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3 **Local support among arctic residents to a land tenure reform in Finnmark,**
4 **Norway**

5
6
7 Abstract:

8 Claims for indigenous rights to land and resources are influencing land use policies
9 worldwide. The public's support for such land tenure arrangements has rarely been
10 investigated. We present a unique case from the Norwegian Arctic, where land claims made
11 by the indigenous Sami people have resulted in the transfer of land tenure and resource
12 management from the government to the residents of Finnmark in 2005. Based on
13 indigenous land claims, a management agency was established, the *Finnmark Estate* (FeFo),
14 which on the operational level provides Sami and non-Sami users the same services. Public
15 debates and conflicts among politicians and the public framed the political process leading
16 up to this establishment. Based on a survey and interviews in Finnmark, we explored the
17 public's support for the new land tenure arrangements. We use the term *diffuse support* to
18 investigate whether residents conform to FeFo's basic ideas, values and principles, while
19 *specific support* refers to the supportive attitudes for management actions carried out by the
20 institution. We conclude that there is a general low diffuse support for FeFo among the
21 residents in Finnmark, but a relatively high specific support for the policies and management
22 actions implemented by the estate among those who have experiences with FeFo. We
23 explain the gap between diffuse- and specific support by the historical, social and political
24 processes which led up to the establishment of the land tenure arrangements.

25 Key words: The Finnmark Estate; indigenous land claims; land tenure; public support.

26 1. Introduction

27

28 All over the world new land tenure arrangements have been established to formalize
29 Indigenous peoples' rights to resources and land (Herrmann and Martin 2016, Zips and
30 Weilenmann 2011, Meijl and Benda-Beckmann 1999). These tenure arrangements have
31 usually been born out of political struggles with national authorities, often from clashes
32 between traditional land use of renewable resources and large scale economic development
33 (cf. Dahl 2012). Yet, differences in colonial histories, how Indigenous peoples have been
34 integrated into nation states, demographic conditions and legislative and political processes
35 of the state determine institutional and administrative frameworks of land tenure
36 arrangements.

37 The contested nature and the legal processes preceding the establishment influence
38 legitimacy and support of the new land arrangements, and thus the *room to maneuver* for
39 decision makers. Weak support of ideas and principles of the land tenure arrangements from
40 its own residents could result in institutional instability and a continued political struggle to
41 change the foundation of the arrangements. Therefore, analyzing the debates about public
42 support for land tenure arrangements is important, not only for documenting the actual
43 support or lack thereof, but also to increase our understanding of peoples' experiences and
44 their reasoning for opposing or supporting the institution.

45 Support for governments has been widely debated in political sciences since David
46 Easton's conceptualization of the term political support in 1965 (Easton 1965). The concept
47 has mostly been used to analyze political-administrative institutions at national levels.
48 However, it is equally relevant to look into public support for (non-public) management
49 bodies at regional- and local levels, as we will demonstrate in this paper. Leaning on Easton's

50 definition of political support, we address public support as the residents' support of a
51 person, group, or institution, or institution action on their behalf (ibid.). A resident could
52 conform to the more fundamental principles, values or norms associated with the institution
53 (i.e. diffuse support), or they could express support and satisfaction with policies or a
54 decision-making process that lead to that management output (i.e. specific support) (Easton
55 1975). These two forms of support are interdependent and interact to influence one another
56 over time (Christensen and Lægreid 2005).

57 In the last two decades, land claim processes have resulted in the establishment of novel
58 institutions directed at co-managing land and natural resources, based on indigenous rights
59 and traditional uses (Poelzer and Wilson 2014, Fondahl et al. 2015).¹ Many case studies have
60 documented how land claim processes have resulted in the establishment of new
61 institutions in the Arctic, but few have scrutinized the public support in the aftermath of
62 their establishment. One exception is wildlife co-management in Nunavut in Canada, where
63 diffuse support was reported as high, despite dissatisfaction with specific policies relating to
64 polar bear quota (Lokken et al. 2018). Easton's concepts of diffuse and specific support ties
65 in to broader debates on the governance of indigenous lands, used and settled by both
66 Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Young (1999), who explores aspects of the debate
67 about the reconciliation of indigenous and non-indigenous land ownership in the specific
68 context of the management of land under pastoral lease in Australia, suggests that such
69 reconciliation is possible and practical.

¹ According to Scott, an institution is a social structure that has attained a high degree of resilience: it is composed of "cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life" (Scott 1995, p. 33).

70 The Finnmark Estate (FeFo) was established following a prolonged public debate over
71 Sami rights to land and water in Finnmark, the northernmost county of Norway. We
72 investigate public support to this land ownership reform and the management body.
73 Pursuant to the 2006 Finnmark Act, the ownership of land and resources was transferred
74 from the government (95% of the land area in Finnmark) to the population in Finnmark. The
75 aim of FeFo as the managing body is to manage land and resources in accordance to the
76 Finnmark Act. Its executive body consists of members appointed by the Sami Parliament²
77 and the Finnmark County Council, constituting co-management. The FeFo case is the only
78 example of co-management of traditional Sami areas in Norway, where land tenure is
79 transferred to a private landowner body (Josefsen et al. 2016a, p. 25).

80 Our study is based on two inquiries carried out in Finnmark in 2012 and 2013. The two
81 studies are: a) a survey directed towards the inhabitants of Finnmark and b) interviews
82 among resource users at Varanger peninsula in eastern Finnmark. Below we will first draw
83 an analytical distinction between the two dimensions of support. Then we present the
84 background and content of the Finnmark Act. We will thereafter account for methods and
85 the main findings, before discussing the relationship between diffuse and specific support as
86 it relates to FeFo as an institution and management agency.

87

88

89 2. The foundation of legitimacy and support

90

² The Sami Parliament is a democratically elected body comprised of 39 representatives elected from 7 districts every four years. Only Sami listed in the Sami Parliament's electoral roll have the right to vote. The registration is voluntary. For more information, see Josefsen, Mörkenstam and Nilsson 2016b.

91 The legitimacy of an institution relies on the public's acceptance and support of its authority,
92 and consequent willingness to conform to and obey decisions made. Legitimacy reflects both
93 how values between the public and the institution coincide, and the relation between the
94 concrete performance of the institution and public opinion, i.a. diffuse and specific support.
95 The establishment of FeFo was controversial amongst the public in Finnmark, with questions
96 arising regarding the legitimacy of the institution. To investigate this, we explore the public
97 support or the lack thereof, by examining the *diffuse* and *specific support* for FeFo.

98 2.1. Specific support

99 Specific support refers to peoples' concrete experiences with specific decisions, actions and
100 results, influencing the specific trust people have towards political authorities and
101 institutions (Easton 1975, Gibson and Caldeira 1992, Christensen and Lægreid 2005, Gibson
102 et al. 2017). Here we intend to understand the specific support of the inhabitants of
103 Finnmark as it relates to the concrete management arrangements and decisions, actual
104 policies or actions of FeFo (Gibson and Caldeira 1992, p. 1126). It is likely that individual
105 elements of trust, such as first-hand experience, contribute to specific support, "whereas
106 long-term experience points more in the direction of diffuse support and trust" (Christensen
107 and Lægreid 2005, pp. 490, 491). One could anticipate that the interactions and concrete
108 experiences between FeFo and engaged actors and organized user-groups will influence the
109 legitimacy of FeFo (Gibson et al. 2017, p. 981). On the other hand, scholars have long
110 suggested that there is a weak connection between specific and diffuse support (Swanson
111 2007, Gibson et al. 2017).

112

113 2.2 Diffuse support

114 Gibson and Caldeira (1992, p. 1121) hold that diffuse support is especially useful for the
115 maintenance of an institution, as citizens could accept singular decisions they disagree upon
116 without eroding the institution's credibility. Easton (1975, p. 451) defines this as "a
117 willingness to maintain and defend the structures or norms of a regime even if they produce
118 unfavorable consequences." In other words, are the inhabitants willing to support FeFo,
119 even if the estate produces unfavorable results, or is there a lack of diffuse support and anti-
120 system attitudes impacting the residents view on the specific management? And conversely,
121 will the public grant FeFo diffuse support when it produces favorable decisions? Levels of
122 diffuse support may be based on peoples' ideological beliefs regarding what values and
123 political viewpoints the land management should be organized according to, and/or ethical
124 principles for supporting different institutional arrangements (Gibson et al. 2017).

