Chapter Title	Nation-Building and Colonialism: The Early Skolt Sami Research of Väinö Tanner	
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Abstract	In 1929, the geologist Väinö Tanner (1881–1948) published an extensive study in human geography on the economic and social adaptation of the Skolt Sami. Tanner aimed at an understanding and respectful approach, and today he enjoys the reputation of a culturally sensitive scholar: one who tried to see the Skolt Sami culture from within, and who wrote against the most aggressive discourses of his time. There are indications, however, that the relationship between Tanner and the Sami was more complex than previously assumed. His book is examined in the light of recent theorizing on colonial knowledge production, revealing aspects of his relation to the object of study that can be seen as colonialist. The focus in the article is on Tanner's approach to the hierarchization of the study object, and whether it was primarily the national or the colonial context, and the related discourses, that induced him to write about the Skolt Sami as he did. His unfavorable comparisons of the Skolt Sami to modern societies, and his use of an expert voice in relation to "correct" forms of subsistence, reveal a scholar deeply embedded in colonial discourses, as does his occasional direct praise of colonial politics. The national, however, turns out to be a more constitutive context for Tanner. Colonialism can be seen as too inclusive a super-structure, containing evolutionary and nationalist discourses articulated at the national level as well, but perhaps lacking the explanatory potential offered by the more apparent national context.	

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Nation-Building and Colonialism: The Early ² Skolt Sami Research of Väinö Tanner ³

Jukka Nyyssönen

INTRODUCTION

After Finland gained independence in 1917, Finnish aspirations of eastern 6 expansion were fulfilled when the Pechenga region, in Finnish Petsamo, 7 was annexed to Finland in the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920. As a result, 8 Finland hosted a "new" minority, the Skolt Sami, an Eastern Sami group. 9 The Skolt way of life was based on a mixed economy, combining small-10 scale reindeer herding and fishing. Due to subsequent encroachments on 11 Skolt Sami fishing rights and the introduction of industry and modern 12 infrastructure, their traditional sources of subsistence were in crisis, and as 13 one option the Skolt Sami began increasingly to enter modern forms of 14 economic activity. This aroused the interest of numerous scholars in the 15

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human sciences, inspired by evolutionist ideas; a Sami culture in its "most 16 original stage" was about to vanish.1 The Geologist Väinö Tanner 17 (1881–1948) was among the many scholars who had already made exten-18 sive field trips to Eastern Sami areas while Finland was still a Grand Duchy 19 of Russia (1809–1917). In 1929 Tanner published the work which forms 20 the main focus of this chapter: an extensive study in human geography, 21 entitled Antropogeografiska studier inom Petsamo-området: 1, Skoltlapparna 22 (Studies in the human geography of the Petsamo district: 1, The Skolt 23 Lapps). The study covered numerous aspects of the economic and social 24 adaptations of the Skolt Sami. Tanner was aiming at an "understanding" 25 and respectful approach, and he enjoys the reputation of a culturally sensi-26 tive scholar: one who tried to see the Skolt Sami culture from within and 27 who wrote against the most intrusive discourses of his time.² There are, 28 however, indications that the relationship between Tanner and the Sami 29 was more complicated than has previously been assumed. Here I examine 30 his scholarly work on the Skolt Sami in the light of recent theorizing on 31 colonial knowledge production. This approach reveals certain aspects of 32 his relation to the object of study that, I claim, can be labeled as colonial-33 ist. The analysis reveals his hierarchization of the study object; it also dis-34 plays the interplay of contexts and sources of discourses, national or 35 colonial, which caused him to write about the Skolt Sami the way he did. 36 The term "colonial science", which has many disciplinary branches and 37 functions, here refers to scholarly production directly or indirectly con-38 tributing to, justifying, and/or participating in colonial efforts and empire-39 building. Colonial science has been stereotypically portraved as derivative, 40 instrumentalist, and extractive and has been criticized as an instrument of 41 imperial control, rather than as a key to the development of the target 42 societies. Colonial science has often had the utilitarian, mercantilist goal of 43 charting the availability of profitable raw materials.³ To achieve these goals 44 a number of discursive means were employed, "othering" or even dehu-45

a number of discursive means were employed, "othering" or even dehumanizing the colonized subjects. The colonial discourses thus articulated
in knowledge production included the inability of the indigenous
population to govern themselves, or the resources found in the lands to be
colonized. These scholarly works aired a need to improve or displace the

¹Harlin and Lehtola 2019, 45–49.

³Cañizares-Esguerra 2005, electronic material, accessed 13.11.2012; Said 1995, passim; Wu 2019, passim.

² Susiluoto 2000, 14–15.

indigenous population, based on the naturalized superiority of the 50 colonizing power and on the goal of utilizing resources.⁴ In addition, 51 geographers were quick to take on board the discourses of social evolution, and subsequent racial ideas and discourses, on the basis of which they 53 constructed hierarchies supporting nations and empires.⁵ 54

Seen as a whole, all the science of the late nineteenth and early twenti-55 eth century was (framed by the) colonial: for historical subjects, scholars 56 included, the imperial was the subjective, or, for many, the native category. 57 In the age of empire, it was the dominant mode of fathoming contacts 58 between peoples near and far. In colonial science, however, the national 59 and the global were closely intermingled. The aims of nation-building 60 could end up building colonial hierarchies, by echoing those constructed 61 on a global scale in the empires. And it was scientists who-not alone, but 62 to a significant extent-introduced global/imperial discourses within the 63 national (e.g. Finnish) frame, and created cross-border systems of under-64 standing colonial rule by means of knowledge circulation.⁶ As a decidedly 65 noncolonial nation,⁷ Finland is a good example of the intermingling of the 66 two categories, the involvement of colonial discourses in knowledge pro-67 duction, framed by national goal settings. 68

