the dynamics of governance of natural resources.

In currently ongoing work, I explore what characterizes the Swedish forest debate. I do, in this article unpack themes relating to knowledge and objectivity with attention to how the 'forest journalists' perceive and navigate these themes. Interviews, focus groups and an analysis of media articles provides the basis for a discourse analysis in which I find a set of storylines encapsulating

what knowledge is made to be and what counts as knowledge in the forest media context as well as what implications objectivity has, according to journalists themselves.

Early findings suggest that objectivity is a central issue for the forest journalists, but that the concept seldom are explicitly problematized which in turn affects what is considered true and relevant. The study suggests that the media reporting on forest, as well as the role of journalists in today's dynamic media landscape are important aspects to understand how sustainable transformations can come about. It brings attention to objectivity as a concept that are contextual, related to power relations, and hence important to pay attention in the governance of the sustainability transformations.

### **Kornelia Johansson**

University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: Producenten

## **Herring today, gone tomorrow? The conflict over the 2024 Bothnian herring quota**

### **Maris Gillette**

How are decisions made about natural resource use when parties disagree about the available evidence, causality, and/or social priorities? In such situations decision-makers must choose from multiple competing stories, taking guidance from the narrative which seems most amenable to action. The decision to allocate a 2024 fishing quota for Bothnian herring (strömming) in the northern Baltic Sea exemplifies this process. As the decision neared, coastal and industrial fishers, recreational fishing organisations, biologists, environmentalists, national political parties, local residents and seafood processors articulated heterogeneous narratives about the quota based on diverging interpretations of current realities and future trajectories for this herring subspecies, rural coastal communities, Sweden's economy, and the Baltic. The European Commission, confronted by multiple stories and three different scenarios from the relevant scienti-

fic advisory board, proposed a 2024 moratorium. Coastal fishers, environmental groups, and Swedish scientists responded positively to this proposal, which aligned with their narratives, while Sweden's governing parties promised to resist the closure, and industrial fishers assured the media that the moratorium would never be implemented. Ultimately, the EU's Council of Ministers rejected the Commission's advice and allocated a reduced fishing quota for Bothnian herring. Analysing and comparing the competing stories advanced by the parties to the conflict illuminates why the Council resisted the Commission's recommendation. It also allows construction of a metanarrative that reveals shared priorities and concerns among ostensibly polarised parties, which could make future decision-making about the Bothnian herring more responsive to public opinion and tractable for intervention.

### **Maris Gillette<sup>1</sup>**

Benedict Singleton<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Gothenburg



# **3. Rural Economy and Entrepreneur-ship**

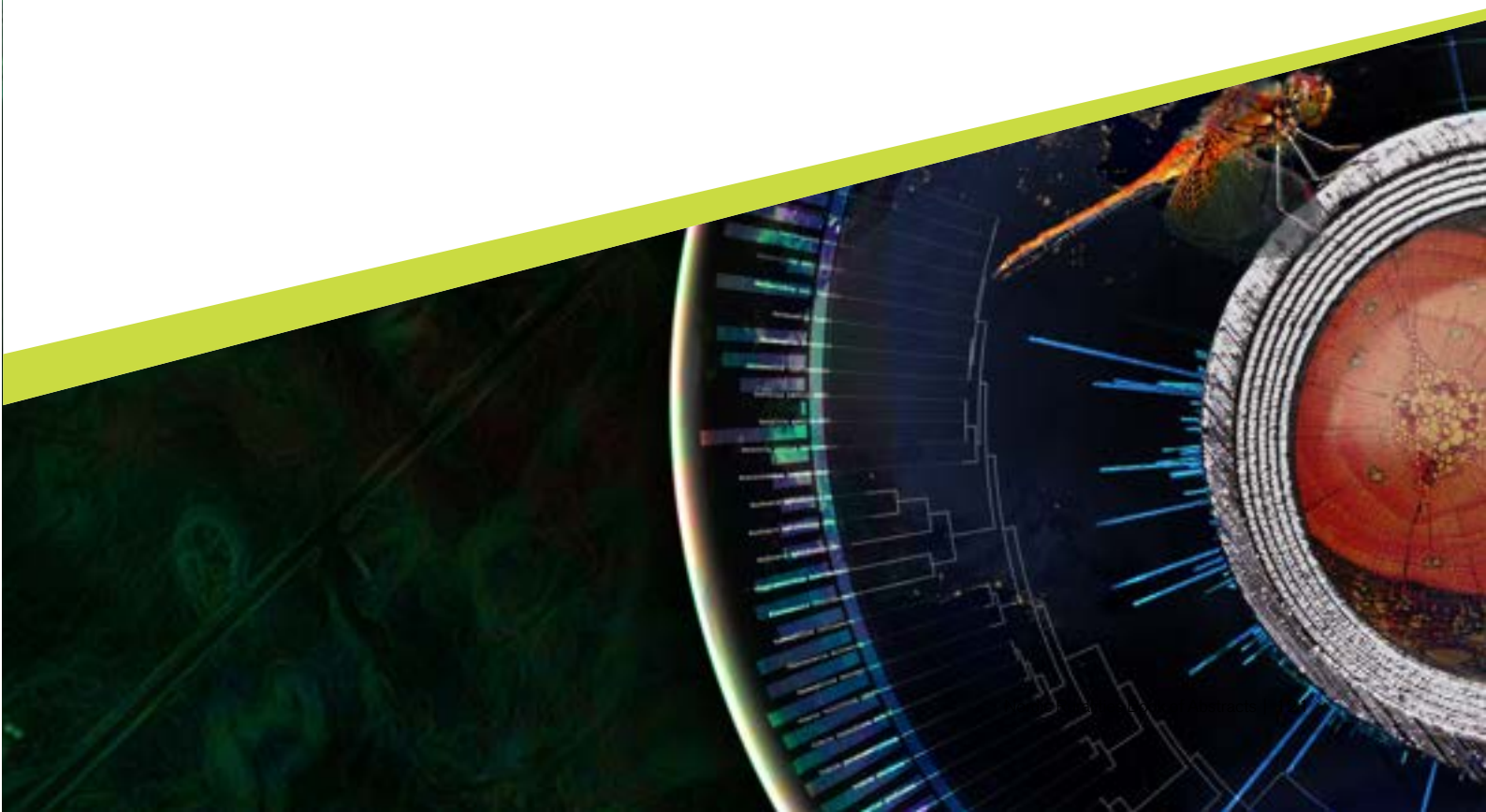
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# **Working the fields and forests – labor relations in (and out of) place**

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When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Is there space for social sustainability in the wild berry industry?**

### **Charlotta Hedberg**

The corporate strategy of the current wild berry industry in Sweden is based on cheap labour and unequal resource distribution on a global scale. The almost annually recurrent cries from Thai berry pickers and NGO:s for fair work conditions have their background in a business model that is built on the precondition to collect cheap fruit from forests in remote areas through the use of foreign workers. Given these premises, it is probably not possible to construct socially sustainable conditions within the current framework, but instead a radical transition of the industry is necessary. In our current research project, we are investigating if there are seeds of alternative economies in the Swedish wild berry industry, and how such alternative models could be governed.

In this presentation, I present results from interviews with municipalities in Västerbotten, Sweden, regarding their views on the current and future roles of the wild berry industry for regional development. The analysis is focusing on if local governments have attempted to stimulate industries relating to the wild berry industry, and if they believe that the industry contains potential for sustainable regional development. I also discuss if strengthened local economies could contain space for social sustainability within the wild berry industry, by paving the way for a radical transition of the industry.

### **Charlotta Hedberg**

Umeå University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Embodied and Emotional Experiences of Learning at a Natural Resources Programme**

### **Ida Säfström**

Part of grand narratives calling for a green transition of the agrarian sector is an expressed need for knowledges for sustainability. Based on participation and focus group interviews with upper secondary school students (*gymnasieelever*) at a natural resources programme (*naturbruksprogram*) in Dalarna, Sweden, I provide insight to educational processes in barns, fields, classrooms and tractors. With a focus on embodied and emotional aspects of their daily learning activities, I articulate the students' own stories of how their education is characterized by processes that create a sense of community: they are encouraged to actively take part in daily practices with importance for local food production. The students develop practical

skills in their daily work and interactions with animals and machines. Together these experiences shape their understandings of themselves as active and caring co-creators of the local environment. Students and teachers at the natural resources programme create an environment where meaningful knowledges and ideas about sustainability are primarily shaped by learning through direct and close practice with the local community and landscape. I argue that understanding the role of such learning processes contribute important insights about how knowledges for sustainability become meaningful for young people interested in working in the agricultural sector.

### **Ida Säfström**

Stockholm University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

### **From Cowshed to Control Room: The Transformation of Work and technology on Swedish Dairy Farms 1980–2020**

#### **Isa Larsson**

New technology in agriculture has meant that heavy lifting, manual and labour-intensive steps have been eliminated, which entails changed qualification requirements and work environment, and consequently new risks and challenges (Pinzke and Lundqvist, 2007). Farms are automated, and the work becomes more about monitoring and observing the animals (Owen, 2003). Ergonomic risks are reduced with automated milking systems (AMS) (Karttunen et al., 2016), and contribute to increased flexibility in the working day (Andersson, 2017). On the other hand, the total working day has been shown to be longer with AMS (Brannen, 2005) and the boundary between work and leisure becomes blurred (Tietze and Musson, 2002).

This presentation focus on how the work, and working conditions for dairy farmers in Sweden has changed between the 1980s and 2020. Special focus will be on the north of Sweden, due to the unfavorable conditions for crop farming and thus importance of dairy farmers. Secondary data shows, among other things, a decrease in the number of milk production companies and an increase in cows per farm. By 2022, approximately 50% of Norrmejerier's farmers used robotic milking, with each cow producing an average of 9.4 tonnes of milk, which is 2.8 tonnes more than the 1995 Swedish average. The change will also be highlighted with a case description of a dairy producing farm, located in the Northernmost of Sweden. How the farm itself have changed with the technology; bigger, more advanced and efficient, and thus reshaped the work.

#### **Isa Larsson<sup>1</sup>**

Kristina Johansson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luleå University of Technology

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Technologies and labor in Swedish milk production**

### **Brian Kuns**

Questions about labor is central for how we imagine and work towards sustainability transitions: how are work processes changing, and who does what work, with what machines, under what social conditions, and with what consequences for sustainability? Our ongoing research project on “Farm work: a survey of work processes, segmentation patterns and sustainability visions in Swedish farm-based Production” aims to fill a gap in research on farm labor in Sweden in general, but specifically we address questions about the

ways organization of farm labor, with its relations to different technologies, shapes (and are shaped by) visions for sustainability, or “green transitions”. In this talk we will report preliminary results from a study on Swedish milk production, based on interviews with milk producers and workers. We have interviewed both conventional and organic certified producers (big, medium and small), with a focus on their experiences of different technologies and production arrangements.

### **Brian Kuns<sup>1</sup>**

Lowe Börjeson<sup>2</sup>, Ida Säfström<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

<sup>2</sup> Stockholm University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **The question of labor in agroecology and the sustainability of non-wage labor**

### **Lowe Börjeson**

Many farms practicing organic farming and agroecology struggle to make a profit. Unable to pay wages, some farms are recruiting laborers who agree to work without pay, instead receiving food and accommodation. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork at organic farms in the southeastern United States and readings on the question of

labor in agroecological farming, we discuss sustainability implications of relying on non-waged labor. We conclude that the lived experiences of farmworkers provide important insights for debates about sustainable farming and transformations towards agroecological practices and production models.

