Det milsvida skogsfolket
Skogssamernas samhälle i omvandling 1650–1800

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Akademisk avhandling

som med vederbörligt tillstånd av dekanus vid humanistiska fakulteten vid Umeå universitet för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen framläggs till offentligt försvar i Hörsal G, Humanisthuset, fredagen den 8 maj, kl. 13:00.
Avhandlingen kommer att försvaras på svenska.

Fakultetsopponent: Professor, Thomas Wallerström, Institutt for historiske studier, Norges Teknisk-Naturvitenskaplige Universitet i Trondheim (NTNU), Norge.
The boundless forest's people. The forest Sami society in transformation 1650-1800.

Abstract
This dissertation shows that the forest Sami of Arvidsjaurbyn (the forest Sami community in Arvidsjaur) were actors on an economic, social and societal level. The parish of Arvidsjaur was founded by the Swedish state in the beginning of the 17th century. The dissertation is a source study. The primary area of investigation consists of the then existing Arvidsjaurbyn in Pite lappmark (the Sami region of Pite). With regard to economic and societal changes, comparative studies have been made of the forest Sami neighbours in the south, Uhmeälbyn (the forest Sami community in Ume lappmark), and the neighbours in the north, Jokkmokk and Sjokksjokk (forest Sami communities in Lule lappmark). Arvidsjaurbyn is unique as a research object, since the community consisted of no other Sami category but the forest Sami. They had cooperated under private management with each other and communicated with the state and the church for more than one hundred years before the first settler arrived (in 1757). Traditionally the forest Sami have been dependent on three industries, namely fishing, hunting and reindeer husbandry. In the 18th century the reindeer herding came to be dominant. The forest Sami showed that they could handle important issues in the encounter with the state and the church. Forest Sami lay assessors successfully defended the Sami community’s industries at the district court sessions. The economic differences among them were not great and the internal solidarity in the Sami community was strong. Arvidsjaurbyn was a Sami community with a considerable population increase 1750–1800. From the 1740s the Swedish state’s policy vis-à-vis the forest Sami became increasingly clear; they ought to pass on to the agricultural industry. The forest Sami were, however, not convinced to adhere to this state policy. Around 1800 the administration of lappskatteland (the taxation area of each forest Sami) came to be moved from the local district court to the county administrative boards, which was a considerable adversity for the forest Sami’s development potentialities. This dissertation is one of the few that problematizes the forest Sami in Sweden. It reveals a sustainable, cooperative, resilient and innovative society.

Keywords
Keywords: Forest Sami, source study, actors on an economic, social and societal level, fishing, hunting, reindeer husbandry, reindeer herding, population increase, local district court, forest Sami lay assessors, county administrative board, Swedish state, church.