My purpose here is to not merely to label Tanner as a colonialist scholar, 69 but to study him critically, to determine whether some aspects of his 70 knowledge production qualify as colonial. I claim no full explanatory 71 power for the term "colonial" in explaining an activity of such complexity 72 as scholarly knowledge production, with all its social and ideological con-73 nections. What I do claim, however, that this same complexity, with its 74 multiple contexts, social dependencies, and impulses (including colonial 75 ones), had an impact on Finnish knowledge production. 76

The historical and geographical context of the article is the period during which Petsamo, located in the border regions of Finland, Norway, and Russia on the coast of the Arctic Sea, was a Finnish province (1920–1921) 79 and municipality (1921–1944). During this era, the extractive aspects of Finnish scientific knowledge production (especially mineralogy) became 81 blatant. Here I address three interrelated questions: (1) in what manner did Tanner encounter and treat the Skolt Sami in the course of his research? 83

⁴Dale 2009, 79 et passim; Danielsson 2009, 64–66.

⁵Wu 2019, 68; Nyyssönen 2017, passim.

⁶Adelman 2019, 3, 9.

⁷For example, Airaksinen 2008, passim.

(2) What were his views as to colonial policies and the colonization of
Petsamo? And (3) were the discourses that gave rise to or inspired his
research colonial and metropolitan, or just national?⁸

The sources, consisting of relevant published texts, manuscripts of the 87 1929 publication and some correspondence,⁹ are read qualitatively and 88 discursively, in search of discursive similarities to colonial science/knowl-89 edge production¹⁰ and of influential contexts and discourses. The concep-90 tual frame involves studying Tanner's scholarly production in the light of 91 colonialism as a discursive undertaking: reading scholarly texts as attempts 92 to construct a moral superiority and a socio-cultural difference. The focus 93 of study is on the naturalizing and objectifying grids through which 94 Tanner observed and hierarchized the Skolt Sami.¹¹ The chapter is orga-95 nized chronologically, I first briefly introduce Tanner and his early career, 96 after which I discuss his activities in Petsamo and his scholarly production 97 concerning the region and the Skolt Sami. I conclude with a discussion of 98 Tanner's response to Finnish perception of the colonization of Petsamo. 99

100 TANNER'S EARLY CAREER AND HIS FIRST FIELD TRIPS

Väinö Tanner (1881–1948) was born in Hämeenlinna to a family belong-101 ing to the Swedish-speaking middle class.¹² In 1905 he graduated from 102 the Polytechnic, with a diploma in chemical engineering. In 1914 he 103 defended a doctoral thesis on quaternary geology at the Imperial Alexander 104 University in Finland (from 1919 the University of Helsinki). During his 105 early career, through his involvement in the Geological Commission of 106 Finland, he took part almost annually, from 1903 to 1913, in geological 107 expeditions to Lapland. In 1909 he visited the Skolt Sami regions 108 Njuõ'ttjäy'rr13 (Finnish Nuortijärvi) and Suõ'nn'jel (Finnish Suonikvlä). 109

⁸Compare Adelman 2019, 10.

⁹Tanners personal archives are located at the Arctic University Museum of Norway, in Tromsø.

¹⁰ Compare Lehtola **2015**, 22–36.

¹¹Cooper and Stoler 1997, 3-4; Thomas 1994, 38-40.

¹²Lundqvist 1968, 143-144.

¹³ I write the Skolt Sami *sijdd* toponyms in the most recent orthography of the Skolt Sami language, and provide a Finnish translation. Toponyms are otherwise written in the language of each respective country. Where possible, I use ethnonyms indicating the *sijdd*-belongingness of the individual. On most occasions, this is not possible, since they are not explicated in the sources.

He taught and did research at the Geological Commission, the Polytechnic, 110 and the Imperial Alexander University.¹⁴ During the years of 1918–1921, 111 Tanner served at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign affairs, whence he was 112 recruited to the Geological Commission. From 1921 to 1930, he served 113 as State Geologist.¹⁵ Tanner was appointed professor of Geography at the 114 University of Helsinki in 1931. During the rest of his career he did not 115 return extensively to Sami topics. Tanner is best known for his geological 116 studies but also for his extensive work on Labrador.¹⁶ He took voluntary 117 exile to Sweden in 1944; as a Swedish-speaking Finnish scholar, he expe-118 rienced conflicts with the Finnish-speaking staff and with pro-Finnish 119 policies at the University during the language disputes in Finland. Tanner 120 was known for his anti-"True Finn" political stance.¹⁷ 121

Tanner became closely acquainted with the Sami regions in Sweden and 122 Norway due to his involvement in the international Commissions working 123 on the reindeer herding crisis in Torne Lappmark, in the northernmost 124 part of the province of Norrbotten (chairmanship in 1910-1912 and 125 1914-1917). The Commissions were meant to resolve the protracted 126 impasse in the negotiations over the pasturing rights of the nomadic Sami 127 from Sweden in the summer pastures in the Troms county in Norway. The 128 Commissions produced reports focused chiefly on biological information 129 as to the condition of the pastures in Norrbotten and Troms, and ended 130 up suggesting the removal of groups of nomads to southern pastures; 131 today this outcome is seen as a great failure, resulting in chaos in 132 pasturing.¹⁸ 133

The fieldwork was conducted according to the scientific standards of 134 the time. The scientists and officials were guided by local Sami, who nevertheless appear only seldom in the sources, providing information as to choice of fodder and some social aspects of herding.¹⁹ The botanical and 137

¹⁴ CV, Box 18, Folder 10a, Private documents, Archive of Väinö Tanner (AVT), Archive of Arctic University Museum of Norway (AUMoN), Tromsø, Norway; Rantala 2008, 45–46.

