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## A cosmopolitan, Sami-friendly scholar? Väinö Tanner on the best way to treat the Sami



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**Abstract.** The topic of this article is Väinö Tanner's views on Sami policies, which are examined from numerous perspectives, including his personal career and Nordic Sami policies. The discursive resources that he re-produced are also charted. Of the Sami policies in existence at that time, Tanner advocated the Swedish variant, which suited better the agenda of his scholarly production on the Skolt Sami. The origins of his choice are located in his long-term professional contact with Swedish experts

on the Sami and the expert role provided by Swedish discourses on the Sami. The anti-Finnish agenda in his scholarly production, and his consequent wish to elevate the Sami in the hierarchies of that time, rendered the more aggressive Norwegian rhetoric on the Sami unusable. In addition, Tanner showed signs of a cultural sensitivity that made him suspicious of assimilative policies.

**Keywords:** Väinö Tanner, Sami research, history of Sami policies, history of minority policies

### Introduction

Of all the renowned Nordic researchers on Sami society and culture, Väinö Tanner (1881-1948) has aroused relatively little scholarly interest as a research object [see, however, 1, Massa I., passim; 2, Massa I., passim; 3, Susiluoto P., passim; 4, Susiluoto P., passim; 5, Susiluoto P., passim.]. Despite numerous positive references to his seminal work on the Skolt Sami, *Antropogeografiska studier inom Petsamo-området. 1 Skoltlapparna*, (Human Geographical Studies in the Petsamo region. 1, The Skolt Lapps, 1929, hereafter *Antropogeografiska*), and its status as a "classic", the man himself has remained mostly unknown. References to his "cosmopolitanism" and the "Sami-friendly" slant of his studies are numerous and he enjoys a reputation as one of the first scholars to bring Skolt Sami intention and rationality into focus in his synthesis on Skolt Sami *sijt* adaptation (*siida*, the Sami village, in Skolt Sami). Tanner is also praised for avoiding the most aggressive racialized discourse on the Sami, such as that which attributed lesser mental capacities to the Sami.

Politically, Tanner is unknown: very little has been written about his political and ideological views in earlier studies. One of the few instances when he expounded on his political views was following his voluntary exile from Finland to Sweden in 1944 because of his frustration with the anti-Swedish policies of Finnish nationalists, the "True Finns" ("Aitosuomalaiset"). Tanner also developed strong anti-Nazi sentiments during the Continuation War (1941-1944). There is a similar lack of knowledge concerning his stance on Sami policies and how states should treat their

Sami minorities. His critical stance on the introduction of agriculture to the Sami is well known. During Tanner's active era as a state official and scholar, minority policies in Finland were in the making, and even though the Sami enjoyed a special, yet un-formalized status as an indigenous minority in Finland, the Skolt Sami were an exception as a 'new' and more 'foreign' minority within the borders of the young nation state, Pechenga/Petsamo having been annexed to Finland in 1920. The *Antropogeografiska* is also vague on this matter, containing numerous and even contradictory discussions on the way in which the Skolt Sami are to be helped into modernity [3, Susiluoto P., p. 18]. A study on this theme, based on archival sources, is so far lacking.

One of the scholars to raise questions concerning this blank spot of knowledge is history professor Astri Andresen, who has briefly discussed Tanner's ignorance concerning the Norwegian treatment of the Paččvei Sami (in Russian, Pazreka) during the border negotiations between Finland and Norway from 1922 to 1925. A favouring of the Norwegian population had led to disruptions in Paččvei Sami land usage rights from the late nineteenth century onwards. The negotiations during the 1920s resulted in Skolt Sami salmon fishing rights being revoked on the Norwegian bank of the River Pasvik, something which Norwegian officials had desired since the 1890s, fearing an (ex-) 'Russian' minority on their turf. Tanner participated in these negotiations as a delegate of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Andresen has noted that Tanner appeared unaware of what were in retrospect more sinister traits of Norwegian Sami policies. In addition, in *Antropogeografiska*, Tanner echoed Norwegian standpoints on this issue: he found the reason for the low catch given as the lower quality of the fishing device to be true as such, but he denied the Skolt Sami testimony that they had been driven away from the fisheries, which had actually happened [6, Andresen A., pp. 17–25, 75–81, 85, 119–122, 157, 160; 7, Tanner V., pp. 146–147, 171].

