Personhood and religious change among the Saami: reviewing historical texts

MA- thesis in the Study of Religions
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preface to studying Saami indigenous religion

Saami religious history has interested me for some time now, and many people have posed the question which is usually the hardest to answer: why? Indeed, why choose a subject that deals with a cultural setting that is so different from our own, and also different from contemporary Saami culture? The reasons are numerous and complex and even I myself can’t address them in full, suffice to say that a general interest in both indigenous issues and the ecology of religion combined with a long tradition of research in Finno-Ugric cultures in the University of Helsinki have contributed to my interest in the subject. In addition, the domestic political history of colonialism has only recently begun to be understood in Finland even though these issues have already been discussed in Norway and Sweden for a longer period of time. I believe that religion was a tool for the political purposes of the colonizing powers in late medieval Saami areas and my interest lies in finding out how deeply religious change affected the rest of Saami life.

Also a global interest in the environmental and cultural aspects of Arctic peoples has resulted in a shift of focus and attention that make the Arctic interesting once more, and my thesis is a continuation of this rise in interest towards indigenous peoples and their ways of perceiving the world. In the Finnish context, for example mining industry, forest industry, tourism and other issues concerning land and water use and rights have sparked an ongoing discussion about indigenous issues concerning the Saami. The signing of International Labor Organization’s convention no. 169, which is a “legally binding international instrument open to ratification, which deals specifically with the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples”\(^1\), has been discussed on many occasions in Finland. The topics of this thesis partly overlap this discussion, even though the focus is on historical events. In addition, the information in school books on the Saami has been outdated and meager, resulting in false attitudes and ignorance in worst cases. These are some of the issues that make the research of Saami history important even today, even though this thesis is not meant to be political in its focus.

In addition to the scholarly and political issues there are of course more

\(^1\) This characterization is taken from the ILO internet page:
http://www.ilo.int/indigenous/Conventions/no169/lang--en/index.htm
personal reasons that have sparked my interest in Saami religion, and it is perhaps necessary to elaborate these. The first course I attended in the University of Helsinki was the last one by then soon-to-be professor emeritus and ‘grand old man’ of religious studies in Finland, Juha Pentikäinen. It dealt with shamanism and the religious history of the Finns and the Saami people before modern times. It would not be inaccurate to say that I am writing this thesis because of the interest invoked in me by this particular series of lectures and readings, without forgetting the interesting lectures and courses on Saami religion given by Risto Pulkkinen and Vesa Matteo Piludu as well as other courses in Saami studies I have since attended in my home university.

Being a rather enthusiastic fisherman and thus a regular visitor to Lapland, I could even admit to experiencing a certain holiness in nature one could call awe or even a feeling of insignificance before the majestic views, age-old streams and mountains of Northern Lapland. The people whose writings and history I have decided to study probably also experienced similar feelings that are shared by many Saami and non-Saami even today. There exists a word in the Finnish language for someone with a pathological obsession for Lapland: *lapinhullu*. I proudly admit to being one of these ‘Lapland-loonies’.

After a period of taking scholarly interest in various other religious traditions, studying Saami indigenous religion began to feel more and more relevant for me as my studies progressed. Simultaneously, my interest in different theoretical standpoints and research paradigms grew as I went through internal struggles concerning epistemology and the nature of scientific knowledge. As my knowledge and interest in religious studies and social and cultural anthropological research grew, together with the progress in my studies, I got more involved in studying Saami religion. Being a fisherman myself, I got interested in the beliefs and related practices concerning fishing and hunting in particular. This work, then, is a consequence of my personal and scholarly interests combined with a tradition of research at my home university in issues concerning Saami religious tradition.

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2 Terms ‘religion’ and ‘indigenous religion’ are further discussed in chapter 2.2.
1.2. Soup with a fork?

While working on the first chapters you are now reading I used to sit in an old reading room next to a friend, also a student of religion. He had just turned his thesis in and read Keith Basso’s extraordinary book *Wisdom Sits in Places* for his last exam in social and cultural anthropology, while I was trying to gather information about the conversion process of the Saami people. We went for a lunch break together and began a conversation on the most discussed and difficult issues of our common enterprise: objectivity and subjectivity. We talked about the way in which most ethnographers of religious phenomena, at least before the latter part of the twentieth century, were bound to see the ‘strange other’ in terms of their own concepts of humanity, society and religion. They usually translated native concepts into their own religious and cultural language, almost exclusively that of Western Christianity. They would go on presenting their findings, translations, theories and interpretations to an academic world dominated by white men from a Western, upper class background.

We also discussed how Basso’s book and its vivid characters could, at their best, help the reader to grasp a much deeper spiritual connection to the environment and landscape than that of their own. This could perhaps result in seeing the whole religious and spiritual spheres of native thought in a new way, creating a process or experience the hermeneutic tradition of religious studies might label as ‘understanding’. Entangled in this thought-provoking conversation, I took a nice meal of pork soup with extra chili for lunch and realized that I couldn't eat my soup with the fork I had taken out of old custom (I seldom eat soup at lunchtime). The analogy struck me: how can I eat soup with a fork? It is true that some of the bits of a soup are edible by fork, and I might get my stomach full, but the whole “idea” of a soup gets completely lost if it is eaten with a fork. The difficulty of my task, and that of other students of indigenous Saami religion, was that I would be trying to understand what a soup was by only eating it with a fork. To grasp a more truthful and holistic picture of the Saami who lived between two religions from the seventeenth century and onwards, I would have to try and reconstruct lost ideals, thoughts, beliefs and actions of people who lived in a distant past and in a completely different cultural and environmental setting from my own.
1.3. Previous Studies

The subject I have decided to study has been documented with a fork, and a very primitive one at that in terms of modern sciences. Let me elaborate: The paradigm of outsiders researching the Saami with an outsider’s view had been prominent in all written sources, beginning from the first publication of Johannes Schefferus’ work *Lapponia* in 1673 and continuing until the latter part of the twentieth century in the area of ‘lappology’, as it is nowadays called. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 189-191; Sergejeva 1997, 73-79.) The ideological premises of lappology, further discussed in the analysis section, influenced all scholarly interest in the Saami people at the time, reflecting and strengthening a view of the Saami as ‘Hobbesian’ poor wild savages in a natural state of chaos. The roots of these views were based on nationalistic and partly colonialist ideals: early theories of cultural evolution, exoticism and romanticism, and mostly Lutheran Christian standpoints in terms of religion and morality, flowed through all lappological research. These views were prominent in the gathering of data and the making of theoretical assumptions about the native religion of the Saami, even if some scholars of the paradigm have been argued to be less biased and critical than others. Some of the most known theorists and scholars before the mid-twentieth century who dealt with Saami religion included Uno Harva, Ernst Manker, J. Qvikstad and T.I. Itkonen. (Ibid.)

A paradigm shift began to take place around the 1970s with a more unified Scandinavian tradition of comparative religion taking root simultaneously with the rise of a new subject called Saami studies: the ideals of reconstructing a more holistic view, based on ideas of cultural relativity, became prominent. Saami religion was studied by adding an ecological perspective and a cross-cultural, phenomenological approach. The Saami still live in an environment that is demanding and beautiful as well as crucial to their traditional way of life. This connection to the surroundings was taken to consideration on a wider scale and compared with material from similar circumboreal peoples of Siberia and North America, while trying to hold on to objectivity, ethnic sensitivity and critical thinking, even though the lappological background of previous scholars had certain influence on these new authors. In a sense, the scholarly world began to take an interest in the remainder of the soup’s contents by moving towards a view that was more holistic in nature. Some of

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3 Uno Holmberg before 1927. Holmberg changed his Swedish surname to Harva, as was a trend among Finnish-Swedish people in the fennoman movement. This poses some technical problems: as he is better known by his Finnish surname I will use the name Harva when referring to him in the text. As the sources I use in this work are from his early career, in sources and references he is referred to as Holmberg.
The most prominent scholars of the 1970s and 1980s were Åke Hultkrantz and his colleagues in Sweden like Bill Widén, Phebe Fjellström and Louise Bäckman. In Finland particularly the aforementioned Juha Pentikäinen has also published articles and monographs concerning Saami religion. In Norway, names like Ørnulv Vorren and Ivar Paulson pop up in articles and studies. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed), 189-191, 356; Kylli 2012, 21-22; Sergejeva 1997, 73-79.)

The field of Saami studies has since moved further towards a paradigm of indigenous studies. It deals more with issues of power and cultural preservation and studies that are applicable to benefit the Saami community in one way or another are often favored. The lappological paradigm has been questioned and rejected on a wide scale, while many scholars with a Saami background have begun enrolling in universities and publishing significant scientific works from an emic point of view - studying their own tradition from the inside, in their own terms. This change is in my opinion welcome and as a result, significant studies about Saami identity and society have emerged in the last years. Also the use of native languages in scientific enterprise is a very positive turn. One of the most recent scholars of Saami religion from the emic standpoint is Jelena Porsanger, even though the first descriptions on Saami religion written by authors with a Saami background were Nils Lundius and Paulus Samilin in the turn of the eighteenth centuries and Johan Turi in 1910. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 189-191, 356-357; Kylli 2012, 254; Sergejeva 1997, 73-79; Rydving 1993, 29-30.)

Some recent studies that focus on the religious change among the Saami available are Saamelaisten kaksi kääntymystä (2012) by Ritva Kylli from Oulu University, The end of drum-time (1993) by Håkan Rydving from the university of Uppsala and Ihminen ja luonto kolutta- ja kuolansaamelaisten maailmankuvassa (1997) by Jelena Sergejeva from the University of Helsinki.

As my own point of departure is that of an outsider dealing with second hand sources, I am aware it is closer to that of the lappologists than indigenous scholars. As my knowledge of different Saami languages and concepts is also limited, it should be stated that the theories and terms used are open to criticism and cannot be considered to bring an emic look at the big picture in the full sense of the category. Dealing with a historical setting, trying to maintain a critical frame of thought and bringing several different points of focus to the study hopefully bring my thesis closer to the area of indigenous studies than that of the outdated lappological paradigm.

4 The terms emic and etic are discussed in chapter 2.2. See also Sergejeva 1997, 73-79.
5 Maiden name Sergejeva. In this work I use her maiden name Sergejeva to avoid confusion, since there is no such historical burden as in Harva’s case.
1.4 The multidisciplinary view and its focus

Even though the paradigm shift from lappology to Saami studies has resulted in a progress that also focuses on the big picture, the “fork problem” remains: almost all ethnographic material about the conversion processes, views of nature, objects of worship and models of worship of the Saami is predominantly collected by Western and Christian ethnographers, all male, usually with different agendas combined with scientifically uncritical and biased views. In other words, we need different theories and methods in order to get a fuller understanding of the whole. We need to throw the “fork” out, take what is left and see if we can reconstruct even a tiny portion of the soup around the bits and pieces the fork has managed to pull out by looking at the historical conditions, making generalizations and asking questions such as “What does a soup containing these bits usually look like?” and “What does a fork usually manage to pull out of a soup?” In my mind, we need help from findings in parallel disciplines such as archaeology and anthropology as well as theories from disciplines such as cultural ecology and modern cognitive psychology in order to answer the questions posed in a way that takes the larger picture into account. We also need to review the political and sociological aspects working hidden in the background, thus trying to reach an understanding of what the religious change might have been like from a multidisciplinary viewpoint.

The soup analogy also serves another function. If you are using a fork for dishes like meatballs, what you eat is measurable. One meatball, two meatballs, etc. But if you are eating soup with a spoon the content is mixed and liquid, it easily escapes the spoon, and it is fluid in nature. This is why we are partly stuck with theories and data that are not scientific in the strictest sense of the word: religious beliefs in a specific historical setting centuries ago can hardly be studied through natural scientific methods that champion measurability, objectivity, falsifiability and a strictly naturalistic take on science. René Gothóni addresses this problem of measurability in his article “The notion of ‘understanding’ in pilgrimage studies”, further discussed in the following chapter on methods. (Gothóni 2002, 156-157) We also need to take the immeasurable experiences and ways to understand the world into account for an understanding of the whole.

This means that answers given to the questions posed in this thesis are not necessarily measurable or scientific in the classic sense of the word. I am not, however, trying to say one could not use scientific reasoning, studies and theories based on for example human psychology in backing one’s points, even though some scholars might
disagree on this, basing their arguments on commensurability, or saying the paradigms do not fit like a triangle does not fit a round slot. My opinion, shared by for example scholars such as Lawson and McCauley in their book *Rethinking religion*, is that both the social sciences and natural sciences that study human behavior and religion shed light on different aspects of the same subject by asking different questions. (Lawson and McCauley 1990, 1-18) My view in this matter is as follows: the questions asked are determined by the answers anticipated, and even though the questions themselves are already theory- and bias-laden the answers themselves hopefully result in providing a more informed picture of the phenomenon studied, especially when the underlying paradigms are identified and approached with care.

One of the most heated debates in modern social and human sciences is the one between explanation and interpretation. The problem in this division and the debate it engenders is that the opposing traditions largely seem to exclude each other, leaving the fields the debate concerns divided and thus hindering the scientific accumulation of knowledge. Lawson and McCauley encourage approaching this problem from a different angle: one that takes both the naturalistic and interpretational views as scientific approaches proper. This is also a view shared by Tim Ingold, who has used both views in his anthropological studies. (Lawson and McCauley 1990, 1-18; Ingold 2000, 2.) As my study focuses mainly on historical sources and less on new empirical data, I am aware that I need to keep the issues that arise from mixing different scientific traditions in mind, if I am to interpret old sources and compare them to modern explanatory and cognitive theories.

Åke Hultkrantz has written that “Religion is in most respects a creation of man’s psychic experience and cultural tradition…In some important aspects however religion is tied up with the cultural structure and thereby, in some religions, with the ecological foundations of culture.” (Hultkrantz 1979, 227-228) In other words, religious phenomena are tied to the traditional, the psychological and the environmental⁶. Tom Sjöblom (2002b, 144) writes that “similar ecological environments attract similar cognitive responses to that environment” and “…a human mind is also ecological in the sense that it can adapt to changing environmental challenges”. (Sjöblom 2002b, 147) Following these ideas, I will attempt to decipher the soup’s contents through the use of various methods and methodologies ranging from ethnohistory to cognitive psychology.

Interpreting historical data, bringing in theoretical approaches and views

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⁶ Hultkrantz’s definition of environment includes surrounding nature, topography, biotope, climate, demographics and quantitatively measurable resources. (Hultkrantz 1979, 221–224)
from different angles and returning to the big picture would be difficult, were we to exclude different areas of serious social scientific research the exclusivist would see as competing views. Lawson and McCauley discuss these metatheoretical viewpoints of exclusivism, inclusivism and interactionism in great length in *Rethinking religion*. They adopt an interactionist view which I also follow in this work. (Lawson and McCauley 1990, 1-31) Roy Rappaport, using different terms, also takes a similar stance of combining the tradition in anthropology that seeks explanations and causes in an objective manner as well as the tradition that seeks meaning in a subjective orientation. (Rappaport 1979, 157-158) This discussion overlaps with the use of *emic* and *etic* categories introduced by linguist Kenneth Pike and brought to anthropology by Marvin Harris. (Harris 1976, 331-335) This dichotomy is further discussed in chapter 2.2.7

My focus is in attempting to both understand and explain Saami religious change that happened between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. In that period the Church and the State started to take active efforts in converting the Saami almost simultaneously by Russia and the Orthodox Church in the East and Sweden-Finland and the Lutheran Church in the West. I have deliberately left the missionary efforts and ethnographies provided by the Church and the State of Denmark-Norway to lesser attention in order to focus the scope of this study to more Eastern Saami groups, even though the aforementioned do also provide an important body of information that has been used extensively by many previous scholars on the subject and thus influenced this work on many levels. After all, despite the regional variations in Saami culture and religion discussed later in this study, there seems to have been a continuum or a common basic structure of Saami religious beliefs. (Kylli 2012, 37-40; Sergejeva 1997, 31-32; Rydving 1993, 22; Bäckman & Hultkrantz 1985, 9.)

What interests me is a change in Saami religion and culture in the late medieval and early modern periods that mostly happened between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. The impact it had on other aspects of life, arguably inseparable from modes of thought many scholars would call religious, intrigues me in particular. Out of these I chose to study the changes in attitude towards nature, especially game animals and fish. Because of the subject of this work and the one-sidedness of the material, I realize the male side is overly emphasized as both the research questions and the sources engender an overly male depiction of Saami religion. This is something that should be pointed out as

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7 An interesting take on how both the biological and the cultural are involved in molding human societies is the ‘leash principle’. See Roger Trigg in ‘Understanding social science’ (2001, 176-179)
this study only touches on areas that mainly concern one side of Saami culture.

The goals of this study are as follows: 1) Finding a model for interpreting previous material in an analytical manner from a multidisciplinary view and 2) thus being able to trace patterns in Saami world view that elucidate their attitudes towards animals. I have four hypotheses that have influenced both the subject of the study and the theories used. I have corrected them as my analysis has proceeded. These are as follows: 1) animal relations of the Saami were in close connection to the concepts of the soul in their pre-Christian world view, 2) soul concepts changed together with the change in religion that happened between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, 3) saami soul concepts and attitudes towards animals can be studied by comparing them to similar cultures and general theories on human cognition and evolutionary psychology, 4) accumulation of knowledge and the organizing thereof moulds the source material from seventeenth century onwards towards more theory-laden views.

First I am going to introduce a method for the systematic analysis of my material and discuss some of the key concepts concerning this study. After this I am going to introduce the theories that are connected to my third hypothesis in short detail. In the fourth chapter I will make some general remarks on Saami indigenous religion and some of the most important historical, political and religious aspects working in the background. In chapter five I proceed to an application of context analysis to the material at hand followed by an attempt to identify recurrent patterns emerging from the material that are of concern to my research question. Chapter six begins with general remarks about indigenous religion in light of the recurrent concepts emerging from the material and is followed by a subchapter that deals with animal relations of Christianity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries while the third subchapter is on religious change from indigenous religion to Christianity. In chapter seven my purpose is to give an answer to the research question and see if my hypotheses still stand, as well as reflecting how the theories and the sources communicate. I try to give some concluding remarks and discuss the issues raised by this work in the last chapter, followed by full bibliography and attachments. The research question my purpose is to answer in the following chapters is as follows:

"What kind of change happened in the religious sphere of the Saami between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and what was its impact on attitudes towards nature, especially game animals and fish?"

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8 For studies concerning the female side of Saami culture, see for example Louise Bäckman’s works
2. READING AND ANALYSING HISTORICAL TEXTS

2.1. Methods of analysing historical texts and their contexts

The main sources I am going to use for this work are (pre-) ethnographic texts and literature concerning Lapland and the Kola Peninsula, mostly written by authors from Sweden and Finland. Some of the authors were priests, some were scholars and most of them were both. When put in chronological order, the first ones of these original texts were authored in the mid-seventeenth century, stretching across the following centuries to the beginning of the twentieth century. The sources are historical, so the methods I am going to use stem from the tradition of the history of religion: systematic analysis, historical ethnography and ethnohistory, formulated in a three-fold scheme of analysis elaborated in this chapter.

By going through the sources, I plan to construct a picture of what the world-view of the Saami living between two religions might have been like based on contemporary knowledge and theories that open parts of the old data up for fresh interpretations. In order to gain variation and hopefully grasp some developments in different times and places, I have chosen the sources for this study to reflect Saami religious change in different parts of the present day Finnish Lapland in various times, and included the Kola peninsula to reflect the East Saami groups. These all represent different spatial and temporal areas and the information is collected by people representing different traditions. This could be considered a hindrance, but in my opinion it gives us a wider base of information from different areas, approaches and findings. The sources, their authors and backgrounds are introduced in more detail in chapter 5.

One would easily think that the ethnohistorian’s method was to strip the source of the intentions the author has loaded it with in order to come to an objective truth. This, as the idea of an objective truth, remains impossible, but should instead be reversed: the researcher’s agenda should be that of pointing out the intentions and making them visible, thus being able to judge the material as reliable or unreliable in the context of the particular study and its subject. What I intend to do in this thesis in terms of method is to

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9 The sources and their authors are introduced in chapter 5.1. and analysed in fuller detail in chapter 5.3. See also map 1 in attachments and a broad review of the sources and theories used: Table 1, ch 8.
10 Like pointed out in chapter 2.2., the term world-view is used interchangeably with the terms mentality, epistemology and ontology in this work, and can't be separated from the etic category of religion in Saami culture.
make interpretations and assumptions based on the texts’ and their author’s context, background and setting by using different interpretive and explanatory models. By this I attempt to achieve a Geertzian “thick description” of taking the context into account. The version of this thick description in this study disagrees with Geertz by also taking the natural sciences into consideration when making assumptions. (Sjöblom 1997, 155; Sjöblom 2002b, 127; Lawson and McCauley 1990, 16-17.)

Håkan Rydving writes, “The methods a historian of religions uses can be divided into two groups, those used to interpret the source material and those used to answer the specifically religio-historical questions at issue”. (Rydving 1993, 17) In this work, this entails a three-fold scheme of research: 1) a close reading of the material concentrating on recurrent concepts, 2) trying to pinpoint the influences previous scientific schools and biased views might have had on the material via context analysis, and 3) reviewing the material through a theoretical scope and ultimately trying to find answers to the research questions I have posed via theoretical analysis. This idea is revisited before the actual analysis, but I try to elaborate these methods in the following.

Close reading and context analysis: In this work context analysis refers to a method of systematic source criticism and close reading refers to the identifying of recurrent patterns and concepts in the material. The methods of historical ethnography and textual ethnography are based on the assumption that ethnography need not necessarily be a method of participating: also textual data can be used in constructing and understanding the ‘otherness’ that lies at the very core of all ethnographic enterprise. Ethnography from a book might first sound similar to the dreaded ‘armchair anthropology’ of early anthropologists like Tylor and Frazer, but as it is a modern and accomplished method and given the historical subject of the study, little more is feasible. On the positive side, the difficult questions that usually assail ethnographic research, like those concerning research ethics and reflexivity, can partly be set aside. What all written ethnographies however share is that they are usually theory and value laden and therefore biased in one way or another. This is a problem we need to address with context analysis. Galloway, in fact, argues that all historical sources are biased, never tell the whole truth and are never perfect. (Sakaranaho, Sjöblom & Utriainen 2002, 6-7; Sjöblom 2002b, 126-127; Opas 2004, 160; Galloway 1996, 25-26.)