### **Lowe Börjeson**

Stockholm University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **The Impact of Economic Crisis on Everyday Life**

### **Sania Dzable**

Research on the impact of economic crises on regional economies often emphasizes macroeconomic factors such as GDP and employment, overlooking the lived and emotional experiences of those directly affected in their everyday lives. While studies typically examine how regions become trapped in economic “lock-ins” or development traps, they tend to neglect how these crises disrupt the everyday lives of communities, leaving them feeling similarly stranded. The concept of “stranded communities” (Atkins 2024) underscores how, during economic restructuring, communities are left stranded as their skills and expertise become obsolete in changing economic landscapes. This paper explores the effect of economic crises on everyday life, drawing on Felski’s framework of everyday life and interviews with 13 Danish mink

farmers whose livelihoods were abruptly ended by COVID-19-related farm closures in 2020. The findings reveal the loss of control, routines, and social ties that once provided stability and structure in the farmers’ daily lives. The paper shows that, beyond the redundancy of skills and industries, the disruption of everyday practices plays a crucial role in creating stranded communities. This sense of disconnection parallels the concept of solastalgia, which describes emotional distress caused by environmental change, but here the “loss of place” stems from socioeconomic crises. By highlighting these everyday losses, the paper advocates for a more nuanced understanding of economic restructuring—one that considers the emotional and relational dimensions of place and everyday life, alongside traditional macroeconomic measures.

### **Sania Dzable**

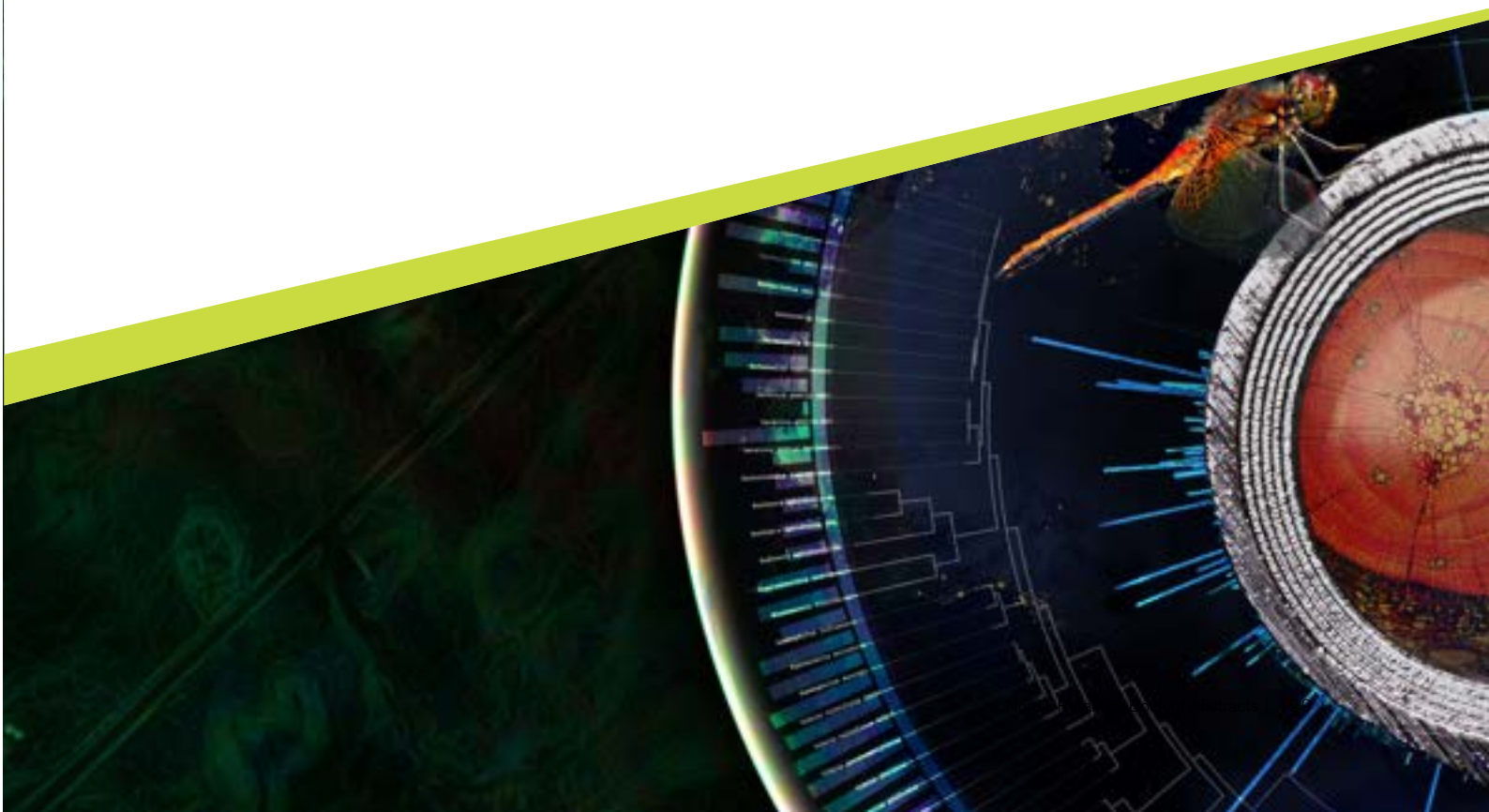
Umeå University





# **Local communities as main actors in rural change**

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When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Hiker

## **Supporting different engagements as a way to strengthen rural localities**

### **Anna Erhard**

This talk will present results from the research project “Pillars of engagement in rural areas”, that aimed to look at the interplay of more formalized (e.g. associations, “classical” volunteerism) and less formalized (e.g. neighborhood help, “spontaneous” initiatives) engagement in different German rural areas. The aim of this talk is threefold: Firstly, we will outline the conceptual understandings of different engagement activities as well as selected conditions of their interplay for sustainable municipal development. Secondly, we show that in the municipalities studied, different engagements are closely interwoven and are often bundled under the ‘umbrella’ of associations (in German “Verein”). Less formalized engagements often run “on the side” and are

rarely perceived as public engagements; they lack social visibility and thus also appreciation, although they address a variety of support services or the maintenance of public areas and buildings. Thirdly, we discuss ways in which these findings of less visible and less formalized engagements can be used more at a political level and what support structures are needed. We argue that political leaders in particular are important as active intermediaries in increasing awareness of various engagement activities. They are required to take on the role of coaches and mentors, either themselves or through the involvement of other higher-level/professional institutions, to strengthen engagement and to identify and motivate people who can act as first movers for (new and creative) local engagements.

### **Anna Erhard<sup>1</sup>**

Marc Redepenning<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Bamberg

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Hiker

## **The Connoisseur method – an alternative strategy for managing green spaces in peri-urban settings**

### **Helena Mellqvist**

In one of Sweden's smaller municipalities, Ronneby, local societal associations have since the early 2000 had the opportunity to apply for beautification money. It started with smaller projects but during the years more people got interested and the financial support has grown. Based on this project, Ronneby and the involved researchers introduce a new approach to public participation; the Connoisseur method.

The study focused on three issues of public participation:

(i) Participatory processes of landscape development are often questioned from a long-term perspective, (ii) vulnerable parts in practice-oriented projects is often successful based on the degree of participating actors, and (iii) local organisations are often sceptic to government led planning processes.

Using an in-depths case study approach, the focus is on Svenmanska Park in Ronneby. The park was planned, planted and managed by a chore group of local users in a process led by the local government. Public participation and active citizenship emerged from self-organisation and know-how within the local society. This project was initiated by Ronneby as a result of formulating a dialogue-based green structure plan for the municipality 2014–2016.

The study describe how the beautification money made it possible for the local associations to succeed in realising their park project using local knowledge based on both local residents and local experts, while also creating a co-management plan together with the municipality. Today, the initiative illustrates how a top-down initiative actually facilitate the European Landscape Conventions' aims to facilitate knowledge sharing and networking on a local landscape level.

### **Helena Mellqvist**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Hiker

## **Capitalizing Stigma: Counter-narrating regional decline through local initiatives within Finland's 'Capital of Pessimism'**

### **Ria-Maria Adams**

Abstract text: The increasing scholarly and political focus on the 'geographies of discontent' calls for attention to the material, emotional and discursive dimensions of regional decline. Structural opportunities and constraints shape individual and collective agency in shrinking towns, influencing how people create and develop initiatives. Despite growing interest in the affective geographies of depopulation and post-industrial life, little empirical work explores how 'left behind' communities themselves contribute to broader political discourses of decline and uneven development.

In Puolanka, Finland, a group of local activists facetiously market their hometown as the 'most pessimistic town' in the world, turning shrinkage, decay, and loss into a brand. In doing so, the Pessimists have achieved what seems impossible for 'left behind' places: they have capitalized on Puolanka's stigma. This ethnographic research explores how local initiatives in Puolanka are counter-narrating regional decline by embracing their stigma. Beyond the pessimism brand, several other initiatives—either created by engaged local residents or led by the municipality—are striving to revitalize and enhance the liveability of Puolanka. This study demonstrates how these initiatives improve residents' well-being and thus contribute to individual and collective wellbeing within the community.

### **Ria-Maria Adams<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> University of Vienna

<sup>2</sup> Arctic Centre, Rovaniemi

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Social enterprises as enablers in rural areas? Lessons learned from NPA regions in different countries**

### **Cecilia Dalborg**

Studies show that viable entrepreneurship plays a prominent role in shaping living conditions for people in local communities. Favourable prerequisites are crucial for developing entrepreneurial processes and establish companies, which in turn affects the well-being of the local community, region or country. The rapid transformation in society has created a growing interest in what role social entrepreneurs and enterprises have regarding societal development. The effects of structural change processes vary in different parts of the world, as well as the conditions for starting and running social enterprises.

This study aims to compare prerequisites for social enterprises in rural regions in the Northern Periphery and Arctic area (NPA-regions). A questionnaire was sent out, spring 2024, to social enterprises in Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway and Sweden. Comparative analysis will be carried

out with qualitative and quantitative analysis tools. Since all respondents operate within the NPA-regions, they share common features such as low population density, low accessibility and low economic diversity, but often also have abundant natural resources. This unique combination of features results in joint challenges and joint opportunities where social entrepreneurship and community engagement can play a vital role.

The preliminary results show significant differences between the countries regarding how rural context affect their operation as well as degree of collaboration with municipality and level of community engagement and support. By creating cross-border understanding of various entrepreneurial ecosystem, learning processes for value-driven enterprises are generated, including possibilities to improve conditions for countries not yet have a well-developed eco-system for social entrepreneurs.

### **Cecilia Dalborg<sup>1</sup>**

Yvonne von Friedrichs<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mid Sweden University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Rural construction collaborations and mobility – results from a research project**

### **Johan Vamstad**

This paper examines the institutional conditions supporting construction collaborations in Sweden and their impact in rural areas. A construction collaboration is a cooperative effort by a group of individuals to construct co-housing for themselves, often in an innovative way, or in locations typically overlooked by commercial developers (Fölster, 2023). This study draws on a case study focused on a collaboration aimed at creating accessible co-housing for elderly residents in a rural area. The initiative enables seniors to move from their traditional homes to modern co-housing within their rural community, thereby freeing up their former homes for younger families (Vamstad et al., 2024). The premise is that constructing modern housing in rural settings—typically overlooked

by municipalities and market developers—can trigger a positive mobility cycle (Casserstedt & Johansson, 2021). The case study identifies funding and regulatory challenges encountered during the project. Through interviews with participants, local politicians, and civil servants, the paper delves into these obstacles, suggesting that while financial risks can be mitigated and local regulations streamlined, successful construction collaborations in rural areas depend on specific conditions to effectively enhance mobility. This research is part of a broader project titled *Construction Collaborations and Housing Cooperatives in Urban and Rural Areas for Socially Sustainable Housing*, supported by research council Formas.