125 For several decades Sami land rights were debated in Finnmark, a debate highly politicized
126 and polarized (Eira 2013, Olsen 2011), with a peak in 2005-2006 around the establishment of
127 FeFo. One can assume the public was quite familiar with the background, the basis for and
128 the management policy of FeFo, through mass media, political parties and non-
129 governmental organizations (Nygaard and Josefsen 2010). At the same time, the debate was
130 partly biased marked by prejudices, misinformation and unsubstantiated statements about
131 encroachment on the rights of the non-Sami population, amongst other topics (Broderstad
132 et al. 2015, Eira 2013). The ideological public conflict in favor of or against Sami land rights
133 was intensified after the establishment of FeFo by an interpretation of the estate not just as
134 an ordinary land management institution but as a highly politicized institution. In general,
135 the publics' perception of an organization depends, in many ways, on images that are
136 shaped and communicated by mass media (Falkheimer 2014, p. 128). In their study of

137 potential threats to support for the US Supreme Court, Gibson and Nelson (2017, p. 595) find
138 that the greatest threats towards a non-political institution come from perceived
139 politicization. Is this a relevant assumption for a management entity like FeFo established to
140 implement the Finnmark Act?

141 2.3 Research objectives

142 High diffuse support, even if the specific support is low, indicate that the general level of
143 legitimacy is strong. We anticipate that high specific support, but low diffuse support does
144 not put the institutions at risk. But low scores on both types of support clearly indicate a
145 legitimacy crisis for the involved system or institution (Christensen and Lægreid 2005, p.
146 490). We examine public support for FeFo or lack thereof, for different segments of the
147 resident population, and explore the experiences and reasoning for opposing or supporting
148 FeFo. We ask: What can the Finnmark case teach us about the significance of, and potential
149 relation between the concepts of diffuse and specific support? How do residents' conflicting
150 views on indigenous lands claims affect the support and legitimacy of land tenure
151 institutions?

152

153 3. The Finnmark Act and the Finnmark Estate

154

155 The main purpose of FeFo's land and resource management embedded in the Finnmark Act,
156 is: "to facilitate the management of land and natural resources in the county of Finnmark in
157 a balanced and ecologically sustainable manner for the benefit of the residents of the county
158 and particularly as a basis for Sami culture, reindeer husbandry, use of non-cultivated areas,

159 commercial activity and social life.”³ The Finnmark Act is linked to Sami rights and land
160 claims, and has given Finnmark an official Sami status through the explicit recognition of
161 Sami rights to govern the land. The Act is also the foundation for the legal processes of the
162 Finnmark Commission⁴ and the Uncultivated Land Tribunal for Finnmark,⁵ but here we
163 emphasize the governance agency (FeFo) due to the politicized history of the land tenure
164 arrangement.

165 The Finnmark Act does not discriminate between ethnic groups with regard to access to
166 resources and land. The law manifests Sami rights concerns, but the actions carried out
167 apply regardless of ethnic identity, a position also held by the Sami Parliament. As far as the
168 need for access to resources and the right to practice one’s livelihood are concerned,
169 procedures established recognize the rights of groups and individuals independent of
170 ethnicity (Broderstad and Hernes 2014). The principle of equal access to land applies equally
171 for both non-Sami and the Sami, and is rooted in the historical use of land by different ethnic
172 groups. Land use history is important for understanding attitudes to indigenous land tenure
173 arrangements. In particular, Finnmark differs from many other indigenous territories that
174 are undergoing decolonizing processes, as the indigenous Sami and non-Sami peoples have
175 shared the land for centuries (Olsen 2010, Ween and Lien 2012).

176 The Finnmark Act and FeFo were established as a result of an enduring political process
177 where the Sami, both individuals and organizations, challenged the government’s claimed
178 ownership of the land. This process can be viewed against the background of an earlier state

³ Act of 17 June 2005 No. 85 relating to legal relations and management of land and natural resources in the county of Finnmark (Finnmark Act) (Lov om rettsforhold og forvaltning av grunn og naturressurser i Finnmark fylke (finnmarksloven)), §1, the purpose of the Act.

⁴ The Finnmark Act establishes the Finnmark Commission (Sections 29-35), and on the basis on current national law, the commission shall investigate rights of use and ownership to the land to be taken over by FeFo.

⁵ The Finnmark Act also establishes the tribunal (Sections 36-43), a special court which shall consider disputes concerning rights that arise after the Commission has investigated a field.

179 policy towards assimilation of the Sami. This public policy was abandoned after WWII but the
180 consequences are still found in public structures and regulations.

181 Until 2005, 95 % of the land in Finnmark was assigned as state property and managed by
182 Statskog.⁶ Local people's resource use was tolerated, but could be disregarded by the state.
183 This was the case in 1970 when protests were raised against the plans for an electric power
184 plant and the damming of the Alta-Kautokeino River in Finnmark. Civil disobedience, Sami
185 hunger strikes and the occupation of the prime minister's office by Sami women during the
186 late 1970's and early 1980s, led to a fundamental change in Norwegian politics towards the
187 Sami people. Even though the Sami lost the fight against the power plant, a paradigm shift
188 occurred in the state policy towards the Sami. The government established commissions on
189 Sami rights and cultural affairs. Based on the proposals of the Sami Right Commission (NOU
190 1984: 18), the National Parliament (Stortinget) adopted the Sami Act⁷ in 1987, and amended
191 the constitution to accommodate Sami rights in 1988. The most significant result was the
192 establishment of the Norwegian Sami Parliament in 1989. The work of the Sami Rights
193 Commission continued; based on their proposal (NOU 1997: 4), and after a political process
194 of consultations between the Government and the Sami Parliament, the National Parliament
195 adopted the Finnmark Act in 2005 (Hernes and Oskal 2008; Josefsen 2008; Broderstad 2015).
196 The ownership of the former crown land was subsequently transferred from the state-
197 owned company to the inhabitants of Finnmark, to be managed by a regional management
198 agency, FeFo, from 2006. FeFo is a property owner, and thus an independent legal entity,

⁶ Statskog is a state enterprise, directed at managing, operating and developing the state forest and mountain properties and associated resources in Norway (<https://www.statskog.no>).

⁷ As a result of the work of the Sami Rights Commission, the national parliament adopted the Sami Act (Lov om Sametinget og andre samiske rettsforhold (sameloven)). The act establishes the Sami Parliament of Norway.

199 not a public authoritative body.⁸ A management board was established including three
200 representatives appointed by the Sami Parliament and three appointed by the Finnmark
201 County Council.

202 The Finnmark Act shall apply with the limitations that follow from the ILO Convention
203 No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (ILO 169), and
204 be applied in compliance with the provisions of international law concerning indigenous
205 people and minorities.⁹ The Act recognizes that Sami, through prolonged use of land and
206 water areas, have collectively and individually acquired rights to land in Finnmark.¹⁰ This
207 recognition of Sami land rights was not present in Norwegian legislation prior to the
208 Finnmark Act. The “Act does not interfere with collective and individual rights acquired by
209 Sami and other people through prescription or immemorial usage.”¹¹ The provisions on
210 international law and established rights contribute in legal terms to conformity with ILO 169.
211 Meanwhile, several court cases following the Finnmark Commission’s investigations of usage
212 and ownership rights, e.g. the Nesseby case,¹² illuminate that the asserted right claims of
213 local Sami, based on customary use and occupation, are not recognized.

⁸According to the Proposition to the Norwegian Parliament O. nr. 80 (2004-2005), the Finnmark Act gives FeFo status as a regular owner. However, the law makes certain limitations on the body's ownership interest (distribution of profit, relation to future legislation, others’ right to hunt and fish on its grounds etc.), without changing the legal nature of the Finnmark property.

⁹ Finnmark Act, Section 3, Relationship to international law.

¹⁰ Finnmark Act, Section 5, Relationship to established rights.

¹¹ Ibid. The recommendations from the Norwegian Parliament's Standing Committee on Justice, commenting on §5 by a majority of the committee, maintain a principal and political acknowledgement of Sami’s collective and individual rights based on prolonged use of land and waters. Meanwhile, after the identification of rights in each case, types of rights recognized are to be based on current law (Innst. O. nr. 80 – 2004-2005, p. 37).