As René Gothóni puts it: ”...the interpreter of an ancient or distant text from a past culture inevitably belongs to and is conditioned by his/her own different culture and time.” The answer, according to him, is in being open to the historical nature of the text.
and understanding the tradition it is bound to. He argues that through a Gadamerian ‘fusing of horizons’ with the text, we can understand and interpret old historical texts as something that ‘breaks the I-centeredness’ and forces the interpreter to expand their understanding to be in touch with the otherness in a productive way. It seems that in order to try to fully understand the distant past I have chosen to research, I need to keep my own prejudices and a priori notions in mind, while trying to track the attitudes and prejudices of the previous researchers and early ethnographers. This understanding is, however, not something that can be verified or measured scientifically, but I believe that the Gadamerian hermeneutic method briefly described above and the self-reflection it evokes are things to be kept in mind when trying to reconstruct the past and understand the thoughts, motivations and meanings of the Saami as a people between two religions. As Gothóni puts it, ”Understanding is the becoming familiar with something, the movement of recovering the way in which the world is.” (Gothóni 2002, 158-161, 168; Sjöblom 1997, 134-136.)

Key problems a historian of religion faces are reliability and bias. Placing a text into wider context, as well as taking the original author’s motivations and goals into consideration, are important factors in choosing sources. This is why it is necessary to clarify the original authorship of the material and research the background and motivations concerning the text to arrive at a more truthful picture. Bias on the other hand does not make material unusable, but requires careful analysis; an ability to ‘see beyond the texts’ and place them in their contexts by attempting to come to a wide understanding of the subject studied, as well as the related research history and its main problems. Keeping reliability of observation as a ground principle, judging the sources by directness of reportage (using first hand sources) and recognizing bias that is ideological (predicting political or religious blind spots) are ideal goals of historical research. Basing arguments on multiple sources is an element to be kept in mind when conducting historical research and this is what I mean by identifying recurrent patterns. The key point in this work is not in particular details or facts, but in combining and comparing these in order to make a more detailed picture by placing the facts in a web of causal interdependence and handling the textual sources as wholes, not just pointing out single facts. (Sjöblom 1997, 150-156; Galloway 1996, 33-39.)

Another problem is linguistic bias: indigenous concepts are not necessarily translatable to the languages of the early ethnographers, or English, as is the case in my study. The terminology of cognitive, social, economic, etc. models is of particular importance in the interpretation of the texts. The textual material has to be analyzed on many levels including single concepts, statements, argumentation and presuppositions.
Semantic interpretations can also be beneficial in researching historical texts, at least when making assumptions that involve cognitive theories. Because the historian of religions deals with text and language, terms and concepts are of great importance. This is why we also need to be careful and precise when using heuristic terms in translating native concepts and try to recognize translating errors the author makes when dealing with historical texts. (Galloway 2006, 40-42; Jolkkonen 2007, 14-19; Sjöblom 1997, 144-145.)

Answers given by both social and natural scientific theories tend to give a rather one-sided picture, usually focusing on the outsider’s view of the Saami conversion history and material gathered by the outsiders. In order to get a deeper understanding we also need to try to paint a more holistic picture of trying to interpret and understand the experiences, attitudes and feelings the Saami might have had concerning the nature around them and the coexistence of two religions. The parallel and overlapping methods of historical ethnography, textual ethnography and context analysis will hopefully help us in understanding the subject from a broader point of view.

I believe that also other viewpoints have to be taken into consideration in order to gain a deeper understanding of our subject, thus other ways to decode and interpret the sources need to be sought. While the previously mentioned phenomenological approach attempts to describe and interpret phenomena by asking questions such as "what is this particular phenomenon like as itself (an sich)?", also questions such as "what were the circumstances that gave birth to this phenomenon?" need to be posed. And for this we can turn to other research traditions that take the social, the political, the ecological and the psychological to a deeper consideration. This helps in reconstructing cognitive and mental models and processes. (Sjöblom 1997, 137-142; Sjöblom 2002b, 143-144.)

*Theoretical analysis* in this work means making theoretical hypotheses based on my previous knowledge of the subject studied, doing systematic analysis in light of these hypotheses, correcting the hypotheses if necessary, reviewing the material in light of these corrections, while trying to maintain a critical frame of thought and a careful evaluation of the material in the process. What must also be kept in mind is that the theories used also belong to certain paradigms that might be proven wrong or incommensurable and thus incompatible with the analyzed material. An open but skeptical mind is an ideal goal in scientific enterprise.

In the context of this thesis, the three-fold method of analysis refers to the deconstruction and re-interpretation of previously collected data that is fragmentary and biased; ergo, an attempt to look at old texts on various levels while trying to grasp the
actual phenomena and processes emerging from the material. This is followed by an analysis of these findings in terms of theoretical standpoints that attempts to bring a fresh and novel look at this old data. My goals are in finding recurrent patterns in the material, trying to categorize the Saami world-view based on these patterns and linking these findings to what is universal to the human mind. Or put in terms of soup-eating; taking the different pieces picked from the soup by different forks, putting them together in a bowl, asking what is universal to these kinds of soups in particular, and finally asking what is common to all soups. I believe we can thus arrive a bit closer to what the Saami pre-Christian religion was like and understand how it changed in the course of history.

2.2 Key concepts

The Saami form a multitude of cultures and languages, and therefore a common lexicon must be used in order to make sense of the concepts concerning Saami culture. The etymology and spelling of various words and concepts in different Saami languages is a separate research area. For this work I am going to use a book called *The Saami: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed), 2005) in consulting the general terms, words and spellings since the original texts vary greatly in forms of spelling of different concepts. When a non-English word is introduced in the material, however, I refer to the form given in the text in *italic* when it is used for the first time, with one exception: I have avoided the word ‘Lapp’ and replaced it with ‘Saami’.

*The Saami*. Even though this study deals with a variety of different cultures, areas and languages, I refer to the whole group of indigenous inhabitants of Sápmi in the centuries I have chosen to study as the Saami. I refer to a distant past in scarcely populated and widely different areas and habitats that did not even share a common language. Already Uno Harva and many other scholars since (for example Rydving & Pentikäinen) have argued that it is a mistake to think that the religious beliefs and practices of the Saami were

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11 For example the term reffering to pre-Christian Saami religious expert is spelled in different ways in each source, so I use the term noaidi used in *The Saami: A Cultural Encyclopedia* to refer to the concept. The terminology used in this work when referring to concepts in different Saami languages is further elaborated in chapters 5.2 and 5.4.

12 Traditional areas inhabited by the Saami in Northern Fennoscandia and Kola Peninsula, see map 2 in attachments.
uniform all over Northern Fennoscandia. Research on the Saami culture as “an overly homogenous, monolithic and static phenomenon” has been criticized by scholars of Saami studies since the 1970s. (Holmberg 1915, 12; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 356; Rydving 1993, 23-27.)

**Western vs. indigenous.** When contrasting the ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ views with the ‘Western’ or ‘modern’ ones, many problems arise. The modern, Western view of the world (or the views of the authors of the material I have used) is itself not monolithic and cannot be labeled as a polar opposite of the indigenous view. Most of the philosophical basis for criticisms of Western thought contra native or indigenous thought comes from Western thinkers themselves and from Western philosophical traditions, even though the new discipline of indigenous studies has resulted in many indigenous authors and scholars questioning the Western tradition of science from the viewpoints of the traditions they themselves represent. Tim Ingold puts the problems faced in an eloquent fashion:

> “however much we may object to the dichotomies to which it gives rise, between humanity and nature, intelligence and instinct, the mental and the material, and so on, the art of critical disputation on these matters is precisely what ‘the West’ is all about. For when all is said and done, there can be nothing more ‘Western’, or more ‘modern’, than to write an academic book such as this. (Ingold 2000, 6-7.)

In this work the term ‘Western’ is used to label a tradition of thinking linked to the Enlightenment and the philosophical and theological views connected to it. I will argue that this view of the world in the minds of political and religious authorities in the late medieval and early modern era is in contrast with the ‘indigenous’ Saami view of the world. It cannot be claimed that this dichotomy would have existed as such in the real world, but should be instead seen as a heuristic tool.

**Emic and etic.** The previously addressed pair of terms also links to, and is partly overlapping with, the distinctions between the terms *emic* and *etic*. This dichotomy is a tool to perceive the construction of the understanding of the world and is linked to the western vs. indigenous dichotomy introduced above. It was first introduced by the linguist Kenneth Pike in the 1950s and brought to social science by Marvin Harris. According to Pike’s formulation, the emic refers to intracultural categories or concepts and the etic to intercultural concepts.\(^{13}\) (Gothóni 1981, 30) The etic, in Marvin Harris’ terms, is a viewpoint that seeks to study cultures and theorize through an objective and value-free

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\(^{13}\) For a review of Pike’s emic and etic categories see René Gothóni’s article “Emic, Etic and Ethics” (1981), and their use in studying Saami religion, see Sergejeva 1997, 73-79. For a criticism of the use of emic categories as heuristic terms see Tom Sjöblom’s article “Only a hobo” (Sjöblom 2002b).
description of the world, while the emic viewpoint attempts a description of the way in which the world is seen by people in different cultures, from within the cultures. (Harris 1976) I try to use both in my work: while the cognitive and ecological theories introduced in chapter 3 stress the etic side seeking to explain cultural and psychological behavior in terms of common humanity, the emic claims I try to make attempt to understand how the Saami have perceived, or in Roy Rappaport's terms (Rappaport 1979, 97-98), cognized their natural environment in contrast with the Western view.

A criticism of Tim Ingold's philosophical language made by Nurit Bird-David in her article on animistic epistemology (Bird-David 2006, 35) could be seen to address the issues in my work as well: trying to balance between the two modes of research the student might get tangled in a web of epistemological problems of what is considered true in the end. This is a bigger problem than could be addressed properly in this study, but I will try to keep this criticism in mind when making claims based on the findings from the material. As Rappaport points out, and Sergejeva agrees with him, a student of cultural ecology must work on both the emic and the etic levels. (Sergejeva 1997, 73-79; Rappaport 1979, 97-98.)

Religion. The term ‘religion’ can be used to suppress, govern, make value statements and categorize in terms of what is considered religion and what is not. My attempt is quite the contrary: instead I will attempt to understand what might be labeled as religious beliefs and practices in terms of common human action and thought. When conducting research on cultures that are different from our own, and particularly in historical research, we have to be careful not to confuse our Western understanding of the term with the kind of indigenous understanding that doesn't possess a native category of religion and seldom separates religious beliefs and actions from other aspects of life. Our inquiry therefore requires a broad definition of religion, as well as reflecting what different aspects might be linked to religious thoughts on a general level. It should be pointed out that I approach religion as a typology with heuristic value as suits the current inquiry, not as a universal category. (Pentikäinen 2004, 83–85; Sjöblom 1997, 134.)

When defining religion, questions arise on what is covered by the term. If we are to follow scholars such as Stewart Guthrie and Tom Sjöblom, we should relate religion to a Wittgensteinian model of family resemblances.14 This enables us to use ‘religion’ as a sort of umbrella term to cover different belief systems that resemble each other, without adding

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14 For example: a family of persons like siblings might resemble each other and can be perceived as a family, but still consist of individual persons. Religions are thus a ‘family’ containing particular overlapping similarities with no particular definition to suit them all.
to the term a sort of Western view that takes religion as an area of thought that is monolithic and separate from the rest of life and thought. (Sjöblom 2002a, 86; Guthrie 1993, 197.) Like Lawson and McCauley suggest, only studying religious texts and traditions further stresses this dichotomy of so called great literal traditions like Christianity, contra oral or folk religious traditions, at the expense of asking what is common to all religious systems. (Lawson and McCauley 1990, 6) Juha Pentikäinen's view that separates different belief systems as religion with a small r and Religion with a capital one might also ease our task at hand. According to Pentikäinen the ones with a capital R are the world Religions that have a written source of belief and a wide following like Christianity or Islam, and the ones with a small r are smaller traditions or sets of ‘folk beliefs’ based on oral tradition, that seldom have a separate concept of ‘religion’. This might not be the best or least biased dichotomy, but it is useful for justifying use of the term in researching traditions like those of the Saami. Using the term in its broader sense thus justifies studying belief systems, mind-sets, world-views and everyday practices through theories and concepts related to the discipline of religious studies. (Pentikäinen 2004, 83-91; Mebius 1968, 130.)

Religion still continues to defy definition, but it can be seen according to a Wittgensteinian model of family resemblances as an unclear category of inter-related beliefs that enables us to study it and even make cross-cultural comparisons. The dichotomy introduced by Pentikäinen further helps us in seeing religious beliefs inseparable from other beliefs in oral traditions in a way that is different from the major organized world religions. What is, however, common to all religious ritual systems, according to Lawson and McCauley (1990, 6) and put in their terms, “is the involvement of culturally postulated superhuman agents.” I argue that Saami religion as such did not exist since a) religion was unknown as an emic category, b) the areal segregation arguably led to many different kinds of Saami religions and c) it was a very dynamic and changing tradition. The word ‘supernatural’ which is deeply embedded in Lawson and McCauley's theoretical construction can in itself be seen as a continuation of a western dichotomy of dividing the natural and the supernatural, unknown to traditional Saami thinking. For example Tim Ingold and Nurit Bird-David have addressed the dichotomy of natural vs. supernatural in their work at length. These criticisms are further discussed in chapter seven.

Sergejeva points out that in pre-Christian Saami society religion could not be separated from a larger concept of world-view or mentality. World-view is, according to her, a belief system that includes many aspects and should be studied in a multidisciplinary manner. (Sergejeva 1997, 65-70) This thesis deals mostly with phenomena that belong to a
previously introduced category of interconnected beliefs that can be labeled as religion. I am going to use the terms religion, world-view and mentality, as well as epistemology and ontology as interchangeable terms; they should be seen as etic categories that rise from the Western tradition of thinking. What I intend to study are beliefs and attitudes that relate to these interchangeable terms; they are purely heuristic tools for categorizing and studying the changes in Saami culture that happened when the Christian influences strengthened over time.

**Saami indigenous religion.** Native religion, nature religion, indigenous religion, folk religion, paganism, animism, animatism and shamanism are some of the most used terms when describing Saami tradition. Common to all these labels and the phenomenon they represent is what they are not: they are not comparable to monotheistic world religions like Christianity as such, and I believe this is probably the reason for giving these labels to indigenous belief-systems in the first place. Another common attribute is thus that as terms they are all value-laden. The aspects and concepts of the postulated indigenous Saami belief system, like those of soul concepts and ‘shamanism’ and the actions and thoughts related to them, will be addressed in this thesis as ‘Saami indigenous religion’. I chose this term because ‘indigenous’ not only refers to the actual content and epistemology of the belief system, it also represents the spiritual connection of the peoples to their age-old dwellings and environment. The terminology also touches upon areas of power relations and ethnicity in contrast to the Christian view of religion.

Labeling different aspects of Saami religion as indigenous or Christian is difficult, but I will attempt, at least to some extent, to use this dichotomy. I need to keep in mind that Saami culture and religion were influenced by Christianity long before an emic category of religion was known by the Saami, and the Christian faith of the Saami was in turn influenced by ancient customs and beliefs for a long time after Christianity was officially adopted. These issues are further discussed in chapters 4.3 and 6.3. The influence of neighboring peoples’ religious systems on indigenous thought is obvious and the concept of archaic or original Saami religion is fictional: oral traditions are generally more dynamic and less static than world religions with sacred texts like Christianity. (Rydving 1993, 18; Kylli 2012, 119, 193.)
3. ETIC THEORIES

In this chapter, I introduce three different etic theories that might help us with the “fork problem” by means of reconstructing the past ideas of indigenous peoples living in a setting that was characterized by harsh economic conditions, scarce population and a subsistence based on hunting, fishing and reindeer herding. These theories touch on what is common to all humans in terms of cognitive and evolutionary psychology as well as what is common to peoples living in similar environmental conditions. These theories possibly help us in filling the gaps left by the authors of my sources and subsequent scholars who have been operating with different kinds of concepts and theories, or “forks”, and are revisited in chapter 7.1 after reviewing the material and other factors at work.

3.1 Anthropomorphism and animism

*Faces in the Clouds* by Stewart Guthrie is a major work in cognitive science of religion, and he manages to put together a convincing set of examples concerning how the human mind works in providing the environment with religious meanings and agents. Guthrie argues that it is natural for the human mind to produce human-like agents around them. These agents do not necessarily inhabit a human form, but they must be seen as having similar properties to humans like morality, feelings, etc. This anthropomorphism Guthrie sees as being the basis for human religiosity and controlling religious thought. Even if Guthrie can be criticized of oversimplifying religion to mere anthropomorphism, we can see anthropomorphism influencing human religiosity in a number of ways concerning beliefs about animals. Animism, as a concept in the study of religions, is seeing the world as inhabited by spirits or persons. It is a term avoided by many scholars because of its Tyloorean evolutionistic, deterministic clang that persists surprisingly widely even today in both popular and academic use. In psychological use it includes the phenomenon of anthropomorphism under its wings. The terms and uses are not necessarily interchangeable, but psychological processes in the background are arguably the same. (Bird-David 1999, 67; Guthrie 1993, 39-45.)

Despite its historical burden, we can find use for the term animism if we consider it
merely as a strategy of interpretation and perceiving the environment like Guthrie does, stripping it of its original purpose in studying religion. This animation of nature has a lot to do with the human mind actively seeking meaning and human-like agents in the environment and trying to affect them with religious activity like prayer or ritual. Or, as Guthrie puts it, "We credit our environment with more organisms and organization than it has". This is a result of a subconscious strategy to animate and anthropomorphize. He argues it has been a useful strategy in evolution to see and avoid threats, even if they did not really exist; according to a classic analogy, mistaking a bear for a boulder is far less advantageous than mistaking a boulder for a bear. Animism and anthropomorphism as psychological phenomena, of which the first includes the second term, are thus strategies of the human mind in processing its observations and giving them meaning. (Guthrie 1993, 39-45; Boyer 2001, 165.)

Guthrie points out that animism is a way of perceiving and interpreting the world, “seeing as”, and a common feature of not only children and ‘primitive cultures’ but also that of educated Westerners. He argues that only in hindsight does a person detect animism as a mistake of overinterpretation. (Guthrie 1993, 54) Nurit Bird-David has made a striking criticism of etic theories on anthropomorphism and animism that most concerns my topic; she argues that anthropomorphism and animism should not be seen as logical mistakes or misunderstandings of ‘primitive minds’ like Guthrie in her opinion does. According to her, Guthrie stresses animism and anthropomorphism as mistakes in logical thinking; this shouldn't be the starting point when studying indigenous traditions. What should instead be stressed is that the sense of personhood in indigenous traditions differs from Western notions. This is in a sense a result of differing epistemological or ontological ‘orientations’ that themselves rise from a plurality of relations with the outside world in different cultures. Issues of studying anthropomorphism and personhood and the value of this theory in light of this work are further discussed in chapter 7.1. (Bird-David 2006, 43-44; Bird-David 1999, 67-72.)

3.2 Cognitive fluidity

In his book *The Prehistory of the Mind*, archaeologist Steven Mithen gives an readable and convincing account of why an archaeologist should also be consulted when asking
questions about the human mind. Combining human biology, psychology and archaeo-

logical data he describes a naturalistic model of how the modern human’s mental capacities have evolved from the earlier human species. He calls this the ”big bang” of human culture that happened around 30 000 years ago. He bases his theory on how religion first emerged on his concept of cognitive fluidity by arguing that religious symbols emerged when the early *Homo sapiens* learned to use his intelligence in a different way from other early humanoid species like *Homo erectus* and *Homo neanderthalensis*. According to Mithen, other humanoid species, including the very first *Homo sapiens*, had a different sort of intelligence from ours. He bases this on a theory called multiple intelligence theory, which portrays the mind as working like a Swiss army knife: different sorts of intelligences work with different sorts of tasks, just like different tools are for different tasks. These are, according to Mithen,

(i)language,
(ii)social intelligence,
(iii)general intelligence ,
(iv)technical intelligence (including tool-making, etc.) and
(v)natural history intelligence (including animal behavior, botany, knowledge about natural phenomena, etc.) (Mithen 1996, 129, 162-165.)

Mithen argues that in the time between 60 000 and 30 000 years ago a ‘big bang of human culture’ took place. This occurred when the early *Homo sapiens* learnt to use these multiple intelligences together, resulting in what Mithen calls ”cognitive fluidity”. According to him, the birth of systems like art and religion can be seen as results of early humans being able to produce symbols some 40 000 years ago. This was a result of cognitive fluidity combining social, natural history and technical intelligences in producing socially meaningful symbols with technically produced tools, using their natural history intelligence when taking models and resources from the nature around them. (Mithen 1996, 181, 185-186.)

Next Mithen explores the topics of these first forms of art, and detects anthropomorphism, theriomorphism (animal form) or both. For example the famous painting of the *Trois-Frèrèrs* -cave sorcerer is a clear example of the first documented notion of anthropomorphism and theriomorphism (Mithen interprets this as archaic totemism). In other words the first forms of art are about animism, the personification of nature, or totemism in tracing one’s lineage to a common animal ancestor. In any case this tells us of natural history intelligence intermingling with social intelligence as a cause of cognitive fluidity. Compared to contemporary anthropological evidence this tells us that among hunter-gatherers it is frequent to attribute human-type minds, or personhood, to
animals. Again, this theory and especially its use in this study are further discussed in chapter 7.1. (Mithen 1996, 186-190.)

3.3 Hultkrantz and the ecological theory of religion

Julian Steward’s Theory of Culture Change (1955) introduced the concept of cultural ecology, a branch of anthropology that attempts to shed light on the importance of environmental influence on culture. He separates this view from biological ecology and argues that it helps in tracking cross-cultural regularities and recurrent patterns in the creative processes that shape a culture in adapting to its environment. Basing his theory on Steward’s theory and an extensive fieldwork among indigenous peoples, Swedish scholar Åke Hultkrantz argued that the environment inspires creative processes that shape human religiosity. These processes are connected to Steward’s idea of a cultural core. According to Hultkrantz, subsistence-related beliefs such as animal ceremonialism in hunting cultures and calendary rites in agricultural ones belong to the cultural core: this he calls 1) primary integration, generally involved in the creative processes induced by adapting to environmental factors. 2) Secondary integration of environment to religious beliefs is characterized by indirect environmental influence. For example, the social aspect of a culture is shaped by the environment in terms of technological and economic adaptations, and the social constructions greatly influence a culture’s religious activities. A third way, in which religious belief is shaped by the environment, is 3) morphological integration. Its influence can be seen in symbolic action and religious art that is directly influenced by nature, and is characterized by strong symbolic meanings. For example, a shaman dressed in a bird costume, helped by his assisting spirits in a bird shape, is an example of natural phenomena influencing both the physical and the mental aspects of religion. (Hultkrantz 1979, 224-235; Hultkrantz 1965, 280–281; Steward 1977, 219–220.)

