

THE DICHOTOMY OF SELFHOOD AND WELL-BEING IN THE EURO- ARCTIC BARENTS: TOWARDS A REDEMPTIVE PROJECT

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I. INTRODUCTION

Lately, well-being of inhabitants of the regions of the world has become a theme of global discourses. Well-being-discourses are considered futuristic, for they transcend the orthodoxies of developmental-discourses which have a parochial materialism in determining well-being—the latter focus on the logos of contemporary living. However, postmodern well-being-discourses have a hedonistic approach that takes seriously *inter alia* non-material aspects of life (i.e., the ethos of life). Because of the said broad-based scope of the well-being-discourses they have become popular in the regional studies circle. The said popularity is also due to the reason that the

discourse's multifariousness and broad scope gives regions the advantageousness and ability of contestation for spatial advances in the politics of spaces. Whatever be the larger function of well-being-discourses, particularly in the context of regions, they have the postmodern function of coopting regions, and the experiences of the inhabitants thereof, as shared space-times of a neoliberal global.

Apropos of the Barents region, it is also a general case of a region contesting for global recognition and participation. There is nothing extraordinary in the Barents' effort to get coopted into the neoliberal whole. However, what interests us is a uniqueness we felt about the region and its inhabitants (the representative Barents-subject), which has prompted us to rethink on the madness of global cooptation and the Barents region's uncritical acceptance of that madness to get coopted into a global whole.

This research discovers that the Barents region, though a material geography as any other global region, has metageographic characteristics. Studies

on the region have informed that routine life in the Barents transcends sheer subsistence and the inhabitants of the region have a socio-ontological existence. That is, the Barents region is a historical consciousness represented through mythologies and semiotics through which the idea of Barents has manifested.¹ The notion of well-being of the inhabitants of the region also comes from the intimate connection the inhabitants have with the nature and culture—a pride in their art, their way of living through land and animals, and their ability to combat the climatic threats. In another word, the sense of well-being does not come from outside.² It is as Jerry Day puts it on a slightly different context, it is a unique “psychology of particularistic communities.”³

Thus the well-being of the Barents-subject is internal to the self from which it has developed its ontic identity, what Carl Mika calls the

¹ Jerry Day, Voegelin, Schelling, and the Philosophy of Historical Existence 20 (2003).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

“worldedness.”⁴ Its indigeneity in that worldedness is the innate unity, the holism, of its self and the surroundings.⁵ If that being the case, what would be the effect of fracturing that holism, alienating the subject from its self in order to get the subject coopted to an altogether new reality? The Authors problematize an effort to fracture the said holism of the Barents-subject and its self in the name of neoliberalization. Thereat, the Authors capture how developmental discourses anesthetize the Barents-self by negating ontologies and forging newer realities. This Article unveils the dichotomy of the self and the other, ontological and the ontic, objectivity and subjectivity. Finally, the Authors propose a project for invigorating the Barents-self, a means to explode the falsification, recovering the Barents-self from the worldedness of a neoliberal modernity. These arguments somewhere have the undertone that the memory of a regional subject

⁴ Carl Mika, *Indigenous Education and the Metaphysics of Presence: A Worlded Philosophy* (2017).

⁵ *Id.*

repressed by a nascent global consciousness can be ignited by a regional consciousness.

In Section II, the Authors abstract the Barents-subject and demonstrate that it is trapped in a space-time to which it is unaccustomed. Therein the Barents-subject is in an oscillation between its ontological self (indigeneity) and ontic projections (modernity), ultimately yielding to the latter. In Section III, we examine two major developmental-discourses that Barents has uncritically espoused in its high ambition for representation and participation in the global. We argue that such discourses have pushed the Barents-subject into a schizophrenia of modernity—the victory of the ontic. In Section IV, drawing on the schizoanalysis of Deleuze and Guattari, the Authors propose a project to recover the Barents-self. Our project dialectically situates the self against its ontic conditions. In this scheme of things, the Barents-subject needs to neither lose itself in the madness of neoliberal modernity nor recluse itself in the solitariness of its ontology.

II. THE BARENTS-SUBJECT AND ITS REVOLTING INDIGENOUS SELFHOOD

The Barents-subject is an abstraction formulated from the essentialist qualities of “traditional people” who now inhabit the political region Barents.⁶ “Traditional people” means inhabitants of a place, who have, since times of yore, a closeness with nature and the native spaces wherein they lived, as James Clifford puts it, “they have been there.”⁷ The existence and livelihood of such people also contain a closeness to the nature. Such closeness and intimacy have also been part of the culture of traditional people.

The contemporary Barents-subject, not the one abstracted, is a far a cry from the above said essentialism of traditional people because the self-evolution of a Barents-subject has predominantly been a theme of political discourses, wherein there is a synonymy between the self-becoming of Barents-

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ James Clifford, *Varieties of Indigenous Experience: Diasporas Homelands, Sovereignities*, in *Indigenous Experience Today* (Marisol De La Cadena & Orin Starn, eds., 2007)

subject and the becoming of the socio-political Arctic and Barents. The problem such discourses create is that they represent the Barents-subject somewhat abjectly as an inhabitant of a political periphery—the Barents of the Euro-Arctic of the Arctic. That abjectness of identity is captured by Lisbeth Lindeborg. “There is a growing Arctic or Barents identity. It is based on a Century’s old shared predicaments of being a periphery, neglected by the core, as well as the fearful natural environment and the climate.”⁸ Further, the effort of the Barents-subject to overcome the abjectness of being on the periphery—that would be by moving to the core—also has a political discursiveness that all what the Barents-subject seeks for is a politicization of its regional identities through the contemporary political process of validating regional identities.⁹

⁸ Lisbeth Lindeborg, *Where the Road Begin: A Northern Renaissance around the Barents Sea: The Barents Euro-Arctic Region*, in *The Value of Arts and Culture for Regional Development* (Lisbeth Lindeborg & Lars Lindkvist, eds., 2013).