¹² The question in this case was whether the village board in a certain area in Nesseby municipality in addition to holding usage rights based on immemorial usage, also had the right to manage the renewable resources of this area or whether this right was upheld by FeFo as the landowner. The Finnmark Commission concluded that the village board had usage rights over the local area in question, but not the right to manage. The village board brought the case to the Tribunal that passed a verdict in favor of the board. FeFo appealed the verdict to the Supreme Court, which in March 2018 passed a judgement that FeFo continues as the manager of the area, but must take into account the usage rights of the local population. See HR-2018-456-P, (sak nr. 2017/860).

214 Early on FeFo took on an active role as landowner and developed a strategy plan within
215 the first two years deciding principles for land management (Finnmark Estate 2007). Unlike
216 Statskog before 2006, the FeFo board differentiated the price for fishing and hunting
217 between residents and others. They also divided the land into zones for small game hunting
218 and established hunting quotas. Moreover, FeFo increased the annual rent on leased
219 property to (private) residences and leisure homes (cottages),¹³ and set the price of estates
220 in residential environments according to market price.¹⁴ This was controversial, especially
221 when the two largest municipalities in Finnmark had to negotiate with FeFo over the
222 property prices. As a private property owner, FeFo has no funding from the government to
223 sustain the organization, and depends on the incomes from selling or leasing property, or
224 commodities such as gravel. However, FeFo's overall strategy is not to profit from real
225 property, but rather the opposite: to manage the Finnmark property in perpetuity, on behalf
226 of future generations (Finnmark Estate 2007, 2015).

227 Four years after the establishment, FeFo was evaluated in terms of how the Finnmark
228 Act had been followed up and implemented in the initiating phase (Nygaard & Josefsen
229 2010). The conclusion was that in general FeFo attended to its responsibility, but in relation
230 to the public surroundings it had potential for improvement.

¹³ FeFo has 12 000 lease contracts to residences, leisure homes and other purposes (www.fefo.no)

¹⁴ Anyone who has a residential lot which they lease from FeFo, may request a purchase offer. FeFo often collects independent tariffs over the property to determine the land value. If the leaser accept the offer, a purchase is made and the property is transferred from FeFo to the buyer. If the offer is not accepted, the existing leasing contract continues. FeFo can also enter into real estate development agreements with municipalities and business actors. This implies that certain areas are made available for development within the framework set out in the municipals' regulatory plan. Such agreements apply mainly to the development of residential or cabin areas and industrial and industrial areas (www.fefo.no). Area for cabin fields cannot be bought, only point least. Any larger projects that may change the use of uncultivated land have to be assessed regarding consequences for Sami culture, reindeer herding, and other present traditional Sami use of the land.

231 Table 1 illuminates the differences between Statskog and FeFo’s fundamental management
232 principles.¹⁵

233
234 **Table 1. Statskog and FeFo’s principles for managing the land in Finnmark, before and after 2006**
235

| Before 2006: Statskog | From 2006: FeFo |
|--|--|
| <i>Stat</i> ownership: 95% crown land | <i>Regional</i> ownership: 95% owned by FeFo |
| Manage land- and resources for the common benefit of all Norwegian citizens | Manage land- and resources for the common benefit of all Finnmark residents |
| <i>Passive</i> ownership: less clear policy for the use and the disposal of land and resources | <i>Active</i> ownership: clear strategies for regional value creation |

236

237 4. Study design and methods

238

239 4.1. Finnmark County

240 Finnmark County is populated by 74 000 inhabitants, covering 19 municipalities (48, 618
241 Km²). Most of the residents are concentrated in 4 towns with 6-20 000 inhabitants, while
242 the remaining municipalities are small and rural. Finnmark is ethnically diverse; Norwegians
243 are the dominant population in numbers. In addition to the Sami people, the Kven are a
244 national minority, and there are also newer immigrants. The demography differs with
245 respect to geography. The Sami population is dominant in the inland areas, which make up
246 the winter pastures for semi-nomadic reindeer husbandry. The Sami reindeer husbandry
247 summer pastures are along the coast and along the fjords, where the Sea Sami have also
248 practiced their traditional livelihoods of small-scale fisheries and/or livestock farming. Today,
249 Sami and others share the same employment pattern.

¹⁵ The table does not include the actions or policies implemented by FeFo, only emphasis the differences in the fundamental principles of the two estates’ management, operation and development of the land in Finnmark before and after 2006. Today Statskog practices an active ownership in their management of state property in other parts of Norway, cf. footnote 6.

250 4.2. Research data

251 This article builds on data collected through a large research project funded by the Research
252 Council of Norway (2011-2013). We used mixed methods to analyze the support for FeFo.
253 Two inquiries were carried out: a general public survey which targeted all inhabitants in
254 Finnmark, and interviews with resource users dependent on land and resources in Finnmark.
255 Prior to designing the surveys, we used discourses in newspapers and media to ensure
256 coverage of the main topics of interest to inhabitants. The result from the research project is
257 previously published in a Norwegian-language report by Broderstad et al. 2015, and in
258 Josefsen et al. 2016a. The report (ibid.) elaborates in details the methods for the
259 investigations, which were granted approval from the Norwegian Data Protection Official for
260 Research. The analysis of the surveys and the interviews were presented at dialogue
261 meetings in six communities in 2014 and 2015. We also participated in two meetings with
262 FeFo where the results of the survey and the interviews were presented and discussed.
263 Documents from the Sami Parliament, the Finnmark County Council and governmental and
264 parliamentary decisions covering the period of time from 2006 to 2015 were analyzed in
265 order to understand and interpret the assumptions of the participants about FeFo.

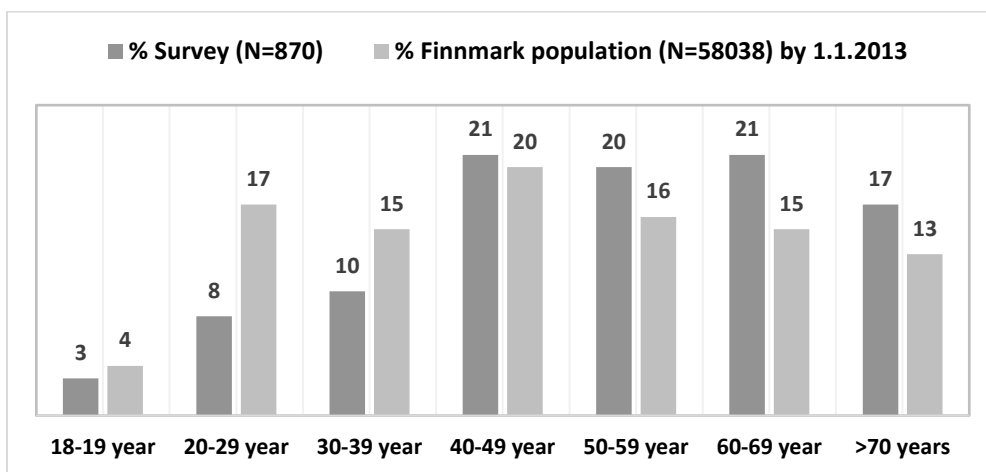
266 4.3 Public survey

267 We carried out a public survey in Finnmark County in the fall of 2012. A random sample of
268 3000 persons was selected out of a total of 55975 inhabitants over the age of 18. 150
269 dropped because of unsuccessful mail delivery, returning blank forms or deceases. Excluding
270 the dropout, the response rate of 33% resulted in a final dataset of 953 persons. A response
271 rate at 33% is not unusual in social science surveys, and there is an ongoing scientific debate
272 on non-response and potential skewedness (see Hellevik 2015a). Hellevik (2015a, 2015b)
273 finds that there is no direct link between low response rate and data representability, every

274 data set must be assessed individually and in relation to the representation of the general
275 public.

276 The respondents correspond fairly well with the general population which consists of
277 51% men and 49% women. Men were slightly overrepresented and women were slightly
278 underrepresented in the survey. Age distribution was somewhat skewed compared to the
279 population at large. People under the age of thirty were largely underrepresented, cf. figure
280 1. This is not unexpected in surveys.¹⁶ The majority of respondents were between 40 and 70
281 (63%). We examined the difference in attitudes depending on demographic variables and
282 socio-political profiles (see Appendix A and Broderstad et al. 2015).