What was Tanner's opinion of the Scandinavian policies, and what kind of Sami policies did he advocate? Which factors affected the choice of policies he favoured? Tanner was both a state official and a researcher. From a methodological point of view, he was able to use and reproduce influences in numerous contexts and from numerous discourses. These contexts, and the discourses as well, both influenced and provided tools for the researcher/official; they could be used as a resource, employed for a variety of purposes [8, Shapin S., pp. 93, 110]. As a researcher, Tanner had more freedom in employing his own choice of discourses – which are understood as ways of talking and writing about the Sami competing to become hegemonic and norm-giving – than he did as a state official, bound to a more rigid, formalist and state-bound mode of talking about the Sami. Consequently, context matters as much as linguistic traces in the texts as far as

methods are concerned. Both context and discourse can be used to study the motivation, rationale [9, Mathiesen S.R., pp. 103-104], intentions, influences, politico-ideological surroundings and transformations in Tanner's political thinking.

The availability and comprehensibility of politico-ideological influences embedded in these contexts varies for differently-situated officials/scholars in the social structure, as well as in time and place. There is no direct causality concerning the context of a scholar, nor does there exist one tyrannical discourse guiding the pen of the scholar. While state officials have to echo the discourses articulated in the institutions they serve, scholars may employ a consciously instrumental perspective in their work: their calculations may take into consideration goals pertaining to the wider society, or they may not. Significant contexts and discourses also derive partially from their life histories, or from the position a single scholar occupies in the social structure and scientific community [8, Shapin S., pp. 93–100; 10, Shapin S., pp. 179, 197–198]. This motivation may not reveal itself, and any interpretation therefore has to remain conditional. What follows is at least an attempt to fathom the motivation and rationale behind Tanner's opinions on the best way to treat the Sami. The contexts in which these are sought focus on his career, his professional roles and the politico-ideological discursive terrain in which Nordic Sami policies were articulated and practised. The sources comprise his personal archive, located at Tromsø University Museum, and the relevant parts of his scholarly production.

As is well known, Russia/Soviet Union has played a significant role in Finnish history. During Tanner's lifetime, Finnish sentiments towards Russia changed from compliance to negative imagery, even hatred, finally acknowledging the necessity of establishing new, friendly relations after the Second World War. The negative sentiments were a historical force and factor without which the Finnish ideologies would remain unfathomed. The political thinking of the era was permeated by ideas of differences between nationalities (placing the author's nationality almost without exception as the highest and the most cultured/capable), as well as by opinions about the Russians/Soviets. The text that follows therefore references contemporaneous ideas of the "Other" held by the Finnish and the Russians. These are to be read contextually as historical statements, not as views held by the author of this article.

#### ***Tanner – background and early career***

Väinö Tanner was born in 1881 in Hämeenlinna, located in southern Finland. His father, Richard Tanner, was a tradesman and his mother, Hildegard Karolina Kant, was from Långtora,

Uppland in Sweden. The home language in the Tanner residence was Swedish<sup>1</sup> [11, Wenner C-G., p. 187], and the family belonged to the small-town, Swedish-speaking middle class. In 1914, Tanner married Jenny Salomon-Sörensen from Malmö in Sweden, so that his connections with Sweden became even deeper [12, Lundqvist G., pp. 143-144].

Tanner studied in two institutes of higher education, which was typical of that time for those still not very numerous pupils who went on to continue their studies in the few available institutes of higher learning in Finland [13, Strömberg J., p.258]. Tanner graduated in 1905 from the Polytechnic Institute (Dipl. Inc. in Chemistry and Engineering) and showed an inclination to pursue a career in research from early on, since he continued his studies (Fil. Cand. in 1909) and defended his doctorate in 1914 with a thesis [14, Tanner V., passim,] in geology at the Imperial Alexander University, an institution better geared for such a pursuit. His thesis was part of a larger series of publications on the quaternary system, on the movements of continental ice. Between 1903 and 1913, through his engagement to the Geological Commission of Finland, Tanner participated in geological expeditions to Lapland. He visited Kola in 1908 and Nuortijärvi/Notozero and Suenjel/Songelsk in 1909. Tanner commenced teaching and research early on at the Geological Commission and the Polytechnic Institute, and from 1905 at the Imperial Alexander University, where he taught geology and mineralogy<sup>2</sup> [3, Susiluoto P., pp. 10–11; 15, Michelsen K-E., pp. 166–167; 16, Rantala L., pp. 45–46]. Tanner studied extensively abroad: cartography in Stockholm and geology in Russia, as well as languages in Switzerland, Germany and Russia. This is one reason for his reputation for being “cosmopolitan”.