¹⁷ "Aitosuomalaiset" was an extreme right-wing patriotic political movement, which in its early phase, in the 1920s, focused on the ongoing language dispute, with the aim of suppressing the linguistic rights of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland. The group was most visible at the University of Helsinki, Tanner's place of work, where he did have to unwillingly conform to the demands of the Finnish nationalists. Jutikkala and Pirinen (1996) 2003, 414–415; Lundqvist 1968, 215–217.

¹⁸ Broderstad, Niemi and Sommerseth (eds.) 2007, passim.

¹⁹Nyyssönen 2015a, 172–173 et passim.

¹⁵ CV, Box 18, Folder 10b, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway; Susiluoto 2000, 12.

¹⁶Tanner **1944**.

phenological fieldwork was carried out according to scientific principles: 138 the use of the Latin names of plants, and the classification of vegetation 139 into different categories in a scientific manner, served as a way of identify-140 ing oneself as a scientist. The reports estimated the carrying capacity of the 141 pastures, based on the growth of lichen and other types of vegetation suit-142 able for pasturing,²⁰ and the area requirement per reindeer.²¹ The situation 143 was in crisis and natural resources were in danger of being destroyed. 144 Tanner became familiar with both aspects in relation to pastures: as a natu-145 ral resource, as in colonial science, and as the context of Sami social 146 organization. 147

In his fieldwork, Tanner showed an inclination, on the one hand, 148 toward sensitivity toward the Sami, especially as informants, on the other, 149 toward colonial arrogance. The sources contain indications that Tanner, 150 along with the Swedish and Finnish Commission members, reacted to and 151 resisted Norwegian doubts as to the moral condition of the Sami; the 152 Norwegians claimed that the Sami were unsuited to serve as informants 153 due to their alleged bias.²² Tanner's application for a "personal (Sami) 154 assistant" in the final Commission expedition in 1914 was turned down.²³ 155 The hierarchies between the Sami and the scholars were also sustained by 156 the use of titles, signifying the social standing of each participant 157 and guide.24 158

Whether some aspects of this engagement qualify as colonial is debat-159 able. The Swedish motivation for preserving the pastures in Sami usage 160 was based on an economic rationale, but suggestions of a colonial power 161 of definition can be perceived in the Commission's work as well: the 162 Swedish Sami, according to many scholars, became victims of a physical 163 form of science-based "social engineering" in the forced removals that fol-164 lowed, even if it cannot be directly credited to the Commissions. Tanner 165 supported the idea of cutting the number of reindeer and removing some 166 Sami groups to "new" pastures. In spite of this enforced social engineer-167 ing, in the course of his fieldwork, he recognized and stressed the 168

²⁰ Minute, Vuoskoaivi, 13 August 1910, Box 1, Folder 1, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

²¹Climatic factors causing a deterioration of pasture conditions were also discussed. Undated protocol, Box 1, Folder 1, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

²² Transcript, Instructions for the commission, 1913, Box 1, Folder 6, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway; Renbeteskommissionens af 1913 handlingar, I:1,13.

²³Correspondence from Kristian Nissen to Tanner, 20.2.1914, Box 17, Folder 9, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

²⁴ Nyyssönen 2015a, 170–171.

indigenous rationality of the Sami organization of herding, expressed in 169 their social and even their political organization.²⁵ The Commission 170 showed a preference, typical of the time, for an intensive form of herding, 171 based on strict control of the herds, and considered more "original". The 172 shift observed toward extensive, less stringent herding, however, was 173 explained differently: Tanner and the Commission listened to their Sami 174 informants and blamed external factors, including the border closure of 175 1889 between Finland and Sweden, increased settlement in the summer 176 pasture areas, restrictions on pasture access, and the unruly, large 177 Kautokeino stocks causing chaos in pastures in Troms and Norrbotten.²⁶ 178 Explanations by Swedish officials, in contrast, were based on near-179 racializing characterizations of the mental attributes of the Sami: the 180 "good" way of herding was in a process of "degeneration" due to Sami 181 laziness and carelessness.²⁷ 182

In the end, the Commission members had the final say on the matter, 183 which was resolved on the basis of scientific knowledge concerning pas-184 ture resilience and productivity; this resonated well with the Sami infor-185 mants who were hoping for a reduction in the number of reindeer as 186 well.²⁸ This was the Sami voice allowed to surface in the reports. Tanner 187 effortlessly embraced the role of an expert on Sami issues, a stance which 188 he continued to lay claim to in his future research, and which affected the 189 way the Skolt Sami were positioned and hierarchized in his studies.²⁹ 190

SUMMERS IN PETSAMO AND THE MAIN WORK 191 ON THE SKOLT SAMI 192

The *sijdd*,³⁰ the Skolt Sami word for "village", was a demarcated administrative region, divided into kin and family areas; it maintained annual cycles of utilization and had ritual, judicial, and economic functions.³¹ In 1920 in Petsamo, three *sijdds* were annexed to Finland (see Fig. 5.1.). At

²⁵ Nyyssönen 2015a, 174 et passim.

²⁶Renbeteskommissionens af 1913 handlingar, I:1, 184–185, 189–190 (see also footnote 3), 191–199, 205–209, 232, 241.

²⁷Lantto 2012, 101.

²⁸ Nyyssönen 2015a, 179.

²⁹ Nyyssönen 2015a, passim.

³⁰The more widely known north Sami variant of the term is siida. In his book, Tanner used the term sijt. Porsanger 2007, 109.