### **Johan Vamstad<sup>1</sup>**

Susanne Wallman Lundåsen<sup>2</sup>, Johan von Essen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Marie Cederschiöld University

<sup>2</sup> Linköping University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Securing Rural Grocery Stores – Communities Matter**

### **Lise Herslund**

We have the last years explored into the phenomenon of communities becoming involved in sustaining their local grocery store in Denmark. – And it matters. A grocery chain has also seen this opportunity and supports it. Communities have in more than a hundred cases saved their store that otherwise would have closed. We identified three kinds of community stores. Two kinds of stores (A and B) largely resembled the original rural store in terms of products and appearance, and they are supported by the grocery chain. The community involvement was mainly based on ownership of the buildings or in some cases (B) also had to take responsibility for the overall operations. A third

category (C) consisted of an independent store where community members had taken on all activities themselves voluntarily – and they were situated in areas of particular place-specific qualities; natural beauty and a resourceful community also counting newcomers. Here, the community store also served as a meeting place and an important part of the social/cultural village life. The communities which mobilize around the local store are all very capable and our research shows that it is the smallest communities that need to be most resourceful. Thus, many rural communities unfortunately cannot do it.

### **Lise Herslund<sup>1</sup>**

Hanne Tanvig<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Copenhagen

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Analyzing the role of civil society in rural economies through resource mobilization theory**

### **Patrik Cras**

In the book chapter “Can civil society solve rural service challenges?”, part of an anthology on sustainable planning for rural areas published in 2023, we discuss local civil societies’ increasing contribution to the maintenance and development of services considered vital for the local economies of rural communities. The empirical base for our analysis is a study of Swedish rural communities, drawing on ethnographic methods. In the analysis of our studied cases, we use theories of resource mobilization to highlight how processes of mobilization for local services gathers and generate resources.

In this presentation we aim to take our discussion on resource mobilization further and present an ongoing attempt to further develop our analysis. We focus on how a resource mobilization perspective contributes to an understanding of how not-for-profit organizations play a role to uphold services considered vital for local economies, and how such organizations interact with other actors (governmental and non-governmental) in their environment to acquire and generate resources.

### **Patrik Cras<sup>1</sup>**

Marie Nordfeldt<sup>2</sup>, Pelle Åberg<sup>3</sup>, Johan von Essen<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

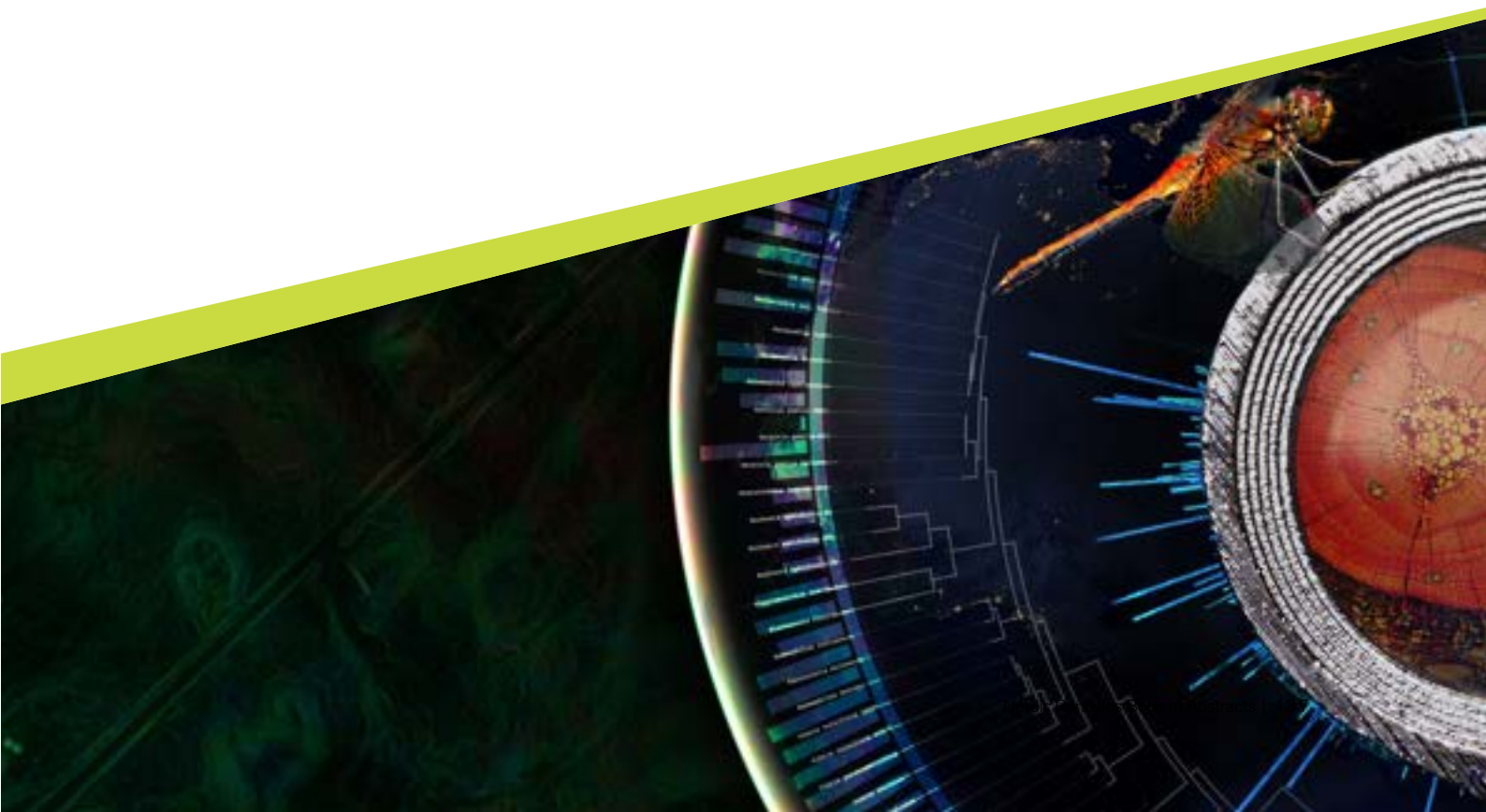
<sup>2</sup> Karlstad University

<sup>3</sup> Marie Cederschiöld University



# **Open group theme 3: Rural Economy and Entrepreneurship**

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When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **A state within reach? An ethnographic perspective on the relocation of government workplaces from Copenhagen to small-town rural Denmark**

### **Birgitte Romme Larsen**

Exploring the redistribution of state jobs from the Danish capital area to provincial Denmark, this presentation draws upon an ethnographic case study involving the relocation of a government workplace from inner Copenhagen to the small town of *Nakskov* (12,500 inhabitants) on the rural island of Lolland. Taking up residence in the town's central square, the presentation examines the everyday social and economic expectations and norms Nota encounters in this new locale. Based on social scientific theories of practice communities and local economic circles, the analysis illustrates how the state institution must simultaneously navigate two parallel and opposing economic circuits: that of *the state*, marked by inflexibility and uniformity, and that of *the local town community*, grounded in pragmatism and adapta-

bility. The state's standardising central-economic line of procedure is shown to hinder the relocated workplace in becoming part of and contributing to the new host town's own local-economic systems of exchange. If relocated workplaces – it is argued – do not become part of such local-economic codes of practice, the state can continue to move as geographically “close” to rural Denmark as it wants, but risks only appearing more distant and absent the closer it gets. Hence, the presentation concludes that in daily life a fundamental conflict of interests between *state-economic rules* and *local-economic norms* emerges on the ground, meaning that, despite being introduced as *decentralisation*, when seen from the perspective of the site of relocation, the redistribution of state jobs to rural Denmark remains bound by logic of *centralisation*.

### **Birgitte Romme Larsen**

Aarhus University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **Reversing the gaze in livelihoods research: Applying the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to farming households in the Global North**

### **Flora Hajdu**

Analyses using livelihoods approaches are common and popular in Global South settings, considered useful as a way to analyse detailed local level data such as household interviews, and widely used in policy geared at rural development. Yet it is strikingly unusual to see livelihoods analysis applied in a Global North setting. Similar processes do take place across these contexts, but conceptualisations differ, for example ‘livelihood diversification’ in the South is rather referred to as ‘pluriactivity’ in the North. This compartmentalization of analytical discussion is unhelpful since it constrains our understanding and risks just reinforcing existing policies. In this paper, we develop and apply a sustainable livelihoods analytical tool to our interview material from 18 farm households in three distinctly different agricultural regions of Sweden. We show how

unique spatial and fast-changing societal contexts affect farmers’ assets, visions and strategies, and identify eight distinct livelihood strategies that farmers use in order to achieve a range of positive outcomes, or, importantly, to avoid negative outcomes. The livelihood perspective helps highlight the extent to which diversification of household livelihoods is key on Swedish farms at this point in time, when farms are increasingly struggling to make profit. Reversing the gaze also illuminates the need to decolonize the livelihoods framework, which implicitly assumes interventions will bring positive outcomes to constrained rural livelihoods, and developing it into a tool that puts focus on structural contexts of inequality, intersectional vulnerability and privilege, and social differentiation in rural areas across the world.

### **Flora Hajdu<sup>1</sup>**

Camilla Eriksson<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

<sup>2</sup> The Swedish Defense Research Agency

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **Exploring the Potential of 'Arctic Quality' in Shaping New Rural Economies and Entrepreneurship in Northern Norway**

### **Frøydis Gillund**

The concept of 'Arctic Quality' has emerged as a significant quality designation for agricultural products from Northern Norway. The label highlights the unique environmental and cultural characteristics of the region, potentially transforming local economies and entrepreneurial landscapes. However, the understanding and impact of 'Arctic Quality' from the consumer perspective remain underexplored.

Our presentation will present and discuss how a coming project will fill this gap by investigating what 'Arctic Quality' means to consumers and how it can be leveraged to foster new modes of rural entrepreneurship. The central research question guiding this project will be: What does 'Arctic Quality' mean to consumers?

Initiatives like "Sustainable Food Production and Value Creation in the North" and the "Action Plan for Green Production in Northern Norway" emphasize the potential of regional advantages in Arctic agriculture. Understanding consumer preferences and willingness to pay is essential for positioning 'Arctic Quality' as a competitive advantage.

The project is planned to focus on the following areas:

- 1. Historical Development** - Reviewing the evolution of 'Arctic Quality' as a concept.
- 2. Focus Groups** - Gathering qualitative data from different regions and tourists.
- 3. Survey** - Mapping consumer preferences and willingness to pay

The research will contribute to the advancement of the rural economy by highlighting the role of 'Arctic Quality' in fostering new entrepreneurial opportunities and revalorizing local resources. The project's outcomes will provide insights into how new industries and community entrepreneurship can drive sustainable rural development, positioning 'Arctic Quality' as a pivotal element in the economic and cultural life of Northern Norway.