Tanner’s fairly rapid progress in his early career was linked to the generally upward rise in class structures in swiftly-modernizing Finland, as well as a need for educated specialists and experts in the service of the state. The number of students enrolled was low and employment prospects were good, especially in the sciences, and it was usual to be offered employment even before graduation [13, Strömberg J., pp. 230–232, 235–236, 239–240, 257; 17, Strömberg J., p. 21]. Tanner’s career took a brief international turn because of his engagement in the work of commissions working on the reindeer herding crisis in Torne Lappmark, the border region between Norrland in Sweden and Troms County in Norway (chairing the commissions in 1910-1912 and 1914-1917). These engagements involved an introduction to the adaptation forms and rationalities of the Sami, as well as numerous aspects of cross-border nomadism. Tanner received

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<sup>1</sup> Tanner corresponded with his grandmother on his father’s side in Swedish, e.g. Archive of Tromsø University Museum (ATUM), Archive of Väinö Tanner (AVT), Box 18, folder 3, Korrespondanse 1929, Letters from Hilli Tanner, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 18, folder 10a, Private documents, CV.

methodological lessons in the field-work and in working with the Sami. Other staff included some of the first-rank Sami researchers of that era, e.g. Kristian Nissen, with whose works, expert role and advice Tanner was acquainted. The archive gives indications that Tanner felt more of a natural alliance with the Swedish policies and members of the commission than with the Norwegian members, who openly expressed doubts on the reliability and worth of Sami testimonies. As chairman of the committee Tanner in any case eagerly assumed the role of expert, a tendency he also exhibited in his later scholarly production on the Sami. [18, Nyysönen J., *passim*] This was the position from which he pronounced his educated opinion on preferred Sami policies.

Tanner's brief engagement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and his diplomatic career (1918-1921) were most likely due to the fact that administration in the field of foreign relations was one of the very few administrative branches with no administrative structures or ministries in its own right in newly-independent Finland (the other being national defence: all the other administrative branches had already existed from the era of autonomy). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established in 1918 and its permanent staff remained small. Recruitment to a diplomatic career and to the consulates and embassies established from 1918 onwards has been characterized as "random". There was a need to recruit men with a command of foreign languages, so the university was among the natural recruitment bases [19, Selén K., pp. 170-171]. Tanner, with his experience in international cooperation and knowledge of languages, had the required sought-after characteristics.

Tanner served in Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Greece. He also served other short engagements with the Ministry: in 1918 he worked as a civil servant at the Department of Foreign Policy at the legation in Stockholm, Sweden [2, Massa I., p. 202; 4, Susiluoto P., p. 12]. He appeared as an expert in the peace negotiations between Finland and the Soviet Union in Dorpat in 1920, and as a political adviser concerning the state of Norway [20, p. 125]. In 1922, Tanner was headhunted from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Chief Director of the Geological Commission to lead the mapping of mineral deposits in Pechenga/Petsamo. This tour of duty lasted from 1924 to 1931, during which time, in his capacity as a state geologist, Tanner was engaged in geological studies (the sufficient extent of the ore in the deposits was detected in drillings during the summers of the late 1920s, while the excavation of the mine commenced in 1936 and production began in 1942-1943 [21, Nummela I., p. 112; 22, Vahtola J., pp. 285–290, 305]). In addition to the formal terms of his engagement, Tanner collected Sami place-names and researched the geomorphology and shore-lines of the Arctic Ocean. Tanner also conducted archaeological excavations localizing stone-age dwellings, possibly in 1928-1930, based on an

analysis of the ancient shore-lines. Contact with the Skolt Sami during the summers of 1924-1927 was among the factors that resulted in the gradual shift of his interest towards human geography: Tanner wrote his human geographical monograph on the Skolt Sami during the 1920s [1, Massa I., p. 67; 3, Susiluoto P., pp. 12-13; 4, Susiluoto P., pp. 77, 87; 12, pp. 143–144].