³¹Enbuske 2008, 71ff; Tanhua 2020, 30.

the time the Skolt Sami were undergoing catastrophic difficulties, which 197 had begun half a century earlier. Recent scholarship has attributed the 198 subsistence and social crisis in the *sijdds* to external factors. For example, 199 sedentary settlement of the Petsamo fjord had made fishing of the 200 Peaccham (Petsamo) increasingly difficult. The demarcation of the 201 national border cut off several *sijdds* from their resource zones: Peaccham 202 from a summer pasture area, Suõ'nn'jel from their winter village, and 203 Paččjokk (Paatsjoki) from their coastal fisheries. Industrial forms of eco-204 nomic activity entered Peaccham and Paččjokk.³² The crisis was acceler-205 ated during the Finnish era, with continuing encroachment on the 206 remaining Skolt Sami subsistence rights. From early on, the state of 207 Finland had high hopes concerning the establishment of fisheries and a 208 fishing industry in the region. Summer fishing places and the exclusive 209 fishing rights possessed by the Peaccham-Sami in Liinahamari were lost to 210 the Finnish fishing industry and fisheries when the road reached the new 211 harbor in 1930. The Peaccham-Sami received no compensation for the 212 intrusion. Finnish fishing in the fjord, which extended over a longer 213 period, reduced the salmon catch in the Petsamo River and the fjord, and 214 the settlers began to herd their own reindeer stocks in the pastures belong-215 ing the *sijdd*. The Peaccham-Sami had to resort to occasional paid labor, 216 for example, in the fish processing factories (Fig. 5.1).³³ 217

In the 1920s, as this process, close to a land-grab, went on, Tanner 218 visited Petsamo numerous times. Officially, he was in Petsamo because of 219 the search for nickel ore, in his capacity as State Geologist for the Geological 220 Commission. The quest came to a halt, to Tanner's disappointment, when 221 due to lack of state funds he had to recommend to the Geological 222 Commission that prospecting be given over to an international actor.³⁴ 223 Here we see him in perhaps his clearest extractive-colonial moment. The 224 nickel mine and refinery was established on the lands of the Paččjokk sijdd, 225 some years after Tanner's work. 226

As a byproduct of these expeditions, he issued several publications on Petsamo, including the classic 1929 study on the Skolt Sami. *Antropogeografiska* is a multidisciplinary study, with a theoretical frame in

³⁴ PM. on Petsamo 1928, Box 3, Folder 1g, AVT, AUMON, Tromsø, Norway; in 1934, the English affiliate of International Nickel Company Ltd., The Mond Nickel Company received the concession to utilise the nickel in Petsamo. Vahtola 1999, 287.

³²Lehtola 2012, 166; Tanner 1929, 152–157.

³³Lehtola 2012, 170, 258–259.

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Fig. 5.1 Skolt Sami Sijdds before 1920. (Source: Nordregio, Cartographer Linus Rispling, https://nordregio.org/maps/saa'mijannam-the-community-location-of-the-skolt-sami-sijdds/)

human geography. Tanner's aim was to survey the people, their semi-230 nomadic adaptation, history, politics, viability and administration, along 231 with the socio-economic crisis of the three Skolt Sami sijdds now belong-232 ing to Finland. The political agency of the Skolt Sami was constructed in 233 a groundbreaking way with Tanner's analysis of the Norráz/Sobbar, the 234 organ responsible for the Skolt Sami sijdd administration, which allocated 235 usage rights to fishing waters and lands to the families. This was one of the 236 culturally most sensitive contributions for which Tanner is credited: a 237 functionalist perception of the *sijdd*, as an entity of a *people* defined by kin-238 ship ties and by the terrain they utilized, and within which they allocated 239

resource zones in an orderly manner.³⁵ Tanner wrote decidedly against the 240 Finnish public discourse on the Skolt Sami, which accused them of merely 241 wandering aimlessly in the mountains and in general perceived their cul-242 ture as less valuable. In addition, Tanner wrote against "Lappologist" 243 research, which to a great extent was aimed at Finnish nation-building; it 244 applied diffusionist hierarchies of culture, which showed the lower posi-245 tion of the Sami in socio-cultural hierarchies.³⁶ One clear agenda of 246 Tanner's work was to reveal many Finnish policies in Petsamo to be inad-247 equate and ill-advised. 248

Due to this take on the Sami, the book enjoys a good reputation among 249 scholars, to a great extent deserved. The book has a programmatic aim of 250 presenting the Skolt Sami as they appeared to him: as "the most gifted, 251 and in terms of their moral frame of mind ... the most developed popula-252 tion element we met up there"; ravaged, however, by external conditions 253 and thrown into poverty. The book's aim was further elaborated, as being 254 "to promote the happiness of a people of nature" by producing objective, 255 factual knowledge of forces at the extreme north, and how to operate with 256 these forces to the benefit of a "people of nature".³⁷ Among the forces 257 impacting the North was modernity, which resulted in the immediate hier-258 archical positioning of the Skolt Sami, even in the very motivation of the 259 book. The book contains an unresolved tension between, on the one 260 hand, the idea of the inevitability of modernization, leading to the crisis 261 and the loss of a traditional form of subsistence, on the other, Tanner's 262 "purist" view of the rightfulness of semi-nomadic reindeer herding as the 263 original, most appropriate and "correct" form of herding. 264

Tanner tried in earnest to understand the internal rationale of a folk 265 living in interaction with their surroundings, as is evident from his meticu-266 lous depictions of the annual cycle of the *sijdds*. He did not refer to stereo-267 typical descriptions of the Skolt Sami according to the majority of scholars 268 and authors in the Finnish public sphere, as lazy, listless drunkards (see the 269 article by Lahti in this volume). He also avoided taking a position in terms 270 of contemporary racial categories: he does not use the terms "Aryan" or 271 "Germanic", but once refers to the "Nordic" race. He thus avoided the 272 crudest forms of typification in the human sciences.³⁸ In spite of this, in 273

³⁵ Susiluoto 2003, 82, 97; Tanner 1929, passim.

³⁶ Nyyssönen 2015b, 151–153.

³⁷ Susiluoto 2003, 98; Tanner 1929, 7–9.