Following Steward’s ideas, Hultkrantz argues that his religio-ecological theory allows cross-cultural comparisons and a classification of types of religion: the idea of a cultural core allows classifying and comparing different cultures with a similar scheme of subsistence and environmental conditions. Also other aspects to religion naturally

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15 While the definition of culture is a tricky one, according to Steward it should be linked to the concepts of both the individual and the society. There is no culture without a society and a society and its function is shaped by culture; they are complementary concepts. (Steward 1977, 219–220)
remain, so the scholar must take the technological and economic aspects into consideration, as well as other fundamental religious traits like the human psyche. A crucial point in Hultkrantz’s theory in light of this work is the conservative tendency of religious ideas. In practice this means that religious beliefs and practices originally tied to the cultural core pertain over time, even though the culture would change in other aspects due to external or internal influences. For example bear ceremonialism and the concepts of owners of nature typical to hunting types of religion can persist in agricultural societies belonging to a different type. (Hultkrantz 1979, 224-235; Hultkrantz 1965, 280–281; Steward 1977, 219–220.)

Despite its problems and relative one-sidedness, Hultkrantz's theory gives us a tool for analysing how Saami indigenous religion related to the environment and natural phenomena in terms of ecological adaptations and providing the human creativity with “food for thought”, to use Levi-Straussian terms. In other words, we have now reviewed some theories related to our subject that tried to answer the question about what is common to all humans and a theory to grasp how these psychological commonalities work together with the actual environment in providing inspiration for religious thought. Questions of religious change that concern the role of animals can thus perhaps be answered in a better way, were we to take the idea of a subsistence-related cultural core and the ideas of secondary and morphological integration and research to what extent religious change and the conservative tendency of religious ideas are reflected in the material chosen to be studied. Or put in simpler terms, how animals are seen to relate to humans in a hunter-gatherer setting and how these views might change, and persist, as the different aspects of culture and religion around them change. It is now time to acquaint ourselves with Saami culture, economic conditions and indigenous religion before finally proceeding to the actual analysis, revisiting these theories in chapter 7.1 and finding proper use for this theoretical construction in chapter 7.2, even though the hypotheses stated in chapter 1.4 that are connected to these theories do have their influence on other parts of this work.
4. THE SAAMI IN PRE-MODERN TIMES

4.1. Saami Indigenous Religion

As stated in the introduction, a monolithic and unified religion or a system completely uninfluenced by Christianity or the neighboring people’s beliefs did not exist in my sources, or the Saami communities for that matter. The religious field of the Saami was dynamic and has not been documented in times before cultural contacts with Christians, or the neighboring peoples for that matter. My focus in this study is more on the religious ideas and practices that concern animals and this is why I am only going to make some general remarks about the aspects of the indigenous religion of the Saami that are most important to our subject. Some aspects that are crucial for our analysis are further introduced and discussed in the analysis section that follows.

One of the most important aspects of the Saami pre-Christian world view was the notion of souls that seems to follow a more general pattern in the Arctic hunting and nomadic cultures. The general idea is that humans and other animals possess two or more souls, one being the force that animates the body, one being a ‘mind-soul’ involved in thinking and one being a free soul that leaves the body for example during sleep or a shaman’s trance. These soul-concepts were inseparable from a wider understanding of the cosmos that was seen as a three-layered body including a lower world inhabited by the dead, a middle world inhabited by living humans, and an upper world inhabited by sky-gods. Also several mythical beings that roamed on and between these different layers were a part of Saami everyday life. This understanding of the cosmos can be seen in the paintings of Saami shamans’ drums found from several different parts of the Sápmi. Another important aspect that needs to be pointed out is that unlike a Western concept of linear time, time was thought to be cyclical. (Pentikäinen 1995, 354; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 279-282.)

The Saami had a pantheon of gods who influenced people’s lives on several levels. The development of these ‘semi-polytheistic’ beliefs is difficult to understand, because of several cultural influences and different biased understandings in old ethnographies. It is clear that both Finnish and Scandinavian polytheism on the one hand and Christianity on the other have influenced both the Saami world view and the preunderstandings of the early ethnographers on several levels. These influences are
discussed on chapter 5.3. Some of the most central godly figures who dwelt in the sky were the ones representing the Sun (Beäivi), the Moon (Männu), the Wind (Biegggaolmmai) and Thunder (Bajannalmmai, Tiermes, Horagalles). Also an archetype of a passive creator or high god (Radien, Raedie, Veralden Olmai, Jimmel) emerges from the sources, even though this might be one of the concepts influenced by Christianity or other neighboring traditions. Some of the gods who dwelt in the middle world were the god of hunting Leaibeolmmai, a plant goddess Rananeid, the forefather figure Madder-Attje, and several female divinities involved for example in the creation of life and everyday practices, Mättarákkhá, Sáráhkká, Oksaahka and Joeksaahka. Underworld divinities included the Ruler of the underworld Jábmiidáhkká and the rider-figure who was responsible for sickness and pestilence, Ruto. (Laestadius 2011, 57-63; Pentikäinen 1995, 251-265; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 280.)

In addition to the gods and a variety of different holy places such as lakes and fells, the Saami world-view included a variety of other mythical and ‘supernatural’

beings that are sometimes hard to distinguish from the gods. Examples of these beings are the Saiva people, animals and spirits who lived in for example bottomless lakes, the Gufihtar who lived underground, the troll-like stallus who roamed the same sphere as humans, and different kinds of masters or owners of nature that are further discussed in the analysis section. (Laestadius 2011, 57-63; Pentikäinen 1995, 251-265; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 136, 374, 406-407.)

The pre-Christian Saami world view is often mistakenly labeled shamanistic; even though the shaman, or noaidi, was an important person in Saami life, shamanism was only one aspect of the world view as a whole. This problem is further discussed in chapter 7.1. The noaidi was an influential figure who would perform healing, influence hunting and fishing luck and travel to other worlds to mediate with the spirits. He could also perform other rituals and divinations by means of ecstasy; the noaidi fell into a cataleptic trance. The noaidi’s free soul was thought to leave his body during this trance, enabling the performance of different tasks like battle other shamans, travel between the three layers of the cosmos or lure prey to be caught by the community hunters. It can be said that concepts of the soul were an integral part of Saami world view and, while still an important figure in the indigenous tradition of the Saami, the noaidi was only one aspect of this soul belief, serving as a mediator between different worlds and beings. (Pentikäinen 1995, 354–355; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 385-388.)

16 The dichotomy ‘natural’ vs ‘supernatural’ is discussed in the chapter s 2.2 and 7.1.
17 the noaidi was always a man according to my sources, even though Sergejeva (1997) disagrees
An important aspect of Saami religious action was sacrifice. In its everyday form sacrifice took place in the dwellings of ordinary people. Sacrifices to the gods like *Horagalles* and *Ruto* were made on special platforms or next to certain trees, usually close to the dwellings of the Saami. In addition, sacrificial activities in certain holy stones called *sieidi* have been reported all over the Saami region. The sieidi stones, considered by some as holy concentrations of divine power, were an integral part of Saami religious activity and many aspects of sieidi worship remain blurred to this day, because of various possibilities in interpretations. There were public sieidis used by the whole community, those that belonged to a certain extended family, and also private ones that were reserved only for one person or his immediate family. Different social roles were also important in the offerings: offerings of the wider society, *siida*\(^\text{18}\), were conducted by the noaidi or other community leader. Family offerings were done by the father or the oldest man of the family and private sieidis received offerings from individuals. It was forbidden for a female to address the sieidi, even though some variations have been reported. The offerings included blood, antlers, grease, bones, flesh and hide of prey animals or fish. Also alcohol, precious metals, tobacco, coins, strings, etc. were offered in later times. Public offerings were often involved in calendric activities like migrations or served as crisis rites conducted in times of starvation or disease. One of the most important functions of the sieidi was its role as a giver of hunting luck. Some stories also tell about sieidis that were broken when proven ineffective. Often the sacrifice was promised through utterance before hunting or fishing: for example a fisherman would promise the sieidi fish heads in exchange for good fishing luck. (Itkonen 1948, 311–313; Pentikäinen 1995, 149–155, Mebius 1972, 66, Mebius 1968, 68–69, 78; Vorren 1987, 96, 101–102; Hultkrantz 1985, 25.)

**4.2 Saami economic culture and its change in the late medieval era**

Because this study largely deals with the beliefs related to subsistence and game animals, it is necessary to survey the economic conditions that impacted the Saami culture in the historical settings this work deals with. Fortunately there are recent studies that shed new

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\(^{18}\) *Siida*: ‘Lapp village’, Saami community or village with common sources of livelihood and territories. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 392)
light on the change in Saami culture. The most traditional forms of livelihood among the Saami in the beginning of historical times in Northern Europe were hunting, fishing and gathering. Gradually, as societal and environmental factors changed, some of the Saami groups went through a cultural change moving from hunting to nomadic pastoralism in terms of large scale reindeer herding around the year 1500. It can be argued, though, that the changing seasons and environmental conditions of the Arctic have constituted in a plurality of subsistence activities, thus reindeer herding is, and was, only one part of Saami subsistence. Not all groups adopted large scale herding as their main livelihood and the importance of reindeer has probably been overemphasized by many scholars. (Pentikäinen 1995, 86–91; Hultkrantz 1965, 292; Bjørnstad et al 2012, 102-108; Røed et al 2010, 83-88.)

The wild and domesticated reindeer are the same species (*Rangifer tarandus*), but still vary biologically and behaviorally. Both early written accounts and archaeological material suggest that a small number of tame deer was common in Saami families before large scale domestication as we know it today: earliest accounts of domestication date back several centuries before large scale herding was adopted. Tame deer were probably used as decoy animals in hunting, but the Saami also used them for milking and as draft animals. Around 1500, many groups started to move from hunting economy to larger scale reindeer husbandry, as shown in a recent cross-disciplinary study. Based on this new evidence provided by the natural sciences we can say, unlike some previous conclusions suggest, that the domesticated reindeer were not genetically native to the most Northern regions of Fennoscandia before the fifteenth century. A new strain of reindeer said to be more easily domesticated because of their social nature was introduced simultaneously with the rise of large scale reindeer husbandry. The domestication process seems to have happened independently in Fennoscandia and Russia. These sources suggest that the culture of large scale reindeer herding was brought to Finnmark area from the Southwest: the actual animals were brought together with the idea of large scale domestication. (Bjørnstad et al 2012, 102-108; Røed et al 2010, 83-88; Magga 2000, 168.)

This domestication process had a great impact on the local economies as wild reindeer were replaced by large domestic herds. It seems that already in the 1690s herds of 700-800 reindeer were kept by the richest Saami. Based on archaeological evidence, a change in settlements and their locations:

“co-occurred with a change in the nature of ownership of reindeer, from being a common resource during the hunt of wild animals to private ownership of the domestic animals. The parallel of both the genetic material and archaeological evidence support a transition to reindeer pastoralism around AD 1400-1500.” (Bjørnstad et al 2012, 102-108.)

Reindeer herding, hunting and fishing were all integral parts of Saami
subsistence, but also gathering, small scale agriculture and pastoralism (etc. goats, cows and sheep) have played their part, the latter two at least among the more sedentary groups, whose subsistence was not dependent on reindeer migrations. The importance of different livelihoods and sources of nutrition has changed greatly according to different areas and times. Different Saami groups have been classified by scholars for example in terms of areal variation (seaside, riverside, forest, fell, etc.), economic conditions (fishing, maritime animal hunting, reindeer herding, etc.) and language groups (Northern Saami, Skolt Saami, Southern Saami, etc.). It can, however, be argued that hardly any group could survive only with one economical scheme of subsistence; the variation and combination of different livelihoods has been a core feature in surviving the natural conditions. Saami groups and their survival have been closely tied with the environment, and this has reflected on the whole culture, its world view and religious ideas. According to Pentikäinen, being a part of a greater whole that is nature, has been a major influence in Saami culture and religion. (Pentikäinen 1995, 349–353.)

As a conclusion, it can be said that while some views might make the claim that cultural change comes from technological innovation happening separately in a predictable sequence, the cases presented above show that reindeer domestication did not occur separately in separate areas; while Russian and Norwegian domesticated reindeer seem to have largely different ancestors, at least in the case of Finnmark the deer were brought along with the idea of large scale herding. In addition, the change was not as complete as is sometimes shown since other forms of livelihood also remained important to the Saami. To get back to the bigger picture, also larger political, religious and philosophical changes happening in Sweden-Finland, Russia and the rest of Europe must be shortly addressed in order to understand the changes happening in Saami culture at the time.

4.3 Political and religious change

The Western missionary efforts. The Saami were, according to Ritva Kylli, the last group of people in Europe to be converted to Christianity. Original documents written by the priests themselves and a few documents by outsiders from the era of Christianization remain as a result, and they are comparatively reliable when compared to documents that describe for
example the conversion process of the Finns in previous centuries. The area of religious change is covered in more detail in chapter 6.2., where it is argued that the first traces of Christian activity in the Western Saami area go back in history many centuries or even a millennium before an active missionary effort by the Swedish powers: Roman Catholic monks, priests and laymen had contact with Saami groups through active trade routes. Archaeological finds tell us that an activating fur trading enterprise in Saami areas resulted in a widening sphere of cultural contacts between the Saami and the outsiders. Some solitary missionaries also took part in introducing the new faith, and a few converts and baptisms have been reported before the beginning of more organized and active Christianization efforts in the sixteenth and especially in the seventeenth centuries. Generally it can be said that prior to this most of the Saami had little knowledge of Christianity. (Kylli 2012, 18, 34-37.)

With the gradual rise to power and finally crowning of the Swedish king Charles IX in 1604, the fate of the areas inhabited by the Saami took a new turn as the century changed. Sweden-Finland took part in several battles under Charles IX’s command, one of them being the battle for a passage to the Arctic Ocean against Denmark-Norway. A new treaty with Russia in 1595 enabled the entry of Swedish powers into the areas inhabited by the Saami; this meant a new era in the religious history of Lapland. The Swedes quickly set up their first churches and taxation systems and began active missionary efforts in most accessible and potential areas in a predominantly Lutheran way. This would also mean a crown-led migration of Finns and Swedes to the Southernmost Saami-inhabited areas and a beginning of an end to the old taxation system, earlier run by privileged men called Birkarls. Ritva Kylli points out that one of the main reasons for Swedish missionary work was to extend the Swedish influence and begin systematic taxation of the Saami areas: Charles IX’s wars in Middle Europe cost a lot of money, and the crown needed loyal taxpayers. Converting the Saami under Christian rule would also mean a steady tax income and more control over their trade affairs. The first churches were built, and Lapland got more attention in the seventeenth century than it had ever gotten before in international politics. Another reason, perhaps peculiar to the modern reader, was that the Lutheran theology that emphasized national efforts resulted in a fear that paganism within Swedish borders would bring ill luck to the whole country. (Kylli 2012, 37-40; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 219.)

As the century got older, Sweden-Finland lost the pathway to the Ocean and the wars in Middle Europe drew attention away from Northern parts, resulting in a decline in Church activities. However as ore mining began to emerge in the area, Sweden-Finland
needed local employees; the thought was that Christians would make better employees than pagans. Several preachers were sent to Lapland, of whom the most influential in Finland was said to be Johannes Tornaeus who even tried to translate Christian texts to Northern Saami language. Thus the gradual Christianization took a turn for the swifter around the 1670s with a more active migration from the South, the founding of several new parishes, building of new churches and chapels and appointing of new priests to the area. By these actions, the Swedish Church and State made several efforts in order to bring Lapland under their regime. The efforts seem to have succeeded well as the amount of baptisms and Christian names rose rapidly at the time. The old beliefs still lingered, however, even though Christian influences grew steadily and also baptized people would at times turn to their old ways. Most of the literary material that has survived to this day is based on this era, after the Christianization process in terms of baptisms had been almost entirely completed. This is a fact that cannot be left out when making assumptions on “original” indigenous Saami religion. (Kylli 2012, 47-56; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 218-221.)

The Eastern missionary work. The conversion process of Eastern Lapland is mostly lost in history. Written documents of this scarcely populated area are few and exclusively written from a Christian point of view. The Orthodox Church has kept documents about the missionary efforts, and some of the hagiographical literature can be thought to be at least partly accurate when looked at from a critical stance. The first major contacts with Christianity and its Eastern variations are thought to have come to the Eastern Saami peoples through peasants arriving from Russia from the beginning of the eleventh century onwards. However, before a more national-oriented Orthodox Church was established with the founding of an independent patriarchate in Moscow year 1489, active efforts to Christianize the Eastern Saami groups were of little importance. From the sixteenth century onwards, however, the religious, political and historical conditions for more active missionary work among the Saami were met with the rise of the Orthodox Christian state of Moscow gaining control over areas inhabited by the Saami. The Tsar of Moscow ordered an active Christian mission that lasted from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the end of the seventeenth. Around that time monasteries gained control over vast areas in the Kola Peninsula, with the simultaneous rise of the Lutheran faith in Scandinavia in the mid-sixteenth century giving further reason for the Orthodox Church to make efforts in converting the Northernmost inhabitants before they became Lutheran instead. Thus the political competition was complementary with the religious motivations of the Orthodox
Because of various historical contacts with Russian and Karelian peoples, the Eastern Saami already had knowledge of the Christian faith before active missionary efforts as early monks settled among the local peoples and began their work. The first groups officially adopted the Christian baptism in 1526. The more remote inland groups were harder to convince, and some groups remained unbaptized until late seventeenth century when they were convinced to convert, partly with monetary gain. Overall, the mission can be seen as successful in bringing at least nominal Christianity among practically all of the Eastern Saami peoples before the year 1700. (Sergejeva 1997, 33-34, 36; Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 218.)

Both Orthodox Christian and historical literature concerning the conversion of the Eastern Saami peoples mention two people in particular: the Orthodox monks Teodorit and Trifon. According to Piiroinen’s hagiographical book on the Orthodox fathers of Karelia, Trifon was born 1494. He worked as a merchant, at the same time preaching the Christian faith to the Saami of Kola Peninsula. His efforts began to take fruit as he learned the language and even built the first church of the area. According to Piiroinen, the monk Teodorit worked with Trifon in bringing the Christian faith to Saami people of the Kola Peninsula. He received his monk’s training in the monastery of Solovetsky, where he met some convert Saamis and learned their language. He later traveled to more rural areas where old beliefs were more prominent to convert the inhabitants and worked there for 20 years. He has been said to have baptized around 2000 converts to the Christian faith. (Piiroinen 1947, 19-23; 65-66.)

If we instead look at a historical account of the events, as presented by Heikki Kirkinen, these men probably did not work together, had different views of monastic life and focused on different areas in their missionary work. Their influence cannot, however, be undermined, since the monasteries and churches they founded were an important influence on the Saami inhabitants of Petsamo and Kola. The main efforts to convert the local inhabitants came from monasteries, although also smaller Christian communities contributed to the process. The most influential era in terms of Christianization was from the 1530s to the great wars around the 1580s. Most of the taxed Saami people were Christians around that era, but as also Kirkinen points out, the old traditions lived on and flourished in private practices even though the inhabitants were nominally Christian. (Kirkinen 1970, 162-169.)

The spread of Christianity was only one part of the Russian colonizing
process, but one of the most profound among the Northeastern Saami. For example taxes and lands were contributed to the use of monasteries and the priests demanded high upkeep in their travels, creating schism between local populations and the Church. In the beginning, Russian Orthodox priests at least tolerated the sort of ‘double religion’ blending of Christian and indigenous religious elements. They were convinced that a native ‘pagan’ was more tolerant towards other religious traditions and thought them all true in a sense. It seems that tolerance towards native views transformed to deep resentment not long after the conversion of Eastern Saami peoples was finished. As a result, the practice of indigenous religion became more private than it was before, while the old belief system remained side by side with Christianity. The indigenous religious belief system thus remained as an integral part of the Eastern Saami culture for decades, even centuries to come. (Sergejeva 1997, 35-36.)
5. OLD TEXTS ON THE SAAMI REVISITED

As the goals, hypotheses, methods as well as the connected theories that might help us in the context of this study have now been elaborated, a short overview of the conditions and backgrounds that concern this inquiry has been brought to the reader’s attention. Before moving on to the introduction of my sources in chapter 5.1 and the making of observations based on the source material in chapter 5.2, it is necessary to further explain how the three-fold scheme introduced in chapter 2.1. is used in the context of this work.

The goal of the first stage of the analysis in chapter 5.2 is to observe patterns that emerge from the seventeenth century texts and concentrate on these patterns when looking at the subsequent ones. My emphasis, based on both the subject of this study and the hypotheses singled out in chapter 1.4., is on 1) anthropomorphic and animistic thinking, 2) beliefs and actions concerning subsistence related activities (namely hunting and fishing luck) and 3) other beliefs about animals. I try to bring forth important information in light of the following stages of my analysis: open the passages I have highlighted from the source material in a way that would bring the author’s ‘own voice’ to the front so that the possible biases and attitudes would emerge to the reader, as well as communicate the findings of recurrent patterns from the material.

The purpose of the second stage in chapter 5.3 is to analyse the contexts and backgrounds of these texts in order to interpret the observations made in chapter 5.2 in a way that makes the identifying of emerging patterns in chapter 5.4 possible. In chapter 6 I make some general remarks based on the previous stages of analysis that concern our research question, before moving to the third stage of analysis. Chapter 7.1 deals with the questions raised by the source material and previous chapters that concern the theories introduced and 7.2 finally attempts to answer the research question that concerns this study.