*Antropogeografiska* is a synthesis of Skolt Sami history, the organization of the Sami *sijt*, its administration, Skolt Sami adaptation and subsistence forms, and its people's relationship with the environment and their ongoing subsistence crisis, as well as the general condition of the folk. The book has a complex identity political agenda, intended to correct erroneous and biased opinions towards the Skolt Sami, renouncing Russian cultural, linguistic and racial influences, and commenting on unwise Finnish policies (in his book, Tanner begins to write favourably about the Russians as the Finns enter Petsamo), as well as attempting to "promote the happiness of the people of nature" by presenting critical and factual knowledge of the folk and forces in the extreme north. The book contains an unresolved tension between an effort to elevate the Skolt Sami in contemporaneous hierarchies and the modern world, pushing the Skolt Sami back to a primitive position in the book. The belief in race as a scientific and hierarchizing factor also complicated the book's salvage agenda concerning this indigenous group [compare 4, Susiluoto P., p. 98; 7, Tanner, V., p. 9 et passim].

Even before the publication of *Antropogeografiska*, Tanner was in a position, and had acquired the knowledge, to be able to air his opinions on Scandinavian and preferred Sami policies. Although he never rose to a position of being able to make decisions about these policies, what was his opinion of them?

### ***Tanner on Scandinavian Sami policies***

As mentioned, Tanner appeared to be uninformed about the true force of the Norwegianization policies in the early 1920s. His archive provides more detailed thoughts on this issue: in an archived manuscript, Tanner wrote that with the annexation of Pechenga/Petsamo, Finland had been presented with its own "Lapp question". In a draft document dealing with the aforementioned issue, Tanner conceptualized ways in which Norway and Sweden had approached this problem: Sweden had practised a humanistic-sentimental "protectionist" policy by forcing the Sami to carry on with reindeer herding. Norway had practised a "national-economic" and "socio-political" policy, in which the Sami were given the same rights and duties as all other citizens, and were expected to stand in reserve in the same labour market as everybody else.<sup>3</sup> Tanner's

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<sup>3</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 6, folder 2, Petsamon alueen paikannimiä, I Lappalaisia paikanimiä, koonnut V.Tanner, undated manuscript «Med Petsamo-området...».

perspective grasped the state rhetoric, but shows a better knowledge of the Swedish policy. His conceptualization lacks the highly critical Finnish attitude of that time towards Norwegian policies concerning the Finno-Ugric minorities in Norway, especially those of “Finnish” extraction or Finnish-speaking minorities, the Kvens. From the mid-1920s onwards, this had become the domain of Finnish nationalists who protested against the poor economic, linguistic and educational conditions of the Kvens, blaming Norwegian policies for this situation [23, Kaukiainen L., pp. 104-113]. Given his negative opinion of the True Finns, Tanner most likely felt an aversion to joining their ranks.

When it came to the best possible Finnish response to the “Lapp question”, Tanner was in favour of the Swedish alternative. His primary argument was that it would not be advisable to leave the Sami to compete on their own against the interests of other professional groups – implying a relative weakness on the part of the Sami. Secondly, natural conditions were not suitable for the chosen policy of cattle-raising – a critique of the chosen Finnish policies thus far in Lapland and Petsamo. Tanner ended his discussion of this subject by stating that there was sufficient pasture and that the disposition of the Sami was most suited to reindeer herding.<sup>4</sup> Tanner’s benevolent, humanistic, paternalistic, protective and normative gaze positioned the Sami as the lowest, without exception: as those with the least possibility or capacity to act in their own interests in a terrain manned by stronger, more capable groups of actors. The state of Finland was depicted as a threat and as the institution that had had to take action to save the Skolt Sami: these roles did not necessarily negate one another, since the successful protective role of the state of Finland was dependent on the state officials following Tanner’s expert advice. Tanner had a habit of elevating the Scandinavian model as an example to the region: this bias, and its Finnish antithesis, may be another reason for the policies he recommended. What can be said with more certainty is that Tanner did not reproduce the more aggressive Norwegian racialized discourse on the Skolt Sami [e.g. 6, Andresen A., p. 155] – this did not suit his Sami-friendly agenda.

The most recent research describes the Swedish Sami policy as paternalistic, one that acknowledged and sustained the cultural hierarchies, but which was protective and conserving in its rhetoric. During the nineteenth century, the social Darwinist conviction of the disappearance of a weaker folk was coupled with ideas of Christian and humanistic help to prolong their existence as long as possible. Exposure to civilization and modern life would lead to pauperization and an increase in welfare costs, as well as a potential loss of the nomadic occupation, which was

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<sup>4</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 6, folder 2, Petsamon alueen paikannimiä, I Lappalaisia paikannimiä, koontanut V.Tanner, undated manuscript «Med Petsamo-området...».

considered injurious and a misfortune to the Sami. It would be humanitarian to sustain the Sami in the nomadic Sami way of life, to which their racial characteristics and disposition predetermined their association. The idea of protection also built on a perception of the Sami as not being capable of taking care of themselves: they were in need of guidance from above. Ideas about modern life “injuring” and “spoiling” the Sami were numerous in Swedish discourse on the Sami during the early decades of the twentieth century when Tanner was working in the reindeer pasture commissions. These ideas resulted in lesser rights in comparison to the general Swedish population [24, Lantto P., pp. 11-16]. As I have already explained, the Swedish Sami policies were known to Tanner.