### **Frøydis Gillund<sup>1</sup>**

Geir Wæhler Gustavsen<sup>1</sup>, Atle Wehn Hegnes<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research

<sup>2</sup> Oslo Metropolitan University

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **Enterprise presence, island size, resident population, and infrastructure in the Stockholm archipelago - An analogue of von Thünen land-rent theory?**

### **Gustaf Onn**

The Stockholm archipelago and *Roslagen* consists of approximately 30 000 islands (View Stockholm, n.d.). The total resident population in Stockholm Archipelago and Roslagen was 2021 almost 8 603 (Källgård, 2022: 351)[i]. Of these, 5 896 have car ferry accessibility (Källgård, 2022, passim). While there are around 40 000 second homes in the area. 14 are denoted by Region Stockholm as *Kärnö*, roughly translated as nodal island. The region focus on *Kärnöar* with respect to societal services. Using a database of members of the Archipelago business organization, population data and island size, this paper investigates the relation between Enterprise presence, island size, resident population, and infrastructure, hypothesising that larger

resident population, island size and infrastructure are correlated with entrepreneurial presence. If this turns out to be the case then agglomeration can be expected to follow principles found in von Thünen's land-rent theory. A secondary hypothesis may be necessary to exploit, that instead of a monocentric format, a polycentric pattern may emerge, as land here is separated by water and is of highly varying size.

[i] Källgård (2022: 350-351) reports the population of Stockholm archipelago and Roslagen up to to be 7 865 inhabitants on 186 islands of which 100 lives on the only populated island in Södertälje municipality, and 722 live on seven islands in the municipalities Östhammar and Tierp.

### **Gustaf Onn**

Södertörn University  
Gärna i samma färg som framsida



# 4. Policies and Politics of the Rural

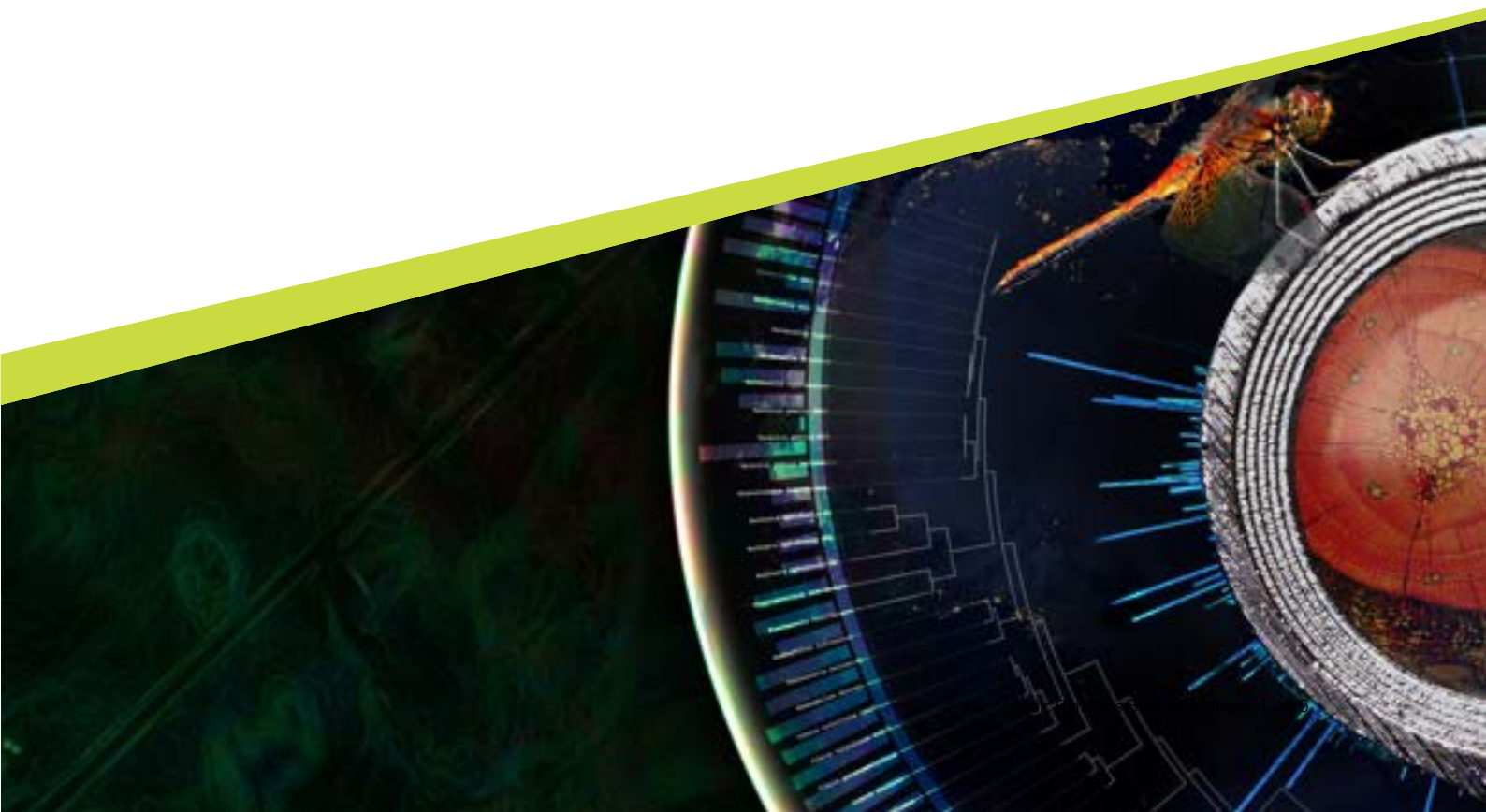
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# **Accessibility and mobility in rural areas – development of policy**

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When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Changed accessibility for semi-rural areas – reorientation in city networks**

### **Désirée Nilsson**

The role of transport infrastructure in regional economic development impacts integrations of activities within a region, between cities and hinterlands, as well as between regions. There are also differences between rural and urban areas in how it is impacted by investments in transport infrastructure (Rokicki & Stepniak, 2018). For rural areas improvement in accessibility has a positive correlation with employment rate, while urban areas can take advantage of improvements also in productivity.

The purpose of this study is to analyse changes in the spatial interaction of semirural areas that lie between two nodes in a network of cities – as accessibility changes. The empirical setting is a polycentric region which has a strong large urban node. Nodes in a network serves different

functions and when transportation cost changes in part of the network it changes the dynamic interaction across space. Meijer and Burger (2022) stress that the development of small and medium-sized towns depends on how they relate to other cities.

In the studied area, both highway and commuter railway were construct and opened approximately at the same time. It can be difficult to separate effects between two transport modes. This study elaborates on differences in effects for younger people and the whole population in the areas. Younger people are more limited in their accessibility since car use may not be an option. By including individual accessibility to railway stations, highway junctions and car ownership the analysis aims to distinguish between effects of separate transport modes.

### **Désirée Nilsson**

Malmö University

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Perception of boundary setting trips in rural areas and their impact on the transition to fossil-free passenger transport**

### **Margareta Westin**

This study has looked deeper into perceptions of safety and security in relation to accessible fossil-free passenger transport in rural areas. It is common to lack alternatives to private cars in rural areas, such as public transport. In connection with the transition to fossil-free transport, the fossil car needs to be phased out, which is challenging where there is a high level of car dependency. The transition means additional layers with challenges on top of existing accessibility challenges. The empirical material has been focus groups in six rural settlements and civil servants in Västerbotten and Norrbotten (northern Sweden). The discussions have focused on the conditions for rural inhabitants to travel with more fossil-free alternatives.

The results show that there is a small proportion of the trips that affect the broadly perceived feasibility of fossil-free alternatives; we call them boundary-setting trips, comprising “tough journeys”, “journeys out of one’s control”, and “journeys affected by the unexpected”. These trips are often with which most participants relate safety and security concerns. It is vital to address these trips and associated perceived risks to make people feel safer with fossil-free alternatives and hence the acceptance. Not necessarily because this boundary-setting trip will occur, but because of having the capability if it happens. There is a need to address how guidelines and routines should be adapted to fossil-free alternatives, such as instructions on what to do if batteries discharge. Furthermore, it is important to ensure basic accessibility in connection with the transition.

### **Margareta Westin<sup>1</sup>**

Charlotta Johansson<sup>1</sup>, Glenn Berggård<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luleå University of Technology

When: 2024-12-03, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: Producenten

## **Coordination of Rural Transport: A Circular Business Model for Digital Solutions**

### **Wiebke Reim**

The transport systems in rural areas face significant challenges related to accessibility, climate, the local environment, and justice. One approach to addressing these complex rural challenges is using digital platforms for data sharing, which creates new business models for competition-neutral coordination between various actors. When combined with circular business models, which aim to harmonise economic, environmental, and social benefits, a potential for further coordination within the transport system emerges. There is a clear need for a new market logic focused on sustainability in rural areas, flow efficiency, and user adaptation, where challenges are addressed through smart collaboration between public and commercial actors, supported by a renewed regulatory framework.

Our research aims to develop circular business models for platform-based, competition-neutral coordination of the transport of people and goods, involving actors at various levels. In this study, we leveraged the digital platform

Predictive Movement, a powerful tool that serves as a collaborative space for data sharing within the transport industry. We also utilised the Rural Living Labs method, which fosters digital transformation in rural areas by engaging actors within a 5-helix model. Insights into the regulatory simplifications needed were developed through a policy lab.

The study revealed that the challenges lie primarily in the business model and regulations, not in the technology itself. There are organisational challenges, such as the integration of the platform, management of handovers/transfers, responsibility issues, and varying regulatory frameworks. Additionally, there are economic challenges related to pricing and revenue distribution. It is also crucial that the regulatory framework supports and promotes transport coordination. The involved actors agree that the platform can improve service levels in rural areas and create opportunities for reduced environmental impact.

### **Wiebke Reim<sup>1</sup>**

Johanna Lindberg<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Luleå University of Technology

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **Barriers and risks in socio-technical transition towards sustainable aviation: Case of Finnish Lapland**

### **Janne Kirjavainen**

Aviation is a vital transport mode for northern sparsely populated regions in terms of accessibility and economy. Simultaneously, ever-growing air traffic is seen as a major environmental problem and the European Union aims to achieve a transition towards sustainability in aviation. There are projections of continuous growth, while several practices require change until air transport becomes more sustainable.

Based on seven thematic interviews and five policy documents, this research investigates the barriers to reach a sustainability transition in aviation, the risks the transition produces, and the local implications the transition has for northern sparsely populated areas. The Region of Finnish Lapland is an example of a such area, where aviation is continuously growing due to increasing tourism. More interview data is to be gathered during Autumn 2024.

Aviation is a global mode of transport, which has a direct impact on the local environment. As tourism is a major economic sector in Lapland and most international tourists arrive to the region by plane, global barriers to reach a sustainability transition in aviation have local implications. Similarly, a locally realised risk can have uncontrollable global outcomes in aviation and deteriorate the accessibility in Lapland and other northern sparsely populated areas.

Interpreting air transport as a socio-technical system aids in understanding its systemic nature. The framework highlights, that transitions are not only technical, but social processes including cultural, political and economic elements. Therefore, it is not reasonable to expect that the sustainability transition in aviation would be reached with straightforward solutions.