The reason for this complex, multi-layered and careful analysis can be found in its complex, multi-layered and sensitive subject, together with the general problems that rise from the use of historical sources. My focus is in an attempt to solve the “fork problem” by reviewing different possibilities that the re-interpretation of historical texts and re-evaluation of recent theories offer. This might shed light on the “remainder of the soup” that is lost in history for the most part.
5.1 Primary and secondary textual sources under analysis

Original sources: As original sources I use passages from *Berättelser om Samerna I 1600-talets Sverige* 19, by the vicar of Tornio Johannes Tornaeus, *Berättelse om Lapmarckena och Deras Tillstånd* 20, referred to in the text as (Tornaeus, *Berättelse*) and the chapellan of Inari Gabriel Tuderus *En kort underrättelse om de Österbothniska Lappar som under Kiemi Gebiet lyda* 21, referred to in the text as (Tuderus, *En kort underrättelse*). These texts were compiled and published by K.B. Wiklund in 1909 and the edition I use is from 1983. They were originally authored as materials for Schefferus’ *Lapponia* introduced later in this chapter and have been chosen to represent the Finnish side of Lapland in mid-seventeenth century in this work. As comparative material from a slightly different viewpoint I will use select remarks from a travel log by catholic priest Johan Ferdinand Körningh *Berättelse om en missionsresa till Lappland 1659-60* 22. The edition used was translated from Latin to Swedish in 1956.

Later sources from more Northern areas are the descriptions from Utsjoki by Jacob Fellman *Pomintoja muistiinpanoista Lapissa* 23 translated from Swedish to Finnish and compiled by Agathon Meurman, and *Kertomus Utsjoen pitäjästä* 24 by Anders Andelin in its original form. Both of these sources represent early nineteenth century views by Lutheran priests. Another later source is authored by the French writer Xavier Marmier *Pohjoinen maa: 1800-luvun Lappia ja Suomea ranskalaisen silmin* 25. The most recent source I am going to use is a travel log from the Eastern Saami area, written in German by the Finnish linguist Arvid Genetz and taken from the introduction of his wordbook *Kuollan lappalaisten sanakirja ynnä ääninäytteitä* 26 published in 1891.

A specific pattern of analysis is applied because of reasons further elaborated in chapter 5.3. For example the texts by Tornaeus and Tuderus are earlier and thus less influenced by previous authors. They are in their original language and can be considered to be greater in their value of testimony. The order in which the analysis proceeds is not only determined by chronology and language, but I also try to arrange the sources in the

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19 Stories about the Saami in seventeenth century Sweden
20 A story about the Lappmarks and their state. Lappmark is a Swedish administrative term referring to different areas in Lapland
21 A short story about the Ostrobotnian Saami under the area of Kemi
22 A story about a missionary journey to Lapland 1659-60
23 Highlights from notes taken in Lapland
24 A story about the Utsjoki parish
25 A Northern land: 19th century Lapland and Finland through the eyes of a Frenchman
26 A wordbook of the Kola Saami including samples
order of their trustworthiness. Genetz’s description of the East Saami deserves a subchapter of its own, because this work deals with Finnish Lapland and it is thus considered to be complementary: it is included to elucidate the Orthodox Saami groups in contrast with the more Western Saami.

Secondary sources: Certain secondary sources are used as sources proper for this thesis for the simple reasons of limited time and language skills. To have a view of the earliest lappological descriptions of the Saami, I chose to use the Finnish version of Johannes Shefferus’ *Lapponia* as it gives a fairly well constructed review of written information about the Saami available in its time. Even though *Lapponia* cannot be considered to be a first hand source, the information it presents on the zeitgeist of concurrent authors and the wide base of information it constructs in a surprisingly analytical manner make it valuable as a source in this study.

As I have restricted my scope to the present day Finnish Lapland and its nearest vicinity, a great part of the comparative information from other parts comes from Uno Harva and his books *Lappalaisten Uskonto* (1915) and *Die Wassergottheiten der Finnisch-ugrischen Völker* (1913), both used in their original languages of Finnish and German. Harva puts forward an impressive and diverse source-base of information, and seems to be interested in the similar topics, namely the animation of nature and subsistence-concerned beliefs, as fits this work. Thus I consider his observations to be of value and believe his presentations can be interpreted in a productive manner. Even though he does not rely on his own ethnography, at least in his work on the Saami, he provides a wide base of knowledge and masters the Swedish, Norwegian, German and Russian languages.

Most of the knowledge I managed to gather for this study concerning the Saami in general come from these two authors. While in another kind of study they should perhaps be considered as background material, in this study I intend to use them as my sources proper because they represent different explanation models for interpreting aspects of Saami religion and give a wider source-base of information that touches the Saami area in general terms. The main issue with these original and secondary sources is that they only present us with a partial view of the life in different historical settings in Lapland, and as most of them are revised, translated, or both, their testimony is somewhat compromised in terms of ethnohistory. These problems are further discussed in the chapter 5.3. The terms used by the authors are in their original form when introduced, but when used for the

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27 Context analysis and testimony of material are discussed in chapter 5.3.
28 The religion of the Lapps
29 Water divinities of the Finno-Ugric peoples
second time their spelling is altered to correspond to the terms used in *The Saami: A Cultural Encyclopedia* (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkki, ed, 2005) so that they are easier to follow.

### 5.2 Beliefs concerning animals and anthropomorphic thinking

#### 5.2.1 Primary sources

*Johannes Tornaeus, Berättelse om Lapmarckena och Deras Tillstånd*: Tornaeus, in his description of Saami religion he calls ‘*Lapparnas Forna Afguderij*’ or ‘idolatry of the Lapps’, writes that the Saami worshiped stones, poles and stumps. Each village and individual person had their own gods and sometimes the individual ones were located next to fishing lakes. On occasion, the whole village would take part in ‘*seita*’ offerings, conducted at sites located on the tops of fells or on a special altar or platform. Tornaeus writes that the sieidi was a particular wooden or stone figure made either by human hand or nature. The stones were, according to him, moulded for example by water, and the wooden figures were either tree stumps or poles that were planted in the ground. He mentions a set of anthropomorphic stones on a particular island, *Darrakoski*, and a wooden sieidi called *Wirku Accha*, worshiped by many Saami for luck in hunting and fishing. (Tornaeus, *Berättelse*, 23-28.)

Tornaeus also describes an anthropomorphic ‘master’ or ‘owner’ of nature[^30], the ‘*Träske Råån*’, translatable as the owner of the lake. These owners he describes generally living in small holy lakes called ‘*Saivo*’, filled with fish. These lakes had to be addressed with reverence and cleanliness and offerings were given to these holy lakes that were thought to have two bottoms. Sometimes the fish that live in these lakes hide in this double bottom; this means the owner of the lake has become angry and must be pacified through sacrifice. Another example of this master-entity is given when Tornaeus compares it to a more Western concept ‘*storjunkare*[^31]’: sometimes this figure, who gives luck in

[^30]: The problematic concept and category of ‘masters or owners of nature’ and is used as a heuristic term and is further discussed in chapters 5.4., 6.1. and 7.

[^31]: ‘Storjunkare’ is a concept that remains somewhat obscured. It is used interchangeably with sieide in many sources, but has also been thought to have other meanings. Harva, for example, identifies him with the
fishing and hunting, is seen in the form of a human with the feet of a bird standing in a boat or on the bank. (Tornaeus, *Berättelse* 23-28.)

Tornaeus proceeds next to describe the Saami drum. Its use was a skill taught by father to son, and it could be used as a divination instrument for example when asking if the hunting and fishing was going to be successful. On the drum’s skin were painted pictures of among other things different animals and fish. The divination was conducted by hammering the skin, thus moving a special ring or small object made of metal that was set on the skin. When the object stopped on a specific animal figure one could predict the outcome of the hunt. Tornaeus himself interprets this as the work of ‘Devil himself and his forest-god Seitä’ (Tornaeus, *Berättelse*, 29-31.)

Gabriel Tuderus, *En kort underrättelse om the Österbothniske Lappar som under Kiemi Gebiet lyda*: Tuderus describes the Kemi and Inari Saami in harsh detail: even though they are baptized Christians with Christian names, they are sanctimonious and still continue to practice their idolatry of worshiping stones and groves, singing hymns to bears, practicing witchcraft and the offering of animals; thus worshiping the Devil in person. He names the unholy backdoor of the ‘kåta’, ‘passionreika’\(^{32}\) where bloody meat of caught animals is thrown in. Women would chew red alder bark and spit it from their mouths onto the face of the hunter after he had thrown the meat in, in order to preserve the hunter’s luck. Women were never to use this back door. Tuderus has written down one of the aforementioned bear songs, originally sung in Finnish, and then gives two translations in Swedish. (Tuderus, *En kort underrättelse*, 11-13.)

Tuderus also describes offerings given to a stone called ‘Zeit eller Råå’. He proceeds to describe as a form of divination: the Saami would ask which animal they would have to offer, and to which god, by lifting a stone and trying its weight. If the demanded animal was a live deer, the Saami would tie it to a certain pole erected for the sacrificial purpose. After a time they would slay the animal by striking it in the head with an axe. Then both the divination stone and the pole would be smeared with the animal’s blood and parts of the flesh would be tied to the pole. After a sacrificial meal, the leftover meat, all bones and the animal’s skin would have to be preserved. If the offered animal, however, was a dead deer shot previously, only the head, skin and the heart would have to be offered. After this, the hunter would go back to his goahti by using the boaššu door and hope for good hunting luck after the sacrifice. (Tuderus, *En kort underrättelse*, 14-16.)

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\(^{32}\) *goahti*, saami tent-like dwelling. *Boaššu*, back door of a saami dwelling and its rear corner. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 133 & 41.)
Following this description, Tuderus describes the Saami noaidi’s trance and a form of drum divination made by hammering the drum’s skin that was painted with animal figures, thus asking a ‘ring’ that moved on the skin which animal should be offered to which stone. According to Tuderus, these devilish ways of worshiping ‘stumps and stones, bears and deer instead of gods’ have diminished because Swedish kings have forbidden them in order to bring the Saami to proper ways of worship. He writes that in the summer the Saami would roam the forests like wild animals, but in the winter priests were able to teach them to read, teach them about God and His will and baptize their children. Thus the tamest of them have abandoned their old ways and adopted the Christian Religion. (Tuderus, *En kort underrättelse*, 14-16.)

*Johan Ferdinand Körningh: Berättelse om en missionsresa till Lappland 1659-60:* Körningh writes that the Saami are still not Christians in his opinion, as they still continue to worship graven images and wooden statues. Concerning animals, he writes that the noaidi was a powerful witch and could do harm to an enemy over a distance by calling wolves to his aid. The noaidi would use the help of his aiding spirits that were in the form of fish, deer and birds. The noaidi’s drum was used for better luck in catching fish and prey as well as for divination. Like Tuderus, he also describes the divination by lifting a stone and the holy back door boaššu that was used when engaged in hunting or sacrifice. (Körningh 1956, 44-53.)

*Jacob Fellman: Poimintoja muistiinpanoista Lapissa:* Fellman describes the Saami world view to reflect their mirthless surroundings, making their religion seem childish and naïve. According to him, their worship was directed towards the reverence of natural miracles and the satisfying of mundane needs. He writes that almost every family had their own idols of ‘Tiermes’, ‘Beive’ and ‘Stuorra Junker’ close to their homes, which the Saami would worship by praying and making sacrifices to them. Not only families, but also private persons and whole villages had their own objects of worship. Sacrifices which involved the whole village were conducted by the village elder, or in more important occasions, the ‘noide’. The sieidis had their own sphere of influence. (Meurman 1907, 39-41.)

Fellman argues that these sieidis were in places where supernatural entities were thought to reside, or in particular natural formations like mountaintops, high rocks, boulders, islands, peninsulas or in the vicinity of a cave or a spring. Thus many places were named after these beliefs, in particular holy mountains (‘passe’ or ‘ailesvarre’) and rivers.
and lakes (‘passejok’, ‘passejavre’, ‘ailesjok’, ‘ailesjavre’). Also sacred groves and trees had their owners (haltia) and were worshiped by the Saami. All these sacrificial places had a sieidi made of stone (‘Gedgge Jubmel’) or wood (‘Muorra Jubmel’), a sacrificial altar or platform surrounded with deer horns and green branches of birch in the summer and spruce or pine branches during the winter. These holy places were forbidden to women and the men would always use the back door of their dwellings, also forbidden to women, when leaving for sacrifice. (Meurman 1907, 44-53.)

Sieidis were either made out of wood by man himself or molded out of stone by nature, of which the latter was considered to be of greater importance. The wooden sieidis were placed next to fishing lakes and rivers, but also next to dwellings. They were tree stumps or poles, located on, or next to, an altar and made in the likeness of a human or an animal. The holy stones (‘Passe gedgge’) were special stones that would stand out from the rest of the environment. Anthropomorphic stones (‘Gedgge olmush’) were considered to be of special power. Smaller and movable holy stones were placed in similar places as wooden figures. Fellman writes that these sieidis were not considered sacred as such, but were initiated by smearing the fat of a caught animal or fish in order to gain good luck in catching fish or animals in the future. These smearings would have to continue in order to preserve the sieidi’s effectiveness: if the sieidi would prove to be ineffective and luck would run dry, they were abandoned or even destroyed; this was in especially true when the village had to move for better hunting or fishing grounds. He believes that the custom of destroying sieidis was more common in the beginning of Christian times and quotes a few stories thereof. Fellman also mentions the stone-lifting and drum divination mentioned above. He adds that the noaidi’s role in both the destruction and the initiation of the sieidi was crucial. (Meurman 1907, 42-48.)

Fellman also touches upon the topic of folk tales and ‘juoigam’, a form of chanting particular to the Saami he sees as ‘simple’ and ‘childish’ that was banned and punishable even by death in earlier times. Whereas juoigam normally concentrated on everyday matters, Fellman introduces a particular form of ‘Tolas juoigam’ that touches supernatural entities and matters; with its help one could make the waters and forests abundant with game, have good health and luck and summon supernatural powers from underground entities and giants as well as birds. In these songs and stories, according to Fellman, the Saami speak to rivers, brooks and waters as living beings. Marmier describes

33 Bassi has a common root with the Finnish word Pyhä, meaning ‘holy’ or ‘sacred’. Ailigas is an interchangeable term and derives from Germanic languages. It has a common root with helig (Scand.), heilig (German) and holy (English) (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 9 & 32.)
34 Juoiggingus: a monophonic form of traditional Saami vocal music, best described as chanting. General concept. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005, 46.)
a similar account; according to him the Saami tell folk tales that anthropomorphize rapids by giving them human names and attributing them with ears, eyes, smile, song and anger. He adds that some stones have been endowed with their own stories. Fellman moves on to describe folk tales about wizard fights and animal transformations, where battles were won with the help of Saami ancestors or other supernatural forces. In addition, supernatural beings like ‘Tiermes’ and ‘Aasa-Thor’ who hunted giants and spirits and helped the Saami in battles against foreign enemies were summoned in these stories and chants. (Meurman 1907, 49-56, 92; Marmier 1999, 52.)

In a story about a journey to Lake Inari Fellman also mentions ‘Ukko’ or “old man”, who is considered a subordinate of the Christian god and responsible for thunder. In one travel story Fellman’s Saami driver says in the middle of a storm that the wind man ‘Biega Olmai’ is angered. Particularly interesting is Fellman’s travel record from the Orthodox Christian Saami parts. He writes that the Russian Saami still practice shamanism and sacrifice to the sieidis. Fellman writes that they are uncivilized, cruel and dull. Their conception of God is very unclear and they call the thunder, the rainbow and the sun their gods (‘Ibmel’). They also perceive rapids as persons having moods and owners that should be revered. He moreover describes a ritual activity where the Saami kneel before the sun and call it their god. (Meurman 1907, 131-132, 204, 327-328, 335, 337-338.)

Anders Andelin: Kertomus Utsjoen pitäjästä: Meurman’s selected records of Fellman’s notes from Lapland give little description on the Saami gods. Andelin, on the other hand, gives an extensive account of the pantheon of different gods on pages 237-273 of his Muistiinpanoja Utsjoen pitäjästä and describes ritual activities that involve animals on many occasions. He mentions many taboos and ritual practices concerning the bear hunt, most importantly the sexual restrictions and the back door that was used in the hunt. The bones of hunted bears and sacrificial animals like reindeer were preserved after the hunt and new flesh was thought to grow back on them. If the bones were correctly preserved, the sacrificed animal would grow bigger and could be seen on the slopes of their holy ‘saivo’ mountains. A wooden idol, smeared with grease and blood, was placed on top of a special wooden chest made for the bones. Sacrifices were made in the autumn, but crisis sacrifices were made all year round. The object of the sacrifice was determined by divination. (Andelin 1858, 191, 260, 266, 268.)

These beliefs are closely tied to Saami soul conceptions as animal and human souls were thought to have a same origin: ‘akka’ goddesses or ‘serge-aedne’. Deer, birds and bears were also thought to travel to the same place as humans after death, ‘Jabme-
aimo’, where they would continue to live much like in this world. This was closely linked to the belief that a person consisted of three elements: life, breath and soul. Andelin writes that the ‘saivo’ beliefs were the main article of faith for the Saami: the noaidis helping spirits, dead relatives, sacrificed animals and many of the gods lived in the holy saivo mountains. Concerning fishing and hunting luck, the same kinds of patterns emerge as previously: in the lakes and fells where the Saami hunted, different kinds of entities were thought to reside. These entities lived in the forests and looked after its beasts, or lived in the waters and looked after the fish. The god of the forest was ‘Leib-olmai’ and the god of fishing was ‘cacce (tssjatstse) olmai’, and both were worshiped through prayer and offerings. They were thought, according to Andelin, to be human-like and give luck in hunting and fishing. (Andelin 1858, 240-242, 256-268.)

Andelin describes the god of thunder, ‘Ukko’ or ‘Aeye’ and his wife ‘Akka’. He writes that closest to Ukko was ‘Seid’, to whom reindeer and fish grease were sacrificed. Andelin states that humans always look for good fortune and luck, so they naturally turn to earthly things. Thus the Saami worshiped sieidi stones found on the banks of waters and tops of fells. He has also written down a story of the origin of a particular sieidi: a noaidi was trying to bring a herd of deer to be hunted by the village men, when a servant disturbed him during soul travel and he turned into stone. Andelin believes all sieidi stones had similar background stories. The sieidi was presented with blood and grease from deer and fish. He also mentions a mermaid-like being called ‘Akkruvva’, who brings schools of fish to rivers and beings called ‘vesi-raukat’ thought to be the souls of the drowned. (Andelin 1858, 274-286.)

Arvid Genetz: Kuollan lappalaisten sanakirja ynnä ääninäyteitää: Genetz gives a description of the back door of the house that was in widespread use only 20 years before his journey and still used by some Kola Saami groups. This supports previously highlighted accounts: the back door was used when leaving and returning from hunting and could only be used by men. (Genetz 1891, xxxiii) He introduces beings that are somewhat obscure and open for interpretation, including several kinship explanations and genealogies of a pantheon of sixteen gods. Considering the emphasis of this work, beings worthy of mention include for example Mintiš, who is a deer that removes his pelt and horns and turns into a human, marrying the youngest daughter of an old couple. Her older sisters marry a seal and a raven. Other relevant beings are Rāiz-ajk, who is responsible for grass growth and thus being vital to reindeer herding and Tava who watches over fishing and

35 This pantheon is further discussed in the chapter 5.3.
hunting. Rāiz-sijt and Koamtka were anthropomorphic beings clothed in white, responsible for fishing luck and health. They also aided the Saami in battle. Rāiz-sijt is related by Genetz to the concept of sieidi in more Western Saami areas and he describes certain stones that were approximately a meter high and organized in groups of three to five; these were called tāippe or sijti-tāippe, to which sacrifices of reindeer and smaller objects were made. They were described by Christians to be homes of angry spirits. Koamtka was in Genetz’s etymological view the god of the noaidi’s drum and Rāiz-sijt a protecting spirit of grass growth. (Genetz 1891, xxxix-xliv.)

After describing his pantheon of gods, Genetz introduces other beings including the owners or spirits (jielle) of the home, the forest and of the waters. The owners of water lived in rivers and lakes and were considered dangerous to humans. These Genetz interprets as loans. He proceeds to write about Āc who were angry and malevolent small women living underground next to rich fishing lakes. Genetz argues that between different entities and men was the ‘Niøjte’, sorcerer and seer. This noaidi could for example acquire information on fishing and hunting luck and ask which gods demanded offerings. According to Genetz, there still existed those who claimed to possess such powers in 1876. They used their drums, which were personified in Genetz’ pantheon as Koamtka, in order to sink into a trance and perform different rituals. (Genetz 1891, xxxix-xliv.)

According to Genetz, the ritual activity of sacrifice had mostly ceased 20 years before his journey (in 1876) took place, so this means they were in wide practice as late as 1850s. These offerings usually took place next to the abovementioned sijti-tāippe and were conducted by the noaidi. They slaughtered the reindeer and cooked it, ate what they could and left the rest of the flesh as well as the reindeer horns and pelt on the spot. The pelt was set on a wooden ‘bock’ in order to resemble a live reindeer. After describing the outlines of this ritual, he gives an account of ritual revitalization: after several accidental deaths, sicknesses and worsening fishing and hunting luck, the ‘Semiostrowskischen lappen’, due to advice given by a noaidi, began to practice this ritual sacrifice again. Men and old wives left the village to a faraway place, erected two houses, took with them twelve reindeer and slaughtered one reindeer a day for twelve subsequent days. These sacrifices were conducted next to sijti-tāippe, far away from the ‘unclean’ women. After all the animals were slaughtered in a ritual manner and twelve hides were placed in resemblance of live reindeer, the houses were dismantled and the

36 1 ½-2 ½ ‘ellen’: cubits
37 Semiostrowskischen lappen living in the areas of Varzin (Varzina) and Ljavoversk (Lovozero). (Genetz 1891, x) See map 1 in attachments.
sacrifices came to an end. These rituals were conducted in the winter of 1874 and were planned to continue after the New Year of 1877. (Genetz 1891, xlv-xliv.)

5.2.2 Schefferus and Harva

The passages by Schefferus and Harva should be considered as complementary material, because of the reasons stated in chapter 5.1. I still hope they provide an insight and give further support to the general patterns I intend to track down in light of the primary material. I have ignored the overlapping that occurs when Schefferus and Harva quote my primary sources.