On a scale of integration-segregation-assimilation, the eager tendency to define the correct way of being a Sami led, in the Swedish case, to a combination of segregation and assimilation. The Lapp hut schools were geared up not to wean the Sami children from their nomadic way of life, by decreasing the amount of schooling and denying them modern conveniences such as proper housing and other comforts. Reserving and protecting reindeer nomadism as the righteous form of subsistence for the Sami was undertaken by means of many protective measures, e.g. a cultivation border delimiting the area for agriculture, forestry and reindeer herding in the region, to the benefit of all three forms of land use; this resulted, however, in mostly unsuccessful efforts to segregate the Sami from modern impulses. On the other hand, the Sami who had for various reasons abandoned reindeer herding, or who practised different forms of subsistence, were an anomaly in not fulfilling the strict criteria of ‘real’ Sami-ness. They were to be assimilated into the Swedish folk, since this was going to happen anyway. Protective and down-grading attitudes led to a strict control of the Sami, in the form of the Lapp Service (Lappväsendet), an authority intended to administer the “Sami question” and implement a Sami policy. In the period of Tanner’s early contact with Sweden, this institution was mostly implementing different aspects of the segregationist “Lapp shall remain Lapp” policy [24, Lantto P., pp. 16–17, 141; 25, Lundmark L.]. In his wording of the proposed Finnish Sami policies, Tanner supported segregation but, as we shall see, not necessarily the assimilation of the Sami.

If the Swedish policy was humanistic in its rhetoric, hierarchizing in its practice and eager to use the power of definition, the Norwegian variant was more straightforward in its desire to merge and “civilize” the Sami. The take on reindeer herding was one of tolerance to a subsistence form about to vanish. Consequently, future Sami agricultural adaptation would entail a leap upwards in the cultural hierarchy and a merging with Norwegian culture. The gaze was permeated with social Darwinism: nomadism, an outdated relic, was going to vanish in its encounter with

stronger forms of subsistence. The Norwegianization policies were based in addition on an (unfounded) fear of the Sami and the Kvens as fifth columns teaming with hostile Finns and Russians/Soviets. School was to become the most important institution in addressing this national threat. Teaching – the staff and the language of instruction – was to be (in) Norwegian. In addition, nationalist-conformist Norwegianization policies were instigated between the 1850s and the 1950s in areas such as road-building, land-sale policies, church-building and an extensive control of “foreign nationalities”. As one variant of global efforts to ‘civilize’ and assimilate indigenous populations, Norwegianization policies stand out as exceptionally long-lasting, leaving a persistent mark on minority communities, most evident in their loss of language [26, Eriksen K.E., Niemi E., p. 26ff; 27, Jernsletten R., pp. 8–17; 28, Minde H.].

The economic argument and the goal of creating an active labour reserve, to which Tanner referred, has been deemed an inferior goal compared with the most significant one – that of national security – by Knut Einar Eriksen and Einar Niemi in their seminal work on Norwegianization policies, *Den finske fare* (The Finnish Menace, 1981). Ideologists targeted minority cultures, languages and any sense of togetherness, to be substituted by a sense of self and an identity as a Norwegian. Regnor Jernsletten has discussed the economic background of the land-lease policies, which reserved land ownership only to those with a command of the Norwegian language. The economic factor to which Tanner referred was most evident in the *poor success* of land-lease politics: the restriction of land sales to Norwegian citizens remained mostly unenforced, since the old prioritization of the economic consolidation of Finnmark and the sedentarization of the nomadic Sami stood out as more important. As far as the land-lease policies were concerned, a fear of foreign nationalities was strongest and the actual discrimination most blatant against the Kvens, but the policies did not hinder Sami or Kven settlement. Rather than creating a reserve workforce, the rhetoric and argumentation concerning this question was, according to Eriksen and Niemi, imbued with a Kvens-as-a-national-threat-to-be-tethered discourse. And sedentary agricultural settlement was perceived as the solution for resolving the anomaly of Sami reindeer nomadism once and for all [26, Eriksen K E., Niemi E., pp. 22–24, 60–61, 69–81, 119, 126–128, 228–237; 27, Jernsletten R., pp. 17–18].