³⁸Thomas 1994, 97.

numerous passages in the book Tanner relied on hierarchizing discourses. 274 He relied uncritically on local Norwegian officials, such as teachers, end-275 ing up echoing their aggressive Social Evolutionist views of the Njauddam 276 Sami (Näätämö, a Skolt Sami sijdd in easternmost Norway). Typically of 277 the time, he blamed the Skolts for their "wrong" subsistence choices, 278 aired doubts as to their capacity for paid employment,³⁹ and predicted the 279 "natural death" of the Paččjokk sijdd after witnessing their "apathy" in a 280 time of crisis.⁴⁰ In these passages, the scholarly discourses of evolutionary 281 identity, caught up in the framework of progressive developmental stages, 282 are aggressively audible in the text.⁴¹ The Skolt Sami are in a liminal state: 283 authentic children of nature, paralyzed in passivity and incompetence and 284 bypassed by modern times, which they have to be helped to enter. At the 285 time this was a very typical, indeed colonial view of a "primitive" people.⁴² 286

It is in these aggressive and racializing ruptures that colonial discourses 287 show their force. The book is burdened with inconclusive vacillation 288 between, on the one hand, the idea of the innate capacities of the Skolt, 289 on the other, that of the external forces affecting them. Tanner is inconsistent in pointing the blame, for example, in encountering people showing 291 symptoms of cultural trauma or colonization. 292

Tanner's perception of history was framed by social evolutionism, locat-293 ing different nationalities along an evolutionary scale. He also applied this 294 hierarchizing evolutionist perspective to historical encounters along the 295 Arctic coast, which he depicted as taking place between the Skolt Sami, 296 who had arrived earlier, and the more powerful Norse and Finnish popula-297 tion groups.⁴³ Somewhat inconsistently, he entertained ideas of the simul-298 taneous coexistence of overlapping cultural spheres, not necessarily 299 engaged in mutual conflict or competition.⁴⁴ In contrast, for Professor 300 Väinö Voionmaa, one of the few historians to show an interest in the 301 Petsamo question, the struggle was taking place between two unequal 302 races.⁴⁵ Tanner had ideas that place him in the colonial flank, as well as less 303 aggressive ideas of ethnicities in history. The book was unfinished and 304

⁴² Compare Mathiesen 2004, 24.

⁴⁴Manuscript «Lapparna inom Petsamoområdet», Box 6, Folder 1a, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

⁴⁵Voionmaa 1919, passim.

³⁹Tanner 1929, 155.

⁴⁰Tanner 1929, 157–159.

⁴¹Helander-Renvall 2011, 8–9.

⁴³Tanner 1929, 11–22.

hastily edited, and therefore contains numerous and sometimes contradic-tory opinions on a range of issues.

Tanner does not use terms originating in a colonial discourse/termi-307 nology as such; they tend, rather, to be derived from the Nordic political 308 context and terminology. When he uses such terms as "kolonist" or "kolo-309 nisation", he attaches to them the sense of a cultural loss of the most 310 authentic forms of subsistence, adding to them a hierarchical tone. In a 311 brief remark on Russian "kolonisation" (from the 1870s onward), the 312 tone is different: he refers to the active Russian policy of settling the 313 peripheries, "dissociating" the original nationalities, and annexing the ter-314 ritories to the Russian "folk region".⁴⁶ Finnish settler activity in the eigh-315 teenth century in the Kemi Lappmark, and the "vanishing" of the old 316 siidas after the shift to agriculture, was of lesser aggressive force. This per-317 spective echoed the historical understanding typical of his time, but can 318 also be seen as a sign of Tanner's hidden agenda, pointing to the general 319 weakness of the Finns as historical actors, as well as a reluctance to see the 320 process in terms of the parameters of colonialism, which would have been 321 ahistorical and anachronistic.⁴⁷ Tanner credits the sijdds/siidas to a vary-322 ing extent with socio-cultural and economic agency and a robustness in 323 encountering actors from the south, but ultimately the forces of settle-324 ment, colonization, and modernization stand stronger. 325

After the Skolt Sami had given up independent and systematic reindeer 326 herding. Tanner observed a material and intellectual transformation. He 327 also noted that the lure of trade and goods had revealed an "Epicurean 328 weakness", a proclivity typical of "children of nature", among the Skolt 329 Sami. The earlier paternalistic family structure had given way to a more 330 individualistic approach-members had begun to tear themselves away 331 from their families in search of subsistence elsewhere; this brought about 332 a loosening of group sentiment within the *sijdd*, which then broke up 333 under the strain of the "Europeanizing" form of culture invading the 334 region from sea and land.⁴⁸ As inevitably as in these socio-cultural hierar-335 chies, the racial categories employed in the book place the Skolt Sami on 336 the lowest rung in the stereotypical stages of development; notably, 337

⁴⁶Tanner 1929, 62, footnote 1.

⁴⁷Tanner 1929, 403–404.

⁴⁸Tanner 1929, 230–232.

however, and unlike numerous other scholars, Tanner saw the Skolt Sami 338 as a viable people, capable of development and adapting to the modern.⁴⁹ 339

The text contains numerous descriptions of the Sami "character", and 340 advice as to how the Sami could best maintain their "happiness". Although 341 Tanner did collect information from his Skolt Sami guides, and included 342 Sami voices in his book (though in a controlled manner), he found satis-343 faction in a prescriptive position as well. He avoided the typical Finnish 344 form of power of definition, which imposed the idea of a "higher" form of 345 subsistence, primarily agriculture, on the Sami; what he was aiming at was 346 a relativistic gaze, acknowledging the intrinsic value of the Sami culture as 347 such. The tension arises from the power of definition inherent in the cul-348 turally relativistic and positive scholarly gaze as well, if and when one sets 349 down a specific ideal, a particular "correct" subsistence form; in Tanner's 350 case, this meant semi-nomadism, which the Skolt Sami sijdds were then in 351 the process of gradually abandoning.⁵⁰ 352