*Johannes Schefferus:* Schefferus describes sieidi worship on many occasions. He mentions stones erected to honor the *storjunkare*, who was a being controlling all animals. Quoting one of his sources (Rheen) he connects the storjunkare with bears, wolves, foxes, squirrels, reindeer, fish and birds. The storjunkare is responsible for good hunting luck. He gives game as a gift to the Saami and has a specific spatial area of influence. According to him, the Saami on the Finnish side simply called this god ‘*Seita*’. The sieidi stones are, according to Schefferus’ sources (Niurenius & Rheen) in the likeness of humans and animals; they are “stone gods the Saami have found on fells and shores”. These stones are sometimes arranged in the likeness of families. (Schefferus 1963, 158-160, 164, 170-179, 182-183.)

The act of sacrifice to the sieidi is described as being one allowed to only men. Different kinds of animals are sacrificed, and sacrificial activity takes place usually during autumn. First a divination is conducted by asking the Saami drum whether the sacrificial animal is suitable and to which god the sacrifice should be made. After the divination, the animal is slaughtered, its legs are cut off and its blood and fat are smeared on a wooden idol, which is then buried together with the legs of the animal. Schefferus’ sources report accounts of the sacrificing of bones, head, grease and blood. The flesh of the animal is eaten by the participants. If a live deer is offered, however, it is killed in the sacrificial place and eaten by participants: the hide is left on the ground and could remain there for years. Also a custom of burying the sacrificed animal’s bones is mentioned. (Schefferus 1963, 158-160, 164, 170-179, 182-183.)
Another activity described is a divination which is performed by lifting a stone, where questions concerning hunting and fishing luck are queried by feeling a stone’s weight and uttering questions about hunting and fishing luck and a favorable direction for the hunt. If the stone feels light, it is considered a positive answer and vice versa. The aforementioned drum divination is also used the asking of these questions. Other beliefs about hunting described in the previously introduced sources are portrayed by Schefferus in similar detail as well. The holy back door and other restrictions towards women and hunting are mentioned, as well as certain days on which hunting is forbidden or at least brings ill favor to the hunter. (Schefferus 1963, 180, 200, 210, 311-313, 329, 439.)

An important and often stressed part of animal relations among the Saami is the special reverence with which the bear is treated. It is perceived as the king of animals and as being under the protection of certain owners of the forest. Schefferus and his sources discuss the ritual hunt of the bear in great detail: a bear hunt is laden with taboos, beliefs and ritual sanctions. Some of these include certain procedures of approaching the bear, certain luohti\textsuperscript{38} chants that address the bear, the beating of its corpse with branches, restrictions concerning women and sexual intercourse during and after the ritual hunt, certain ritual arrangements in eating and preparing the flesh and finally burying the bear’s bones in full anatomical order. (Schefferus 1963, 180, 200, 210, 311-313, 329, 439.)

Uno Harva: In addition to the previously introduced sources, Harva describes sieidi worship in great detail. He argues that different sieidis had different functions: some were asked for luck in fishing, some in hunting, herding, health etc. They were said to vary greatly in sizes and shapes, sometimes they even formed families. The Saami asked questions from the stones by lifting them (divination mentioned above). Some sieidis were located close to water, even in water, others on the peaks of fells. The places they were located at were considered holy; certain behavior, such as shouting and sleeping, was forbidden in their vicinity. Again, these restrictions were especially directed at women. These regulations applied to some holy lakes as well. An example of a related ritual practice mentioned is that bones of the fish captured from these lakes were to be kept in the water they were caught in before given to dogs. Some of these holy places were still revered in the beginning of the twentieth century, and certain codes of conduct were followed in their vicinity. (Holmberg 1915, 29-34.)

According to Harva’s sources (Olsen, Fellman, Tornaeus), the village sieidis

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\textsuperscript{38} Luohti, refers to a particular chant, whereas juoiggu refers to chanting in general. (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari & Pulkkinen (ed) 2005)
were located on top of fells whereas the private sieidis were situated on lower ground. Sieidi could appear to the Saami as an anthropomorphic figure, a man in fine clothing. Harva writes that some stories describe the sieidi stones as humans turned to stones. The anthropomorphic qualities of these sieidis and metamorphoses into birds are further elaborated with examples from Russian and Swedish Saamis. He proceeds to make the claim that sieidi worship was actually a form of veneration of the dead. Also wooden sieidis were worshiped: they were stumps or poles. One of Harva’s sources (Appelgren) describes certain wooden figures erected on the banks of good fishing spots to venerate the ‘gods of water’. Harva argues that the wooden sieidi was made in the likeness of the entity to which the sacrifice was made and only used once. The stone sieidis were considered more powerful. (Holmberg 1915, 29-34.)

The act of sacrifice itself is described in the primary sources, and on this subject Harva gives us few new insights. Among the reindeer-herding Saami, the sacrificed animal was slaughtered, its flesh was cooked and eaten, certain stones were smeared with the animal’s blood and fat by the noaide, the bones and pelt were preserved and brought to the place of sacrifice. During these rituals the partakers would sing special songs, luohti. One of Harva’s sources (Jessen) describes how different parts of the animal were preserved, especially the reproductive organ of the male deer, by the noaidi and buried. A wooden figure was then made and smeared with blood. Among the fishing Saami, the fisherman promised certain parts of his catch to the sieidi, were he to be lucky in his fishing. According to one of Harva’s sources (Samilin), certain stones were presented with the entrails and scales of the fish caught in order to ensure the favor of the owners of the lake also in the future times. Women were not allowed to approach these stones. One of his sources (Leem) describes a certain stone in Norway called guuli-jbmel or fish god, that also received sacrifice in hopes of securing good catches. Another source (Qvigstad) describes a sacrificial activity both before and after fishing. (Holmberg 1915, 39-43; Holmberg 1913, 25.)

Bear ceremonialism has also been previously described in great detail and Harva does not give much extra information that is of relevance to the subject at hand. The holy back door, ritual sanctions concerning women and hunting, the bear’s understanding of human language connected to singing during hunting rituals, sanctioned eating and preparation of the flesh, the preservation of bones in anatomical order and sexual taboos are some of the most important recurrent patterns. One intriguing detail is the power thought to be manifested in the bear’s blood, heart and kidneys. The flesh was not to be

39 This theoretical assumption is further discussed in chapter 5.3.
preserved, but eaten on the spot. After describing bear ceremonialism, Harva addresses the preservation of bones and argues, based on one of his sources (Thurenius), that not only the bear, but also the hare’s and the lynx’s bones were preserved in anatomical order and buried so that no predator could dig them up. The bones of fish and other animals living in the water were reportedly buried in springs. (Holmberg 1915, 43-52.)

According to Harva, one of his sources (Itkonen) describes how fish bones were set back into the water the fish were taken from and another (Niurenus) describes how a wolf’s skeleton was placed on a tree’s branches. Harva compares these traditions to Native American customs of burying bison skeletons in order for them to be reborn, and Inuit tradition of returning seal bones to the sea. Thus, he states, that life is preserved when the skeleton is preserved. An informant from ‘gellivaara’ has stated that he had placed a bird’s head, feet and wings on a stone in order for them to grow new flesh. According to Harva, this notion is also true of the bear: when the bones are preserved, the bear comes back to life. This practical reason Harva sees as the source for the development of more complex ritual activity. (Holmberg 1915, 43-52; Holmberg 1913, 5.)

Harva identifies several masters or owners of nature, out of which many have been previously introduced, so I mainly focus on aspects that have not yet been discussed. Harva introduces one of his Russian sources (Haruzin), according to whom the Saami believed in certain semi-anthropomorphic figures or masters of the forest called miehts-hojzin, and luot-hojzik. The latter was a half-deer, half human entity which looks after the reindeer during their grazing in the forest and helps in hunting. Harva compares it to the previously introduced reindeer being, mintiš. Also birds had their own masters. Out of water beings, the most recurrent figure influencing fishing luck and looking over fish was čacce olmai, described by several of Harva’s sources. One of these sources (Itkonen) describes a being who shows itself in many forms; a woman, a child or a peculiarly acting fish like a flounder or a burbot. These fish called mārdes are considered sacred and might reveal themselves in dreams. According to Harva, they are premonitions of death. (Holmberg 1915, 86-91; Holmberg 1913, 33, 36-45.)

Another water-sprite is the ‘tšatše-jienne’, a female being protecting water-birds and potentially malevolent toward humans. Harva also describes the aforementioned beings afruvva and ravgga, the more Western saiva-nieida who lives in saivo lakes, and nekke, a dangerous being known for attempting to drown people. Another water being, argued by Harva to be a Finnish cultural loan, is the tšatse-haldde, to which small sacrifices were made. Harva describes how the first fish caught in the springtime was sacrificed to this haldde by placing the bones back to the water unbroken. He quotes a
similar activity gathered by one of his sources (Meriläinen) from Kautokeino of a ritually sanctioned treatment and preservation of bones concerning the first fish of the season. Many of these water beings are described as seen in dreams and having sexual relations with humans. (Holmberg 1915, 86-91; Holmberg 1913, 33, 36-45.)

5.3 Context analysis and testimony of material

In this section I am going to utilize the previously defined method of context analysis in an attempt to point out the biases and underlying theoretical assumptions of the sources and their authors in order to find out how these may have influenced the material. This should allow us to re-interpret the source material in a manner through which less biased recurrent patterns could be pointed out and put in context in order to proceed to the second part of my analysis. I will endeavor to keep in mind that the biases and prejudices the authors possess are sometimes difficult to point out, and that arriving at definite answers through the interpretation of historical texts is close to impossible. My underlying hypothesis in this section of the analysis is an accumulation of knowledge and the organizing thereof that moulds the material from the seventeenth century onwards. My hypothesis posits that the information becomes more theoretically oriented and more complex the further we travel forward in time.

5.3.1. Seventeenth century sources

The introduction by Phebe Fjellström and afterword by Israel Ruong written for the 1983 edition of K. B. Wiklund’s Berättelser om Samerna I 1600 talets Sverige give short, but informative descriptions of the authors of these texts and their purpose: the texts were originally ordered by Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie to be used as background for Johannes Schefferus’ Lapponia. One of the authors of these texts, Johannes Tornaeus served as vicar for the Tornio parish for 41 years and travelled to the Northern regions of his area every year; namely Enontekiö, Inari and even as far as Utsjoki. Tuderus, on the other hand, had a
harsh attitude towards the indigenous beliefs of the Saami. His language is hard to follow for a modern reader who is not a native Swedish speaker and he does not give many examples to back his statements. His religious bias is so clear it can be said to figuratively jump on the reader.

Körningh, like many other coeval authors, shows fear towards the Saami and their customs; he believes in the efficacy of Saami witchcraft and its diabolical origin in earnest. (Körningh 1956, 44) However, these texts should be seen as valuable information since they are among the earliest written, first-hand accounts of Saami religion: their authors should be seen in their temporal context and their attitudes and goals should be considered. To give an example of the influences he might have had, Körningh describes his encounter with Tornaeus (Körhning 1956, 22-24), who was probably largely responsible for Körhning’s knowledge on Saami indigenous religion. Körningh still make separate observations and inferences that should be seen as valuable observations in comparison to other authors since he managed to ‘infiltrate’ situations otherwise forbidden to outsiders. (Kylli 2012, 90, Körningh 1956, 24.)

The underlying ‘theory’ of the seventeenth century sources is the Christian faith that does neither attempt to understand nor explain the perceived phenomena in more complex terms. This idea of wild and child-like peoples living under the influence of Satan, practicing worst kinds of idolatry and immoral activities, is a prevailing one. The soul beliefs are seen as misunderstandings and as hard to grasp by the authors. A good example of this is Schefferus' explanation of the noaidi’s trance as spirit possession instead of soul travel, because “the devil can't bring back a soul once it has departed”, but instead “lies possessed by the devil, without the ability to move”. (Schefferus 1963, 206-207.)

5.3.2. Early nineteenth century sources

Based on the nineteenth century texts from Fellman and Andelin, it seems that priestly attitudes towards the Saami softened as they adopted Christianity more whole-heartedly compared to the previous centuries. The indigenous beliefs of the Saami were however still viewed in a similar manner and the practice of old customs still seen as idolatry or false ‘magical’ or ‘folk religious’ beliefs, if not straightforward devil worship and witchcraft like in the seventeenth century sources. Fellman, for example, demonstrates a little less racially
motivated biased view as he shows empathy and understanding towards at least Lutheran Christian Saami. (Meurman 1907, 93-96.)

On the other hand, a striking example is his journey report from Russian Lapland. While he otherwise shows himself as a cosmopolite and as an understanding individual towards the Saami, he shows great disdain towards the religious ways of the Eastern Saami. His aim might also lie in simply emphasizing the work done by Lutheran priests in fighting the old beliefs and contrasting it with the work done by their Russian Orthodox counterparts. (Meurman 1907, 96, 326-337) He has also been criticized of interpreting Saami religious beliefs in a predominantly Finnish frame: he is said to have compared the pre-Christian religions of the Finns and the Saami in an uncritical way.\(^{40}\) (Kylli 2012, 31.)

In light of context analysis and the hypothesis on accumulation of knowledge, it is important to elaborate the accumulation of knowledge between the seventeenth and nineteenth century authors. The early eighteenth century Norwegian and Swedish authors’ contribution to the information we have on the Saami is explained by Rydving, Harva and Widén. The Danish-Norwegian priests, coming from a pietist missionary station in Copenhagen with the lead of Thomas von Westen, were more scholarly and theologically oriented (Holmberg 1915, 10) and stressed different aspects in their missionary work because of their religious commitment to Lutheran pietism. (Widén 1980, 270; Rydving 1993, 34) Even though their contemporary Swedish counterparts had similar religious backgrounds, the Norwegians stressed individual conversion and discussions, especially with the noaidi, and a lot of the material usable by the later authors is based on this material. (Rydving 1993, 34-35.)

What follows thereof, is that the information the pietist Norwegians, gathered with von Westen’s lead, is gathered by interviewing the noaidis. They were arguably in the possession of different knowledge on soul concepts, had different sorts of divinities as well as different ritual actions than the ‘layman’ Saami. The noaidis were of more interest to the priests who sought these sorts of answers, being particularly interested about different gods and for example views of the afterworld. The individual noaidis had differing views on religious matters and thus their separate concepts were partly adopted as common knowledge about the Saami religious sphere. Therefore the subsequent sources are not arranged regionally, but information concerning the Norwegian Saami was applied uncritically to other Saami groups and the ‘common folk’ as well. (Rydving 1993, 20, 34.)

\(^{40}\) Fellman’s criticism is interesting in light of later authors who have used him as a source incl. Harva, whose biases are discussed later in the chapter
This has probably resulted in an emphasis on supernatural matters like gods or spirits in contrast with more practical sides of Saami religion.

Andelin himself writes in *Kertomus Utsjoen pitäjästä* (page 240) that the information on different Saami gods he has described is written down from discussions with noaidis and shows lot of Christian influences. He writes (page 273), not informing the reader to which parts he refers to, that the religion described is from the Norwegian (‘Ruija’) side and has been written down by the priest Jessen. Pages 237–273 are thus arguably plagiarized from Norwegian sources, at least in part, and thus other parts of the book should be considered to have more value of testimony based on the directness of their reportage. From the page 273 onwards, Andelin begins to focus more on the Finnish side of Utsjoki and Inari: these I consider to be more relevant to me as first hand sources describing the main focus area.

The emphasis and influences from the Norwegian sources then arguably followed to influence the works of Andelin and Fellman, and they only occasionally state their sources. It is clear in the light of these factors that at least parts of information they present us of the indigenous religion of the Saami is influenced by concurrent views and does not necessarily represent a specified area. What follows, is that in addition to their priestly ways of observance, previous authors have largely influenced what they know about Saami indigenous religion: this must have influenced the way they observed and made judgments about the Saami living in Finland.

When Andelin and Fellman describe Saami religious activities, at least some parts are references to earlier authors from other areas than their own. I conclude that they are influenced by Norwegian sources from the eighteenth century, arguably even to the point of plagiarism. Even though indigenous Saami religion does seem to possess a common “core”, an overly monolithic view⁴¹ of Saami indigenous religion still prevails in these sources. This perhaps stems from the dichotomy of Christian authors setting it against Christianity. They should thus be considered somewhat less biased, but more unreliable in terms of testimony when compared to the previous seventeenth century sources that are more biased, but also more direct in reportage. The earlier biases are, according to my hypothesis, more visible and thus easier to identify.

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⁴¹ This monolithic view is discussed for example in chapter 2.2. for a more detailed criticism see Rydving 1993, 23-27.
5.3.3. Genetz and Harva

While his description is not very long and his underlying theories are more challenging to point out, Arvid Genetz’s description of the East Saami works as a valuable comparison to the other original sources introduced above. Genetz’s description of the East Saami religious sphere, which he describes as Christian paganism (‘christlich-heidnische’), comes from members of more Eastern groups and includes a polytheistic model of interpreting the Saami religious sphere by identifying 16 distinct gods. (Genetz 1891, xix, xxxix) I find the polytheistic model biased due to the common tendency of the time to describe Saami religion in terms of ‘higher’ forms of development. Thus I decided to treat the descriptions of these gods in light of the previously specified points of emphasis and not bring Genetz’s pantheon of gods and their genealogies to the analysis.

Genetz admits that the translation of the Bible to the Kola Saami languages is one of his main goals and uses terms that show at least slight resentment to Saami ways, for example when describing their traditional poetry. He describes how the Saami are reluctant to answer his enthusiastic questions on their old beliefs. (Genetz 1891, xix, xxxix.) This illustrates both the caution with which his writing should be interpreted, as a lot is probably left out, and also the enthusiastic romanticism towards ‘primitive’ religions that was characteristic of his time and described in more detail in the analysis of the context of Harva’s work.

When doing context analysis on Harva’s early work, his scientific background should naturally be considered. His early works belong to the school of British evolution anthropology prevailing at the time. The founding idea of this school of early anthropology was to try and figure out the origins of religious thought by placing different traditions under an evolutionistic scheme. Inspired by Charles Darwin’s (1859) general theory of evolution, Herbert Spencer (1862) created a model of thought according to which all religions could be organized into different stages of evolution. Evolution was universal and unilinear, evolving from simple and ‘primitive’ religions towards more complex religious systems, and the author’s own view was naturally seen as the highest form of cultural evolution. In Spencer’s theory the ‘original religion’ was manism or veneration of the dead and in E. B. Tylor’s (1866) theory it was the previously mentioned animism. (Anttonen 1987, 13, 32.)

This view was brought to Finland from the British evolutionary school by

42 Aforementioned Semiostrowskischen lappen (Genetz 1891, x)
Edvard Westermarck in 1890, with a strong focus on researching the so-called ‘primitive religions’. A comparative method focusing on universalism and cultural relativism was stressed. The rising nationalism and national romanticism of the time also influenced the early students of religion and anthropology: the mythology of the Finns and other Finno-Ugric peoples became popular areas of study, largely thanks to figures like Elias Lönnrot and M.A. Castrén in the mid-nineteenth century. These two orientations of evolutionary anthropology and national romanticism were united in the work of Julius and Kaarle Krohn. They were both students of Westermarck and the first work published in the science of religion that used this new paradigm called ‘geographical-historical method’ was Suomen Suvun Pakanallinen Jumalanpalvelus by Julius Krohn in 1894. The underlying idea was that the original religion of the Finns was ancestor worship. All other influences were brought to Finland with Catholic Christianity, adopted to paganism in a syncretistic manner. (Anttonen 1987, 39-46.)

Uno Harva was a student of Edvard Westermarck and Kaarle Krohn with a priestly and nationalistic (‘fennoman’) background, and was, at least in his early works I use as sources, committed to his mentor Kaarle Krohn’s geographical-historical method. It was a solid and unanimous paradigm led by Krohn in an authoritative manner. Harva’s personal nationalist ideas also contributed to his scientific interests, and thus he could be seen to not having followed Westermack’s school of universalism and cultural relativism. Instead Harva heavily stressed the Finno-Ugric peoples and their ‘original religion’ in his works. (Anttonen 1987, 48, 83.)

The underlying motivation for Lappalaisten uskonto was in this finding of an origin for the religious forms of the Finno-Ugric peoples. This was thought to be a sort of ‘preanimistic’ or ‘animatistic’ veneration of the dead in the form of anthropomorphic supernatural entities believed to be living in nature. In Die Wassergottheiten der Finnisch-ugrischen Völker, he tries to show that the concepts of water spirits residing in different holy places like rapids and lakes come from this preanimistic stage of development in hunting and fishing cultures, whereas animism in the form of general beings like water sprites comes from a further stage in cultural development, namely agriculture. Thus he denies Tylor’s argument of animistic origin of religion and instead argues that the first, most primitive stage is ‘animatism’, soul belief. In Harva’s early work, the nationalist and evolutionist commitments united, and following Krohn’s geographical-historical method he tried to show how the most ‘primitive’ Finno-Ugric hunting cultures like the Saami evolve into agricultural cultures and finally into ‘civilized’ cultures like the Finnish. (Anttonen 1987, 109, 111-112; Harva 1913, 8-15.)
Harva's nationalist, religious and scientific blind spots have now been elaborated, at least in a superficial manner, and thus the underlying theory-ladenness influencing his work is revealed. This means that his interpretations concerning veneration of the dead, and thus bear ceremonialism, should be denied. Also the different interpretations concerning masters of nature in terms of masters of game and owners of different water systems should be approached with caution. Harva’s biases are even more complex than the previously analysed authors if my hypothesis of the accumulation of knowledge stands: his seeking of an ‘objective’ theory to interpret Saami tradition is prevailing and intermingles with his political and religious preferences in complex ways, as pointed out by Anttonen.

5.3.4. Results and reflections on the material

When viewed in a chronological order from *Lapponia* and its source material all the way to Uno Harva and his early works on the Saami, a general pattern of the accumulation of knowledge emerges that agrees with my stated hypothesis. As knowledge increases and becomes more accessible, together with general ideological currents, more complex theories begin to emerge than the anteceding ones which simply reduced the indigenous religion to blasphemy and Satan or demon worship. It can be said that the first authors are not theoretical in that sense, but more descriptive. As the focus moves forward towards our time, the rise of a more academically oriented view emerges as descriptions, theories and methods become more determined, complex and in a sense ‘reductive’. Thus the use of my method becomes more difficult as biases and prejudices are harder to point out. The scientific agenda tied to the current paradigm begins to influence both the questions asked and the interpretation of the answers given in the interviews and discussions behind original sources, as well as questions asked from the written material as in Uno Harva’s case.