283 **Figure 1: Different age groups responding to the survey relative to the general population (%)**



284

285 The respondents corresponded to the Finnmark population, consisting of Norwegian,
286 Sami, Kven, and newer immigrants. 17% of the respondents (N=162) were registered in the
287 electoral register of the Sami Parliament which corresponds to the 13% of the registered

¹⁶ In addition, 9% (N=83) respondents have not stated their age. How this affect the skewedness in the age numbers is difficult to assess.

288 Sami in the general population in Finnmark.¹⁷ In the survey 19% stated a Sami or a mixed
289 origin. We categorized those respondents registered in the Sami electoral roll as “Sami” in
290 the analysis (17%),¹⁸ and those not registered as “non-Sami.” The Sami representation in the
291 data material is somewhat higher than in the population, and those registered are in general
292 more politically active (Selle and Strømsnes 2010). Sami ethnicity is not generally recorded in
293 population censuses (Samiske tall forteller 1, 2008), but we expect that the electoral roll’s
294 registration is sufficient for analyzing major differences in support among residents.

295 Two other relevant dependent variables are political affiliation and education level. In
296 terms of political affiliation 57% of the respondents placed themselves on the left side and
297 43% on the right side of a political left-right axis. 40% of the respondents have higher
298 education while the number for the whole population of Finnmark is 24%. While the
299 education level is higher in our material, people with primary school are underrepresented
300 (17% with primary school in the survey compared to 33% for the population in general). We
301 used frequency counts and K-mean cluster analyses to, analyze differences among groups.

302

303 4.4. Interviews with local resource users

304 Six communities¹⁹ on the Varanger peninsula were selected: three coastal villages: Berlevåg,
305 Båtsfjord and Kiberg, and three fjord villages: Austertana, Nesseby/Varangerbotn and Vestre
306 Jacobselv - a “suburb” to the administrative centre, Vadsø.

¹⁷ In order to be able to register, one has to identify as Sami, speak Sami at home, or at the very least have a relative who spoke the language at home, be they a parent, grandparent or great-grand parent.

¹⁸ In the survey, 57 of 953 respondents did not report on the question about registration in the electoral role.

¹⁹ These were selected according to governance criteria seeking to maximise contrasts in a) governance regimes on a circumpolar scale, b) socioeconomic criteria like contrasts in socioeconomic conditions, contrasts in opportunities for wage income and a population number between 200 and 5000, c) biophysical criteria as the model communities should be located on the tundra to ensure comparison between biogeographically regions.

307 Table 2: Socioeconomic characteristics of communities in the interview study (%)

| Community | Pop.size | Income USD | Unemployment % | Key occupation |
|----------------------|----------|------------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Båtsfjord | 2,058 | 58,791 | 5.7 | Coastal commercial fishing |
| Berlevåg | 1,015 | 51,755 | 6.2 | Coastal commercial fishing |
| Kiberg | 224 | 53,474 | 7.8 | Coastal commercial fishing |
| Nesseby/Varangerbotn | 258 | 55,663 | 3.2 | Fjordfishing, sheep, reindeer |
| Austertana | 290 | 60,511 | 2.8 | Fjordfishing, mining, reindeer |
| Vestre Jakobselv | 500 | 65,827 | 2.7 | Service hub (Vadsø) |

308
309 The main purpose was to gain insights into governance processes, differences in
310 nature use and values, and perceptions of the residents. We interviewed local people that
311 use nature actively and those likely to interact and have experience with the institutions that
312 are responsible for the management of land and natural resources. We therefore used quota
313 sampling to select participants in our study. Our interviewees are local leaders and active
314 users of nature, either through harvesting and/or recreational use. The interviewees are
315 adults, year-round residents and have lived more than 5 years in the community. We were
316 interested in identifying a diversity of relationships that local people hold with nature and to
317 governance, rather than achieving statistical generalizability at a community level.
318 Additionally, we aimed to control for gender, age and ethnicity within the limit of our
319 sampling frame. 79 interviews were conducted. The self-identified ethnicities of Sami, Sami-
320 Norwegian, and Sami-Finns/Kven together constituted 29% of the interviewees.

321

322 5. Results

323

324 5.1. Respondents attitudes towards the new land arrangements and Sami rights

325 In the survey (Table 3) we asked about the respondents' attitude towards FeFo when it was
326 established in 2006, six years prior to the survey. It is important to note that this is recall
327 data. Even though it is not as reliable as survey data conducted at that time, it has value as

328 data about respondents' self-evaluation of their opinions about FeFo and changes in
 329 opinions. The aim of making use of recall data is to explore possible changes in diffuse
 330 support and reasons for it among the residents (cf. Swanson 2007, p. 648). Over half of the
 331 respondents reported that they were negative towards FeFo in 2006, while only 14% were
 332 positive and 14% were indifferent. The respondents were divided into two groups,²⁰ "Sami"
 333 and "non-Sami,"²¹ and there is a clear difference between Sami and non-Sami (Table 3). The
 334 Sami (33%) were more positive to FeFo than the non-Sami (10%), and non-Sami (57%)
 335 reported to be more negative in 2006 than the registered Sami (40%). The overall tendency
 336 is that the Sami were more divided in their view on FeFo in 2006 than the non-Sami, who
 337 were clearly more negative. For more insight, see Josefsen et al. 2016a.

338 **Table 3: The public attitude towards FeFo when established in 2006. Sami and non-Sami. (%)**

339

| | Total | Sami | non-Sami |
|------------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| Positive | 14 | 33 | 10 |
| Negative | 57 | 40 | 61 |
| Indifferent | 14 | 17 | 13 |
| Do not remember | 15 | 11 | 16 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | N=845 | N=154 | N=691 |

340 Fisher's exact test: p=0,000

341

342 To explore why respondents were negative to FeFo in its pre-implementation phase, they were
 343 asked to elaborate on reasons for being negative to the establishment in 2006, according to
 344 the claims in Table 4 (these are identical to the claims the respondents considered in the
 345 questionnaire):

²⁰ Dropout N= 57 (cf. footnote 19.)

²¹ When referring to the Sami in relation to the survey, we mean those who are registered in the electoral roll of the Sami Parliament (N=162). The term non-Sami is used to include all respondents in the survey not registered in the electoral roll of the Sami Parliament (N=733). The non-Sami respondents therefore also include Sami who are not registered in the Sami Parliament's electoral roll.

346 **Table 4: Percentage of respondents supporting different reasons for (all, Sami, non-Sami) negative attitudes**
 347 **to FeFo in 2006.**

| | All respondent (N=515) | Sami respondents (N=61) | Non-Sami respondents (N=422) |
|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Fearing Sami would gain too little influence | 3 (N=15) | 8 (N=5) | 2 (N=9) |
| 2. Skeptical to whether FeFo was able to manage land and resources for the best of Finnmark's inhabitants | 39 (N=203) | 49 (N=30) | 38 (N=162) |
| 3. Feared the Sami and non-Sami in Finnmark would be discriminated | 45 (N=233) | 39 (N=24) | 46 (N=194) |
| 4. Pleased with Statskog's work | 58 (N=301) | 70 (N=43) | 57 (N=241) |
| 5. Preferred Finnmark to continue as crown land | 60 (N=308) | 64 (N=39) | 59 (N=249) |
| 6. Skeptical to FeFo, thought it would give the Sami Parliament too much influence over resource management | 70 (N=359) | 44 (N=27) | 73 (N=309) |

348

349 The most frequent reason for negative attitudes towards FeFo in 2006, was the
 350 perceived influence the Sami Parliament would gain over the land and resource
 351 management in Finnmark. Most of the respondents who were negative to FeFo were
 352 pleased with Statskog, and preferred Finnmark to remain crown land.