⁹ See Geir Hønneland, *Borders, Orders and Identities in the European North*, in *The NEBI Yearbook: North European and Baltic Sea Integration* 335, 336 (Lars Hedegaard and Bjarne Lindström, eds., 1999), See also S.G. Sreejith, *Subjective Environmentalism: The Climate Change Policy of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council*, in

The Authors would later argue that such identity-formation, what Turid Moldenæs would call, “narrativized identities,” has bearings on the selfhood of the Barents-subject and in its socio-political coexistence in a global order.¹⁰

As far as the self of the Barents-subject is concerned, what is captured in political discourses is not in fact the reality. Beyond the self-becoming of the Barents-subject in the socio-political contexts of the Barents region, the Barents-subject has an ontological intimacy with nature which has helped it in its coming-to-consciousness. Because of that intimacy and connection, the inhabitants of the region have indulged in livelihoods that are related to the pristine ecology of the region.¹¹ Livelihoods of inhabitants of Barents, which include fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding, have a functional

Climate Governance in the Arctic 383 (Timo Koivurova, E. Carina H. Keskitalo and Nigel Bankes, eds., 2009) (“The Barents identity is derived from a coherent focus on certain projected vulnerabilities”. *Id.* at 397).

¹⁰ Turid Moldenæs, *Reinventing a Place through the Origin Myth*, in *Place Reinvention* 165 (Torill Nyseth and Arvid Viken, eds., 2009).

¹¹ Thomas Hilder, *Sami Musical Performance and the Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe* 19 (2015).

subtlety that the ecological purity of the region is untouched.¹² Further, there is also a mystic touch to the lives of the people in the Barents region that evokes in the Barents-subject an ontological sense of beingness which puts the subject in an equanimous state of endowed self.

Such an ontologization of the Barents self is a counter narrative and response to the politicized self-hood of the Barents-subject. However, the said narrative response is not an analytical artifact; rather it is the actualization of a historical conception of the consciousness of the Barents peoples preserved in their mythical memory. Subconsciously, perhaps consciously, that actualization routinely happens in their memory and nostalgia. For instance, *Kalevala*, the Finnish epic, is the Finnish memory of beingness, which recreates in the Finno-Arctic region's peoples a sense of pride on their indigeneity, further engendering their beingness hidden in that

¹² See Timo Jokela & Maria Huhmarniemi, *Environmental Art and Community Art: Learning in Northern Places* in *International Dialogues about Visual Culture, Education and Art* 198, 202 (Teresa Eca & Rachel Mason, eds., 2008).

indigeneity. Christopher S. Browning and Pertti Joenniemi endorse this Kalevalan nostalgic tickle in an onto-political vein—“[T]he Kalevala provided the Finns with a historical self-awareness and a national project to recover the history and culture of the nation.”¹³ Their further take on the Finnish identities reassure that the tickle of nostalgia is not limited to a metaphysical actualization of their beingness in their memory. Rather it becomes a resistance to the politicization of their identities. They argue that the sense of beingness will, “reclaim national independence” to establish a “national project establishing certitude around a nationalist system of meaning and purpose and thereby bracketing out existential questions and the anxiety of meaninglessness”.¹⁴

This type of “ontological resistance” of traditional people, as in the case of Barents-subjects

¹³ Christopher S. Browning & Pertti Joenniemi, *The Ontological Significance of Karelia: Finland's Reconciliation with Losing the Promised Land*, in *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties* 154, 159 (Bahar Rumelili, ed., 2015), pp.154-71 at 159.

¹⁴ *Id.*

and elsewhere, to the politics of identities is not isolated, nor is it any longer unknown to contemporary social theory. It is happening at the very conceptual foundation of the idea of “social being,” in anthropology, as an “ontological turn,” redefining the social imaginations of being and its identity in society which is the putative reality.¹⁵ Ontology therein is seen as a means to transcend parochially constructed identities. Therefore, the recreation of indigeneity in the routine life of a Barents-subject is not a psychological slip into neurosis or a phenomenological lapse into melancholy. It is rather an invocation of the alterity of a forged reality in which the self is writhed in a subjectivity unknown to it. The onto-political mode (what Eduardo Kohn calls “ontographic”) of such an ontological resistance is in fact the most rational and

¹⁵ See Eduardo Kohn, *What An Ontological Anthropology Might Mean*, Cultural Anthropology, available at <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/463-what-an-ontological-anthropology-might-mean>; David Graeber, *Radical alterity Is Just another Way of Saying Reality*, 5 J. Ethnographic Theory 1 (2015).

transformative choice an indigenous subject can make.¹⁶

What has prompted in the imagination of the Barents-subject a resistance to the contemporary social reality? This article argues that it is a social-subject's discontent with the Foucauldian technologization of the self which has pushed the subject into a synthetic imagination to which it was totally alien. However, a subject which has fallen into the schizophrenic spell of artefactual realities, starts to forget its ontological existence and any potential it has thereof. An ontological recovery of that subject—that is teaching the subject the art of becoming-of-the-being from the unbeingness of the false-sense-of-self imposed on it by the violence of the ontic—is complex. The Authors will describe that ontological recovery and the socialization of that recovery of the self through the onto-political mode later in the paper. However, the next section focuses on the general case of the deluded self of the Barents-

¹⁶ Kohn, *supra* n. 13.

subject which is unaware of its ontological possibilities.

III. THE ALIENATED SELF OF THE BARENTS-SUBJECT: THE FALSE SENSE OF WELL-BEING IN THE BARENTS

A. The High Hopes of a Renewed Selfhood

The contemporary Barents-subject in the Barents spaces is an ambitious presence of certain “high hopes” of the region as a whole. In its high hopes, the region has adopted a governmentality in a perpetual act of balancing with a neoliberal governmentality.¹⁷ In fact, the political region deems this balancing as a socio-political becoming, transcending the social, political, and geographical exclusion to which the Barents was subject. This is a process *inter alia* inundated by modernist discourses and liberalizing narratives.¹⁸ Amid this socio-political becoming, the average Barents-subject, oddly, does not find itself

¹⁷ Monica Tennberg *et al*, *Neoliberal Governance, Sustainable Development and Local Communities in the Barents Region*, 2014 Barents Stud. 41 (2014).