Thus reinterpreting my sources and making assumptions based on them becomes increasingly difficult as theory begins to mould the material in more complex and dynamic ways. Framed differently, as science and ethnography become more advanced and complex, the biases and prejudices become harder to track down and decode. This is in part why I chose to restrict my scope of material from the twentieth century to Uno Harva’s
early works on Saami religion. Veikko Anttonen states that even though theories from the
beginning of the twentieth century might be seen as severely outdated, clinging to
categories of ‘heroes of anthropology’ and ‘nationalistic zealots’ when talking about early
ethnographers might lead to some truths and valuable information being ignored. Instead,
he argues, we should practice a sort of anthropology to understand the history of
anthropology: the meaningful and the informative should be highlighted among the
information that is clearly biased and unreliable. (Anttonen 1987, 13.) This is what I intend
to do in an attempt to find emergent patterns from the sources.

5.4 Emerging patterns

The use of heuristic terms in order to translate words and concepts from one tradition
(intracultural) to the rest of the world (intercultural) is needed in order to get a more
detailed and ‘thick’ picture of the subject at hand. In this chapter my main focus is to
identify general patterns in the source material that concern this study, name them by using
heuristic terms, and elaborate these patterns and terms in light of the findings in the source
material. The use of these general heuristic concepts is justified, because the method used
requires taking the contexts into consideration and using multiple sources.

With the use of context analysis and close reading, I have been able to
identify five patterns that partly overlap in the texts. It might have been possible to identify
other patterns as well, but the context analysis reveals some biases and influences that,
simultaneously with the specified areal emphasis, direct the scrutiny of the researcher to
these five. A possible alternative pattern could have been for example the saivo-concept
identified with sacred lakes and mountains and the entities that were considered to reside in
them: even though similar ideas emerge from all around the Sápmi, the material collected
on them is most notably from more Western areas than concern our study. Thus these
entities fit under the general category of ‘masters or owners of nature’ and/or act as the
noaidi’s helping spirits and the places and ritual activity affiliated with them partly overlap
with sieidi sacrifice. Another problem rises with Saami gods, who also were seen to control
hunting and fishing luck. The biases in explaining the Saami pantheon, the emphasis on
this current inquiry and different areal and historical variations make Saami gods fall under
the category of ‘other anthropomorphic beings’, even though their importance in Saami
indigenous religion was obvious.

Sieidi worship and sacrifice is one clearly emerging pattern in light of my sources and it can be said that sieidi worship was of great importance to the Finnish Saami. The sieidis were stones, poles or stumps. The wooden sieidis were often carved in the likeness of human figures. The sieidi stones stood out from the rest of the environment and were often anthropomorphic in stature. Some stories tell of humans that have been turned into these stones. Several sources state a family of sieidi stones, often portrayed together with a leader. The sieidis had their own spheres of influence. Certain ritual behavior was followed, like using the holy boaššu door when leaving for sacrifice, prohibitions concerning women and special codes of conduct like the avoidance of noise in their vicinity were followed and utterances in the form of prayers and juoiggu were performed. The sieidi’s function was to serve as an originator of fishing and hunting luck and they were similarly asked for good health. There were private sieidis, family sieidis and community sieidis. They were located in holy places next to lakes or on the tops of fells, depending on particular groups and areal variations. The sieidi was abandoned if luck were to run dry. Sometimes questions were asked from sieidis (stone divination) and sometimes divination was carried out by the noaidi, who was a vital figure in Saami indigenous religion according to my sources.

The noaidi might have investigated a cause for poor luck in fishing or hunting. He could have predicted the outcome of a fishing or hunting trip either by divination or cataleptic trance. The noaidi could also lure herds of game to traps or find missing reindeer herds by means of this trance. The divination was conducted by hitting the shaman’s drum, decorated with different meaningful symbols: for example deer, fish and fishing nets were quite common. The drum also represented a geographical map and according to Genetz it even had its own god. Divination by pounding the drum with a bone hammer would result in a movement of the ring, thus revealing where the catch might be or which species should be hunted or fished. Not only the noaidi, but also laymen had drums that were used in divination. The drums and skills in using them were passed on from father to son. The sacrifice itself was often determined by this divination process and in larger and more meaningful rituals and sacrifices the noaidi acted as a ritual master.

Sacrifice was the main custom of worship among the Saami. Sacrificial activity was conducted as offerings, performed at special places, on an altar or a platform in the vicinity
of the goahti, or in the holy places mentioned above. In a similar manner to the way the places of worship varied, also the offerings differed depending on the context. Most common animals sacrificed in my sources were reindeer and fish. Some of the sacrifices were continuous, some were calendaric (the main season for sacrificial activity being autumn) and some could be classified as crisis rites. A recurring pattern is the smearing of the sacrificial animal’s blood or grease on the sieidi and a sacrificial meal in bigger sacrifices. Another recurring pattern is the preservation of different parts of the animal, namely separate organs, parts of the flesh, the pelt or the bones. The bones were often buried and fish bones were placed back in the waters where fishing took place. This applied to other animals as well, especially the bear.

*Bear ceremonialism* is one of the most important ritual activities of the Saami and the bear was widely worshiped and held as most powerful of all animals. During the bear hunt and the rituals that followed, certain chants or Luohti were performed and the bear was addressed directly in many utterances. Like in the sieidi sacrifice and other hunting activities, the holy boaššu door was used when leaving for the hunt and a certain set of sexual restrictions and other prohibitions concerning women were a part of bear ceremonialism. When the bear was caught and killed, the cooking and eating of the flesh followed a certain ritual drama. The flesh was not to be preserved, but eaten on the spot, and the blood, kidneys and the heart were thought to be of great importance. The preservation of the bones was vital and a ritual burial of them followed.

*Masters or owners of nature and other anthropomorphic beings* emerge from the sources as well. Examples show a variety of beliefs concerning different masters and owners of nature, as well as a variety of spirits, sprites and gods. Some of them are considered anthropomorphic and some theriomorphic. Beliefs in sedentary beings controlling a specified area as well as more general concepts of these owners are to be found from the sources. Owners of certain places like a rapids or lakes with a specified areas, as well as ‘gods’ of fishing or hunting that exercise control over specific animals or animals in general emerge. Also gods related to weather like the god of thunder and the god of wind are recurrent. Sometimes sexual relations between humans and other-than-human beings are reported. The temporal and spatial differences in these owner-concepts between different Saami groups and their historical developments, as well as the ways in which the original authors have interpreted them in etic terms, are difficult to specify. This problem is
further addressed in chapter 7.1.

In this work, I have used systematic analysis as a method of highlighting the biases, theory- and value-ladenness of historical texts as well as the context of this previous information. In addition, I have identified five partly overlapping patterns concerning my research question that have emerged from these sources, namely 1) sieidi worship, 2) the noaidi as a religious expert, 3) sacrifice, 4) bear ceremonialism and 5) masters or owners of nature. I believe that rather than pointing to single facts that might be biased in one way or another, these recurrent patterns in the material can serve as tools for a theoretical analysis I intend to undertake in chapter 7. There I will try to link these patterns found from my sources both to other similar traditions and common human action and thought in general. First it is necessary for us to take a look at animal relations of indigenous religions in general as well as a brief look at animal relations in light of late medieval and early modern Christianity. After that, a brief survey of the religious change in light of both my sources and more general remarks is made.
6. ANIMAL RELATIONS AND RELIGIOUS CHANGE

6.1 Animal relations and indigenous religions in general

According to Lisa Kemmerer a general feature of all indigenous religious traditions is that there is no division between the natural and the supernatural, culture and nature, or human and other species for that matter. This results in a view that considers all creatures and natural phenomena as interconnected and sacred. Kemmerer’s is a classic view that has been questioned since, as Kemmerer points out, this is only a common belief and not necessarily in line with the actual practice. This distinction between belief and practice is important to keep in mind in the following chapters. The idea of a moral and social order in nature of which the human is a part is a common feature to indigenous traditions. (Kemmerer 2012, 8-10.) Tim Ingold points out that in sciences the way in which hunting and gathering peoples interact with their environment in terms of subsistence has been traditionally separated from the way in which they construct their religious, ceremonial and mythical spheres of life. This reflects a wider dichotomy between nature and culture and of making the two separate. He argues that the way in which people act in their environment is also simultaneously a way of perceiving it: the two are interconnected, and thus a new way to study the environmental relations should be introduced. (Ingold 2000, 10-12.)

In indigenous terms, we as humans are seen as parts of a community and a cosmic order. This means that moral and ethical rules concerning kinship are expanded to include animals, because they are seen as kin: they are moral agents who form communities and demand respect, responsibility and compassion. Animals and their behavior are humane and they are viewed as persons, who are credited with souls and similar cognitive capacities and processes as humans. This interrelatedness is expressed in myths of inter-species transformations and kinship genealogies involving animals like totemistic views or myths concerning inter-species marriages. Indigenous traditions also often feature special powers related to animals and they are often involved with creation and other important myths. This also has a link to the treatment of animals with special reverence. (Kemmerer 2012, 22-27, 37-48.)

The most important issues concerning indigenous traditions in light of this work are those related to hunting and fishing. The act of killing, according to Kemmerer, is commonly seen as a necessity, not a sport, since hunting is a way of subsistence. At the same time killing moral beings that belong to the hunter’s community is a moral dilemma.
At least the hunted animals are entitled with souls that continue their life after the individual animal’s death. A common conception is that of the rebirth of killed animals: in many traditions the hunted animal gives its body as a gift to the hunter and the soul is reborn. This presumably leads to showing reverence and treating animals with respect, and not killing more than the hunter needs. Otherwise his luck would run dry and ultimately end in starvation as the animals would refuse to be caught. This is why fear of ill favor and starvation is a common feature in indigenous traditions and religious beliefs and practices: they are reflections of this dependence on animals (eating of souls) and fear of divine retribution in terms of ill luck and starvation. (Kemmerer 2012, 29-34, 40, 48-50.)

These general remarks on indigenous traditions are also made by others, but Kemmerer seems to have several flaws in her argumentation. First of all, she deliberately paints a positive picture of indigenous peoples as “original conservationists” in a manner that is based on the Western idea of a nature vs. culture separation and shows a classic “noble savage” view that can be questioned on many levels. Another problem is her generalization: labeling all indigenous traditions by pointing out single examples from all over the world and very different cultures seems like Frazerian argumentation and armchair anthropology in the truest sense of the word. However, comparing these notions to Arctic hunting cultures and proceeding to the Saami traditions that emerge from my sources, these assumptions might prove fruitful when used as etic categories that communicate similarities between different cultures’ ways of perceiving the nature around them.

The first of these categories I am going to address, is the notion of special ‘masters’ or ‘owners’ of nature. This concept is, according to Hultkrantz, embedded in a hunting culture. According to his theory, things like metaphors, beliefs, moral codes and social relations reflect, to a point, the environment which a (hunting/nomadic) culture inhabits. These factors alongside with cultural diffusion then affect the systems of practice and belief that can be labeled as religion. If we are to think that the environment inspires the forms and practices of religion, animals are a crucial part of the environment and cannot be left out as we can see in practically all of the world’s religions. They are essential food for our thought as well as our stomach, and thus constitute a major part of a hunting culture’s religion. Especially interesting and difficult are the soul-concepts related to animals and masters of nature. (Hultkrantz 1961, 7; Ingold 1986, 245, 251.)

Generally the masters of nature can be seen as protectors or guardians of certain species, certain places or certain classes of species like marine animals or fish. They are moral and human-like beings that sometimes assume a human form,
that of an animal. They seem to be inseparable from the concepts of souls among hunting peoples that underlie our current inquiry. Hultkrantz points out that in Arctic hunting cultures animals, especially the hunted animals, are credited with having souls. He furthermore argues that these soul-concepts in turn ground the idea of animal masters or guardians, and the line between the individual animal and these masters is not clear as the individual animals are perceived relationally and sometimes seen as representing these masters. Sometimes the individual animals are seen as the master’s ‘pets’ or ‘flock’. These masters are of great concern to the hunter, because they are thought to control hunting luck and the regeneration of slain animals. Animal masters control game and if animals disappear, it means that the master is offended and the hunt discontinues. (Hultkrantz 1965, 303-305; Hultkrantz 1961, 7; Ingold 1986, 245, 251; Kinsley 1994, 11-13, 18.)

The concept of masters or owners of nature is widely held to be an integral part of almost all hunting cultures around the world. These beings are seen as moral protectors of nature, and a hunter must stay in good terms with them if they wish to reap the fruits of the master’s flock in order to gain their livelihood or subsistence. In other words, they need to perform certain rituals, follow certain restrictions and keep themselves from over-hunting the local fauna if they wish to stay in good terms with these food-providing moral beings. They are, according to him, not only a part of hunting culture, however, but also that of agricultural, pastoral and other cultures where hunting plays a part in the overall scheme of subsistence. (Hultkrantz 1961, 7-8.)

6.2 Christianity and animals in late medieval and early modern times

As some general remarks about indigenous religions concerning animals and nature have now been presented, a brief look at the views of seventeenth and eighteenth century Christianity follows. What should be pointed out is that the role of Christianity concerning ecological issues has been greatly disputed. The historian Lynn White modeled the so called ‘Lynn White hypothesis’ in his controversial article “The Historical Roots of our Ecological Crisis” in Science-magazine. The basic assumption of White is that Christianity and the views it encompasses are to blame for the modern ecological crisis. (White 1967, 1203–1207)

What I seek to find in this study, however, is not the question of Christian
influence on issues concerning the modern ecological crisis, but the actual historical effects of Christian conversion on Saami attitudes towards animals. The modern discussion on ecology focuses on what Kinsley calls “modern” views that consider nature a resource to be exploited, but it is highly questionable if the Saami convert’s views or even the missionaries’ views were in any way comparable to the attitudes that are in the foreground today. (Kinsley 1995, 101-102.) There seems, however, to be a great contrast between the native views and the views of the clergy. Lutheran tradition in the late medieval and early modern times seems, according to Kinsley, to heavily stress anthropocentrism, distancing one’s spiritual identity from nature and regarding animal-likeness in humans as a reminder of the Fall and the rebellion of man against God. According to this Lutheran view, nature was against man as a result of human action. Nature was also subordinate to humans, demanding human control. (Kinsley 1995, 110-111.)

In the period when most of the Christianization occurred, Western European thought was heavily influenced by modernity and philosophers like Descartes, Bacon and Newton. Characteristic of their thinking was the thought of animals as soulless machines. If this view was a result of Christian culture or not is a question that is both multi-leveled and difficult to answer. It is clear however that this view was in sharp contrast with the native view and forms a firm background for what most of us think of nature today. According to this view the human being is superior to the rest of nature as he is closer to God. The rationality humans possess was not visible in the rest of the world that was mechanistic. Nature had no purpose, rationality or goal, and the duty of man was to manipulate nature through science. Nonhuman species, according to this view, were not credited with souls. (Kinsley 1995, 125-130) Nature became a lifeless resource, passive, dumb and wild. Indeed, man’s mission was to penetrate the wilderness and subdue it. People living off nature were seen as savages. It should be stressed here that Christianity and this ‘modernist’ view were only related, not interchangeable. (Kinsley 1995, 130-136.)

Keith Thomas points out and quotes attitudes towards animals in seventeenth and eighteenth century England, and I believe that the attitudes of Swedish clergy and philosophers that performed missionary work among the Saami shared many of these views, since the theological background was, in both cases, quite similar. The idea of anthropocentrism had been embedded in Western thought since the Greek philosophers; the concurrent theology and philosophy held animals as inferior to humans. In the seventeenth century England, all living things had a purpose in God’s creation and animals were considered as created for man’s use. Domestication was seen as a good thing and it was best for the animals themselves to be under the dominance of man. According to this view,
animals had no conception of the future and lost nothing with loss of life: animals had no rights, no property or land. They had no place in human society because they had no reason. Even cruelty and killing animals for pleasure were acceptable. Modern theologians emphasize other passages from the Bible that stress human’s stewardship over nature, but seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophy was more concerned with exploitation than stewardship. (Thomas 1983, 17-25.)

Animals were not only different in posture, but three mental capacities that separated them from humans were particularly stressed: speech, reason and religion. Their spirit and soul were nothing like those of humans. This thought was brought forth by René Descartes from the 1630s onwards, and his notion of animals as soulless and spiritless automatons had a great impact on Western thought for several centuries onwards. This was a consequence of the Cartesian substance dualism; he saw the human body as a machine and the soul as a separate entity from the body. Animals were not attributed with a soul. Descartes deprived animals of all reason and thought, and his supporters even concluded that animals did not feel pain. (Thomas 1983, 30-33.) I find it more than possible that thinkers like Descartes and Bacon, along with the Stoic and other Greek philosophers, Protestantism and the spirit of enlightenment, influenced the missionaries greatly and influenced their perception of animals.

The underlying view in both the Orthodox and Protestant traditions is that of God creating the universe and man, and “nature” as subordinate to man. Christianity, especially in the period between seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, placed man above the rest of creation since man was created in the likeness of God. Nature was seen in the West as opposed to culture or humanity, and thus also opposed to the supernatural or God. In Western Christian thought, particularly in the Protestant tradition, God, the World and humanity have been seen as three sides or “poles”, of which the other two couldn’t exist without the first. Additionally the acts of God don’t follow any “natural” order, but are supernatural in a sense that is not of this world. To give an example from a similar setting in the American continent, the New England Puritans who sought to convert Algonquian Indians to Christianity saw nature as wild and polluting, a place for the Devil, the Indians and their shamans as the Devil’s little helpers that should be freed from their savagery. The Orthodox Christian monks in Alaska also perceived the wilderness as a place of trial and spiritual struggle, but in a different sense than their Protestant counterparts. (Grigorios 1996, 36-39; Albanese 1990, 34-37; Oleksa 1987, 27.)
6.3 From indigenous religion to Christianity

If we follow history from the first recorded contacts of the Saami with Christianity, spanning to the last sacrificial activity reported from ancient sacred sites around the last years of the previous century, the religious change took nearly a millennium! On the other hand, practically all Saami were baptized on a timescale ranging from the end of the seventeenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century. Perhaps it can be said that some Christian elements were adopted to the indigenous religion, and the other way around. Reports of church sacrifice (some people continued the sacrifices they had previously done on the sieidis by presenting different offers to the Church building) show a blend of two religions co-existing for centuries. The most intense change, however, happened in the beginning of the eighteenth century, and this was probably a time when the changes I intend to track down took place. (Rydving 1993, 72-76; Widén 1980, 272; Kylli 2012, 119.)

It seems that the religious change of the different Saami peoples that happened was a slow one. Even though the swiftness in conversion processes varies according to areal and temporal factors, it is clear that some of the old customs and attitudes survived over time in a way that was surprising for the missionaries. The reasons for this sluggishness have been speculated, and I have decided to briefly review my material in light of six common aspects given by both the missionary clergy and later scholars separately. I have ignored some clearly biased reasons given such as the excessive use of liquor by the Saami and their natural tendency towards ‘paganism’ and ‘witchcraft’ as well as supernatural explanations like ‘God’s plans’ or ‘Satan’s plots’. Even though Rydving’s and Widén’s work, which I have used in identifying these six aspects of conversion, focus mainly on more Western Saami areas, I believe these apply at least to the Lutheran conversion of the Finnish side and some of these I believe to hold true for the more Eastern groups as well. For a better view on Orthodox Saami, I have to try and find the outlines and differences by making comparisons and reviewing the source material. By drawing some examples from my sources, I hope to reveal the conditions under which a gradual religious change took place. In the next chapters I am going to discuss these six aspects of conversion in detail.

1) Seasonal and spatial reasons and variations. The economic conditions of a moving lifestyle did not present the clerics with opportunities to observe and teach the Saami for
extended periods, leaving them to practice their indigenous religion in peace for the most of the year. Fellman describes how the nomadic lifestyle led to most parts of religious teaching to come from the children’s parents. The Christian teachings and rituals were reserved for the markets, where the priests and other representatives of the state and the Saami would congregate for church activities, tax-collecting, juridical hearings, etc. This means that many of the Christian activities took place during the winter, leaving the Saami to practice their traditional customs during the summer. Andelin describes how tax-collecting and Church activities were difficult to organize because of the long distances and nomadic lifestyle. Körningh and Tuderus also write how chruch activities took place only once a year. Tornaeus describes how the nomadic Saami have more problems in reading and knowledge on Christianity than more sedentary groups in questionings conducted by him. (Meurman 1907, 60, 87, 117, 130; Andelin 1858, 195, 205, 279; Körningh 1956, 40-41; Tuderus, *En kort underrättelse*, 16.)

2) *The Saami had a comparatively loose hierarchy that hindered the conversion process.* Lewis Rambo distinguishes two strategic styles of conversion strategy: diffuse or system-oriented strategy that seeks to convert large numbers of people, beginning with their community leaders. The other is a concentrated or personalistic strategy that seeks to convert individuals who are low in social hierarchy and form a ‘resistance’ thereof. (Rambo 1993, 79.) Rydving describes von Westen’s ambition to convert the noaidis because this would weaken the indigenous religion: this was a strategy of conversion that was not very common and did not seem work that well in rooting out old beliefs. (Rydving 1993, 72) In addition, Fellman describes the missionary work of Esaias Mansveti in the mid-seventeenth century Inari and Sampio, where Mansveti, converted the leaders of both Sampio and Inari to the Christian faith. Rest of the communities followed and by the year 1661 everyone in these villages was baptized and literate, at least in principle. (Meurman 1907, 113-115.) When put in context, however, Fellman’s glorification of Mansveti’s missionary work is evident and the actual conversion process was probably not as complete as described. The first strategy seems to have been applied to the Saami particularly in the seventeenth century and among groups who lived in more sedentary settings by means of for example fishing.

Rydving argues that most missionary efforts in the beginning of the eighteenth century were concentrated on young people, who were considered easier to influence and had no active roles in the indigenous religious activities. This then led to older people not passing their tradition to the younger in fear of punishment, because
children were used as informers of religious crimes. In addition to the influence of obligatory schooling on religious attitudes, this arguably led to a more full-scale conversion at least in more Western areas in the beginning of the eighteenth century. (Rydving 1993, 137-138.) This seems like a logical explanation, since the sacrifices and other ritual activities are said to have been led by older men and the role of younger people is not mentioned. On the other hand, even death penalties were in use for people caught practicing the old religion and a fear of punishment was evident. As a conclusion it seems that both of the strategies were applied and their application varied according to the missionary’s theological views, the nature of the community and the geographical area. In the Eastern parts, the missionary work was based on three main monasteries where monks and priests would make journeys to meet the indigenous inhabitants; the conditions are elaborated in chapter 4.3. My sources reveal little information on the Eastern part.