This gaze was purist and normative, and contained numerous colonial 353 tropes, though in mild form. On a positive note, Tanner used reindeer and 354 reindeer herding as a tool to endow the Sami with cultural potency and 355 agency,⁵¹ and praised them for their successful adaptation to their environ-356 ment.⁵² At the same time, Tanner's conception of the Skolt Sami culture 357 as a reindeer-herding culture, an idea contested by subsequent research,⁵³ 358 became a cultural straitjacket in the book and a source of vulnerability,⁵⁴ 359 binding the Sami unavoidably to the lowest position, both socio-360 economically and culturally. It can also be argued, from the book's general 361 anti-Finnish agenda (along with certain brief passages where Finnish set-362 tlers are compared unfavorably to the Sami), that Tanner used his book to 363 convey a politics of identity; the passages where the Sami are elevated in 364 status within the book's hierarchies may in part have served the purpose of 365 showing the Finns their lowly place along the Arctic coast.⁵⁵ The context 366 of the identity politics expressed in the book is thus national, not colonial. 367

⁴⁹Tanner 1929, 329.

⁵⁰ Undated notes on Albin Neander, Box 6, Folder 1a, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

⁵¹Tanner 1929, 25–27.

⁵² Handwritten notes on Petsamo-Sami, Box 5, Folder 3, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

⁵³ Nickul 1948, 60.

⁵⁴ Tanner 1929, 27.

⁵⁵Tanner 1929, 25-27.

368

TANNER EXPLICATES HIS VIEW ON COLONIALISM

Tanner seldom expressed any views concerning colonialism. In 1927, in 369 an article on the economic potential of Petsamo which has received per-370 haps the greatest scholarly attention, he presented the idea of the cultural 371 integration of Petsamo as desirable and advocated for the introduction of 372 agriculture as a means to prevent the feared pauperization. When it came 373 to the actual colonization of the region, Tanner preferred not a "plunder 374 economy", but a mild, Finnish variant of colonization, whereby the Skolt 375 Sami were to be treated as equals. Tanner uses the term "our 'colonial 376 policy" only once, in the context of the need for the state to take an 377 expert and guiding role in Petsamo. Otherwise the region is referred to in 378 the text by its new name, Petsamo, or is described as a new part of the 379 country, at the far fringe of the land (maanääri) or as a "Finland of the 380 Arctic Ocean" (Jäämeren Suomi), pointing to the recent annexation and 381 relative foreignness of the region, but not necessarily to a colonial rela-382 tionship as such. The region to be annexed was part of the state.⁵⁶ The 383 lecture on which the 1927 article was based was addressed to a Finnish 384 audience consisting of agricultural scientists: hence the agriculture-friendly 385 stance. Rather than going into this widely studied article in depth, I take 386 up a less familiar example from the 1929 book: a brief reference to the 387 colonial dynamic of the Finnish annexation and of Petsamo as a colony. 388

In the 1920s and 1930s, there was some reluctance in Finland over 389 representing the country as a colonial power.⁵⁷ One exception is a little-390 known article by Ilmari Laukkanen (1926), which Tanner had read; I use 391 it here to identify the elements of the idea of Finland as a colonial power 392 to which Tanner was reacting in the 1929 book. According to Laukkanen, 393 Petsamo could be characterized as a colony (alusmaa), but did not fully 394 qualify as one. This was because Petsamo had been annexed to the state as 395 an equal territory: first as a province, then as a jurisdictional district 396 (kihlakunta). What lent legitimacy to speaking of Petsamo as a colony, 397 according to Laukkanen, was the educational level and nationality of the 398 population, along with the prior societal, economic, religious, and admin-399 istrative conditions of the region. There were many alien features, due to 400 which a "sibling relationship" between Petsamo and rest of the country 401 was "unnatural", and which made for a colonial relationship between 402

⁵⁶Susiluoto 2000, 13; Tanner 1927, 6, 109 et passim.

⁵⁷Airaksinen 2008, passim; also Tanner himself is an example of this, Tanner 1927, 6.

colony and "mother country" (emämaa). Laukkanen coded the region as 403 non-western, evident, for example, in the vague and unclear legislation 404 regulating land ownership. The fact that the land of the region was 405 declared to be state (owned) land was represented as "conquest-like" atti-406 tude on the part of the Finnish state. The act was legal, in the sense that it 407 had been carried out according to existing Finnish legislation; the forms of 408 private land ownership were formalized and given to those who had the 409 right to them, and land was leased to the settlers. A special Petsamo settle-410 ment law, regulating the land and its leasing, was enacted in 1925 ("natu-411 ralising" the situation in Finnish legal reasoning). One (unintended) 412 aspect of cultural colonization is found in Laukkanen's text as well: the 413 "persevering" and "skilled" Finnish settlers were to serve as an example to 414 the Orthodox population. For Laukkanen, the Skolt Sami did not fulfill 415 the parameters of "Finnishness" due to their wandering way of life; hence, 416 they did not qualify for inclusion in the state system. Laukkanen expressed 417 suspicions as to whether the Skolt Sami wished or were capable of becom-418 ing sedentary farmers or fishermen, with rights identical to those enjoyed 419 by Finns, and whether they would give up their preferred "forest-dweller 420 freedom" (metsäläis-vapautensa), with its connotations of primitivism.58 421

Provoked by Laukkanen's demeaning ideas of the Skolt Sami and of 422 Finnish natural superiority, Tanner included a critical reference to the arti-423 cle. The passage, which once again draws in numerous directions, deals 424 with the misery of the Paččjokk Sami, opening with a long list of positive 425 depictions of their ability to contribute in numerous areas of economic 426 activity beneficial to society as a whole. Surprisingly, Tanner goes on to say 427 that the Skolt Sami were so deep in misery that it would be highly risky to 428 leave them to rely on their own resources, as suggested by Laukkanen. In 429 addition to being provoked by Laukkanen's doubts as to the personal 430 capacity of the Paččjokk Sami, Tanner appears to be most critical of the 431 idea of uncontrolled sedentarization, which they were in the process of 432 being sucked into, on their own, Skolt Sami initiative, which Laukkanen at 433 least implicitly had described as a desirable policy.⁵⁹ In Tanner's view, this 434 was not a desirable solution for the Skolt Sami. 435

Knowledge production in a colonial/imperial setting has been seen as 436 meaning the creation of intelligible spaces, over which mastery was 437

⁵⁸ Laukkanen 1926, 129–136.