¹⁸ *Id.* at 43.

ontologically alienated in the new conditions created by the governmentality, for its social presence in neoliberalism is assured in the discourses through frequent allusions to its indigeneity and community.¹⁹ This representation and visibility, to which the subject until then were unknown, created a renewed sense of self for the Barents-subject.

The antithesis the Barents-subject formulated in its Hegelian ambitions is the neoliberal self, what Jim McGuigan calls the “preferred self,” which is a typified representation of a typified social condition.²⁰ In its urge to discover itself in the self-image of the preferred self—the neoliberal subject—the Barents-subject finds itself “neurotically other-directed.”²¹ The otherness which the Barents-subject has found for its self-discovery is of a *homo socio-economicus* high on the affluence of modernity. What has prompted this kind of a search of self-image on the Barents-subject? In fact, it is the

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ Jim McGuigan, *The Neoliberal Self*, 26 *J. Current Cultural Res.* 223 (2014).

²¹ *Id.* at 230.

political and cultural narratives on the region which have constructed of the Barents-subject an image of a being imagining possibilities for a move from the local to the global. In a revolution to get represented, and thereby to become visible, the Barents-subject accepted the evolutionary logic of it being on a move from a lower historical existence to a higher stage of world-historicity.²²

This type of progressionary existence and the ambitions of the Barents-subject are reflected in the policy of “social inclusion” of the peoples of the Barents region which the Barents Euro Arctic Council (BEAC) is committed to—a move from the forsaken fringes to the Habermasian participatory centers.²³ Many of the projects aimed at the Barents-

²² For support, see Gry Paulgaard, *Place Attachment, Unemployment and Masculinity: Young Men in the High North*, in *Remapping Gender, Place and Mobility: Global Confluence and Local Particularities in Global Peripheries* 207 (Stine Thidemann Faber & Helene Pristed Nielsen, eds., 2015).

²³ *Statement by Minister Tuomioja: The Objectives of the Finnish Barents Euro Arctic Council Chairmanship*, Statement by Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, of the Objectives of the Finnish Barents Euro-Arctic Council Chairmanship 2013-2015, Tromsø on 29 October 2013, available at <http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=291383>; For the theoretical foundation of this argument, see Jürgen Habermas,

youth—which is a typical representation of the temporally present (contemporary) subject—are meant to provide the Barents-subject bouts of, if not spaces for, global experiences. For example, projects of the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) like *Young Entrepreneurs in the Barents Region* aim to fetch shares of global growth to the Barents region through the enabled participation of the Barents-youth in global developmental projects. According to the *Activity Report 2007* of BYCO, the said project aims to “[I]ncrease the knowledge about and experience of international entrepreneurial collaboration in the younger generation through specific education ... [and then] ... to give young entrepreneurs increased opportunities for international business development.”²⁴

Such participation provides to the representative Barents-subject (the Barents-youth in this case) an

Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy (1996).

²⁴ Activity Report 2007, Barents Youth Cooperation Office, *available at* http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Report_Working_Group_Youth_Policy_2007.pdf

inside-out view into a thriving cosmopolitan modernity which lies outside its indigenous selfhood. The perspective the subject thus gets through the many narratives on development and sustainability has the hope of a promise, which acts on the Barents-subject as the projections of modernity and illusions of well-being, pushing the subject to abjectly haunt its own self, its own indigeneity, and its own identity. The resulting internal churn invites newer imaginations to break free from its indigenous identity which appears to the subject far inferior in comparison with the global perspective it has discursively acquired.

B. Becoming Neoliberal: The Capability Approach and the Barents-Subject

In the neoliberal becoming of the Barents-subject neoliberalism is not an adversative force. Rather becoming neoliberal is a participation in the discursiveness of modernity and exploring possibilities to cohabit on the folds of modernist times and on the fringes of a fast-modernizing space.

Therefore, unlike other impositions, neoliberalism is sensitive to the needs of the subjects on which it imposes itself (though such an imposition happens phenomenologically as a self-imposition through the subject itself).

Undisputedly, neoliberalism has a unique rationality of fairness to it—one may call it a modernist democratic sensitivity! Neoliberalism believes in not disadvantaging anyone on the basis of arbitrary impositions. Rather it enables people to have the opportunity to overcome the impositional disadvantage through effective participation and representation. This type of a sensitivity comes from the meta-temporal awareness of neoliberalism that modernity as a temporality *per se* is asymmetrical, which is prone to causing inequitable distribution and questionable outcomes.

However, the said unevenness of the neoliberal modernity is a result of the Foucauldian power-inevitability, for society is propelled by social kinetic forces of power which has no escape velocity. That is to say, the space-time of neoliberal modernity has

no formula to convert the power permeation into anything non-power. Also there is simply no inside-out view from power to look at social considerations and constituents other than power, if any. On balance, as an abstraction of power, neoliberalism does not have imaginations for self-criticism and as an actualization of power, neoliberalism does not have possibilities for alternatives; rather neoliberalism has another kind of imagination—it makes participation of everyone possible through enablement. Perhaps it is through the critical roads leading to neoliberalism that the above said democratic sensitivity entered neoliberalism; rather than it being organic to neoliberalism.²⁵ One critique that has played a big role in making neoliberalism democratically sensitive is Amartya Sen’s capability approach. Capability approach’s commitment to freedom and participation (in fact, freedom for participation), has prompted people to critically

²⁵ See generally Lars Pålsson Syll, *Amartya Sen on Neoliberalism*, available at <https://larspsyll.files.wordpress.com/2011/03/amartya-sen-on-neo-liberalism.pdf>

concede to neoliberalism and coopted (if not mediated) it into their system of self-becoming.