3) Clash of cultures: mutual fear, resentment and language problems. The Scandinavians, Russians and Finns had been taxing and harassing the Saami for a long time and now tried to convert them to their own religion, usually to serve their own needs. The language borders that were present in the first contacts might have been causes for a slow adoption of Christianity. The clergy that were sent to work as missionaries did not speak the indigenous language, were aggressive towards the Saami, reportedly practiced all kinds of vice and many fell ill because of unfamiliar natural conditions. In addition, preaching to the Saami was not a position that was popular among clerics. (Rydving 1993, 73-76.)

The early sources are clear in their writers’ aggressive stand towards the Saami and their traditional culture and the harshness of the nature and difficulty of transportation are described in practically all of my sources. Fear towards the missionaries and the powers they represent are also transmitted through these texts. A good example of this is Körhning’s text, where he mentions that the Saami are reluctant to trust anyone in addition to being timid and fearful. Fellman writes that the previous literature about the Saami has painted a malicious picture of them: the information was gathered from neighboring groups belonging to the majority culture and many of the priests were harsh and discriminant towards the Saami. This is something noticed by Harva as well. Many did not have skills in the Saami language, and this Fellman believes resulted in a very superficial understanding of the Saami culture. In addition Andelin describes how the languages of the people belonging to the majority culture varied seasonally as the nomadic lifestyle included crossing language and State borders. In fact, even in Fellman’s time, the use of Saami language was forbidden in Churches. He also describes the organized
persecution of Saamis by the settlers belonging to the majority cultures. (Körhning 1956, 39, 44; Meurman 1907, 93-94, 114, 117, 178, 360, 363; Andelin 1858, 279; Harva 1915, 9.)

4) Economic change and colonial activities. This aspect of religious change is linked to the previously elaborated cultural confrontations. Changing and worsening economic conditions of the Saami might have been interpreted by community leaders as punishments for turning away from the indigenous religion, together with the growing contacts with unpopular settlers, colonial officers and mining industry. (Widén 1980, 270-271) Genetz’s account of ritual revitalization in a time of crisis, described in chapter 5.2.1, seems to be in line with these reasons. Tornaeus describes a crisis rite conducted at a sieide site with bad results, reportedly ultimately leading to the performer’s conversion to Christianity and a destruction of the sieide as the old tradition failed to assist the ritual’s performer (Tornaeus, *Berättelse*, 37).

The colonial activities that perhaps resulted both in the worsening economic conditions among the Saami and a deepening resentment towards the State include many aspects. One was the crown-led division of Saami lands into different areas by Charles IX. Also the acceleration in fur trading, where guns were traded for furs, resulted in growing hunting activity and arguably to a diminishing number of game animals. Another problem brought by the colonial powers emerged as the Swedish mining industry began in Saami areas in the mid-seventeenth century; Schefferus mentions several ore, silver and copper mines founded in different years: 1635, two mines in 1640, one in 1655 and one in 1660. According to Schefferus, the Saami would keep their knowledge about precious metals to themselves, because they feared that their free life would end if they were forced to work in these mines. Another reason is mentioned by Körhning, when he writes that the Saami do not want to reveal a gold source, since it would result in misfortune as trees would be cut to be used as coal and the related activities would destroy their pastures. (Schefferus 1963, 123, 248, 251, 269, 270-271, 470, 473, 474; Körhning 1956, 50.)

5) Secrecy and underground activity. Rydving adds that the Saami indigenous practices and beliefs vanished underground as a reaction of the sacrileges, threats and punishments directed at the Saami by the priests. The indigenous practices continued in secrecy and could not therefore be ended by Christians. (Rydving 1993, 75-76.) My sources do not tell of these underground activities, but it is probable that this kind of privatisation and withdrawal occurred. Genetz mentions, like already pointed out in chapter 5.3, the
reluctance with which the Kola Saami addressed the matters concerning their traditional views. The fearful attitudes and punishments mentioned earlier in this chapter complement this argument.

6) Internal feuds. The punishments and sacrileges were also carried out by competing Saami groups and were a source of strife and mischief among the Saami themselves, so the Saami probably saw a new religion as an element that weakened their group identity. Rydving divides Saami attitudes towards Christianity in the following terms:

“(1) traditionalist activists: those who actively supported the indigenous religious heritage and opposed the Christian religion, i.e. agents of the status quo;
(2) passive traditionalists: those who sympathized with the indigenous religious heritage, without active struggling, either for the indigenous religion or against the Christian one;
(3) neutrals: those who lived in both systems without giving priority to either of them, or who ignored the religious dimension;
(4) passive Christians: those who sympathized with the Christian religion, without active struggling, either for the Christian religion or against the indigenous religion;
(5) Christian activists: those who actively supported the Christian religion and opposed the indigenous religious heritage i.e. agents of change.” (Rydving 1993, 70)

The different stances towards the change in religion must have had their impact in the weakening of social cohesion and further strengthening the resentment of those opposing the change. (Rydving 1993, 72-76) My sources give few examples of internal struggles and I believe this was due to the authors’ meager interest in internal Saami politics as well as their idea of the Saami as a single group. The account of a destroyed sieide from Tornaeus described previously in the fourth aspect to conversion tells us that the village community wanted to kill the destroyer of the sieide, and this reveals the existence of internal feuds within the community. (Tornaeus, Berättelse, 37) It seems probable that these kinds of feuds between competing religious groups did occur and that the traditionalists saw this new religion as weakening the internal group identity of the Saamis.

Another way to classify reaction towards a new religion is a conversion pattern introduced by Rambo, originally modeled by Richard W. Bulliet and based on the diffusion of innovation theory from the biological sciences. According to this theory, the conversion process follows a standard bell curve or S-curve. The first group to convert are the so called “innovators” that amount to 2,5% of the population. The next group are the “early adopters” at 13,5 %, early majority with 34 % and late majority with an identical 34%. The last group, most reluctant to convert, is the “laggards” consisting of 16 % of the population. (Rambo 1993, 95-96.) Even though this scheme might not be applicable to the real world as such, it provides a point that has been ignored by much of earlier research: a rising amount of baptisms does not mean a total and final conversion of the individuals,
families and groups involved by an adoption of all the aspects of a new faith and an active renouncing of the old religious system.

Lewis Rambo writes that converts selectively adopt and adapt the new religion to meet their needs. He further argues that the most fertile ground for Christian conversion throughout the ages have been the so called animists, since they have no organized form of religion comparable to Christianity. (Rambo 1993, 34-42, 47, 54) It can perhaps be said, based on the aforementioned assumptions, that a powerful colonizing force penetrating an indigenous setting triggers a crisis (Rambo 1993, 41) and that crisis simultaneously with missionary efforts results in people converting to a new faith to avoid punishment. In the seventeenth century setting this meant baptism, wedding and funeral rites and the reading of Christian texts. Bearing in mind the conservative tendency of religious beliefs introduced by Hultkrantz, it must have been hard for the Saami people to reject their former belief system as it was closely tied to their subsistence and their way of life. (Rambo 1993, 71, 73, 77, 129.)

It can be argued that the colonizing forces arriving from both the West and the East shaped the conversion process greatly. Still major parts of the population retained their former beliefs. The adopting of Christian beliefs as parts of their indigenous religion was not a difficult question for many Saami: Christian imagery, views and concepts of afterlife and divinity were introduced, but people still stuck to their indigenous ways of sacrifice and divination in order to ensure their subsistence in trying to influence matters like illness, hunting/fishing/herding luck and weather. The clergy, however, saw traditional practices like divination, healing and sieidi sacrifice as opposed to Christianity. This resulted in a sort of double religion that the clergy vehemently opposed and was punishable even by death. (Rydving 1993, 54-68, 72.)

The Saami would pick the elements from Christianity that benefited them most, notably baptism, marriage and funerary rites. These signals most likely appeased the missionaries, baptism also acting as a strong message of conversion to the colonizing forces. My material, however, reports accounts of so called ‘double baptism’, where the Christian name was ‘washed off’ and the child was given a traditional Saami name. This of course happened in secrecy and relates to the fifth aspect of Saami conversion introduced earlier. (Harva 1915, 19; Körhning 1956, 44; Schefferus 1963, 401) These naming rituals are described in great detail by Rydving. (Rydving 1993, 115-127) Material benefits that followed the baptism in some cases could be seen as speeding up the nominal conversion process, while the actual conversion seems to follow a pattern of slowly mixing the new faith with local elements. It seems that the inhabitants continued to live and practice their
native religion in much the same way they had done for centuries, merely blending it with Christian elements, like they had already done before the conversion. It can be said that colonization, areal segregation and other elements resulted in indigenous beliefs and Christianity living side by side for decades, even centuries to come in Lapland.

The political goals of both Sweden-Finland and Russia seem to constitute both spoken and unspoken motivations influencing missionary work in order to gain control over fishing and hunting grounds and trade networks. In the East, tolerating ancient customs in turn would have made the locals more tolerant towards missionaries, also making it easier to collect taxes for both secular and spiritual powers. The final point of the conversion seems thus to be less spiritual and more political in nature, making the process hardly seem a permanent and final triumph of effective missionary work, as presented in many sources. The Churches found the situation advantageous due to the ease with which converts were found among crisis-stricken natives and the colonial forces benefited from the native converts’ more accepting disposition towards becoming taxpayers, soldiers and employees of the State.

All in all, the gradual religious change from Saami indigenous religion to a Christian one took a very long time. How long precisely, is challenging to say. A specific date of the Saami renouncing the old beliefs and adopting new ones as a group is not possible to point out since what I am describing are the beliefs and actions of individual persons, family groups, bigger organizations and finally a Saami culture that is not uniform in time, or space. In addition, the conversion processes of groups that existed in history are not comparable to how individual religious conversion is perceived today.
7. SAAMI ANIMAL RELATIONS AND THEIR CHANGE UNDER THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

As we now are in possession of a general idea of what indigenous, especially hunting cultures, have in common in relations to animals, what the Christian and ‘modern’ views say about animals and nature and a general outline of the religious change that happened, we can revisit the etic theories introduced in chapter three in order to evaluate their worth in light of the study at hand. First I am going to see if the theories need reformulation in order to be able to be utilized in the reflection of the material in a sensible manner in chapter 7.1. Through this theory-making I attempt to reconstruct the animal relations and notions of personhood in Saami indigenous belief system in order to contrast them with the Christian views and study the change that happened in chapter 7.2.

We have now introduced the sources and analysed their context in order to find emergent patterns that can be analysed by the application of theoretical analysis. It is necessary to look at the theories in more detail and reflect them in light of both the close reading of the source material and the context analysis conducted in chapter 5.3 before moving to concluding remarks and answering the research question posed.

7.1. Etic theories revisited

Thanks to Veikko Anttonen’s elucidating Uno Harva ja suomalainen uskontotiede (1987), we can track down the theoretical points Harva makes and personal tendencies and biases that Anttonen pinpoints. In addition, Anttonen shows in an eye-opening manner how Harva’s research has influenced later material in light of the study of religious traditions of Arctic hunting cultures, Finno-Ugric cultures and Saami culture in general. Scholars I have quoted and used in this study that have been influenced by Harva in one way or another include Åke Hultkrantz, Juha Pentikäinen and Ivar Paulson. (Anttonen 1987, 18.) At least Paulson has inspired, on the other hand, Tim Ingold’s thinking. Thus, in a way, even

44 Hultkrantz referst to Harva in the first formulation of his religio-ecological theory and states “Holmberg's investigation has a reliable foundation.” (Hultkrantz 1965, 307)
45 According to Anttonen, the studies by Paulson are at least partly based on Harva's notions of 'primitive' concepts of the soul and masters of game.
46 Ingold, in his work The appropriation of nature, uses Harva, Hultkrantz and Paulson as literature.
Nurit Bird-David and Steven Mithen, who base some of their arguments on Ingold’s work, are influenced by Harva’s views in an indirect way.

A similar point is made by Tom Sjöblom: he criticizes the scholarly use of what he calls the ‘Northern Religions hypothesis’. He points to the use of heuristic terms to interpret data to support theoretical claims. According to this hypothesis, the Northern peoples in extreme climates not only share a common material and economic lifestyle, but also a common mentality resulting in religion called ‘shamanism’. One of the main points of his critique is that “shaman” is not an emic category for most of these Northern cultures since it comes from the North Asian Evenk language belonging to the Tungusic language group. This problem has been evaded by using *ad hoc* explanations like describing a shaman as a generic term for religious healers or defining a construction called “classical shamanism” by Hultkrantz. However, other problems rise from the fact “…that shamanism is a certain type of mental attitude towards the environment is the basis for the Northern Religions hypothesis.” For this purpose, Sjöblom defines mentality as consisting of four distinctive features: 1) it is collective rather than individual, 2) stress is on unconscious and unspoken rather than conscious reflection, 3) the concern is not only with contents of beliefs, but also on structures and categories of the mind and 4) they are culturally inherited and transmitted modes of thought. Sjöblom admits that the environment attracts certain cognitive responses, perhaps giving rise to a Northern mentality. Shamanism, on the other hand, is harder to derive from this mentality as it is by definition a religious tradition passed from generation to generation. (Sjöblom 2002b, 140-147.)

This idea of a monolithic religious system or mentality called shamanism fed to a passive individual mind through acts like storytelling, dancing and play, along with the hidden structures it encompasses, is questionable in light of new cognitive theories that stress cultural transmission as a creative event where the cultural and the mental come together. Sjöblom argues that the surface features are communicated, but the cognitive processes of those involved are constructed individually. Thus traditions, most notably traditions that do not have a written source of belief, are bound to change as “social learning is the greatest variation-generating component of the human mind”. (Sjöblom 2002b, 140-147.)

Sjöblom argues that the idea of an unchanging Northern shamanistic mentality is not transmitted by culture and language on a deep level. Rather only the surface features are communicated and the meaning embedded in them is constructed anew many times over. What follows from this is that a) religious practices are local and under the process of gradual change and b) while the ecological circumstances give rise to the
analogical attitudes of Northern peoples, these cannot be systematized into mentalities. As a concluding remark of his article, Sjöblom writes that hypotheses that direct the study should be elaborated and the relationship between the material and the heuristic concepts used should be reflected upon. In addition, an ongoing dialogue between the data and the theoretical presuppositions should be evident, and if they contradict, the data should prevail instead of ad hoc explanations. (Sjöblom 2002b, 140-147.)

Concerning the theoretical analysis I intend to conduct, many major issues rise from Sjöblom’s criticism. First of all, Hultkrantz’s religio-ecological approach that identifies different types of religion in cross-cultural comparison is questionable, so comparisons to other similar circumboreal hunting cultures than the Saami should be made with caution and care. On the other hand, if the environmental factors giving rise to cognitive processes common to all humans are similar, analogies are possible when the changes and variations that occur are considered. This way we can also question the etic theories introduced in chapter 3, and the paradigm of ”Arctic hunting religion” and ”Finno-Ugric religion” and the suppositions that pierce through the religio-ecological theory of Hultkrantz and other subsequent scholars of Saami religion. These important questions need to be asked about the possible biases and misinterpretations of previous studies in modern theory-making, as well as a reflection of the student’s own theoretical presuppositions when the source material is based on written historical sources.

The paradigm of cultural ecology has been questioned on several levels and the classification and cross-cultural comparison of religious traditions have largely gone out of style in the contemporary science of religion. Other key issues with this approach are that comparing religions on a big scale is extremely difficult and often impossible, and as shown, the type of religion that has been argued to exist in Arctic hunting cultures is somewhat outdated. Another problem is that there exists no simple criterion in classifying individual beliefs or practices to the cultural core, but at least it can be said that beliefs and practices concerning hunting, fishing and reindeer herding belong to subsistence activities that can be classified in such manner. Hultkrantz’s model, in spite of the criticism, fits practically all the arctic hunting and nomadic cultures quite well. The main goal of Hultkrantz is to explain change in religious phenomena in different cultures in relation to the ecological surroundings of that culture. Other factors have to be considered as well, but the religio-ecological approach gives us insight into how nature inspires religion. By making comparisons and classifications we can take the environmental factors into consideration, in addition to the historical, psychological and cultural factors that shape the beliefs of indigenous peoples living off the environment. (Burhenn 1997, 112-113;
Now that we have a reformulated idea of the way in which nature inspires religious thought and the conservative tendency thereof, we can turn to more general ideas about human thought and nature. Mithen argues that among hunting cultures the anthropomorphizing of animals is a good strategy in understanding natural phenomena such as their behavior and ecological role. He backs his point by presenting Mary Douglas’s idea of similarity between categories for understanding social and natural worlds being important in predicting animal behavior. It therefore seems, based on these assumptions, that anthropomorphism has been an advantage in adapting and surviving in a hunting society. In Mithen’s view, the first archaeological traces indicating religious action are dated almost simultaneously with the first findings considered as forms of art, and this he argues to be simultaneous with the ‘big bang’, or when humans first showed signs of possessing cognitive fluidity. He sees Boyer’s notion of recurrent ideas in religion and counter-intuitivism as being at the very core of religious thinking and a key feature of supernatural beings the world round, together with not being too violative to intuitive thinking for the human mind to grasp. Mixing of different cognitive domains or intelligences resulted in the birth of religious ideas of supernatural beings like talking rocks, personified natural phenomena like the gods of weather, or the masters of nature controlling hunting luck. He also argues that the idea of a religious specialist, a person with some supernatural essence the rest of society lacks that is able to communicate with these other-than-human persons, rose as a result of this cognitive fluidity. (Boyer 2001, 75, 165; Mithen 1996, 192, 198-201.)

According to Horowitz & Bekoff and Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli some recent researchers in sciences like psychology and even biology are beginning to take advantage of anthropomorphic thinking as a tool for science; along with being a strategy of perception, it is a strategy of gaining knowledge about other animals, a feature that natural selection has favored in human evolution. Mithen, like stated above, sees the attribution of social behavior and personhood to the environment as a tool for categorizing and predicting, or living and surviving, in the environment. Bird-David similarly argues that “indigenous animation is an instrument of knowledge”, a form of “institutionalized way of knowing”. What animistic thinking is at its core, according to Bird-David, is the understanding of different beings and objects as parts of a whole, “perceived along with its relations, not as existing outside of them”. Therefore it is “relational rather than objectivist”. The animation of the environment in indigenous cultures extends to ‘persons’ that are in contact and relationship with the perceivers. Everything is seen in a web of
connections, and the relations of people to ‘non-humans’ like animals, plants and even stones are constructed in context and in sophisticated, complex and dynamic ways. (Eddy, Gallup & Povinelli 1993, 87-88; Horowitz & Bekoff 2007, 23-24; Bird-David 2006, 43-44.)

The notion of personhood in an animist setting used by Bird-David and Ingold derives from A. I. Hallowell’s classic article “Ojibwa Ontology, Behavior and World View”, in which he elucidates the sense of personhood in Ojibwa ways to perceive the surrounding world in relational terms. The underlying basic principle in Ojibwa ‘ethnometaphysics’ is that of personhood, reciprocity and similarity between humans and other-than-humans and a nonexistent division between culture and nature as well as natural and supernatural domains. (Hallowell 1960, 19-52.) Kenneth Morrison introduces a similar account from the Chumash people in California first introduced by Thomas Blackburn. In Chumash ontology similarities in personhood, or seeing the cosmos inhabited by sentient and moral beings, recur. He also gives several other examples and concludes that the notion of personhood is of crucial importance in studying Native American religious systems and the reciprocity between humans and other-than-humans that is expressed in ritual activity. (Morrison 2000, 23-36)

According to Mithen’s argumentation, the human mind anthropomorphizes animals and other phenomena, just like Guthrie has tried to show, and this is a logical continuation of cognitive fluidity. Quoting Ingold, Mithen proceeds to say that the world of the early human was not divided into different social and natural worlds, but rather they were one and the same. Totemic and anthropomorphic thinking were results of this cognitive fluidity. (Mithen 1996, 186-190.) Sergejeva rejects an idea of totemic thinking among the Saami and sees it as a logical continuation of the Saami living in a close connection to nature inseparable from the blurred line between humans and other-than-humans. She further stresses the importance of nature as a complex whole, where the ‘physical’ and the ‘spiritual’ along with the ‘human’ and the ‘animal’ are in a continuum of relationships. This personhood in nature is further elaborated in the tradition about the ‘masters’ or ‘owners’ of nature and other ideas of the morality and reciprocity that is embedded in the way the Saami have perceived their environment, their relationship with it as well as their relationship with each other. The concepts of different holy places and the noaidi as a special mediator between the humans and their environment are inseparable from this view. (Sergejeva 1997, 168-169, 242-255.)

47 The classifications of human and non-human persons, natural and supernatural, dividual and individual concerning indigenous epistemology are discussed in detail in Bird-David 1999, 72.
If the idea of the anthropomorphizing and animizing human is stripped of its negative connotations and the dichotomy of putting the natural and the supernatural as separate spheres, studying anthropomorphic thinking in the Western as well as in the indigenous views becomes possible and relevant without being biased or pejorative. Bird-David’s view that the personhood attributed to animals and objects is always related to the present context is a valuable point in making assumptions about anthropomorphism and animism in indigenous, particularly hunter-gatherer, cultures. She argues that animism and anthropomorphism are about relating to objects and animals on a deep level, instead of being mistakes in logical thinking. However, this reinterpretation of Guthrie’s ‘modernist’ terms does not rule out the existence of the psychological phenomenon that gives rise to this sort of thinking. (Bird-David 1999, 77-78.)

Thus we have reviewed the ideas of Hultkrantz, Mithen and Guthrie and linked them to both the Saami views and the views of other similar cultures from the American continent to arrive at a concept of personhood. This is a progression from the interrelatedness and similar cognitive capacities of both humans and animals being at the core of indigenous relational epistemology. This is not to be viewed as a mistake in logical thinking, but rather as means to relate to one’s environment in a productive and complex manner. It seems that the environment feeds the receptive human mind with meanings and beliefs, and these individual humans function in a community of human and other-than-human persons where these meanings and beliefs are communicated to form systems of thought one could call mentality, epistemology, ontology, world-view or religion. These are in turn transmitted through culture.