### **Janne Kirjavainen**

University of Lapland

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **Total impact of transport policies leading to climate neutrality and alleviation of transport poverty**

### **Outi Hakala**

In the transport sector, different policies have been proposed to achieve climate neutrality and reduce transport poverty. While the quantified wider economic effects of individual policy measures are often assessed, their combined effects are frequently overlooked, especially from a regional perspective. However, system-level assessments considering regional specificities are needed to create widely accepted, balanced and effective policy packages that support a just transition to sustainable transport.

This study examines the effects of a transport policy package in Finland, including measures to renew the car fleet in order to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and to increase the use of public transport through incentives and infrastructure improvements. The package also includes recently suggested measures to alleviate transport poverty, especially in rural areas.

The analysis focuses on total economic effects that vary between sub-national regions and on distributional effects between households, paying particular attention to rural areas. In addition, effects on national CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are assessed. The analysis utilizes the RegFin model, which is a computable general equilibrium (CGE) model designed for examining Finland's regional economies. RegFin contains a comprehensive and detailed description of the Finnish economy and an emissions calculation module, which enables the analysis of systemic impacts.

The evaluation results reveal the regional economic, environmental, and redistributive impacts of combinations of individual measures. The results highlight conflicts and synergies between the different measures and recognize regional specificities. Therefore, the results can be used to support the design of policy packages and thus a just transition also in rural areas.

### **Outi Hakala**

University of Helsinki

When: 2024-12-03, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: Producenten

## **The Spatial Inequalities of Air Travel and Regional Development in Iceland**

### **Thoroddur Bjarnason**

For most of its history, Icelandic society was characterized by rather extreme geographical isolation. The two thousand-kilometer voyage from continental Europe took a week or two and was generally only undertaken by merchants, clergy, government officials, and their entourage during the summer months. Within the country, the population was scattered around the habitable coastline, isolated by high mountains, deep fjords, and rapid rivers. Without any roads, domestic travel by foot or by horse between isolated communities was precarious, particularly outside the summer months. While steam ships improved the speed, safety, and regularity of domestic and international transportation, air travel largely obliterated these geographical constraints. With most major cities in Northern Europe and the Eastern United States within a few hours of travel, about twenty airlines cur-

rently offer scheduled passenger flights between Reykjavík and 57 destinations in Europe and North America. Domestically, most larger towns in the country are also within an hour's flight from the downtown airport in the capital of Reykjavík. The organization of international and domestic flights has however also created considerable spatial inequalities between the Reykjavík capital area and the peripheral rural regions. The quest to develop an alternative gateway to the outside world from Akureyri in Northern Iceland now spans more than forty years. This paper outlines this quest in the context of the evolving business models of international aviation and political and economic currents that have shaped Iceland over the past century. Various data sources are utilized, including official statistics and general population surveys.

### **Thoroddur Bjarnason<sup>1,2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> University of Iceland

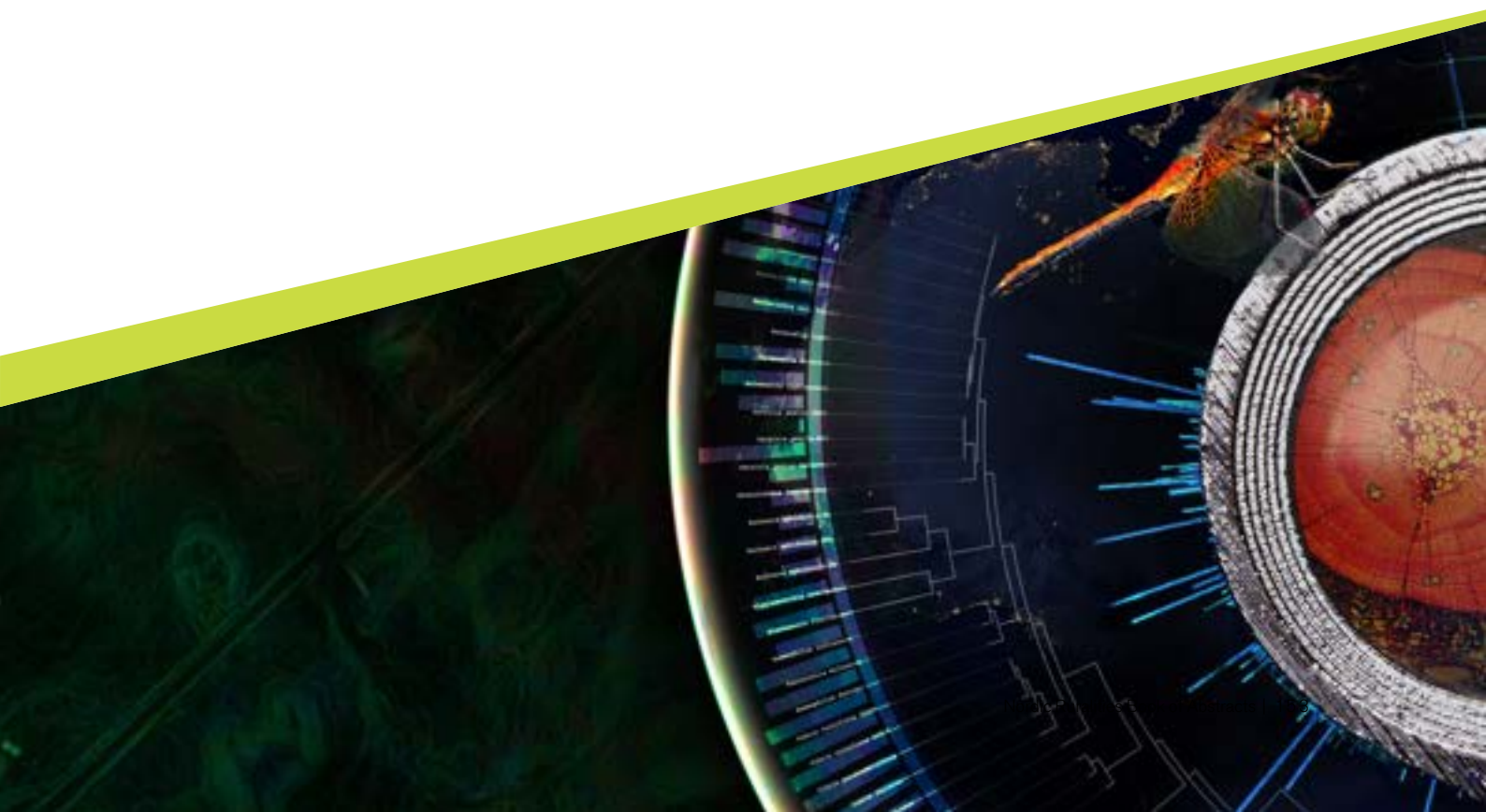
<sup>2</sup> University of Akureyri





# **Ecologic and social justice in transitions – alliances in and between peripheralized places**

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When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Ecosocial community work: A possible framework in developing ecosocial policies?**

### **Elvi Chang**

Social work operates at micro, meso, and macro levels, offering services from individual counseling to promoting sustainable development. This presentation draws on three datasets from a doctoral project, exploring the lack of ecosocial perspective and community work in Swedish social work, both in the urban and rural areas. A key aspect of ecosocial work is integrating social and ecological perspectives, highlighting the interdependence between humans and the environment. It critiques the current welfare state's unsustainable growth orientation and argues for a shift towards sustainable development and eudaimonic wellbeing in response to ecological crises and finite planetary resources.

Ecosocial work emphasizes sustainable welfare, ensuring that human needs are met within ecological limits and accessible to all, while promoting intergenerational solidarity by preserving eco-

logical resources for future generations. To facilitate this shift, existing policies must be redesigned to respect both human and planetary boundaries. Ecosocial policies advocate for moving from an anthropocentric to an ecocentric perspective, emphasizing the often-overlooked connection between social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Specifically in rural areas, revitalizing local economies is crucial for sustainable development. The revitalization of rural areas can become attractive places to live and work, even for young people. One way to promote this is to develop ecosocial community work, which may help provide a framework for ecosocial policy-making in both rural and urban areas. The potential for this framework needs to be further tested with empirical data from both rural and urban areas.

### **Elvi Chang<sup>1</sup>**

Stefan Sjöberg<sup>1</sup>, Komalsingh Rambaree<sup>1</sup>, Päivi Turunen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Gävle

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Super gentrification of second homes in the Stockholm archipelago and its effect on sustainability**

### **Madeleine Bonow**

The phenomenon of second home ownership has indeed become a significant aspect of modern leisure lifestyles, reflecting a blend of cultural, historical, and economic factors. In Sweden, unlike many other countries, second homes are not solely seen as luxury items but are integrated into the fabric of ordinary life. However, the concept of rural super-gentrification, which involves the displacement of middle-class second home owners by the super-wealthy, has emerged as a concern. This process often leads to a transformation of the landscape and its communities, raising questions about the sustainability of such changes. The archipelago landscape outside Stockholm serves as an example, where the restructuring has significant implications for both the environment and its inhabitants. As the demand for second homes continues to grow, it is crucial to consider the long-term impacts on rural communities and the

natural landscapes they inhabit, ensuring that development is balanced with the preservation of local culture and ecosystems.

The project presents a comprehensive approach to understanding the multifaceted perspectives on Super gentrification within the Stockholm archipelagos. By integrating Stakeholder theory, the research aims to bridge the diverse interests of local residents, business owners, seasonal inhabitants, government officials, and visitors. The mixed-methods strategy, encompassing digital surveys, direct observations, various forms of interviews, and cartographic analysis. The insights gained promise to inform urban planning and policy-making, ensuring that decisions are grounded in a thorough understanding of the social, economic, and environmental implications of Super gentrification, thereby enhancing sustainable development in the region.

### **Madeleine Bonow<sup>1</sup>**

Saeid Abbasian<sup>1</sup>, Roger Marjavaara<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Södertörn University

<sup>2</sup> Umeå University

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **Local communities at stake? – reactions among generations of “stayers” to industrialization, de-industrialisation and re- industrialisation**

### **Maria Vallström**

National and regional authorities have embraced the new battery factory in Skellefteå – a town historically linked with depopulation and deindustrialization – as a positive development. The factory is expected to create jobs, increase tax revenue, and symbolizes the ongoing “green transition” in the north of Sweden. While many studies focus on the novelty and short-term impacts of this development, few researchers place current developments within the broader historical context of the town and the surrounding rural region of Norsjö. This study aims to explore Skellefteå’s historical

trajectory through the perspectives of its native inhabitants, examining how current changes are experienced, interpreted, and narrated by three generations—each shaped by different phases of industrialization, deindustrialization, and reindustrialization—with attention to issues of class and gender, and explores how the tension between center/periphery, individual/society is articulated in the local structure of experience. What social and ecological consequences can be traced and how can these be perceived as a matter of social justice?

### **Maria Vallström<sup>1</sup>**

Johanna Overud<sup>2</sup>, Daniel Bodén<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Södertörn university

<sup>2</sup> Umeå University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Navigating the Skills Divide: Addressing Workforce Challenges and First Nations Experiences in Regional Energy Transitions in Australia**

### **Sarah Niklas**

The transition to renewable energy offers promising economic opportunities for regional and rural areas but also intensifies workforce challenges. For First Nations communities in Australia, challenges are compounded by historical experiences with the fossil fuel sector, including broken promises and unmet commitments. Past engagements have often resulted in minimal benefits and environmental degradation, leading to scepticism about new energy initiatives.

This study explores critical issues related to capacity building, educational opportunities, and high unemployment rates within the context of the transition. Australian governments have identified Renewable Energy Zones in inland and coastal regions with high renewable energy potential, good grid connections, many include former coal regions. As projects develop, the demand for specialised skills rises – skills that are often scarce in remote areas. This skills gap is exacerbated by inadequate access to education and training, impacting local employment and economies.