The Barents people's participation in neoliberalism is also propelled by the capability approach. The various projects initiated under the aegis of BEAC has explored the constitutive possibilities of capability approach by hinging on the regional advantageousness of the Barents people and their essentialist potential. Such projects are meant to ensure and enhance the well-being of the Barents people. The approach and working of two such projects—Projects on Sustainable Mining and Projects on Sustainable Reindeer Herding—are examined below, providing how the capability approach works through enabling Barents people to participate in neoliberal realities. It is in fact a positive orientation of the Barents people towards their involvement in neoliberal social production.

1. Projects on Sustainable Mining in the Barents

As mentioned above, the Barents region has a subtle ecosystem and pristine natural environment. Hence the region is highly vulnerable to destruction if hard activities like mining are conducted therein. Barents, however, is rich in minerals like nickel, iron, ore etc. and resources like oil and natural gas, which offers high prospects for the development of the region.²⁶ During the Chairmanship of Finland (2013-15) in the BEAC, the Council recognized the need to promote sustainable mining and thereby to contribute to overall economic development of the region.²⁷ However, the BEAC had to surmount the local concerns prompted by the environmental and social costs related to mining.

²⁶ *Mining and Mineral Resources in the Barents Region*, Barents Media Guide, available at <http://www.barentsinfo.org/Guide/facts/mining>

²⁷ *The Finnish Chairmanship in the Barents Euro Arctic Council 2013-15*, ACSAO-CA02 Yellowknife / Mar 2014, available at https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/bitstream/handle/11374/1303/OTHER_BEAC_Doc02_Finnish_Chairmanship_Programme_AC_SAO_CA02.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

In a conference held in Rovaniemi, Finland on 22 to 25 April 2013 by the Working Group on Environment of the BEAC, the possibilities of sustainable mining was explored recognizing that “the natural resources of the Barents region are of strategic importance.”²⁸ The conference further recognized that while mining offers immense development for exports, Research and Development (R&D), employment, and income tax, it also poses threats to the Barents environment and nature-based livelihood of the indigenous population, which is in addition to the overall social cost and externalities mining may have on the Barents people.²⁹ However, on a balance the benefits were found to outweigh the costs. The conference, accordingly, decided to continue with sustainable mining of the region by “identifying specific common interest and sharing best practices.”³⁰

²⁸ *Concept Note on Common Challenges of the Conference on best Environmental Practices in the Mining Sector in the Barents Region*, Best Environmental Practices in the Mining Sector in the Barents Region 67 (2014).

²⁹ *Id.* at 68.

³⁰ *Id.* at 76.

Subsequently an enabling project, Sustainable Mining, Local Communities, and Environmental Regulation in the Kolarctic Area (SUMILCERE) under the aegis of Kolarctic CBC 2014-2020, a European Union (EU) initiative to enhance cross-border cooperation across the EU external borders, was launched by a consortium led by the University of Lapland. The enabling that the project aimed for has the capability approach for achieving development through creating opportunities for participation as “free and sustainable agents.”³¹ The project aims to create conditions for the Barents-subject to have free agency in participation in the formation of the social rationality in which it has to find its identity.³² Such a willing participation is possible only through the proper “coordination of the whole social structure.”³³ To this end, the project has

³¹ *Widodo D. Pramono and John Woltjer, Capability Approach for Well-being Evaluation: A Case Study in Magelang Regency, Central Java, Indonesia, available at*

http://www.regionalstudies.org/uploads/R._Widodo_D._Pramono.pdf
³² *Id.* at 2.

³³ *Implementing Sustainable Mining in the European High North, Kolarctic CBC Cross-Border Cooperation, available at*
<https://www.ulapland.fi/loader.aspx?id=e929e742-7486-4461-b979-abb1d2689db2>

recommended building a social sustainability framework to actualize the developmental possibilities of mining in the social rationality of the region as well as help the Barents-subject in integrating itself into the said social rationality.

From a developmental perspective, it is always the essentialist factors that pose challenges to development, which was also in fact the case with mining in the Barents, e.g., concerns apropos of mining were related to the destruction of natural environment, deprivation of participation for local communities, and breach of cultural rights.³⁴ Such concerns engender in the people of the region a sense of social disengagement and extrication. Capability approach works against such disengagement and extrication, building a renewed sense of involvement in social activities. Particularly in the case of regions, capability approach works through developmental measures such as evaluation of development

³⁴ Kai Kokko, et al., *Sustainable Mining, Local Communities and Environmental Regulation*, 2 Barents Stud. 51, 55 (2015). See also Leena Suopajärvi et al., *Social Sustainability in Northern Mining Communities: A Study of European North and Northwest Russia*, 47 RESOURCES POL'Y, 61 (2016).

whereby the “individual [becomes] the end of development goals.”³⁵

Mindful of the said concerns and their redressal, SUMILCERE recommended measures like evaluation of possible environmental harms on the basis of which the mining license would be granted.³⁶ The said licensing system will be institutionally path dependent and effectuated *inter alia* through public participation, creating both social legitimacy and public confidence apropos of the mining operations.³⁷ At the deployment phase of mining, the public consultation (and participation thereof) addresses local social concerns, whereas at the project implementation phase the narratives on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Social Impact Assessment (SIA)—which reach the local communities through local legislations—assuages the concerns of the people of the Barents.³⁸ Their

³⁵ Pramono & Woltjer, *supra* n. 29 at 2.

³⁶ Kokko et al, *supra* n. 32.

³⁷ *Id.* at 57; Maria Pettersson et al, *License to Mine: A Comparison of the Scope of the Environmental Assessment in Sweden, Finland and Russia*, 6 Natural Resources 237 (2015).

³⁸ See Timo Koivurova et al., *Social License to Operate: A Relevant Term in Northern European Mining*, 38 Polar Geography 194 (2015).

sense of participation is furthered by schemes like “social license to operate” and community participation in the economic development of the region.³⁹

The above said measures aim at enabling the local community through participation in planning and evaluation, and in the promotion of public good. In fact, the sense of well-being of the Barents people is reimagined and redefined in view of their freedom of performance on the basis of capabilities available to them. The Barents-subject is prompted to self-discover and self-perfect in the image of its newly found opportunities and the capability to partake in those opportunities, as G.A. Cohen captures the self-becoming of a subject through capability approach. “My will is how I would make things go. If they go that way without my intervention, then, except in special cases, I will unambivalently welcome that.”⁴⁰

See also Ole Kristian Fauchald, *Regulating Environmental Impacts of Mining in Norway*, 1 *Nordic Env't L. J.* 53 (2014).