Reasoning that resembled Tanner’s was also present in the discourse on schools as a progressive factor for minorities deemed “backward”, where the argumentation down-played the national threat discourse and took up more explicitly the need to civilize minorities and incorporate them into Norwegian society, as Bernt Thomassen, director of schools in Finnmark, wrote in 1917. (The Sami called him “[Nikolai] Bobrikoff”, referring to the governor general of

Finland who had aimed to “Russify” the Grand Duchy of Finland and was murdered in 1904.) The idea was that the Sami and the Kvens should feel a sense of unity with the Norwegians, as well as sharing a sense of solidarity and Norwegian culture, and enjoying the well-being provided by this elevation, as well as the ultimate goal of creating loyal citizens out of the Sami and the Kvens (in opposing Norwegianization policies it was hoped that the same results would be achieved by kinder treatment of these minorities). Thomassen’s rhetoric did not explicate the duties of the new full citizens enjoying the equality promised by Norwegianization [26, Eriksen K.E., Niemi E., pp. 115–121], as Tanner’s wording did, but it may have provided a source for Tanner, since he engaged in brief correspondence on the school issue with an ardent Norwegianization advocate, Johs. Haaheim, from a former Skolt Sami area in Neiden<sup>5</sup>.

This source reveals a later interest in the matter and Tanner’s mildly critical stance towards Norwegianization policies in schools. Here, too, Tanner demonstrated an understanding of the demands of the state, but not necessarily to the extent of full cultural change. Reindeer herding, according to the half-nomadic model preferred by the Swedish experts and Tanner, was to be continued by a folk proven culturally competent in the environment best equipped for such an adaptation. This was clear to Tanner, as clear as it was that the modern world constituted a threatening realm, since the ill-advised Finns advocated agriculture, which was poorly suited to their particular environment, and there did not yet exist any overlap between these niches for different means of living. Tanner himself wished to establish a cultivation border, as described earlier. One of the sources of these ideas was Swedish reasoning on this matter and one of the provocative discourses was the Finnish discourse praising the Finnish peasant as the normative ideal [29, Tanner V., pp. 81, 97].<sup>6</sup>

In his correspondence, Tanner stated that he did not agree on all the points with Haaheim, without specifying his points of disagreement (the original letter from Haaheim to Tanner is not to be found in the archive), but Tanner took the Sami pupils’ point of view as his starting-point: at worst, they sat in the classroom with no command of the language used by the teacher and gained

<sup>5</sup> As a newly-graduated teacher from the Seminar in Tromsø, Johannes Haaheim was sent to the multi-linguistic region of Neiden to teach Sami and Finnish children precisely because he was *not* in command of the Sami languages. This was logical, under the Norwegianization policies practised during the 1880s and 1890s. Haaheim, originally from Hardanger in Vestlandet, was an active member of the Norwegian local ‘nobility’ in Neiden, with positions of trust in church and municipal administration. He served as mayor in 1901-1904, enjoying a good reputation in the municipality and as a teacher “who norwegianized pupils without force” [Rasmussen, Sigrun: Neiden kapell og Svanvik kapell, Nasjonal oppbygging i Sør-Varanger, Hovedoppgave i kunsthistorie, våren 2007, Institutt for filosofi, ide- og kunsthistorie og klassisk språk, Universitetet i Oslo, 35, 37-38]; Haaheim is depicted in *Den finske fare* as an ardent promoter of Norwegianization policies. He initiated and administered the first school dormitory, the Fossheim dormitory in Neiden, and shared his opinions concerning the unreliability of the Kven population in the region in secret reports that he sent to the military [26, Eriksen K.E., Niemi E., p. 66, 137-138].