This study, through workshops and interviews with education and training providers, employment services, communities and industry including project developers and network services, provides an in-depth analysis of these issues. It highlights systemic problems, such as the lack of culturally-relevant training, insufficient programs bridging school leavers and jobs starters, and the mismatch between educational offerings and industry needs.

Finally, the study develops strategies and policy interventions to bridge these gaps, focusing on community-driven initiatives and meaningful partnerships between Indigenous organisations and energy companies. By addressing these challenges and integrating First Nation's perspectives, the study aims to ensure that energy transitions are both equitable and effective, fostering sustainable development and economic resilience.

### **Sarah Niklas**

University of Technology Sydney

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **Politics of Green Investments: The Green Transition and Recognition of Colonial Relations in Greenland and Sápmi**

### **Malin Nystrand**

The green transition requires a dramatic upsurge in critical mineral extraction. Extraction is part of colonial histories in Greenland and Swedish Sápmi, which have large deposits of such minerals. Their Indigenous Inuit and Sámi inhabitants, however, are resisting the further sacrifice of their lands for the green transition, indicating a clash between the moral imperative to extract for the green transition and the moral imperative of a reckoning with past and ongoing colonial injustices. This paper presents a new research

project designed as a comparative case study between Greenland and Swedish Sápmi which seeks to understand how these clashing imperatives are negotiated between ruling elites and local populations in green extractive investments. It aims to do so by identifying and comparing different forms of recognition (legal, socioeconomic, cultural) between ruling elites and local populations, asking how forms of recognition are activated or ignored in, and affect, the negotiation of imperatives in concrete investment cases.

### **Malin Nystrand<sup>1</sup>**

Ilse Renkens<sup>1</sup>, Peter Leys<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Roskilde University

When: 2024-12-04, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Place, mobility and justice among rural youth facing transition to a more sustainable society**

### **Christoffer Hornborg**

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the centrality of place, mobility and justice among rural youth, describing their present and future trajectories in relation to the transition towards sustainable development.

We will show some examples from three qualitative investigations made with semi-structured interviews, drawing on questions of spatial conditions and relations, material and infrastructural matters, all noticeably present in the perceptions, expectations, and aspirations of young rural subjects.

Some participants described aspects of injustice in how rural places were neglected, a lack of infrastructural development, the dismantling of services and jobs, etc. There was also an awareness of the planetary state of emergency and worry

about how superimposed governmental efforts to address climate change would not be compatible with rural conditions and resources.

In this it is possible to speak of a *mobility injustice*, where young rural subjects experience their everyday being constrained and limited in relation to urban resources and possibilities, due to imperatives to change in response to climate change. This is stressful and function to mobilize efforts for a personal change towards a more sustainable future. We want to discuss how examples of “collateral damage”, as Zygmunt Bauman has called it, isn’t distributed randomly, but seems to hit harder on those already under pressure from scarce resources, delimited future expectations and mobility injustice.

### **Maria Vallström<sup>1</sup>**

Christoffer Hornborg<sup>2</sup>, Linda Fridén Syrjäpalo<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Södertörn university

<sup>2</sup> Campus Västervik

<sup>3</sup> Stockholms universitet

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Trekker

## **Saving the countryside by and for whom? Images of rurality and national identity in movement for and against the re-industrialization of Swedish North**

### **Sara Nyhlén**

Today we witness how geographical and social peripheries are mobilized as “change agents” in the current industrialization and green development in the Swedish sparsely populated north (Norrland). In this article our aim is to explore how images of rurality and national identity is framed in movements both for and against the establishment of a new ‘so called’ green industry in the Northern Swedish countryside. The prospect of this new establishment has been vividly debated in the local community, both in struggles for (because of job opportunities) and against it (because of the destruction of nature and livelihood opportunities). Combining

digital ethnography with critical whiteness and settler colonial perspectives we analyse what kind of images of rural life and identities that is mobilised in the different standpoints. Our analysis shows that both the resistance to and the mobilization of such ideas of renewal and escape are rooted in both the nostalgia for a pre-industrial past marked by simpler ways of life distant from the dirtiness and immorality of the city, and the welfare nostalgic dreams about industrial investments. It also shows how different development goals are invoking different worldviews and ideas on what is best for the local community, making visible the rural as a conflicted space.

### **Sara Nyhlén<sup>1</sup>**

Katarina Giritli Nygren<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mid Sweden University



When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

**“We want to invest in young responsible families”: Heteronormativity and settler time in the media narrative of a project for rural survival**

**Anna Olovsson Lööv**

This paper aims to contribute to critical studies of the intertwinement of rurality and coloniality by analyzing the narrative of an initiative for ‘saving the dying countryside’. The initiative aimed to make families with children move to a rural village in northern Sweden. We problematize how the media narrative about the initiative constructed particular tropes of rural life that are deeply normative of *settler time* (Rifkin 2017). The material consists of newspaper articles about a

housing project in a rural village initiated in 2019 in response to the threat of closing down the school in a sparsely populated region in Jämtland, Sweden. Sweden is a settler colonial nation-state and settler colonialism is a gendered process (c.f. Arvin et al 2013). We therefore use queer and decolonial theories to critically address the media narrative and how it actively denies pluriversality in the Swedish countryside.

**Anna Olovsson Lööv<sup>1</sup>**

Angelika Sjöstedt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gaskeuniversitetet/Mid Sweden University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Bridging worlds: Understanding the role of rural journalists in rural communities of Norway and Spain through their own perceptions**

### **Cristóbal Mora Bieli-Bianchi**

There is still a lot of research to be done in understanding the dynamics and importance of journalism in rural communities. When it comes to the relationship between media studies and rurality, rural media has traditionally been labeled as 'local' which, without being completely wrong, misses the importance of the geographical approach to understand better its particular dynamics in these communities. For example, a newspaper from a neighborhood in a city will approach the community differently than another established in a sparsely populated area, and both would be considered as 'local'.

In my PhD project I address this issue and analyze and discuss the experiences of rural journalists in two very diverse rural media contexts: Norway and Spain. Highlighting along the

research process the importance of having a stronger rural media ecosystem as a valuable part of local democracy and culture, my project looks to understand better rural journalists not just as professionals, but also as individuals with their own lives involving in rural communities.

In the words of one of the participants of the project, this research helps to "bridge worlds". So, it does not look for concrete definitions or actions to be developed, but to share a wide range of experiences of rural journalists in both countries and look for common areas in which actions can be taken, always considering what makes special every rural context being studied.

At the conference, I will share with you the current progress of my project with some preliminary analysis and results.

### **Cristóbal Mora Bieli-Bianchi**

Nord University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Dreaming Dangerously in Sápmi?**

### **Richard Ek**

Walking through the demolished Kiruna city centre feels like being in a war zone, frozen in time. This is merely one visible manifestation of a larger geo-economic 'battleground' in Swedish Sápmi. This territory has become a 'combat zone' as the green industrial transformation accelerates alongside the intensification of conventional grey industry. In essence, large parts of Sápmi are at risk of becoming green sacrifice zones. The spatial terminology of green sacrifice zones, along with the extractive exercise of state power, invites the application of Agamben's work on the state of emergency/exception and sovereign power both theoretically and conceptually. Simultaneously,

the current situation in Sápmi underscores the necessity for further exploration of how resistance can be mobilised. This presentation addresses two ambitions: to conceptualise a spatial grammar of green (neo)colonialism in Sápmi and to explore possibilities for indigenous resistance. The form of resistance elaborated upon, as an example, is a walking trail that highlights the forced eviction of Sámi families in Sweden during the first half of the 20th century. Such a walking trail does not currently exist, yet it could become Real as an imagination, as an act of 'dreaming dangerously' (Žižek, 2012)—a radical and anticolonial trope that challenges climate extractivism and (grey and green) industrial colonialism.

Åsa Andersson<sup>1</sup>

**Richard Ek**<sup>2</sup>, Stuart Reid<sup>2</sup>, Janne Sirniö<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Planet Saivo AB

<sup>2</sup> Karlstad University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Planning for socially sustainable rural housing in Sweden**

### **Susanne Stenbacka**

Countrysides in Europe, including Sweden, face different housing-related challenges. The literature illuminates spatial as well as socio-economic inequalities. Many rural regions are characterized by shrinking populations and strive to manage service needs with fewer resources. At the same time, other rural areas increase their population seasonally due to a strong development of tourism, and because of an increase in distance working and multiple dwellings as a lifestyle for certain groups. The availability of new jobs in expanding sectors such as tourism or resource extractive and 'green technology' industries is also a driver of housing shortage in particular rural areas, not least in Sweden.

Both the "cold spots" and the "hot spots" in rural areas see problems related to housing provision and social sustainability, since the spatial inequalities driven by economic processes and mobilities also give rise to more or less severe planning challenges. A low demand for housing related to a shrinking labour market and out-migration causes reduced access to services and sometimes abandoned buildings. A high pressure on the housing market triggers restrictive or conditional measures to avoid speculative developments and rural gentrification. Altogether, spatial inequalities and local differences highlight the need for a more comprehensive understanding of how rural housing is connected to issues of social sustainability and how planning measures may be taken. This paper aims at discussing a recent literature review on rural housing policies and the contemporary situation in Sweden with regard to rural housing challenges and policy development.

### **Susanna Heldt Cassel<sup>1</sup>**

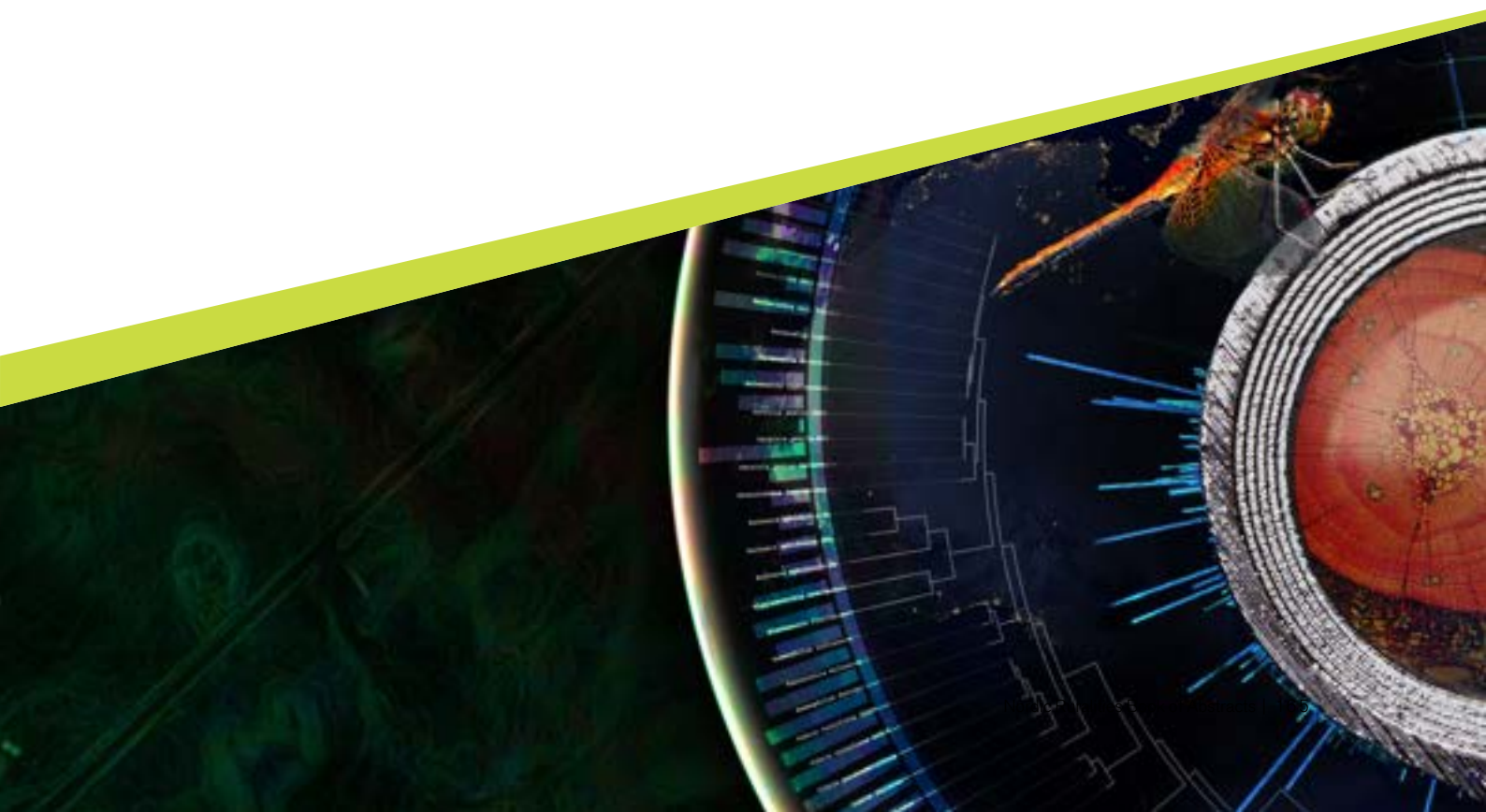
Susanne Stenbacka<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Örebro University