353 However, there are some differences in the reasons given by the Sami and the non-
 354 Sami. Those of the Sami respondents negative to FeFo in 2006, were satisfied with Statskog
 355 (claim 4: 70% Sami, 57% non-Sami). In percentage, there are more Sami respondents than
 356 non-Sami respondents who wanted Finnmark to continue as crown land in 2006 (claim 5:
 357 64% Sami, 59% non-Sami), and who were critical to FeFo's ability to manage land for the
 358 best of Finnmark's inhabitants (claim 2: 49% Sami, 38% non-Sami). A higher proportion of
 359 the non-Sami (46%) feared differential treatment (claim 3: Sami respondents 39%), and a
 360 significantly higher proportion of non-Sami (73%) were skeptical to Fefo because of the
 361 influence of the Sami Parliament (claim 6) than the Sami (44%). This reveals two interesting
 362 tendencies. First, compared to the non-Sami respondents, there are more Sami respondents
 363 who were negative to FeFo in 2006 because they were satisfied with the Statskog tenure

364 system. Second, there are more non-Sami respondents who were negative to FeFo in 2006
 365 because they believed this would strengthen the Sami Parliament's influence over the
 366 resource management in Finnmark.

367 In 2012, after six years of operation, only 1/4 (26%) wanted to retain FeFo (Table 5).
 368 Many had not made up their mind (30%). A large percentage of the population wanted to
 369 remove FeFo (44%). Sami respondents were more positive to the existence of FeFo than
 370 non-Sami. Among the Sami, 41%, reported that FeFo should continue to exist, but as much
 371 as 30% wanted to dissolve the organization. Among the non-Sami respondents, 47% wanted
 372 to remove FeFo.

373 **Table 5: Registered Sami's and non-Sami's views on whether FeFo should continue to exist. (%) N=852.**

| | Total | Sami | Non-Sami |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|----------|
| Should continue to exist | 26 | 41 | 23 |
| Should close down | 44 | 30 | 47 |
| Do not know/no opinion | 30 | 29 | 30 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | N=852 | N=157 | N=695 |

374 Fisher's Exact Test: p=0,000

375 The respondents' attitudes towards FeFo seem to have changed between 2006 and
 376 2012 (cf. Table 3 and 5). In general, more respondents were negative to the establishment of
 377 FeFo in 2006, than those who wanted to close down FeFo in 2012. Even if the questions are
 378 not identical, the findings could indicate that public attitudes towards FeFo have somewhat
 379 improved.

380 **5.2. Support for land management arrangements among different groups**
 381 We used a K-mean cluster analysis to statistically divide the observations into distinct groups
 382 based on their attitudes (see Appendix A).²² After testing for different numbers of clusters,
 383 we found that four clusters identified the data patterns and correlations the most. A series
 384 of statements concerning the Sami Parliament, the Finnmark Act and FeFo were used in the
 385 analyses to identify these four clusters visualizing the different views of FeFo. We have
 386 named the four groups: "Rejecters I," "Rejecters II," "Don't Knowers" and "Precautionary
 387 Supporters."

388

389 **Table 6: Four clusters of opinion on FeFo. N= 688**

390

| | Cluster | | | | p-value |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---------|
| | Rejecters I (49%, N=336) | Rejecters II (13%, N=86) | Don't knowers (9%, N=63) | Precautionary supporters (30%, N=203) | |
| There is a need for a management body as FeFo | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Somewhat agree | <0,001 |
| FeFo has contributed to making the people of Finnmark "masters in their own house" | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Neither/nor | <0,001 |
| Sami Parliament contributes to a positive development in Finnmark | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Neither/nor | <0,001 |
| Sami Parliament should be closed down | Somewhat agree | Neither/nor | Strongly disagree | Somewhat disagree | <0,001 |
| Sami Parliament should have less influence over the use of natural resources in Finnmark | Strongly agree | Somewhat agree | Strongly disagree | Neither/nor | <0,001 |
| Sami Parliament has too much influence over FeFo | Strongly agree | Neither/nor | Don't know | Neither/nor | <0,001 |
| Difficult to distinguish between what is the responsibility of FeFo and the Sami Parliament | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Don't know | Neither/nor | <0,001 |
| Finnmark Act will help ensure local concerns | Somewhat disagree | Somewhat disagree | Don't know | Somewhat agree | <0,001 |

²² The objective of cluster analysis is to assign observations into groups or clusters so that observations within each group are similar to one another with respect to variables or attributes of interest, and the groups themselves stand apart from one another. Methods have been described in Broderstad et al. (2015).

| | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|------------|-------------------|--------|
| Finnmark Act leads to discrimination between Sami and other inhabitants | Strongly agree | Somewhat disagree | Don't know | Neither/nor | <0,001 |
| Finnmark Act has contributed to better management of the nature | Somewhat disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know | Somewhat agree | <0,001 |
| Finnmark Act is a threat to the public right of access ("allemannsretten") | Somewhat agree | Somewhat disagree | Don't know | Somewhat disagree | <0,001 |

391 The four groups identified by K-mean clustering of the support for FeFo. The respondents scored
392 each item on a Likert scale. The items that respondents scored were statements drawn from media
393 discourse analysis. We report the mode (i.e. the most common score) for each statement in the
394 group.
395

396 "The Rejecters I" representing almost half of our sample have four features that
397 separate them from the other clusters (see appendix A for further details about the
398 demographic and socio-political profile of each cluster). First, a large part of the respondents
399 in this group say they are politically interested. Second, the respondents in this cluster are
400 evenly distributed when it comes to orientation to the political left and right. Third, and
401 different from the others, they live in densely populated municipalities, and do not reside in
402 the Sami language municipalities.²³ Last, the respondents are not registered in the Sami
403 Parliament's electoral roll. "The Rejecters I" are categorically against implementing Sami
404 rights, which they believe will discriminate against other inhabitants in Finnmark, and
405 associate Sami rights with the restriction of public access to land and resources in Finnmark
406 (see Table 6). "The Rejecters I" want to dissolve FeFo and the Sami Parliament, though they
407 find it difficult to distinguish between the institutions' responsibilities.

408 "The Rejecters II" (13%) are politically left-oriented, and have below average interest
409 in politics (see appendix A). Most were against implementing Sami rights, but not to the
410 same degree as "the Rejecters I". "The Rejecters II" do not have the same categorical view

²³ These are municipalities where the Sami have the right to use Sami language when they are in contact with official agencies, which operate in the area. Norwegian and Sami language are equal in the Sami language administrations areas.

411 on whether to dissolve the Sami Parliament, but do not support the politics of the Sami
412 Parliament (see Table 6). They do not reject the Finnmark Act based on ethnic differences or
413 public access to land and resources – but they think that FeFo has not led to better
414 management of the nature. In contrast to "the Rejecters I", they are more aware of the
415 difference between the Sami Parliament and FeFo.

416 "The Don't Knowers" (9%) are younger than those in the other clusters, are politically
417 left-oriented and include a higher percentage of women (see appendix A). The political
418 interest is low while the number registered in the Sami Parliament's electoral role is above
419 average. The respondents do not want to dissolve the Sami Parliament or FeFo – despite
420 having negative attitudes toward both institutions (see Table 6). They strongly disagree on
421 whether or not there is a need for a management body such as FeFo. We call them "Don't
422 Knowers" because the respondents appeared as either having little knowledge about,
423 lacking opinions, or not having made up their mind on issues regarding the implementation
424 of Sami rights.

425 "The Precautionary Supporters" (30%) have a higher level of education. This group
426 includes a larger portion of those registered in the Sami Parliament's electoral roll and they
427 have a high interest in politics (appendix A). The respondents are supportive of Sami rights
428 and think that FeFo has improved land and resource management. "The Precautionary
429 Supporters" tend to be supportive of the Sami Parliament, FeFo and the Finnmark Act, but
430 have a wait-and-see attitude about the results of the reform – which explains our naming of
431 the group (Table 6). As "the Rejecters I", the respondents in this cluster are also evenly
432 distributed when it comes to orientation to the political left and right, which illustrate that

433 being supportive of Sami rights is not necessarily in itself an issue about political party
434 affiliation.

435 The principle of regional ownership, which entitles the population in Finnmark a first
436 claim to land and resources, differ from the former Statskog land management regime (cf.
437 Table 1). In the survey, respondents were asked to consider the following statement: "In the
438 case of resource scarcity, FeFo should give the Finnmark inhabitants the first claim" (Table
439 7).