³⁹ Kokko et al, *supra* n. 32.

⁴⁰ G.A. Cohen, *On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice, and Other Essays in Political Philosophy* 79 (2011).

Yet, what if the subject arrives at an ambivalence about its own selfhood and the selfhood it has welcomed unambivalently? If the subject has a deep presence and participation in neoliberal spatio-temporality, it is less likely to yield to the ontological pull of its indigenous self, for it feels capable, participating in the collective willing and acting of the society in which it is deeply and meaningfully situated.

2. Projects on Sustainable Reindeer Herding in the Barents

While reindeer herding remains the primary means of livelihood in the Barents region, in the waves of modernity— apropos of the Barents, modernity is “external influences and change”—it has been under severe threat.⁴¹ Reindeer herding is not a material wherewithal for the Barents people; rather it is a complex “interplay of animals, land and human activities.”⁴² In fact, all the said three factors

⁴¹ Arctic Council, Sustainable Reindeer Husbandry (2002).

⁴² Inger Marie G. Eira et al., *The Challenges of Arctic Reindeer Herding: The Interface between Reindeer Herders' Traditional*

are themes of a discourse on the Barents engagement with reindeer herding. The said discourse is a discursivity *inter alia* of the physiology (including the metabolism) of the reindeer, the physiology that informs that it is through the reindeer that the people of the Barents actualize the ecological possibilities of the region. The Barents is in fact the reindeer's habitat, for the region exists through the spatio-temporality of the reindeer to which the herders and the rest of the populace are partakers.⁴³

Since the Barents herders live on and live through the reindeer, reindeer herding is “a way” and “an art” of living in the region.⁴⁴ Such an art includes strategies for adaptation and resilience, effective land use for herding, resonance, etc.⁴⁵ Further, being an

Knowledge and Modern Understanding of the Ecology, Economy, Sociology and Management of Sami Reindeer Herding, available at http://library.arcticportal.org/550/1/Eira_127801.pdf

⁴³ *Id.* at 7.

⁴⁴ See generally David Bunikowski, *Sámi Reindeer Husbandry as a Way of Life: On Culture, Philosophy, Cosmology, and Law*, available at

https://www.academia.edu/22258623/S%C3%A1mi_reindeer_husbandry_as_a_way_of_life_on_culture_philosophy_cosmology_and_law

⁴⁵ See generally Ealat Project, *Reindeer Herding, Traditional Knowledge and Adaptation to Climate Change and Loss of Grazing Land*, Arctic Council, 2010.

art of living, reindeer herding also creates a sense of community and indigeneity among the herders through certain pastoral semiotics, e.g., the use of common indigenous terminologies of herding, common herders' folklores, herding-pastimes, etc. In sum, the reindeer herding, as the art of living of the people of the region, plays a big role in the identity formation of the indigenous Barents-subject, for reindeer herding is culturally poised in the Barents consciousness. Quite appropriately, an Arctic Council report affirms that reindeer herding in fact helps in the engendering of a Northern identity:

The reindeer husbandry communities of the Circumpolar north are guided by three cultural constructs within which they seek to: (1) Control their own destiny, (2) Maintaining their cultural identity, and (3) Be able to live close to and rely on nature for their livelihood and wellbeing.⁴⁶

However, reindeer herding came under severe threat as the region moved into the spatio-temporality of modernity. Such threats did not come from one

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 5

single source; they came from multifarious sources, though they are part of the larger d/evolution to modernity. For example, on one hand, inappropriate land use for infrastructural development rendered the pasture land unusable for reindeer's grazing as remaining pastures became congested, a situation which Kristina Labba refers to as the "reduction in reindeer carrying capacity."⁴⁷ On the other hand, climate change and the resulting melting ice cause *inter alia* the reindeer to "lose access to their feed," Stefan Kirchner and Vanessa M. Frese illustrate the phenomenon. "When [...] a layer of ice has formed on the otherwise soft blanket of snow over their food, the reindeer are not able to access the lichen hidden underneath."⁴⁸

In their totality, the above said phenomena threaten reindeer herding in the Barents regions,

⁴⁷ E. Carina H. Keskitalo, *Climate Change and Globalization in the Arctic: An Integrated Approach to Vulnerability Assessment* 120 (2008); Kristina Labba, *The Legal Organization of Sami Reindeer Herding and the Role of the Siida*, in *Indigenous Rights in Scandinavia* (Christina Allard & Susann Funderud Skogvang, eds., 2016).

⁴⁸ Stefan Kirchner & Vanessa M. Frese, *Sustainable Indigenous Reindeer Herding as a Human Right*, 15 *Laws* (2016).

further threatening the socio-existential imagination the people of the region have through the reindeer. In other words, the sense of well-being of the people of the region, which is a participation in the wellness of the reindeer, is challenged in a neoliberal modernity. Loss of the said imagination prompts the younger generation to think beyond indigenous means of livelihoods, searching for their Barents identity in newer “spaces of capability.”⁴⁹

The strangeness of the self in newer surroundings prompts the self for a redemption, and consequently it opens itself for accepting newer recognitions. In a Ricoeurian sense, strangeness of the Barents-subject in a neoliberal temporality is the separation of *ipse* and *idem*, and the self’s acceptance for a voluntary mutation.⁵⁰

As part of exploring capabilities to enhance the well-being in Barents, the Arctic Council initiated a

⁴⁹ Alan Kirman & Miriam Teschl, *Searching for Identity in the Capability Space*, 13 J. Economic Methodology 299 (2007). See also *Climate Change Challenges Reindeer Husbandry*, UEF Bulletin 2017, available at <https://www.uef.fi/en/web/uef-bulletin/reindeer-husbandry>