<sup>2</sup> Uppsala University

# **Local economic sustainability in rural areas: Place-based policies, practices and partners**

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When: 2024-12-04,

Where: The Climber

## **Sustainable Economic Development as an option for the Future of Depopulating Rural Regions? Planning Discourses in Swedish municipalities**

### **Josefina Syssner**

In mainstream political discourse, development has often been understood in terms of economic growth. Recent political and academic perspectives however question this interpretation. Newer academic perspectives also suggest that effective and legitimate goals of local development policy must emerge from the local context. Rather than imposing external solutions, goals must be rooted in and shaped by the specific needs and dynamics of the community. This paper aims to bring together and contribute to

the two debates mentioned above. To this end, it analyses planning discourses in Swedish municipalities that have not experienced growth in the conventional sense for a long time. More specifically, it analyses whether sustainable local economic development, as expressed in the SDG 8 goals, is a possible starting point for local governments when planning for the future in areas with long-term population decline that want to advance place-based development policies.

### **Josefina Syssner**

Linköping University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **The impact of proximity and distance on municipalities' forms of cooperation**

### **Lena Grip**

The demographic decline in many municipalities in recent decades has meant reduced tax revenues, and in relative terms increased costs per inhabitant, not least in sparsely populated areas. In addition, demographically small municipalities outside the major labor markets often struggle to maintain the supply of skills in several important areas, which increases difficulties in upholding regulated municipal services. Various forms of collaboration to solve problems by interacting across organizational boundaries for a specific purpose have therefore become an increasingly common and important issue for many.

The presentation reports the results of a re-search project that, through a survey to all Swedish municipalities, tried to make a systematic mapping of intra- and inter-municipal collaboration and

collaboration with other actors, and its various forms, related primarily to the municipalities' regulatory tasks. The study's results show that density promotes collaboration and that distance and proximity constitute spatial structuring principles for how and between which municipalities collaboration takes place, but also that regional lock-in effects affect inter-municipal collaboration. The results also show that geographical conditions and population density affect the motives and objectives of collaboration.

Through the results of the survey, we want to contribute to a critical discussion on the challenges and opportunities of collaboration, with a particular focus on the economic sustainability of rural and sparsely populated municipalities.

### **Lena Grip<sup>1</sup>**

Svante Karlsson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karlstad University

When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **Transformation processes in rural fishing communities in Iceland**

### **Matthias Kokorsch**

Icelandic fishing villages have experienced socio-economic and demographic difficulties during the past decades: mono-dependent local economies in combination with path dependency and lock-ins have made a necessary transformation difficult. These changes were partly caused by a shift towards full privatization through an ITQ system. This shift resulted in transformational shocks to many communities, disrupting their main livelihood and making it difficult to attract new residents and sustainable development ideas. Despite these challenges, fisheries remain a crucial industry in many rural regions of Iceland. However, new threats such as the fourth industrial

revolution and climate change are adding stress to these communities, especially small-scale fisheries. As automation risks replacing a significant portion of jobs and climate change threatens both the ocean and infrastructure, interesting transitions can be observed in some remote villages that are shifting to aquaculture. Results from case studies in different villages in Iceland will be presented with a particular focus on current policies and schemes in Iceland that are tailored to small-scale fisheries. We will analyze the policies and schemes in place, particularly those tailored to small-scale fisheries, and evaluate them against strategies of renewal, minor reorientation, and major reorientation.

### **Matthias Kokorsch**

University Centre of the Westfjords



When: 2024-12-04, 15:30 - 17:30

Where: The Climber

## **Shrinkage and degrowth – possibilities for a fruitful conversation**

### **Sara Löwgren**

In this conceptual paper we propose that two literatures that deal with alternatives to growth—shrinkage and degrowth—could gain much from engaging with each other. The shrinkage literature is commonly concerned with municipalities that experience population decline and population ageing resulting in various economic and planning challenges, as well as potential opportunities. The research is often empirically rich. Shrinkage researchers typically draw from political science and geography and focus on formal and informal actors at the local and regional level. Much work is policy oriented, and some shrinkage scholars work on helping to make shrinkage manageable, for example through so called smart shrinkage. The degrowth literature has been called an activist science and has its roots in social movements and

political ecology. Much of the work in degrowth fits within one of two categories: first, making a case for degrowth as a new way of organizing global 'society' to handle contemporary crises like climate change or inequality, or, second, analyzing small-scale projects and practices, such as ecovillages, urban farming, or various commons, as local examples of degrowth. Degrowth researchers and activists are often aiming to promote specific, alternative futures. Although both literatures at their core address the same issue—alternatives to growth—the two literatures have not interacted much. In our paper we discuss why this might be and the implications for rural policy. We also offer suggestions for how shrinkage and degrowth could enrich and challenge each other going forward.

### **Sara Löwgren<sup>1</sup>**

Josefina Syssner<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Linköping University

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Natural, vegetarian but sometimes with local meat - how northern adolescents imagine sustainable food experiences**

### **Hilde Weiser**

Sustainable food choices are important contributors to sustainable development, yet this can be complex and challenging for young consumers. While the Swedish north is highlighted as tomorrow's sustainable food producer due to climate change, little research has taken the perspective of the becoming consumers in this area. This study focuses on what adolescents in rural or suburban areas of northern Sweden associate to food described as sustainable, e.g. good for the climate and environment, and how they imagine its taste, smell, and other sensory attributes. In this study, adolescents aged 15–16 years old wrote empathy-based (fictitious) stories about either a positive or a negative sustainable food experience.

A preliminary analysis indicates that sustainable food is associated with naturalness, vegan or vegetarian food, and local production. Sustainability is generally positively valued, if it does not compromise the foods' taste. The naturalness is positively expressed in descriptions of food that looks like a flowering garden or tastes like the ocean, or negatively in stories where sustainable food is described to contain soil and bugs. Negative food experiences describe vegan or vegetarian meals in which the absence of meat causes dissatisfaction. The positive stories tend to include meat as sustainable food, especially if it is locally produced. These preliminary results add northern adolescents' values and perceptions to the multifaceted concept of sustainable food. In the strive for sustainable food transitions, an inclusive discussion that questions and deepens our understanding of sustainable food to identify favorable changes, is crucial.

### **Hilde Weiser**

Umeå University

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Hiker

## **Culturally appropriate food in elderly care: Action research on Sami minority rights in three responsible municipalities**

### **Ildikó Asztalos Morell**

The Sami are an indigenous people and one of the five national minorities recognized by Sweden. Municipalities and regions with a special mandate to maintain minority cultures receive specific responsibilities and budgets for promotion. One significant issue in elderly care in Sweden is the lack of culturally adapted food. This particularly affects older Sami individuals in elderly care who are unable to prepare their own meals. In this project, we conducted interviews with elderly Sami, both in groups and individually, to understand their preferences for meals in municipal elderly care. These interviews were guided by an action model developed by food consultant Ann Spar-

rock. We also engaged in dialogue with officials in Suarssá (Sorsele), Máláge (Malå), and Umeje (Umeå)—three selected municipalities within the Vindelälven-Juhtátahkka biosphere area, representing mountain, forest, and urban Sami communities. The project examines how municipalities work towards realizing minority rights, how cultural rights are interpreted in the context of food provided by public kitchens, how minorities are involved in shaping municipal menus, and how their preferences are acknowledged. Additionally, it explores the obstacles and opportunities for improving connections between public kitchens and local Sami food producers.

### **Ildikó Asztalos Morell<sup>1</sup>**

Lena Maria Nilsson<sup>2</sup>, Ellacarin Blind<sup>2</sup>, Ann Sparrock<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