<sup>6</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 6, folder 1b, Muetkess, Njaudam, undated draft for a letter to Mr. Haaheim.

no benefit from the teaching. It took a long time for Tanner to touch upon points of view of the state relating to security issues, which was the starting-point in many of the discussions about Norwegianization policies. But Tanner eventually returned to an evolutionary frame of mind by claiming, in unison with Haaheim, that education had to match the culture of different nationalities and that the interests of the state would be best served if the individuals were bound intimately together as a solid cultural unit (“kulturförband”). Cultural development could not proceed regardless of the existence of the folk (folkbestånden).<sup>7</sup>

Tanner’s arguments seem to be drawn in two directions. His conception of culture and history was evolutionary, but Tanner had pondered nationalization questions within the school institution<sup>8</sup> from the point of view of equality as well. There are clear indications of democratic humanism, while his discussion of the best of the state does not specify the culture within which the pupils were to be unified: it is most likely that the singular form and idea of development pointed to the majority culture of each host state. However, Tanner’s final sentence seems to return to somewhat more pluralistic points about it being best for Skolt Sami culture to address the modern world, for which they had to be prepared, in order to not to meet it head-on from a primitive stance – a point made in Tanner’s *Antropogeografiska* – but into which they did not necessarily have to sink in order to assimilate. According to my reading, Tanner did not support assimilative measures outright.

Additional support for this attitude is apparent in an earlier text on Skolt Sami place-names, in which Tanner wrote about the Sami being in a process of acculturation/assimilation that was undesirable (Tanner used his own term “epäkansallistuttaminen”, which translates roughly as un-nationalizing the Sami, and which may serve as a translation for the term “die Denationalisierung”, used in scholarly texts of that time [30, Kihlman A.O., p. 39]). The article’s explicit salvation motive – the exceptionally nuanced and expressive Skolt Sami tradition had to be saved for posterity before it vanished – resembles the starting-point of much of the argumentation for assimilation policies, even though Tanner did not explicate this [31, Tanner V., pp. 3-4].

Tanner had produced another draft on the issue of schools, in which he was more generous in sharing his thoughts. On a passage on the issue of schooling in Suenjel, Tanner was sceptical about the desirability of placing Sami children in the same school as pupils belonging to a different, higher race; the encounter might and indeed did turn out be unfortunate, the school turning out to be a “torture institution for the child of nature” (“tortyranstalt för naturbarnen”),

<sup>7</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 6, folder 1b, Muetkess, Njaudam, undated draft for a letter to Mr. Haaheim.

<sup>8</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 6, folder 2, Petsamon alueen paikannimiä, I Lappalaisia paikannimiä, koonnut V.Tanner, undated manus “Schnitler omtalar nämligen i sitt...”.

leading Sami children to abandon school. Because of this, and the general dislike of school dormitories among the Sami, Tanner was in favour of establishing their own Suenjel school in the winter village. Tanner racialized another aspect in his critical discussion of the dormitories: where could one find a woman with sufficient cultural maturity to take care, with understanding and devotion, of that many children belonging to a different race? The passage ends with a quotation from the first novel written by a Sami, “Muitalus Samiid birra” (Story about the Sami, 1910), in which the author Johan Turi airs his opinions about the pros (cheating the Sami became more difficult as they learned reading, writing and arithmetic) and cons (the inevitable cultural change, from Sami culture and nature to peasant culture and nature) of the Swedish “five-year school” [32, Turi J., pp. 28–29].<sup>9</sup> Tanner’s philosophy was hierarchical and racializing, yet compassionate and curiously culturally sensitive, leaning more to the culture-protecting *ethos* of the Swedish model than to the assimilative Norwegian variant. It may also be said to grasp some aspects of the actual experience of Sami pupils already sent to schools in the north: Tanner referred to discussions with Swedish Sami individuals in this passage. Tanners way of using the racial factor is no longer valid, but his attempt to use it in a supportive, yet paternalistic and instrumental manner is interesting .

Aside from general development, and the inherent and desired result of schooling, Tanner did not specify anything about the wiping out, abolition or disappearance of indigenous culture, nor the civilizing, enfranchising or salvaging of indigenous peoples, all of which were typical ways of talking at that time about assimilation and the resultant progress in the social engineering of indigenous groups, including the Norwegian example [28, Minde H., pp. 126–131; 33, Cairns A.C., pp. 53–56]. Tanner used Sami sources, which served to mellow his discourse. His effort to look at the situation from the Sami pupils’ point of view had the same effect.