440 **Table 7: The public's view on whether Finnmark inhabitants ought to have first claim in case of resource**
441 **scarcity. (%)**

| | Rejecters I | Rejecters II | Don't knowers | Precautionary supporters | Total |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------------|-------|
| Yes | 66 | 60 | 42 | 82 | 67 |
| No | 15 | 11 | 6 | 4,5 | 11 |
| Neither/nor | 16 | 14 | 8 | 12 | 14 |
| Don't know | 3 | 15 | 44 | 1,5 | 8 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

442
443 In total, 67% of the respondents' support this principle of first claim, while 11% reject
444 it. "The Precautionary Supporters" generally agree with the statement, while "the Rejecters
445 I", who fully oppose Sami rights, agree on the principle of the first claim. This shows that
446 most of the people support the management institution's fundamental principle of regional
447 ownership, which makes it possible for Finnmark inhabitants to have the first claim to the
448 county's resources. Simultaneously, most of the respondents reject implementation of Sami
449 rights, which made regional ownership possible in the first place.

450 [5.3. Support for FeFo's specific policies and management decisions](#)

451 Many respondents reject the basic norms of Sami rights, and, simultaneously, support FeFo's
452 management actions. This is particularly evident for the introduction of hunting zones for
453 grouse in the autumn of 2010 and the principle of selling building lots in residential areas at

454 market price (cf. section 3, footnotes 13, 14). Statskog had no regulations of hunting zones;
455 one could pay a fee and then hunt anywhere (except if the fee was paid for just one
456 municipality), i.e. there were no regulations of hunting pressure. Hunters now have to report
457 where they are hunting and register the time period they are present in the hunting zones.
458 FeFo established this system to regulate the hunting pressures in popular zones including
459 the possibility to exclude hunters from outside of Finnmark. This practice is supported by the
460 inhabitants; only one out of five agreed that the hunting zones should be terminated, while
461 38% disagreed about removing the regulations.

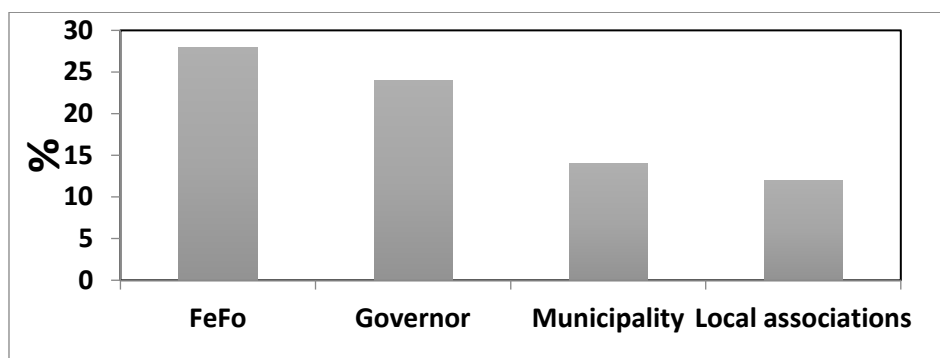
462 Before FeFo was established, land prices in Finnmark had not been regulated due to
463 the upcoming clarification of land rights. FeFo decided to introduce market prices on
464 building lots in residential areas, a principle met with loud protests in the two largest
465 municipalities where the pressure on residential development is high. Local politicians
466 argued that the market prices made it impossible to pursue investments in social housing. In
467 our study, 1/3 disagreed with the opinion that “FeFo should sell property to market price,”
468 1/3 agreed, while the rest were in between or did not know. We found greater support for
469 the principle of market price than expected from the public debates. As argued by FeFo:
470 Selling the common properties under market price would result in private individuals or
471 companies taking the profit. Another survey done 2012 among Finnmark FeFo’s business
472 customers also revealed that people are satisfied with FeFo as a regional economic
473 developer (Broderstad et al. 2015).

474 [5.4. Interviews with resource users](#)

475 Resource management of fish, wildlife and recreation is one of the primary tasks of FeFo and
476 is more specifically defined in the Finnmark Act than other fields of responsibility. To learn
477 how FeFo’s operationalization of the Finnmark Act generates specific support for resource

478 management, we focused on resource users that actively use nature and local leaders that
479 have experiences with FeFo. The data highlights important views among those who actively
480 engage in traditional harvesting, hunting, hiking or other forms of use. Local leaders were
481 expected to be well informed and knowledgeable about the management arrangement. In
482 Norway, land owners do not manage natural resources freely. The state regulates, for
483 example, how and when one is allowed to fish or hunt, and reindeer husbandry is regulated
484 by their own legislation. FeFo's management of resources is limited by a state regulative
485 framework related to nature and wildlife protection, where the County Governor oversees
486 that governmental regulations are implemented. The County Governor is also the regional
487 authority for environmental management under the Nature Diversity Act. In one of our
488 questions "which are the two most important institutions for you," these two institutions
489 were identified as the two most important with a total of 28% mentioning FeFo and 24% the
490 County Governor (Figure 2).

491 **Figure 2: Institutions mentioned as the two most important for participants use of land and resources (%)**



492

493 Both small and big-game hunters were satisfied with wildlife management (Figure 3).

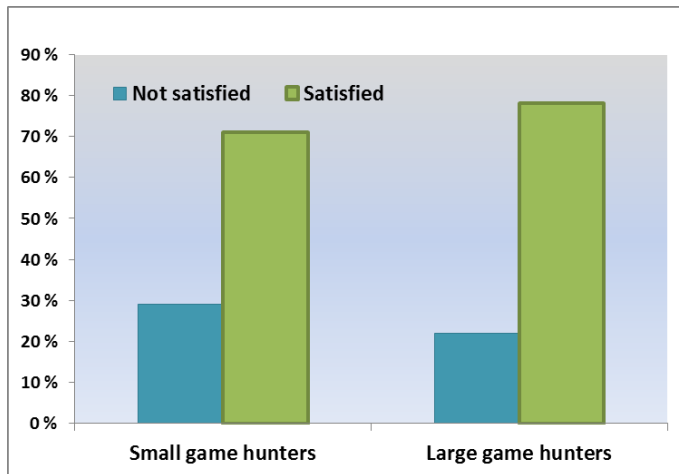
494 When asked whether they have experienced any changes with the transfer of wildlife

495 management to FeFo, only 8% reported negative experiences, which could possibly explain

496 the strong specific support for wildlife management among resource users. The few having

497 negative experiences reported increased charges for moose hunting and the new and
498 complicated digital registration system for small game as their main reasons for discontent.

499 **Figure 3: Small-game and big-game hunters' satisfaction/dissatisfaction**



505

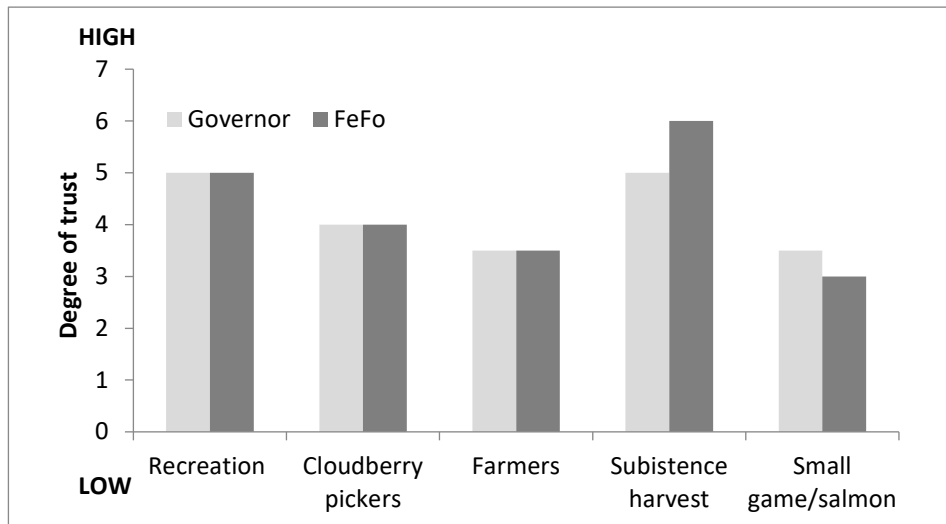
506 The interviews showed that more than 70% of the small game and 78% of the big
507 game hunters were satisfied with the management. Bag limit, temporary restrictions on
508 hunting and rotation of hunting grounds were considered acceptable measures in case of
509 resource decline. The Finnmark Act gives the population of Finnmark priority to harvest, a
510 principle supported by as much as 68% of the respondents in the survey. These results may
511 suggest increasing specific support for FeFo's management.