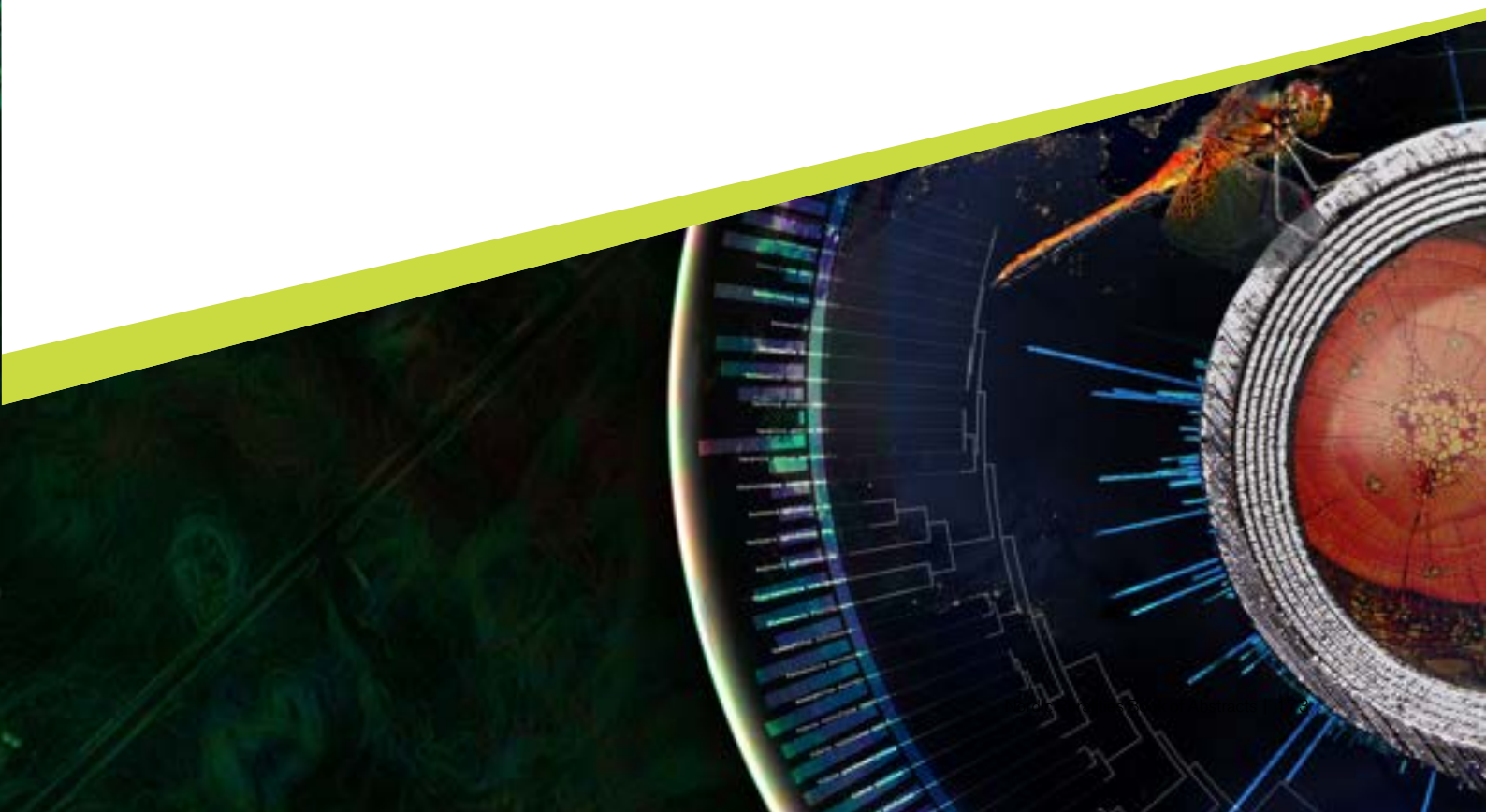
<sup>2</sup> Umeå University

<sup>3</sup> Torsta AB



# Open group theme 4: Policies and politics of the rural

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When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Challenges of rural policy and governance in times of multiple crises**

### **Leo Granberg**

This presentation focuses on challenges of sustainable resource use and rural policies under conditions of multiple global crises. We apply integrated, multi-scale approaches to understanding rural governance, including social and ecological dimensions. First, we draft a conceptual framework, then we discuss rural governance in Sweden and Finland for three cases, two for sectoral approaches of fishery and forestry, and one crosscutting approach of energy governance. For local fishery, we discuss the conflicts between species protection (grey seals and cormorants) and small-scale fishers, opportunities for removal and usage of unwanted fish species, and, in general, options for striking a better balance between local fisheries and climate change and biodiversity conservation policies. For forestry, we discuss the policies and governance approaches, with

attention to their local implications, e.g. related to biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, and reforestation under conditions of global warming and climate change, including risks of reforestation with new and mixed species. For the transformation of fossil energy systems, we discuss the problems of conflicting technological, economic and ecological approaches and their integration in multi-scale policy and governance systems, including wind energy and photovoltaics. In each case, we highlight the need for active participation of rural people among other resource users. Also, the interaction of local and global, social and environmental change, and need of the integration of sectoral perspectives in multi-scale rural governance are discussed.

### **Karl Bruckmeier<sup>1</sup>**

Pekka Salmi<sup>2</sup>, Leo Granberg<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New University of Lisboa,

<sup>2</sup> Natural Resources Institute

<sup>3</sup> University of Helsinki

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **Professional practises of rural proofing**

### **Patrik Cras**

Distinctive rural conditions can remain unnoticed or unattended in politics. As urban conditions often dominate, in terms of the number of citizens concerned, within a given political unit (such as a municipality, a region or a nation state) this is not surprising. This phenomenon has been named the *urban norm* or *spatial blindness* in the literature.

Specific ways of working to address rural perspectives within the policy making process may be able to counteract spatial or territorial blindness. That is to say, ensuring that also a wide range of rural perspectives and area specific knowledge is also taken into account in the decision-making process. Such approaches have been developed by policy professionals under the umbrella concept of rural proofing.

Different ways of rural proofing policy were first developed in England and Canada around 2000 and the concept is now promoted both by the EU and OECD. Rural proofing was introduced at national level in Sweden around 2011 and has since also been formalized as official practice in several municipalities. This makes it possible to study rural proofing as a municipal practice in Sweden, even though it is still a rare practice. This paper draws on a study of rural proofing practises in Swedish municipalities and specifically discusses the roles civil servants occupy in rural proofing processes. The paper analyses both 1.) how the concept of rural proofing is interpreted by civil servants and 2.) how rural proofing is carried out in practice.

### **Patrik Cras**

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

When: 2024-12-05, 08:30 - 10:30

Where: The Trekker

## **From Crisis to Sustainability: the politics of knowledge production on rural Europe**

### **Seema Arora-Jonsson**

What does it mean to study places in ‘crisis’ and how does that affect the research done on the ‘rural’? To be considered to be in crisis is not really new as any literature review of rural studies indicates. And yet, we live now in a new context, with new challenges for ‘rural’ research, in particular that of sustainability. Sustainability is the new policy focus and is increasingly reflected in research on rural Europe. Although scholars are beginning to theorize on what is sustainable in and for rural areas, our intention is to take this further. We theorize on what the focus on crisis and, increasingly on sustainability, means for the research we do and the knowledge we produce on rural Europe. Our

aim is to bring attention to the politics of past and present knowledge production on the rural to be able to imagine just and sustainable futures. In an analysis of literature primarily from Sweden and the UK, we argue that two construals, that of a rural crisis and that of rural–urban polarization, have set the tone for rural studies and may have overshadowed a more plural approach. We outline what might be needed from rural research to meet future challenges and what the notion of sustainability, with its emphasis on the entanglements of the social, economic and environmental, might mean for the future of rural research.

Ruth McAreavey<sup>1</sup>

**Seema Arora-Jonsson<sup>2</sup>**

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When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Climber

## **Not cutting off the branch we sit on: Towards developing conscientious places**

### **Kerry Chipp**

Conscientious brands are a nascent development in the literature; we seek to extend this concept to conscientious place brands. Conscientious brands differ from sustainable brands in that the focus is on the stakeholders, their impact and the transformative nature of the project. Conscientious brands are the “organisation’s moral agency” and the ability to gather all employees in the “power to act together” in a “human-centric, transformative purpose that is rooted in their distinctive and heritage and a consciousness of their role in society” (Olsen & Peretz, 2021; Ind & Igelesis, 2022; Marcovic et al, 2023). Our research included components of the small business ecosystem of Norrland, including the umbrella bodies of both the public and private sectors, as we sought to understand local actors’ perspectives on sustainability. Our results

indicated that there are four pillars for a conscientious destination place brand: (1) An inclusive stakeholder group, which includes the environment itself; (2) Consensus seeking among the sometimes divergent stakeholder needs and goals; (3) Rooted in a distinctive social, cultural and ecological heritage and (4) A community which is transformative and thereby works towards inclusion, preservation, persistence and justice. These four pillars operate within a paradigm of deep ecology (Næss, 1989), since our findings suggest that the predominant ecological modernization (Mol, Sonnenfeld and Spaargaren, 2009) separates people from nature and acts as a hindrance to transformation and social justice. Hence, we propose the environment itself as a stakeholder in our project, along the lines of the private rights of nature.

### **Kerry Chipp<sup>1</sup>**

Carola Strandberg<sup>1</sup>

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## **Left before places**

### **Nils Björling**

In the wake of the re-industrialization of Sweden, several municipalities experience a 'positive crisis', referring to the increasing demand of labour and growth due to industrial investments. Municipalities and rural landscapes that earlier often were characterized as 'left behind places' – referring to a situation where the state in the aftermath of the industrial expansion during the 20th century has withdrawn from local and regional responsibility, leaving municipalities to compete for investments in order to survive – could today be characterized as 'left before places'. In the current 'positive crisis', the state is still perceived as 'invisible' despite the ambitions from both Sweden and Europe.

The aim with this paper is to outline and develop the concept of 'left before places' to discuss power relations and governing rationalities,

both between the public and private sector, and between the local community, the municipality, the region, and the state in the ongoing industrial transformation. As some municipalities become subject to re-industrialization, they also are forced to enhance forms of governing destined to create adequate conditions for the private sector to flourish. At the same time, they are still responsible for the welfare of their citizens, as well as for the increasing workforce they need to attract. The paper presents initial findings from ongoing research in three Swedish municipalities. Tentative conclusions articulate how left before places carries new characteristics, such as a specific form of neoliberal governance that attempts to create conditions for industries to flourish through 'governing at a distance'.

### **Nils Björling<sup>1, 2</sup>**

Malin Rönnblom<sup>2, 3</sup>, David Scott<sup>2, 3</sup>

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When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

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## **New alliances in shrinking rural communities?**

### **Sara Löwgren**

In my PhD research, I focus on communities that are often forgotten about or used as rhetorical devices in the context of climate change and sustainability transitions in Sweden. Geographically, these are shrinking areas in southern Sweden outside of the main town of their municipalities, and far from larger cities and new industrial developments following the green transition. Demographically, I am paying particular attention to communities rarely heard in the context of climate change and just transitions – people with immigrant and/or refugee backgrounds, racialized people, people with low income, people of different ages, and so on, aiming to counter the tendency of sustainability discourses being concerned with white, well-off, urban consumers. Politically, the field sites have been chosen because there has been significant

support for the Sweden Democrats and one other party, suggesting some level of political polarization.

Working at my two field sites for the entire fall of 2024, conducting observations, interviews, and participatory action research, I ask what the climate crisis, sustainability, and justice mean to different people and how place and belonging figure in an uncertain future. Interrogating issues of power and privilege, both within and between different groups, I also explore how new and existing alliances might create possibilities for sustainability in these places. In the presentation I will share my ongoing research and raise for discussion questions about rural sustainabilities and how we as rural researchers may contribute to just transitions.

### **Sara Löwgren<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Linköping University

When: 2024-12-04, 13:00 - 15:00

Where: The Climber

## **Social procurement in rural Sweden – beneficial co-creation of value for municipalities and social enterprises?**

### **Yvonne von Friedrichs**

In many Swedish municipalities, there is an increasing need for skills supply identified, while many people are far from the labour market and have difficulty finding employment. Public contracts between the municipality and companies can be used as a path for individuals who find it difficult to get jobs at the same time as the companies' opportunities for skills supply can be strengthened. Hence, good methods are needed to measure the socio-economic benefit of interventions. The study aims to explore models for measuring the impact of a social procurement process involving a Swedish municipality, social enterprises and beneficiaries.

Results from previous studies show that the profitability and effect measurement of social value-creating is challenging as there are many aspects to take into account (Carenco, 2018).

Identifying the value of social influence using measuring methods and models turns out to be complicated, and even though many attempts have been made to evaluate different methods and models (Grieco et al., 2015; Högberg, 2019; Maas & Likert, 2011; Costa & Pesci, 2016; Rawhouser et al., 2019), there is insufficient evidence that proposed tools and techniques are integrated into practice (Kah & Akenroye, 2020). Hence, new models and methods are still in demand for measuring social enterprise.

In 2022-2024 a pilot project on social procurement was conducted in a Swedish rural municipality interviewing social enterprises, the beneficiaries, municipal officials. The results of the study generate the content of a model that can serve as a guide for social procurement processes in Swedish municipalities.

### **Yvonne von Friedrichs<sup>1</sup>**

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