⁵⁹ Tanner 1929, 159–161.

possible,⁶⁰ and the introduction of European conceptions of territoriality 438 at the periphery.⁶¹ Both Laukkanen and Tanner integrated Petsamo into 439 Finnish administrative territoriality, Laukkanen in a highly formalist man-440 ner: both were constructing an extension of the mother country, the colo-441 nial features of which were somewhat defective. It was not the idea of 442 Petsamo as a colony as such that bothered Tanner this time; it was his 443 resistance to pronouncements expressing Finnish superiority that pre-444 vented him from adopting the most aggressive or arrogant colonial rheto-445 ric. This would have demonstrated the imperial potency of the state he 446 wrote against, and its capacity to bring the Skolt Sami into the modern 447 era. While this stance on the poorly hidden contemporary agenda was 448 what partly motivated his culturally sensitive take on the Skolt Sami, it had 449 other roots as well; these included the friendly relationships he enjoyed in 450 the field,⁶² and the turn in the scientific paradigm toward placing a value 451 on indigenous sources of knowledge.⁶³ For both men, however, the place 452 of the Skolt Sami in the quasi-colonial setting was the same: the lowest. 453

In 1931 Tanner attended an international geography congress in Paris; 454 on the occasion, he took part in an expedition to Algeria. Tanner praised 455 French colonial policies as economically and politically elevating, as well as 456 promoting socio-cultural and national assimilation.⁶⁴ His harsh criticism 457 of the native tribes of Labrador adopted a similar, matter-of-fact manner.⁶⁵ 458 When not provoked by Finnish paternalist voices, such as that of 459 Laukkanen, boasting of Finnish superiority, he aired effortlessly pro-460 colonial sentiments; it was the national context that was the provoking 461 factor, while colonial discourses provided him with additional tools 462 enabling him to locate the natives on the hierarchical ladder. In any case, 463 the fixed position for the Skolt Sami was the lowest, which the destabiliz-464 ing weakness of the ("colonizing") potency of the Finns could not shake. 465

I have found only one indication, in a draft letter found in his correspondence, of Tanner airing and showing an awareness of the *anti*imperialist attitudes of the times. In the draft, Tanner writes with reference to an unspecified text by Professor Friedrich Ratzel, a pioneer in the field of human geography, in which Ratzel speaks of the "killing race", that

⁶⁰ For example, Skurnik 2017, 9–10.

⁶¹Wu 2019, 64.

⁶²Susiluoto 2000, passim.

⁶³ For example, Lagerspetz and Suolinna 2014, 15–17, 52–53.

⁶⁴Tanner 1932, 35–36.

⁶⁵ Tanner 1944.

destroys "nature folk" by barbarically colonizing them. Tanner lists the 471 victims of this onslaught, specifically mentioning "[American] Indians, 472 Tasmanians and the Eskimo". Diseases are imported and new temptations 473 are introduced to "children of nature", at the same time that they are 474 robbed of their resources and their socio-political structures. Some of 475 these processes were visible in Petsamo too, but Tanner suggests there is 476 no cause for despair (this is where the draft ends).⁶⁶ Tanner was aware of 477 contemporary anti-imperialist critique and logic; in the 1929 book, how-478 ever, no such stance was adopted. 479

CONCLUSIONS

480

Tanner acted in Petsamo in numerous capacities: as a state official in search 481 of nickel ore, and as a self-proclaimed expert on the Sami. He asserted the 482 typical colonialist presumption of (scholarly) authority, resulting in asym-483 metric and conflicting representations of the Skolt Sami. On the one hand, 484 his 1929 book is among those sympathetic and relativistic colonial repre-485 sentations which were critical of the writer's own society: Tanner was defi-486 nitely critical of the state of Finland. On the other hand, he failed in his 487 quest to produce a consistently sympathetic report on the Skolt Sami.⁶⁷ 488 He found this people in the midst of an accelerating process of change in 489 their form of subsistence, something that intrigued Tanner and led him to 490 write about them in various ways, implicitly dependent on international 491 colonial discourses. The general tendency in the book is to be incapable of 492 presenting the Skolt Sami as anything other than on the lowest develop-493 mental rung and weakest of the peoples struggling to survive and adapt. 494 Tanner escapes full-blown colonialism only by crediting the Skolt Sami 495 with aptitude to adapt, though only under his guidance. The subsistence 496 crisis of the Skolt Sami and their apparent poverty led Tanner to describe 497 a society at risk of disappearance, which had chosen the wrong path. The 498 "happy" life of the Sijdd-society was beginning to be a lost option; herd-499 ing had adopted the "wrong" practices and the modernization occurring 500 in the region appeared to him as threatening to the Skolt Sami. To be fair, 501 Tanner cannot be accused of seeing only a cultural desert, a territory 502 awaiting industrial utilization; he also recognized a landscape of meaning 503

⁶⁶Undated draft and an outline titled "Bidrag till Petsamo-områdets antropogeografi",

Box 18, Folder 6, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

⁶⁷ Thomas 1994, 19, 26.

and function.⁶⁸ This was the picture conveyed by his informants, and was another central point in the book he produced. The book was not *merely* an ill-advised or ignorant example of the colonial encounter.⁶⁹ The 1929piece took part in what the global knowledge regime was concerned about: discussions and debates on modernity,⁷⁰ but the last-mentioned taints the book in a partially uncontrolled manner and results in numerous contradictions.