⁵⁰ See generally Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (1992).

project on 1 October 2002 on sustainable reindeer husbandry.⁵¹ The project, through achieving sustainable reindeer herding, *inter alia* aims to provide “opportunities to protect and enhance the environment and the economies, culture and health of indigenous communities and of other inhabitants of the Arctic.”⁵² The project recommended effective “management” of reindeer husbandry. The proposal was in fact to integrate indigenous reindeer herding knowledge to the knowledge (discourse) on sustainability. Such a trans-localization is proposed to be made possible through gaining the necessary competence and capability to access and contest in the global market.⁵³ Capability in the context of sustainable reindeer herding was represented as newer possibilities of herding through newer imaginations, a conceptual framework aiming revolutionary outcomes which Janne Hukkinen calls “alternative sustainability scenarios.”⁵⁴ That is,

⁵¹ Arctic Council, *supra* n. 39.

⁵² *Id.* at 11.

⁵³ *Id.* at 157.

⁵⁴ Janne Hukkinen, *Sustainability Scenarios as Interpretative Frameworks for Indicators of Human-Environment Interaction*, in

capability is not understood in terms of what the individual or community is capable of at the moment, but in terms of possibilities—“real opportunities”—for the social self-becoming of the individual or community. This new ethic of development is best evidenced by the Finnish approach by which the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MOAF) of Finland “maintains a set of indicators of reindeer management.” These indicators explore opportunities for reindeer herding at the global level by measuring “the productivity of reindeer herding population, the ecological carrying capacity of reindeer herding region, the significance of reindeer management for the regional economy, the profitability of reindeer management, and the quality of reindeer related products.”⁵⁵ However, the MOAF’s approach is not limited to the new imagination of enhancing capability in reindeer herding. It also has the custom-approach to capability, which is of ensuring effective

Sustainable Development Indicators in Ecological Economics 291, 293 (Philip Lawn, ed., 2006).

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 297.

participation by developing participatory scenarios, as Hukkinen narrates the strategies.

The participatory scenarios were developed during a [three]-year EU-funded research project entitled RENMAN (The challenges of modernity for reindeer management: integration and sustainable development in Europe's subarctic and boreal regions). The overall thrust of the RENMAN project was to 'integrate the indigenous people in an integrative study between politics and science' with the specific objectives of 'participatory assessment and systems analysis of different reindeer management regimes', and the development of 'integrative scenarios and management plans for future sustainability.'⁵⁶

While sustainable reindeer herding may trans-localize and globalize reindeer herding, integrating the region and its peoples into a larger whole, the Barents self becomes prey to the politics of indigeneity. In that politics the indigeneity of the subject is re-conceptualized through semantic

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 302.

equivocations, reassuring the subject that it has a representation and participation in the neoliberal. However, as Sita Venkateswar, *et al* put it, indigeneity of a subject or peoples remains historically and ontologically self-constituted regardless of what theories of transformation and development have turned it to become.⁵⁷ The case of Barents indigeneity and the selfhood of its subject is no different.

The two projects described above are meant to enable the people of the Barents to effectively participate in the fast globalizing neoliberal world. The capability approach adopted for that purpose did ensure that such participation is based on the best utilization of the peoples' as well as the region's potential, giving them a sense of participation and enablement. However, the apolitical capability approach may be, it is open for being used as a means for the naturalization of the global ambitions of

⁵⁷ Sita Venkateswar et al., *Introduction*, in *The Politics of Indigeneity: Dialogues and Reflections on Indigenous Activism* (Sita Venkateswar & Emma Hughes, eds., 2011).

modernism.⁵⁸ The case of the Barents was also a similar politicization of the capability approach whereby the Barents-subject was brought under the semantic rubric of sustainability and development to submit its selfhood to the reformative ambitions of neoliberalism. Robbie Shilliam puts the scenario persuasively that the self-becoming of the Barents-subject in modernity is akin to “baptizing the sufferers as developmental individuals whose freedoms must be provided for by and understood in terms of profane market mechanisms.”⁵⁹

Elsewhere in the Article, the Authors spoke about the Barents-subject’s ontological resistance to the politicization of its identities. That resistance is naturally given in the deluded self of the Barents-subject as an unfulfillment alongside a nostalgic longing for an absent identity. Such a subject writhes in the discomfort of the newly imposed roles and identities. Whilst the semantic subterfuges of the

⁵⁸ Elise Klein, *Developing Minds: Psychology, Neoliberalism and Power* 10 (2017).

⁵⁹ Robbie Shilliam, *Redemption from Development: Amartya Sen, Rastafari, and Promises of Freedom*, 15 *Postcolonial Stud.* 331, 345 (2012).

narrations on their new roles anesthetizes many of the subjects, in some of them, especially in those who have an ontological disposition, the self tries to recover the foundations of its actuality. Below we make a general case for such a recovery.

IV. THE PROJECT OF RECOVERING THE SELF

In philosophical terms, the Barents-subject in neoliberality (the neoliberal temporality) has become a desiring subject. Though the desire is not precisely a Deleuzoguattarian desire to become a repressed, it is a desire to be like an ideal someone (other) in a schizophrenic somewhere.⁶⁰ That “someone” is a “mechonic”—a post-social person who is multiple and differentiated enterprise in oneself—and that “somewhere” is the neoliberal market out there. Indeed, the neoliberality has the potential to transform subjects of the yore (traditional people) to desire for participation in the “acceleration” towards

⁶⁰ See generally Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1983).

markets.⁶¹ It is this madness of otherness and the politicization and formalization of that madness by neoliberalism that Bruno Latour puts as the creation of “the irresistible feeling of belief” in a self-referential real that acts on the ontology of the subject.⁶²

There are many facilitations for subjects to get accelerated to newer identities and existence—they are the discourses on development. Discourses are constructions (forges) of subjectivities to achieve shared identities. In fact, discourses in modernity forge subjectivities as if they are conceptions of development and by their rhetorical power (whatever that may mean) they turn the subjectivities into shared understandings of such notions. Therefore, in the politics of discourse, what is otherwise a process of utter normalization of subjectivities become a