512 When asking different groups of land-users about their trust²⁴ in FeFo and the County
513 Governor, we found a relatively high degree of expressed trust especially among those who
514 actively use the land, such as recreationists and subsistence harvesters (Figure 4). This
515 indicates that those who actively use nature might be more supportive of FeFo than others.

²⁴ Trust could be linked to people's satisfaction with specific public services (ibid: 488), or more generally as trust in institutions. The distinction between institutional trust and satisfaction with policies and public services is interlinked to the concept of diffuse and specific support for institutions. Diffuse support for political authorities will generally be expressed as trust and confidence in those institutions, which is important for long-term institutional stability (Easton 1965, Gibson and Caldeira 1992).

516 Our results may also reflect a generally high institutional trust as the environmental
517 governor also scored high on these analyses.

518 **Figure 4: Degree of trust among different groups of resources users.**



519

520 Different groups of resource users statistically identified by cluster analysis (see Broderstad et al. 2015) and
521 their median trust in the governor and FeFo scored on a scale from 1 (lowest level of trust) to 7 (highest level of
522 trust). The categorization of the different use is done based on the interviewee own definition of important
523 resources.

524 We used Kruskal-Wallis H test to investigate significant differences in trust levels
525 associated with demography and role in the community (appendix B). The only significant
526 difference in trust of FeFo was the higher level of trust among leaders of village boards and
527 organizations that have more frequent contact with FeFo. The ethnic dimension was not
528 important for explaining trust of FeFo. Trust in the Sami Parliament is best explained by age
529 and whether one is a Sami or comes from a Sami village. We also found statements similar to
530 the surveys which reflects that people perceive FeFo as an exclusive Sami project; “FeFo is
531 local, but favors the Sami.” People also directly associate the slogan used for FeFo before its
532 establishment “people in Finnmark should be masters in their own house” as directly linked
533 to the Sami Parliament’s use of the slogan and thus Sami rights. Many of the resource users
534 were supportive of FeFo’s management of small-and big game hunting and inland fishing,

535 and were less concerned about the fundamental principles of self-governance of FeFo. Some
536 of the interviewees were knowledgeable of FeFo and spent a lot of time explaining their
537 view. Similar to “the Rejecters,” they were against the establishment of any institutions
538 based on Sami rights. However, they had come to the conclusion that FeFo will not be
539 dissolved, so the best strategy was to understand FeFo as an institution for all in Finnmark.
540 While this example substantiates findings of the survey that many respondents reject
541 implementation of Sami rights, it may also indicate a change in levels of diffuse support for
542 FeFo.

543 6. The relationship between diffuse and specific support – a discussion

544

545 The public support for FeFo is influenced by the history of events leading up to FeFo, by the
546 experiences with the estate and by the multiple mandates of FeFo. We found considerable
547 local resistance towards the new land tenure arrangement in Finnmark. As much as 61% of
548 the non-Sami respondents were negative about the establishment of FeFo in 2006, and 47%
549 still wanted to dissolve the land tenure arrangements in 2012. In 2006, 40% of the Sami
550 respondents were negative to the establishment, and in 2012, 30% wanted to dissolve the
551 land tenure arrangements. Comparing this resistance among the Rejecters with their
552 support for the principle of a first claim appears quite inconsistent. While the principle of
553 regional ownership makes it possible to have the first claim to the county’s resources, most
554 of the respondents reject implementation of Sami rights, which made regional ownership
555 possible in the first place.

556 Previous studies have shown that values, norms and attitudes towards policies
557 depend on the land tenure arrangements and the historical legacies on which they are built
558 (e.g. Hausner et al. 2015, Jentoft and Sjøreng 2017, Schmidt et al. 2018). The main reasons

559 for the negative attitude towards FeFo as expressed by “the Rejecters I” and “the Rejecters
560 II,” is the unfounded fear that Sami heritage should result in an unequal distribution of land
561 rights based on individual and ethnic rights rather than managed in common like the FeFo
562 model arrange for. Despite the salient role of media in the formation of opinions for or
563 against FeFo, the debate was partly marked by unfounded anxiety about Sami gaining more
564 rights than others (Broderstad et al. 2015, Eira 2013).

565 As in every population, a diversity of opinions is evident among the Sami, manifested
566 by a wide range of perceptions about FeFo. The support based on the public perceptions of
567 FeFo is weak (diffuse support), but the specific support for management actions and policies
568 implemented by FeFo does not show the same patterns among those who have experiences
569 with FeFo. This might explain the slightly more positive attitudes towards FeFo since its
570 establishment.

571 Our data was collected six years after the establishment of FeFo. The transfer of state
572 ownership and management authority to the collective ownership by the inhabitants is
573 different than other indigenous land tenure arrangements within demarcated indigenous
574 land area. Finnmark is not purely indigenous land because of the non-Sami majority that
575 have resided there for centuries. Seeing Sami as lower on some imagined ethnic hierarchy
576 where Sami culture was regarded as backwards and worthless, justified the assimilation
577 policies of the Norwegian state (Eidheim 1971, Eythórsson 2003; 2008, Minde 2005).
578 Additionally, Sami concerns were not to be brought up on the public agenda, as illustrated
579 by those who opposed the Sami paragraph of the Norwegian constitution (NOU 1984: 18, p.
580 444). Such ideas do not necessarily disappear even though public policy changes. The
581 Finnmark Act challenged these ideas; and it also affirmed Finnmark as a Sami region with

582 legal land rights. As a response to the Finnmark Act, Olsen (2010, pp. 112, 115) explains that
583 the non-Sami inhabitants in Finnmark believe that the establishment of the Finnmark Act has
584 unjustly treated them as settlers.²⁵ Our data shows that the negative attitudes can be
585 explained mainly by opposition to indigenous rights, particularly among non-Sami residents
586 that live in the more densely populated areas in Finnmark, such as Alta and Vadsø. The Sami
587 history of FeFo clearly explains the low diffuse support among those opposing the Sami
588 rights' development, which indicates that pre-existing ideological tensions may affect
589 individual's diffuse support level. As the FeFo case is highly politicized and polarized due to
590 Sami rights, the relationship between diffuse and specific support may be significant due to
591 the high level of political attentiveness (ibid., p. 647, Gibson and Caldeira 1992).

592 The "Don't knowers" cluster shows that people may dismiss the need for a
593 management body such as FeFo (see Table 6). Simultaneously they do not want to close it
594 down (Appendix A). This could be regarded as a contradiction. But as they also strongly
595 support the existence of the Sami Parliament, it could be an expression of public support
596 across these two institutions (cf. Easton's concept of support regimes; Swanson 2007, p.
597 657) due to their common platform of strengthening Sami culture. This indicate other
598 reasons for dismissing the need for a management body as FeFo than being opposed to Sami
599 rights.

600 In contrast, "the Precautionary Supporters" are positive about Sami rights and
601 believe that FeFo has led to better management of land and resource management in

²⁵ According to Olsen (2010), the Sami right issue in Finnmark, as embedded in the Finnmark Act, is substantiated in a global indigenous rights discourse, and illustrates that the Sami right issue in Finnmark is similar to indigenous rights issues in most of the former colonized societies in other parts of the world, where local people were deprived their rights. This led to, according to the postcolonial discourses, a conceptualization of the people and the state as respectively *indigenous/colonized*, and the *state/colonial power* (Lawson 2004, p. 1218). Such concepts have consequences on peoples' self-perception on their ethnicity and identity, which may imply a view on non-Sami in Finnmark as settlers.

602 Finnmark. This cluster included a higher percentage of the Sami population than the other
603 groups. As their expectations correspond with the principles and values that FeFo is founded
604 on, it is reasonable to expect a higher diffuse support for FeFo. The specific support of “the
605 Precautionary Supporters” is a “reservoirs of good will” that could become tested, as
606 negative reactions to management decisions may have negative impact on the institution’s
607 diffuse support (Mondak and Smithey 1997, Swanson 2007, p. 647).