7.2 Theoretical analysis

As the different theories are now woven together to form a postulated indigenous ‘ethnomethaphysics’ as a frame of understanding and explaining the Saami pre-Christian world view and a general idea of the human-animal relations that accompanies this framework, it is now necessary to take a closer look at the patterns that emerge from my sources. I have tried to construct five interconnected categories based on the two first stages of my three-fold method of analysis. This last stage of theoretical analysis attempts to answer my research question: "What kind of change happened in the religious sphere of the Saami
between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and what was its impact on attitudes towards nature, especially game animals and fish?”

Various scholars have debated over what or who was the ultimate subject of sieidi sacrifice: some say that the sieidis were concentrations of divine power as such and some say they represented an external force. The sources show that offerings to masters of game, masters of natural places and for example the gods of thunder and wind were conducted at sieidi sites. What the scholars do, however, largely agree on, is the function of the sieidi. It seems it was an originator of good fishing and hunting luck as well as health, and some material suggests that it would bring the souls of slain animals back to life, being the originator of prey. (Itkonen 1948, 315–319; Pentikäinen 153–155, Mebius 1968, 130.) Hans Mebius (1968, 195–196) argues that in these sacrifices the soul concept has been crucial, and this is shown by smearing of the sacrificial animal’s blood on the sieidi or the offering of other important organs like the heart or the head. Often the soul was thought to be in the blood, the heart or the head. Another important matter was the preservation of the bones: often the bones would be buried in full anatomical order, for the flesh to grow back on them. These examples show how the animals were credited with souls and indicate a firm belief in their resurrection. (Mebius 1968, 194–196; Pentikäinen 1995, 354.)

Regarding the concepts of souls in hunting cultures, these are inseparable from the practice of shamanism. The general idea is that humans possess several souls, one being the force that animates the body and the other being a free soul that leaves the body during sleep or the shaman’s trance. Ingold has a point that while all humans are thought to have a free soul, animals are credited with similar free souls as a group, not individually. These “free souls” of animals are, according to Ingold, human-like persons or masters of game. This is an intriguing idea, and also Ivar Paulson seems to have a similar perception concerning the souls of humans, animals and masters of game. (Ingold 1986, 247-248, 264-266; Paulson 1961, 97.)

The idea of helping spirits that come in many forms, also found in the sources, is integral to the noaidi’s work. Water birds and fish are often the most powerful helping spirits of the noaidi. Fish are animals that live and travel underwater and water birds can travel in all elements. Thus by turning into a fish or a water bird the noaidi could either travel horizontally to other geographical places or vertically to other worlds like the upper and the lower world. By taking the form of a deer the shaman can lure other deer to the hunters, reveal the location of the prey by soul travel to the hunters, or battle other shamans in deer costume. All of the above mentioned are hunted animals and they are all credited with souls. The noaidi’s role and that of the masters of nature that emerge from the
sources are, I argue, both phenomena related to the soul-concepts that rise when the environment inspires religious thought in human mind. Masters of nature are thus human-like persons that can take an animal form or a human form. (Hultkrantz 1965, 311-313.) If this holds true, the soul concepts concerning animals are inseparable from the rest of the Saami indigenous ethno-metaphysics that included a three-layered universe, ideas of several souls in humans and animals as well as a related religious specialist called the noaidi.

We could therefore suggest, based on these theories, that the primary integration of ecological conditions and morphological integration of symbols in the environment (as well as cognitive fluidity between natural and social intelligences) can be seen to work simultaneously in concepts of the helping spirits of the noaidi, masters of nature and animal ceremonialism. The hunted animals thus also served as mediums for the noaidi to enable his soul-travels as a result of morphological and primary integration. This theory would explain the transfer of souls and metamorphosis between humans and beasts like deer, fish, different birds and the veneration of the bear. Thus there is a direct correlation between the noaidi’s helping spirits, familiar game and the knowledge of the game animals’ movements. This could also be broadened to otherwise meaningful, potentially harmful and dangerous animals that were not primarily obtained for food like lynxes and wolves, as Harva’s sources suggest, and especially the bear that was both a dangerous beast and a source of nutrition. These were animals that had something more to them, a soul, a human-likeness, ‘mana’ or ‘väki’. (Boyer 2001, 166-167; Hultkrantz 1965, 311; Harva 1915, 43-52.)

The Saami saw the owners of nature and even the sieidis as persons with moral qualities: they had motives, hierarchy and other human-like features. The sources describing masters of the game, animals as persons and shaman’s animal helping spirits are backed by the cognitive theories of agency detection, anthropomorphism and the theory of counter-intuitive representations first introduced by the cognitivist Pascal Boyer. Masters of nature and other anthropomorphic beings can be seen as cognitive representations induced by the human mind: they are moral persons and they break the natural categories of the mind by invading the borders between man and animal. They are thus counter-intuitive representations par excellence, and can be seen by these etic theories as results of the psychological processes resulting in anthropomorphic thinking. (Sjöblom 2002a, 86; Boyer 2001; 75-77; Ingold 1986, 249; Mithen 1996, 186-187, 192, 200-202.)

Local masters or owners of nature emerge from the material, but also more general beings. The Saami had their hunting and fishing rituals and sieidi offerings linked
to an anthropomorphic being: not only in terms of human-like sieidi stones, but also the masters or owners of nature have been anthropomorphic in the broader sense of the term. However variable they might be in terms of anthropomorphism and theriomorphism, as well as local and more general beings, one thing in common does occur: they are all moral beings that can be both angered and appeased. Although they might take the form of an animal, all in all they must be seen as anthropomorphic beings that may be addressed similarly to humans; they possess a capacity to feel and must be considered moral beings.

Animism and anthropomorphism seem to include Saami animal relations and soul beliefs under two terms that stem from similar psychological responses to the environment, elucidating aspects of past cultures’ ways of perceiving nature. If nature is full of persons, humans are seen as parts of a holistic system including animals, plants and even lifeless objects like stones. Thus an animistic view of nature is based on the concepts of reciprocity and equilibrium, and the soul concepts concerning animals as being opposite to the Western, Cartesian view of seeing animals as soulless machines. (Ylimaunu 2002, 116-117; Sjöblom 2002a, 85.)

When these ideas are compared to my sources, the ideas of masters or guardians of nature, their appearance in dreams, sexual relations and metamorphosis between humans and other-than-human persons as well as bear ceremonialism are concepts that follow from the notion of personhood in nature. When related to Bird-David’s view, the relational epistemology of personhood attributed to other-than-humans means that these persons are not seen in a subject/object manner. This view does not dispute the actual psychological processes at work described by the etic theories, but instead offers us a way to understand and relate to the interconnectedness the Saami have felt towards these persons by moving away from ‘naturalist’ dichotomies and reductive character embedded in the natural sciences by questioning their basic principles in a productive manner in order to try and understand the way in which the world is seen in an indigenous setting.

So far it seems that the postulated attitudes concerning animals belonging to the indigenous world view follow my revisited theories. These theories explain anthropomorphic thinking, addressing the natural world by social terms, the belief in counter-intuitive agents and a conservative tendency of religious ideas. When we look at these theories from a critical stance we can reflect their reductive and etic emphasis and modify them accordingly. By understanding that the emic view did not separate the natural from the supernatural, the mind from the body or the Christian from the traditional we can see that they are categories that stem from Western, especially protestant Christian and modernist views.
One of the main points of this attempt to understand the personhood concepts by using emic terms is the Saami word for human or man, ‘olmmai’ and old man, ‘galles’. To give a few examples, the sources include many notions of ‘leibolmmai’, the alder man controlling hunting luck (red alder was chewed and spat by Saami women during hunting rituals, so the connection most probably comes from the red color of blood) and ‘caccolmai’, the water man controlling fishing luck. ‘Bieggolmai’ or ‘Bieggagalles’ was in control of the weather. The ‘Gedgge-olmush’ was a sieidi stone in the likeness of man. Many other examples of personhood in emic terms and connected ideas of the reciprocal relationship and communication with these powers by means of sacrifice, divination, dream-vision and the noaidi’s trance emerge from the sources.

As stressed several times in this work, the religious concepts in an indigenous setting cannot be separated from other aspects of life. Thus in order to answer the question about change in animal relations, other aspects do remain that need to be addressed, these being the other major changes in Saami culture that happened in these centuries. The largest question is the large scale adoption of reindeer herding: how does domestication change animal relations? There are a few theories and points that need to be addressed, but as the focus of this study is not in asking how domestication changes soul concepts, only a few points can be addressed in this context.

Åke Hultkrantz has studied the change of Saami religious activities regarding the transition from hunting and fishing to reindeer nomadism. His basic idea is that the old belief system of the hunters and fishers remained even though the culture (for example community size, hierarchy and dwelling places) changed to a degree. He argues that a “nomadic variant” was in the developing when Christianity took over the old beliefs and that the Scandinavian loans had a much larger influence on Saami religion than this cultural change that only affected a part of Saami population. (Hultkrantz 1985, 23-28.) Some of Hultkrantz’s points are grounded in the idea of transferred mentalities discussed above, and it is possible that only the surface features of this “hunting variant” were passed to the “nomadic variant” and the deep meanings were renewed as other factors like Christianity and growing colonial pressure resulted in big cultural changes. Also other opinions are thus needed to get a fuller picture.

Tim Ingold argues that with domestication a culture’s way to see animals changes from co-dwelling and reciprocity to domination over objects that can be owned and inherited. This doesn’t mean a herdsman would not care for his animals, but their relationship changes: the humans become dominant and the animals subordinate. Contrary to the Western dichotomy of nature vs. culture and the way we tend to see animals as
things, however, the social relations between humans and animals still exist in a pastoralist society as the ‘being with’ animals is still present. The change, Ingold argues, is not only in the social relations between humans and animals, but also between humans themselves as society changes to a more hierarchical one. (Ingold 200, 61-76) Hultkrantz’s points as well as the points given in chapter 4.2 of a change in the social structure of Saami society after the transition seems to be in line with Ingold’s points.

A recent study by Nurit Bird-David and Danny Naveh focuses on the effects domestication had on the relational epistemology described earlier by joining two ethnographic accounts from the same area in different times (1978-1979 by Bird-David and 2003-2004 by Danny Naveh). A hunter-gatherer culture (Nayaka in India) was pressured by outside powers to adopt animal husbandry and agriculture. This changed the way they saw animals – the wild animals were still seen as persons, but the domesticated animals like chickens and cows became ‘objects’ or ‘things’ in a sense: they were largely seen by their trade or nutritional value, but the personification of wild animals remained largely unchanged. This reflects, according to the article, a shift in the way in which these animal resources were used: while the hunted animals provided food for the self and the community, the products from domesticated animals were sold to anonymous users. The use of the animal thus affected the way it was perceived in this relational epistemology, whether it was a person or a thing. This they base on the idea of ‘immediacy’ in the ‘production-consumption nexus’, meaning that if the animal product is not consumed by the hunter or the pastoralist him/herself, the relational attitude towards it changes. The greater the departure from immediacy, the more animals are seen as objects. (Naveh & Bird-David 2014, 74-92.)

This is something that maybe elucidates some of the factors at work; large scale reindeer husbandry and activating fur trade probably began to change the way in which the Saami perceived animals, especially reindeer, already before an active Christian mission. The shift in the economic culture was arguably a result of the colonizing powers tightening their grip on Sápmi, resulting in the trading of furs, reindeer pelts and meat products to for example guns that were more effective in hunting. These barters were done with people representing the colonial cultures and the animal products were used by anonymous consumers that did not belong to the Saami social sphere. Also the taxes demanded by these powers and the Churches representing them might have resulted in this relational epistemology being different in the case of animals with value in terms of domestication or fur trade as these both deviate from the immediate return model.

Accounts from the American continent have also been studied, and they seem
to follow a similar pattern in terms of activating fur trade, mission work and other byproducts of colonisation working together and resulting in profound changes in the environmental relations concerning wild animals in a crisis-stricken hunting society as described by Martin Calvin’s 1978 book *Keepers of the Game*. In his book Calvin concludes that religious change from indigenous religion to Christianity was one of the numerous reasons for a change in environmental relations, but not by far the only one. (Calvin 1978, 150-156)

Religious change in the Saami setting from indigenous religion to Christianity happened simultaneously with other major changes both within Saami society, as well as between the Saami and different colonizing forces from Sweden-Finland, Denmark-Norway and Tsarist Russia. In addition, the religious change was not something that happened overnight in a simple process and many traces from the old religious setting remained. In addition, it cannot be said that Saami animal relations changed to a similar view of the so called ‘modernist’, but a sense of relatedness and respect towards nature can be seen to have persisted over time despite the big changes that happened in the economic, spiritual and political spheres of Saami culture.

Remembering Sjöblom’s criticism of transmitted mentalities, we can conclude that the religious surface features, for example ritual behaviors like the luohtis addressed to a bear, regulations concerning the hunt or calendric sacrifices were communicated through tradition and their deep meanings renewed each time. Even though the religious experts and their drums disappeared because of Christian efforts to put an end to the indigenous traditions, it seems that the surface features continued for decades or even centuries because of the conservative tendency of religious activities related to the cultural core, among other reasons elaborated in the chapter 6.3. Hultkrantz’s theory about religious beliefs is in need of reformulation, and I suggest a new aspect to Saami religious change discussed in chapter 6.3: “There is a conservative tendency of ritual activity related to the cultural core, even though the deep meanings and surrounding factors would change.”

The ‘Lynn White argument’, according to which the introduction of Christianity changes attitudes towards animals and nature, probably holds ground to some extent, but remains an oversimplification. The processes of change vary greatly as I have tried to elaborate in this study. Based on the three-fold analysis of my material it cannot be said that the religious change was the only or even most important reason for changes in animal relations. Besides, my material gives little account on these attitudes altogether or the practices related to them to give a satisfying answer.
8. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Before moving to my concluding remarks, it is necessary to present the reader with a diagram that hopefully elaborates the different theories, paradigms and orientations in a visual manner. I have organized the authors dealt with in this thesis according to their motivations and backgrounds in broad categories that do not necessarily reflect the unity of the actual ideas behind them, but perhaps represent their views in ways that clarify these different ‘paradigms’, even though I am hesitant to call these divisions as such.

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8.1. Conclusions

While the historical and sociological factors the Saami faced have been well documented by scholars of the history of religion, such as Rydving, Widén and Kylli, I included the cognitive and ecological factors at work as a comparison. This meant interpreting the sources from a novel point of view. Although the sources might be dated, some patterns clearly emerge, and one of the key concepts is that of relating to nature in social terms I have decided to call by a heuristic term ‘personhood’.

By both understanding and explaining these notions of personhood, we can perhaps grasp something that is at least partly lost in history: animal relations in Saami indigenous religion. It can be said, based on my sources and theoretical analysis, that the border between man and animal of the Saami pre-Christian society was blurred. This blurred line between species could be seen as a result of a fluidity between natural intelligence and social intelligence, if Mithen’s theory is thought to hold sway. Western thought has long been quite the opposite, since animals have become this-worldly beings who merely serve as sources of nutrition or as pets. As previously described, Cartesian thinking has influenced the modern man in his portraying of animals as merely machines without the ability to free will or a soul, while humans, according to this view, do have a soul that is \textit{de facto} separate from the body.

What has been characteristic of Western scientific thought in general is the creating of several dichotomies and categories in order to make generalizations and coherent patterns. Such dichotomies have been useful in many cases, but they have also contributed to the construction of false assumptions about the world and especially human action. Generalizations such as a division between the religious and the profane spheres of life, between nature and culture, between the natural and the supernatural and between the so called hard sciences and the humanities have brought us to a culmination where the categories no longer aid but instead hinder the progress of sciences dealing with indigenous peoples. The dichotomies form categories influencing the way in which we see human action and make assumptions about phenomena in order to make sense of cultures that are different from our own. Clinging desperately to these kinds of dichotomies is one of the errors a social scientist can commit when researching historical materials dealing with indigenous peoples and making assumptions based on them.

I believe that putting different religions’ views under comparison in terms of nature-friendliness like proposed by the Lynn White thesis is next to impossible. Religious
change was not the only or most prominent change that happened in the Saami society. For example a rise in fur trade and reindeer husbandry and later an economic enterprise of great value around reindeer were other big changes in the society, alongside of a stronger grip exercised by the ruling powers. As religion is, at least in the way the term is used in this work, inseparable from the rest of life’s and a culture’s aspects, I argue that the changes in religion and mentality reflect other big changes in traditional Saami society, not the other way around.

A similar dichotomy related to our subject of study on a deeper level is the classification related to religious change: either you are Christian or not. This is a dichotomy that has in my opinion hindered the Saami studies long enough, but also makes my research question somewhat problematic. If we look at it from the priestly view, the question is quite simple: by practicing “idolatry” you renounce the Cristian faith. If we look at the question from a point of view that the Saami themselves might have had, the question is not that simple. By remembering this and discarding the evolutionistic suppositions and aspirations to classify different cultures, we can use what is of relevance in Hultkrantz’s theory concerning religious change in light of this work: the idea of a cultural core and the conservative tendency of religious ideas that belong to it. The beliefs and practices that concern hunting and fishing show a conservative tendency in light of my sources despite a nominal or even deep religious commitment to Christianity of the groups or individuals involved. This, together with the political and economic changes elaborated previously, means that the religious change that happened did not have a straight or easily elaborated influence on Saami animal relations.

The studied religious change can be said to have happened on many complex levels; a great variation of differing spatial and temporal factors as well as intra-group variations in the acquisition of new beliefs occur. The changes in attitudes towards animals are even more difficult to research, since little information has remained to this day. I feel as if I have only scratched the surface with this study, and many facts, stories and accounts remain lost to history, but some are preserved and can be studied further.
8.2 Discussion

In this work I attempted to point out and analyse change in Saami attitudes towards game animals in light of the religious change from the Saami indigenous religion to Christianity. The question is both multi-faceted and difficult to answer, and putting two religions in comparison in terms of nature friendliness is extremely difficult, even questionable. In addition, the modern Saami who still live in close connection with their surroundings arguably have a different attitude towards nature than for example those living in major cities, even though the differing soul concepts and animal ceremonies are in the past. Perhaps, however, there is a lesson to be learnt. As this study has shown, a change in a society happens on several different levels and is untraceable to a single phenomenon like religious change. It still does not mean change in the religious sphere could not be singled out and studied. Also religious changes need to be studied to gain a more holistic understanding of the issue at hand, and this I see as my task as a student of religion.

Because of the many sides that relate to this change, this inquiry has become more of a ‘review’-type of thesis and an attempt to develop a method of studying historical texts in order to apply different types of theories to them. This method of interpreting historical texts could be developed further by making adjustments and clarifying the ways in which the actual analysis is done. In addition, the method of interpretation, or theoretical analysis, should be further modified for clarity, as well as reflecting the context of the subject of each study.

What about the “fork problem”? It still remains, but new ways to address it emerge. The material I have used gives a very superficial view of Saami life, so a much wider and more heterogeneous source material would perhaps give more accurate answers concerning these topics. In addition to textual sources, close analysis of Saami rock art and other archaeological findings as well as a close symbolically oriented study on the Saami drums’ figures might reveal valuable information on this topic. Also ethnographical fieldwork might prove valuable in the context of this study to relate the topics discussed to modern-day Saami and their attitudes and orientations towards nature. These are only some of the possible ways in which the ethnohistorian might further address this “fork problem” in order to gain knowledge and reconstruct the past ways of knowing that deviate from the modern sciences, but are not necessarily subordinate in every aspect.

This work possessed a more philosophical side to it as well. It has shown that issues raised by desperately clinging to different kinds of paradigms and theoretical stands
forces one onto wobbly ground: the epistemological issues that rose from the different orientations stretch to deep philosophical questions about the relative nature of truth. Mithen, Guthrie and other cognitivists seem to have an ‘origin’ agenda in their research, not completely unlike that of the previous evolutionistic schools Harva represents. This, along with the fact that most of what we know about the human mind relies on Western university students, I see as some general issues with this study paradigm that can hopefully be answered by scientific efforts and a re-evaluation of the goals of this enterprise. In my mind the search for the origins of religion is a controversial research question that has its roots in controversial historical stances, especially remembering that many of for example Mithen’s points concern predominantly male activities like hunting and fishing: they don’t focus on female religious activities in the same sense. Here’s an important question to those that encompass these views of hunting religions as some sort of proto-religion: what about gathering religions, do they exist? Or is scavenger religion the original form of religion?

There are also things I want to point out as an individual person with political views I try to keep from clouding my judgment. I think they need to be revealed in order for the reader to become aware of my prejudices and their possible effects on my work. The first thing I want to point out is the treatment and respect of animals in different cultures. The nomadic lifestyle that was, and still is, a big part of Saami culture, as well as the reverence and symbolic value given to animals discussed in this thesis, are something that I think should be considered by the bigger public. Also politicians hopefully make their decisions concerning both the Saami and the Northern landscape and nature based on studied knowledge in both the social and the natural sciences. For example the current discussion on indigenous rights is a major issue, and I personally think those in power ought to learn something from their predecessors. Especially the effects of historical actions and strategies should be studied by the politicians when making decisions, and an ongoing debate about the effects of mining industry and other major commercial activities happening in the Sápmi reflects little knowledge of history from the decision-makers’ part. It is my opinion that the Saami people’s rights to participate in the decisions concerning land and water use, their traditional holy places as well as their own language and culture should be protected by signing the ILO 169 act; a signing that has been postponed by the Finnish parliament for many years under various excuses.

Here’s another view: maybe the reader who might have just eaten a commercially produced meat or fish product might think that for some people that chunk of fleshy tissue would have been a feeling and thinking person, comparable to human.
modern food industry and its treatment of animals could be seen as worst sort of blasphemy from that point of view. Compared to the attitude of a herder, let alone a hunter, the modern person does not see or feel the animal in the same sense; this is true of the Saami in a sense even today, whereas for the average person, it is just a soulless chunk of meat.

I believe that as a fisherman I can relate to this on a level. I love eating what I kill, even though I don’t like the killing part that much, and personally think wild food is the best sort of food you can get. In the world of modern sport fishing, not killing more than you need is on everyone’s own conscience for the most part, and if sanctions occur for some species or areas they are seldom punished severely. In this study, there is hopefully something to relate to in this sense for those who fish for sport and kill all they can catch. The fishing industry and the customers buying fish products should also be aware of the amounts of fish that are overfished each year, also and especially in the Saami cultural sphere. Fishing, hunting and land use are sources of political disputes that concern the Saami even today.
9. SOURCES


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10. LITERATURE


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10. ATTACHMENTS