⁶¹ On acceleration, See Benjamin Noys, *The Grammar of Neoliberalism*, available at https://www.academia.edu/327085/The_Grammar_of_Neoliberalism
⁶² Bruno Latour & Michel Callon, ‘*Thou Shall not Calculate!*’: Or *How to Symmetricalize Gift and Capital*, available at <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/downloads/P-71%20CAPITALISME-MAUSS-GB.pdf>; See also Noys, *supra* n 59.

governmentality which is a “special stratum of discourses and practices of knowledge and power.”⁶³

In modernity, the Barents-subject, as many other social-subjects of yore, lives in a reality semanticized through the said type of discourses. It (the Barents-subject) has become schizophrenic in the snare of modernity which has theatricalized the existential routines of the Barents-subject, engendering in it a sense of archaism about its ontological self (indigeneity) and a sense of modishness about its newer ontic projection (neoliberal opulence). Perfidious to itself, the Barents-subject “renaturalized” itself in its own self-image of “mechic assemblages.”⁶⁴

Below we speak about redemptive possibilities for the Barents-subject. By redemption, we do not mean to attempt to annihilate or falsify the space-time of modernity, which we believe would be the self-destruction of sociality and the Barents-subject

⁶³ Călin Cotoi, *Neoliberalism: A Foucauldian Perspective*, Int’l Rev. Social Res. 109, 111 (2011).

⁶⁴ David Shearman & Sauer-Thompson, *Green or Gone: Health, Ecology, Plagues, Green and Our Future* 196 (1998).

present therein. Rather, we imagine new coordinates that would help the Barents-subject gain access to its subjective-system, that is, the Barents-self's historicizing as a traditional people (the historical self) will eclipse its schizophrenic worldhood of neoliberality (modernist self). The project we propose only aims to recover the “ontological” of the Barents-subject so as to enable the subject by disengaging it from the desire to be the someone in somewhere.

Before the authors explain this project, they would like to make a caveat that their construction of the Barents-subject as a traditional people has an essentialist touch. Hence, their construction runs the risk of being pushed into the wrong variations of essentialism and wrong categories of identity politics. However, as essentialist as their postulations may be, it is the Aristotelean “ontological essentialism,” the best illustration of which is Luce Irigaray's conceptualizing of womanhood as the

divinity of women.⁶⁵ In the same vein, when the authors argue that the Barents-subject has an indigenous selfhood, the authors construct indigeneity not in the sense of organic essentialism, but indigeneity is constructed as an external projection of the ontology of the Barents-subject. In other words, indigeneity and the seeming organic essentialism is in fact the space-time—an ontic projection, a certain worldly experience—of a universal-subject. The Barents is thus a consciousness rather than an average reality that needs improvement to better realities (like neoliberalism). The Barents-experience is a subjectivity of the universal-self. The Barents-experience is the universal-self experiencing its ontology through a projected reality.

Thus, the Barents-subject is emplaced in a closed space wherein experience is singularized (to the experience of mobilizing capital) and imagination is

⁶⁵ Morny Joy, *Divine Love: Luce Irigaray, Women, Gender and Religion* (2006).

“striated” (to the imagination of development).⁶⁶ For subjects in such a closedness—the schizophrenia of modernity—Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari propose the discovery of and transition to smooth spaces which are in fact possibilities of performativity.⁶⁷ However, the subject in schizophrenia needs a flight—a “voyage”—to smooth spaces from its mind-body incarcerated in the striated space-time. By way of the voyage of the Barents-subject to the smooth spaces, the authors propose a transposition, a nostalgic inversion into experiences of yore. However, by proposing a nostalgic transposal the authors do not intend to romanticize the Barents-subject, prompting them to become idle subjects reveling in the bliss of the bygone. Rather, they understand the involvement of the Barents-subject in the neoliberal modernity. The Barents-subject is in a striated space-time and in relations of mobility that crisscross its space. Hence, we attempt to add a fillip to the search of the identity

⁶⁶ Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* xiii. (1987).

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 482.

of the temporally discomforted subject—which is its ontological resistance to the untemporality of neoliberalism—facilitating the subject to reclaim its cognitively stored ontological experiences, further creating smooth spaces of performative possibilities.

Though the authors say they propose the project, in fact they only expand, contextualize, and theorize the silent Barents effort to reclaim their ontology and rediscover their identity. This is for the reason that there is an ontological resistance already existing in the Barents, which is a resistance by the subjects to reclaim their ontological identity. The first of such resistance is a premeditated and conscious return to the subject's own ontology which is the indigenous experiences of the historical Barents-subject which is a Hegelian universal individual writ small. A striking illustration of the said return-to-ontology is the Kalevala Project.

Originally, the Kalevala Project—an institutionalized collecting and promoting of the Finnish Epic, *Kalevala*—was meant to foster nationalism and nationhood. It is the project from

which the “Finnish nationalist movement sought inspiration in its fight for independence.”⁶⁸ Later on, the Kalevala Project aimed to depoliticize the Finnish identity, by rejecting the legitimacy of the politically and strategically created identities, forging a separation between the nation and the state.⁶⁹ In modernity, the Kalevala Project turned to nation-building through cultural re-construction. The fundamental tenet of the Project is that a true national sprit is possible only if “the nation remained in touch with its ancient heroic/mythic past.”⁷⁰ However, the approach of Project Kalevala was not to essentialistically situate “Finnishness.”⁷¹ Instead, the project has identified Finnish/Northern essence as the Northern subject’s ability to adapt to climatic challenges, in its “high art,” in its indigenous values, and in its numinous connection with nature.⁷² It is on

⁶⁸ Eirikur Bergmann, *Nordic Nationalism and Right Wing Populist Politics: Imperial Relationships and National Sentiments* 75 (2015).