608 Despite the general lack of support, the attitudes towards FeFo have become more
609 positive in the six years after its establishment. The level of diffuse support for FeFo in 2006
610 has changed in 2012. The most likely reason is that experiences with FeFo’s management
611 decisions, for instance to the introduction of hunting zones for grouse, have made people
612 more supportive. Also direct relations can increase diffuse support, as the interviews with
613 resource users can imply. Direct relations have led to specific support, which in turn may
614 have increased diffuse support. Those who are leaders and are in direct contact with and
615 have knowledge about FeFo, trust the estate more than those who are not highly engaged
616 with the estate, indicating that direct and positive experiences with FeFo can increase
617 specific support for the institution. Those actively using nature through traditional
618 harvesting and recreation showed a higher trust in FeFo than others. FeFo was regarded by
619 these groups as a caretaker of traditional uses and access to hunting and fishing rights for all
620 inhabitants of Finnmark. Thus, direct experiences with FeFo indicate what FeFo could do to
621 improve the negative attitudes toward the institution, i.e. specific support can increase
622 through positive experiences of residents who benefit from the services that FeFo offers
623 over time. This is also evident among the businesses that have dealt regularly with FeFo in
624 their daily work (Broderstad et al. 2015). However, in cases where the management of FeFo
625 is perceived to de-emphasize Sami rights i.a. exploitation of natural resources for economic

626 growth, the support of “the Rejecters” may increase, while increased support from “the
627 Precautionary Supporters” depend on a restrained attitude to exploit these resources.
628 Nevertheless, given the multiple mandate of FeFo, involved institutions and actors have to
629 recognise the dilemmas of the governing interactions and the wickedness²⁶ of the problems
630 (cf. Jentoft and Chuenpagdee 2009). As long as parts of the county population contest Sami
631 rights, FeFo has to live with and learn how to manage conflictual surroundings, and a relative
632 low diffuse support in the foreseeable future.

633 In Finnmark and other Sami areas, the inhabitants constitute a diversified
634 demographic composition and a complex land use history, which demands governance
635 solutions that differ from tenure arrangements and land use policies in other indigenous
636 areas, like Northern Canada. This complexity is reflected in the multiple mandate of FeFo.
637 The Finnmark Act resolves this diversity by establishing a management regime that increases
638 the representation and the degree of Sami influence, but where the rights of groups and
639 individuals to land and resources are acknowledged independent of ethnicity (Broderstad
640 2015, p. 16). We found high support for regional ownership and a first claim to resources for
641 residents in Finnmark, indicating that that the population support the underlying principles
642 of FeFo. The fact that there are no significant differences in the level of trust in FeFo and the
643 County Governor for the resource users interviewed, suggests that FeFo is able to handle
644 multiple mandates, which in the long run could contribute to increased institutional trust
645 across ethnic groups.

646 The weak diffuse support has implications for the long-term institutional stability of
647 FeFo. Nygaard and Josefsen (2010) concluded that FeFo has not sufficiently implemented the

²⁶ Problems are wicked in the sense that there are limits to how systematic, effective and rational a governing system can be in solving them (Jentoft and Chuenpagdee 2009: 553).

648 Finnmark Act's principle of "management as a basis for Sami culture," because of the strong
649 opposition to Sami rights. A lack of implementation of this principle may reduce both the
650 diffuse and the specific support, first and foremost among the Sami and "the Precautionary
651 Supporters." Given the many expectations about how Sami rights should be implemented,
652 there may be a risk that FeFo does not become the institution they hoped for. After the
653 survey was conducted, the public debate as reflected in Sami media, may indicate a growing
654 dissatisfaction with the concrete implementation of Sami rights in the Finnmark Act. On the
655 other hand, those opposing Sami rights are against such an implementation as the two
656 groups of Rejecters illustrate. FeFo finds itself caught in the middle, without being able to
657 reconcile neither "the Rejecters", "the Don't knowers", nor "the Precautionary Supporters."
658 That said, the fact that FeFo is established as a result of Sami rights claims anchored in
659 international human rights law on Indigenous peoples, implies that particular values, norms
660 and principles are constitutive for and underpin FeFo as an institution. In case of a weakened
661 Sami support, the correspondence to international indigenous rights as established in the
662 Finnmark Act, runs the risk of waning and in the longer term open up for profound changes
663 in the Finnmark Act impairing the pillars based on indigenous land use and rights. Such a
664 prospect asserts that the Sami support is of vital importance to FeFo. Obtaining legitimacy
665 calls for long term efforts to change the residents preferences based on positive experiences
666 and new knowledge gained.

667 7. Conclusion

668

669 In this article we have addressed two questions: what is the significance of, and
670 potential relations between, the concepts of diffuse and specific support for FeFo; and how

671 do residents' conflicting views on indigenous lands claims play into the support and
672 legitimacy of land tenure institutions.

673 Having analyzed and interpreted the public support for FeFo as an institution and a
674 governance agency, we have found a polarized public with a majority who opposed Sami
675 rights and a minority of precautionary supporters. FeFo does therefore not only operate in
676 "the shadow of politics" (cf. Schmidt 2013, p. 10), but also in the spotlight of two clearly
677 different and conflicting perspectives on indigenous rights. Ideological convergence or
678 divergence between individuals and an institution, does explain the level of diffuse support
679 (Swanson 2007), which is the most difficult to change. In our case, this is probably more valid
680 for the rejecters of FeFo than for those who have a precautionary standpoint. We also found
681 that the diffuse support for FeFo was higher among those actively using nature, as FeFo was
682 regarded as a caretaker of traditional uses and access to hunting and fishing rights for all
683 inhabitants in Finnmark. As well, we found support for concrete management decisions,
684 both in the survey and the interview study.

685 This can be explained as specific support, since it is directed at perceived decisions
686 (cf. Easton 1975, p. 437). As evident from our results, those who have experience with FeFo,
687 such as local leaders, businesses and active users of the land, and thus FeFo's services are
688 more supportive of FeFo than others. The slight positive change in diffuse support for FeFo
689 may reflect a growing specific support based on experiences. However, specific support does
690 not necessarily transform into diffuse support, since diffuse support is difficult to strengthen
691 once it is weak (ibid., p. 444). This insight is important in the debate about the future of
692 FeFo.

693 Institutions build up goodwill over time. As any institution born in conflict and highly
694 politicized, FeFo’s experience with weak support was anticipated. One strategy which may
695 be tempting for FeFo to choose in order to establish a reservoir of goodwill is to downplay
696 Sami rights. However, choosing such a strategy, would likely result in an escalation of the
697 polarized Sami land rights discourse due to FeFo’s obligation to adhere to the Finnmark Act.
698 That said, the risk of unhandled conflicts may diminish the overall public support of FeFo and
699 the land tenure system would fail to reconcile indigenous and non-indigenous lands rights.
700 Thus, the main responsibility rests with FeFo as an institution, the institutions appointing the
701 FeFo board – the Sami Parliament and the Finnmark County Council - to ensure both Sami
702 and regional concerns in the land tenure governance of FeFo are heard.

703

704

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885 APPENDIX

886

887 **A. Profile of respondents in the four clusters**

| Variabel | Total | Cluster | | | | p-value |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------------------------|---------|
| | | Rejecters 1 | Rejecters 2 | Don't knowers | Precautionary supporters | |
| % men | 0,54 | 0,57 | 0,50 | 0,26 | 0,59 | <0,001 |
| Mean age (year) | 50 | 50 | 51 | 38 | 51 | <0,001 |
| % higher education | 0,46 | 0,43 | 0,44 | 0,41 | 0,55 | 0,014 |
| % registered in Sami Parliament' electoral roll | 0,19 | 0,09 | 0,17 | 0,29 | 0,34 | <0,001 |
| % Settled the last 15 years | 0,21 | 0,19 | 0,21 | 0,31 | 0,21 | 0,195 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| % residing in four largest populated municipalities in Finnmark (Alta, Hammerfest, Sør-Varanger and Vadsø) | 0,64 | 0,70 | 0,59 | 0,52 | 0,58 | <0,001 |
| % municipalities using Sami language | 0,18 | 0,09 | 0,19 | 0,30 | 0,28 | <0,001 |
| % residing in costal municipalities | 0,18 | 0,21 | 0,22 | 0,18 | 0,14 | <0,001 |
| % oriented towards the political left | 0,57 | 0,49 | 0,70 | 0,69 | 0,53 | <0,001 |
| % interested in politics | 0,63 | 0,69 | 0,51 | 0,30 | 0,68 | <0,001 |
| % that want to close down FeFo | 0,40 | 0,68 | 0,40 | 0,00 | 0,07 | <0,001 |

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