In his archived statements on the Norwegian policies Tanner did indeed appear to be uninformed concerning their grimmer aspects. On the one hand, this risks becoming an anachronistic problem, since some aspects of these policies were secretive, and thus many of the consequences of Norwegianization policies have emerged and become associated with them at a later date. The policies have been attributed with a strength and coverage that may not have been evident in a real-historical situation during all of the phases of the Norwegianization policies, spanning over a century. This is stated not as a belittlement of Norwegianization policies, but as a methodological statement of the available knowledge possessed by historical actors in their temporal contexts and the effects which have been accredited in retrospect to historical

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<sup>9</sup> ATUM, AVT, Box 6, folder 2, Petsamon alueen paikannimiä, I Lappalaisia paikannimiä, koonnut V.Tanner, undated manuscript in a collection titled «Upplysningen».

phenomena in different identity political projects. Both of these realms, the historical and identity political, can be studied historically, but they have to be separated, since the epistemological rules under which the historical actors operated are different.

### ***Conclusions: Tanner the Sami-friendly scholar?***

Generally, Tanner shared the social Darwinist thoughts and world-view that were inherent in the Swedish Sami policies, more aggressively so in the Norwegian variant. The focus of Tanner's wording was the same: the Sami were progressing higher up the ladder of socio-cultural evolution, and only the means and the pace of the uplift were under discussion. Tanner chose the milder, Swedish variant, one that left room for some cultural sensitivity and cultural protection, as well as – most importantly – reindeer herding, the subsistence form of his choice, reserved for the Sami. Tanner's cultural sensitivity was most evident in his somewhat ambivalent thoughts on schooling and the Sami.

Race was an explanatory and scientific factor for Tanner and he included a lengthy chapter on physical anthropology in *Antropogeografiska*. He did not, however, include the aggressive Norwegian rhetoric on the Sami in his book. This is not necessarily yet another sign of his ignorance of the Norwegianization policies, or their blunt rejection: aggressive, racializing rhetoric was something that Tanner had set out to oppose in his writing in the first place, therefore he had either to omit Norwegian opinions from his book or oppose them. For Tanner, the Norwegian rhetoric was a spoiled, unusable discursive zone, rather than a source of influence. His book was intended as a response to the aggressive Finnish discourse on the Skolt Sami, rendering the Norwegian and Scandinavian discourse on Germanic superiority useless because of the discursive force with which it placed the Sami as the lowest. As a Finland-Swede, Tanner might well have shared the discourse of Germanic racial superiority compared to the Finns and other Finnish minorities – a pleasant position to take. Because of this ambivalence, and the relative lack of opinions he expressed on this topic, *Antropogeografiska* does not provide a definite answer concerning Tanner's view on the Sami policies.

Among the discourses which he did not chose to reproduce were the True Finn discourses on the oppression of the diasporic Finno-Ugrian minorities. This confirms the old notion of Tanner as an anti-True Finn individual. This is a known fact, which resonates well with his identity as a Finland-Swede. The same applies to the Finnish Sami policies that he criticizes all the way through *Antropogeografiska*.

Tanner's articulations on a preferred Sami policy seem to form a paradox with his 'Sami-friendly' stance: the Sami protested against the Swedish policy at the time and it has definitely

fallen into disfavour among researchers. Tanner wrote from an expert's stance, which sometimes resulted in paternalist attitudes, sometimes even guilt-tripping the Sami concerning their "wrong" choices, i.e. making choices not suggested by Tanner. His categorizing gaze was at times harsh, as harsh as the Swedish policies, and he advocated a "correct" form of semi-nomadic reindeer herding, not aware of how recently it had been adopted as a Skolt Sami form of subsistence. The expert role provided in the Swedish discourse was something that attracted Tanner profoundly, and it affected his scholarly production as well. He labelled the Swedish policy "humanistic-sentimental", implying that he found the Norwegian policy to be more instrumental and less sensitive culturally. He was a most genuine "Sami friend" according to the standards of that time. The paternalism inherent in the Swedish policy was understood differently then: only later did this begin to signify the hostile undermining of Sami rationalities and sensitivities. The perceived benevolence in meetings with indigenous peoples, acting and dictating policies for and on their behalf, was part of the imperial and hygienic discourse of that time. So, too, were the aims of the stronger party, the state, and the health of the polity. These were two sides of the same coin and did not negate each other.

Among the aspects that continue to label Tanner an approachable researcher of the Sami is his choice of "humane" policies, including his thinking on race: as in politics, Tanner never took eugenic or deterministic views concerning race, but connected the race discussion to wider discussions on the viability of the folk. He ended up, famously, writing – in opposition to Norwegian scholars such as Amund Helland – that the Skolt Sami were not dying out or degenerating [7, Tanner V., p. 329]. As far as Tanner was concerned, the Sami were capable of development, but it would be best to do things his way.

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