⁶⁹ *Id.*

⁷⁰ Ilona Salomaa, *‘I Devote Myself to the Fatherland’: Finnish Folklore, Patriotic Nationalism, Racial Ideology*, in *Finland’s Holocaust: Silences of History* (Simo Muir & Hana Worthen, eds., 2013).

⁷¹ *Id.*

⁷² *Id.*

the basis of a contemplation of its own historical abilities and values that the Project seeks to construct Finnish identity. What needs to bear in mind is that there is no historical materialism in the Project's deduction of Finnishness, for what the Project deems as historical abilities, as depicted in Kalevala, are not the Northern subject's responses to material conditions, they are but a universal subject's dialectic interaction with its ontic realities.

What, however, interests us in the Kalevala Project is the possibilities the ontological return (on ontological dialogue) it offers. An ontological takeover will have the Barents-subject irrelevant in the ontic realities of neoliberal modernity, though. But when ontological interaction provides dialectical possibilities with the ontic modernity, the Project becomes relevant for contemporary Barents-subject.

Interestingly, the ontological and the ontic are finely poised for a dialectic, the Deleuzoguattarian dialectic of the smooth and striated space-time, respectively. Deleuze and Guattari call the dialectic of smooth and striated space-time a "musical model,"

for the sonorous rhythm the interaction of spaces create, that is, they form a “set of simple oppositions and complex differences, as well as reciprocal non-symmetrical correlations, between smooth and striated space” which can capture the “abstract distinction at the same time as concrete mixes.”⁷³ One occupies the smooth space-time (ontology) without an actual sense of participation, whereas in striated space-time (ontic/neoliberality) one participates in order to occupy the spaces.⁷⁴ That means, in the latter there is a deep involvement and participation—active presence—whereas the former is a memory of the experience of the ontological essentialism of the subject. Deleuze and Guattari do not set any rules for the interplay of the smooth and striated space-time, they can occur regularly or irregularly, continuously or intermittently, and in small or big intensity.⁷⁵

In the Barents, the Kalevala Project facilitates this type of interplay wherein the ontological

⁷³ Deleuze & Guattari, *supra* n. 65 at 477.

⁷⁴ *Id.*

⁷⁵ *Id.* at 477, 478.

subjecthood intercepts the ontic identity of the Barents-subject. The interception is an invitation for the subject in striated spaces and striated identities to encounter its ontological otherness (the memory of subjecthood) in the smooth spaces of ontological possibilities and vice versa. It is a dialectic of identity against subjecthood. It is a dialectic of liberal ambitions against historical memory. In actual fact, the said interception happens through interlocalization of the Barents-subject through cultural exchanges under BEAC.

Many of the activities under the aegis of BEAC, of late, have the effect of evoking the sense of Barents among the Barents-subjects, e.g. the homestays, folklore festivals, etc. help the subject overcome the striation of neoliberal modernity. The unchecked horizontal extension of the subject to neoliberal spaces can be dialectically tested by the subject itself by participating in or negating its ontology. More often than not the Barents-subject uncritically yield to the neoliberal expansion because of the disproportionate availability of information

apropos of the possibilities in the Barents region and in the neoliberal market.⁷⁶ Disproportional information availability creates an “expectation gap” between dreams and realities—“there is not necessarily any correspondence between what individuals expect out of life and what they are really capable of achieving.”⁷⁷ Hence, to even out the information availability and help the Barents-subject to juxtapose its ontological memory and ontic existence, BEAC aims to enhance the sense of Barents culture and experiences of local living environment of the Barents-subject.⁷⁸ The ACU Project that aims to provide a single Barents Culture Window under the aegis of the Faculty of Arts and Designs, University of Lapland is an initiative in the above said lines. Successful implementation of the project will have the Barents-subject digitalized information on Barents art, history, culture, and

⁷⁶ *A Summary and Compilation of Activities During 2006-2007*, Finnish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Youth Policy, available at https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Working_Group_Youth_Policy_Finnish_Chairmanship_report_2005-2007.pdf, p.16.

⁷⁷ *Id.*

⁷⁸ *Id.*

living, which are in addition to tools like the Barents multicultural calendar, an image database of major Barents events, etc.⁷⁹

A deeper engagement with culture and tradition will help the Barents-subject emplaced in striated space-time to traverse to the smoothness of “continuous variations” and differentiations, setting a conversation within the self of the subject between the experiences of striated and smooth space-time.⁸⁰ It is the dialectic of the self—of the universal subject’s particular experience of space-time (the Barents-self) and the particular subject’s universal experience of global space-time (the neoliberal self).

V. CONCLUSION

It is our argument that the desire of the regions to participate in the politics of spaces is overrated. Global discourses have interpolated into the

⁷⁹ *Preliminary Plan*, Gateway to Barents Culture Window, available at www.rovaniemi.fi/loader.aspx?id=0e799c91-4dab-4b00-9900-c33019eb6695

⁸⁰ “Continuous variation” is, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the experience of smoothness in striated spaces. See Deleuze and Guattari, *supra* note 65.

subjects' imagination that they are made to reimagine their region as a material space contenting for a place in the hierarchy of spaces. The region, in actual fact, is the collective consciousness of the subjects—the ontology, myths, culture, and livelihood of the subject are the constituents of that consciousness. The regional consciousness is a unified praxis of all the above said constituents. However, in total disregard to the above said fact, the forces of modernity have re-characterized the region which has led to the essentialization of the regional identity (and to some extent the commoditization of regional qualities), costing the subject its possibilities to actualize its universal ontology.

As a return to the true regional consciousness of the Barents-subject, we envisaged a project, which is in fact the colligating of many disorganized efforts in the Barents to recover the region's lost self. Our systematizing those efforts under a redemptive framework achieves two things. First, it creates conditions for the onto-historical memory of the Barents-subject to rise up from the

[un]consciousness of neoliberal modernity. Second, it gives a dialectical nature to the otherwise disorganized resistance of the Barents-subject to a neoliberal untemporality. Within the redemptive framework, the ontologically informed self of the Barents-subject, through dialectic means, explicates the neoliberal otherness, rising to the totality of the ontological memory and ontic experiences.