Both contexts-the national and the imperial/colonial-carry a risk of 511 reductionism. The relationship between scholarship and nationalism, 512 industrialism and imperialism is sometimes presented as organic, whereby 513 scientists saw themselves as serving the nation and its expanding empires. 514 This image is true to some extent and is an apt description of some parts 515 of the sciences in Finland as well. In the true imperial centers, the motives 516 of scientists entering academia varied tremendously: sometimes they were 517 openly hostile to the imperialist industrialism many thought they were 518 meant to serve or to the conquest of different parts of the Empires.⁷¹ The 519 motives of a scientist or scholar might originate from their personal values 520 and include moral motivations and agendas connected both to nation-521 building and to a broader, personal world-view.⁷² As a Swedish-speaking 522 Finn, Tanner is a good example of a scholar who was troubled by the 523 Finnish nationalistic perspective in scholarship, which he found inappro-524 priate to be advocated in his writings.73 The same goes for the idea of 525 Finnish colonial superiority, which he could not align himself with. The 526 national and colonial do intermingle in his book, but in a way that forced 527 Tanner to downplay the colonial rhetoric. 528

The 1929 book contains aspects of discursive colonialism—the construction of moral superiority and cultural difference are present, but the level of symbolic violence is relatively low;⁷⁴ residual signs of symbolic and discursive violence are observable in the rejection of indigenous rationales of adaptation, for example, in (according to Tanner) the key cultural marker, reindeer herding. The book does not contain explicit colonial framing or the crudest colonial characterizations of the natives, and Skolt

⁶⁸ Pyenson 1982, 27.

⁶⁹See, for example, Dathan 2012, passim.

⁷⁰Compare Adelman 2019, 2–7.

⁷¹Bowler 1997, 189, 202; Skurnik 2017, 3–4.

⁷² Jalava, Kinnunen and Sulkunen 2013, 13.

⁷³Nyyssönen 2017, passim.

⁷⁴Compare Cooper and Stoler 1997, 3–4.

Sami citizenship meant that the relationship could not be articulated 536 purely as colonial, since the colonial subject was not formally subject to 537 tutelage of any sort. The tools for hierarchizing, based on race and source 538 of subsistence, were derived from the Social Evolutionist arsenal-which, 539 to be sure, were also to be found in the discursive toolbox of actual settler 540 colonies. The 1929 book lacks the most aggressive colonial discourses: the 541 inevitable destruction of a people in a racial struggle, the displacement of 542 a people due to the need for colonies and resources, the idea of natives as 543 a threat to the rightful colonizer, or a regressive and degenerate people 544 populating valuable resource areas.⁷⁵ This relative mildness applies to most 545 Finnish science concerning the Sami, where the disappearance of the Sami 546 was inevitable and regrettable, but not something actually advocated. 547

It is tenable to propose a totally new interpretation of Tanner as a colo-548 nial scholar, but mostly because of the large and inclusive capacity of the 549 definition of the scientific colonialism, embracing both nationalist and 550 evolutionist aspects. We find a man suggesting the forced re-location of 551 reindeer-herding Sami southward from their villages of origin;⁷⁶ operating 552 on the naturalized scales and parameters of Eurocentric cultural hierar-553 chies, and categorizing Sami handicrafts as "primitive";⁷⁷ leading the 554 search for nickel ore, for mines that would soon destroy the traditional 555 way of life of one Skolt Sami sijdd; contemplating French colonial policies 556 in a positive light; and reporting condescendingly on the "degeneration" 557 of native groups in Labrador. This would be as reductionist as to rely 558 solely on the previously reigning interpretation of Tanner as a benign and 559 sensitive scholar, who "understood" the Sami. He has both sides to him. 560 At his finest, he managed to lift himself above the dominant colonial ten-561 dency of Nordic research, the discourse of the Sami as a dying and disap-562 pearing, inferior culture, by acknowledging the viability of Skolt Sami 563 society. 564

Epilogue The fate of the Skolt Sami and that of Tanner's 1929 book reveal 565 some unexpected twists to be encountered in trying to apply colonial terminology to the Finnish case. It was the great powers of the time, Germany and the Soviet Union, declaring themselves as anti-imperialist at the 568

⁷⁵ Danielsson 2009, 59–65; Thomas 1994, 44.

⁷⁶Manuscript «Talma byalag», Box 1, Folder 2b, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

⁷⁷ Third version of the manuscript «Könkämä byalag», Box 1, Folder 2b, AVT, AUMoN, Tromsø, Norway.

time,⁷⁸ whose war machinery made it impossible for the Skolt Sami to 569 continue their form of subsistence in their traditional lands. After the 570 Second World War, the Finnish scholarly community, out of necessity and 571 an aversion toward the two dictatorial powers, launched an anti-imperial 572 project of their own, meant to cleanse the human sciences of aggressive 573 nationalism. In this project, specific readings of Tanner's work were avail-574 able; the long-term effect of the reception of the 1929 book was mostly 575 positive, as sustaining a sense of knowledgeable people living close to 576 nature and mastering their environment; an image that resonated well in 577 the Finnish scholarly and literary public sphere after the war, and was 578 repeated in numerous studies. The colonial scientist became emblematic 579 of a prolonged and more sensitive anticolonial take on the Sami in Finnish 580 scholarship, making the idea of a "colonial Finland" increasingly alien. 581

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⁷⁸This was one of the arguments in favour of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939. Rentola 1994, 139–145.

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