

Indigenous homemaking and housing policies. Colonial relations in everyday life and opportunities for empowering Indigenous individuals and communities.

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The Scandinavian countries and Indigenous people

- Share some basic features regarding history, culture, welfare and politics.
- Less research on the indirect assimilation induced through often well-meaning welfare policies such as housing and the links between the housing policies in the past and its consequences for Sámi and Inuit homemaking today.
- Often presented as outsiders performing “innocent” colonialism, with equality-oriented welfare systems, strong democracies, economic competitiveness, concern with aid, peace building, and cooperation.
- Silenced the internal colonization and assimilation.

Indirect colonisation

- Colonisation as a structure, not only an event, where the invasion is connected to elimination of the colonised, a dissolution of Indigenous societies, their structures, culture, values and even history through assimilation, replacing them it with the colonisers' societal principles. (Patrick Wolfe – settler colonialism)
- Welfare as indirect colonization?
- Welfare as something good, that comes with some costs for Indigenous people.

Indigenous decolonisation

- Homemaking can be seen in relation to decolonisation, that can be defined as (re)negotiation of power, place, identity and sovereignty.
- It is not a reaction to colonial power in a binary way but a rather messy, dynamic and contradictory process.
- We as researchers need to move beyond reproducing stereotypical images of Indigenous people as damaged and use research perspectives that envision the resilience, hopes, visions and creativity of lived Indigenous lives.

- A Finno-Ugric Indigenous people living in Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia
- The only recognized Indigenous people in Europe.
- Traditionally a variety of livelihoods, such as reindeer herding, fishing, hunting and farming, now to a great extent highly educated and urbanized



Sámi and Indigeneity

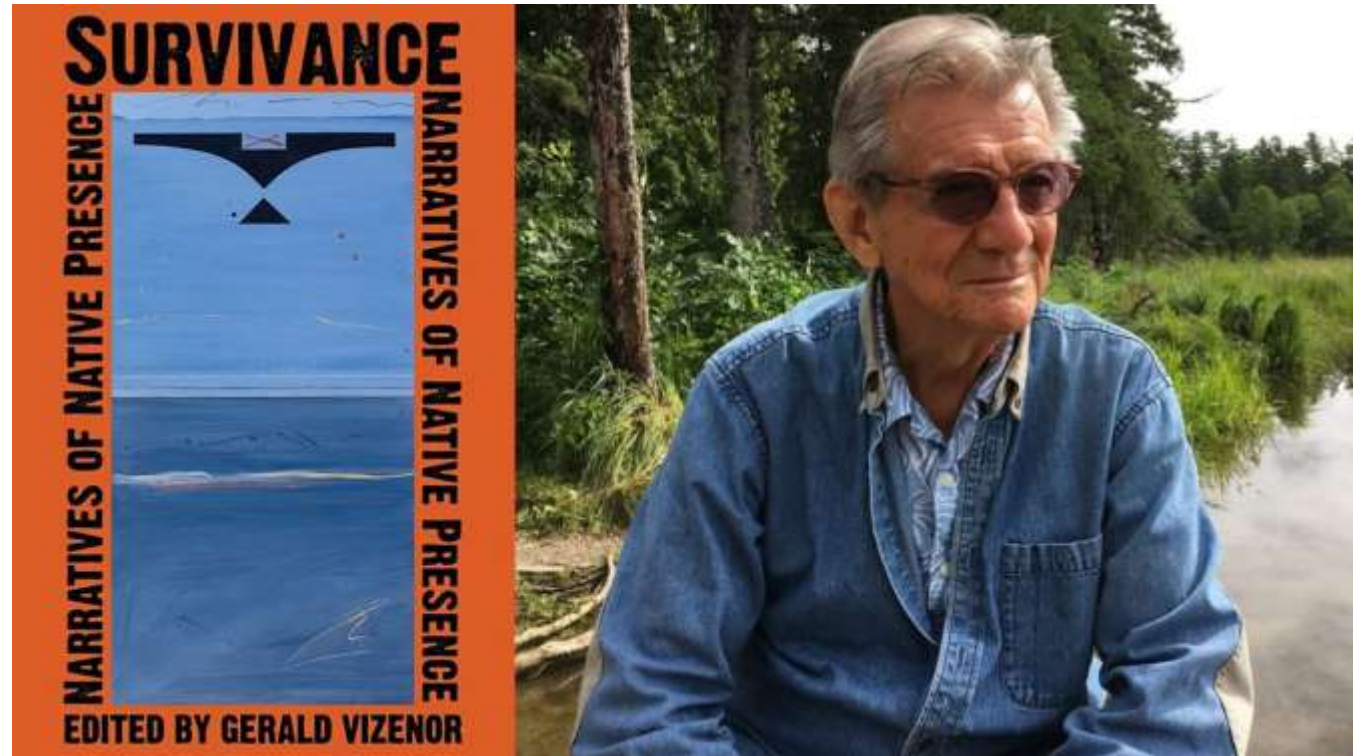
- Often linked to a conqueror logic related to “who came first” to a territory
- Rather a term that describes the relationship between people and the nationstate:
- ILO 169:

Descent from populations, who inhabited the country or geographical region at the time of conquest, colonisation or establishment of present state boundaries. They retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, irrespective of their legal status.

Indigenous homemaking practices

- Homes are spaces that traverse time, place and social status, as dynamic social constructions that are variously related to policies, places, families, kin, self, gender, feelings, journeys and practices.
- Survivance

"Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction, or a survivable name. Native survivance stories are renunciations of dominance, tragedy and victimry" (Vizenor 1999)



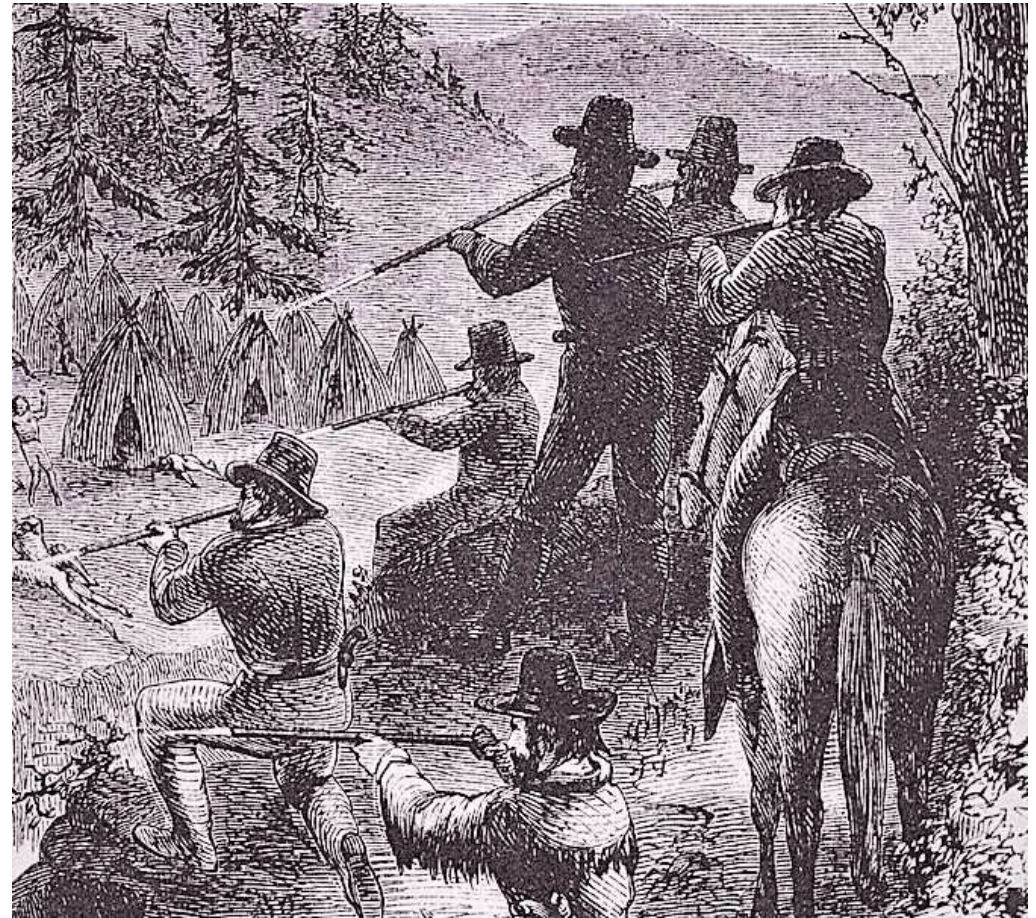
«Ishi» (1861-1916)



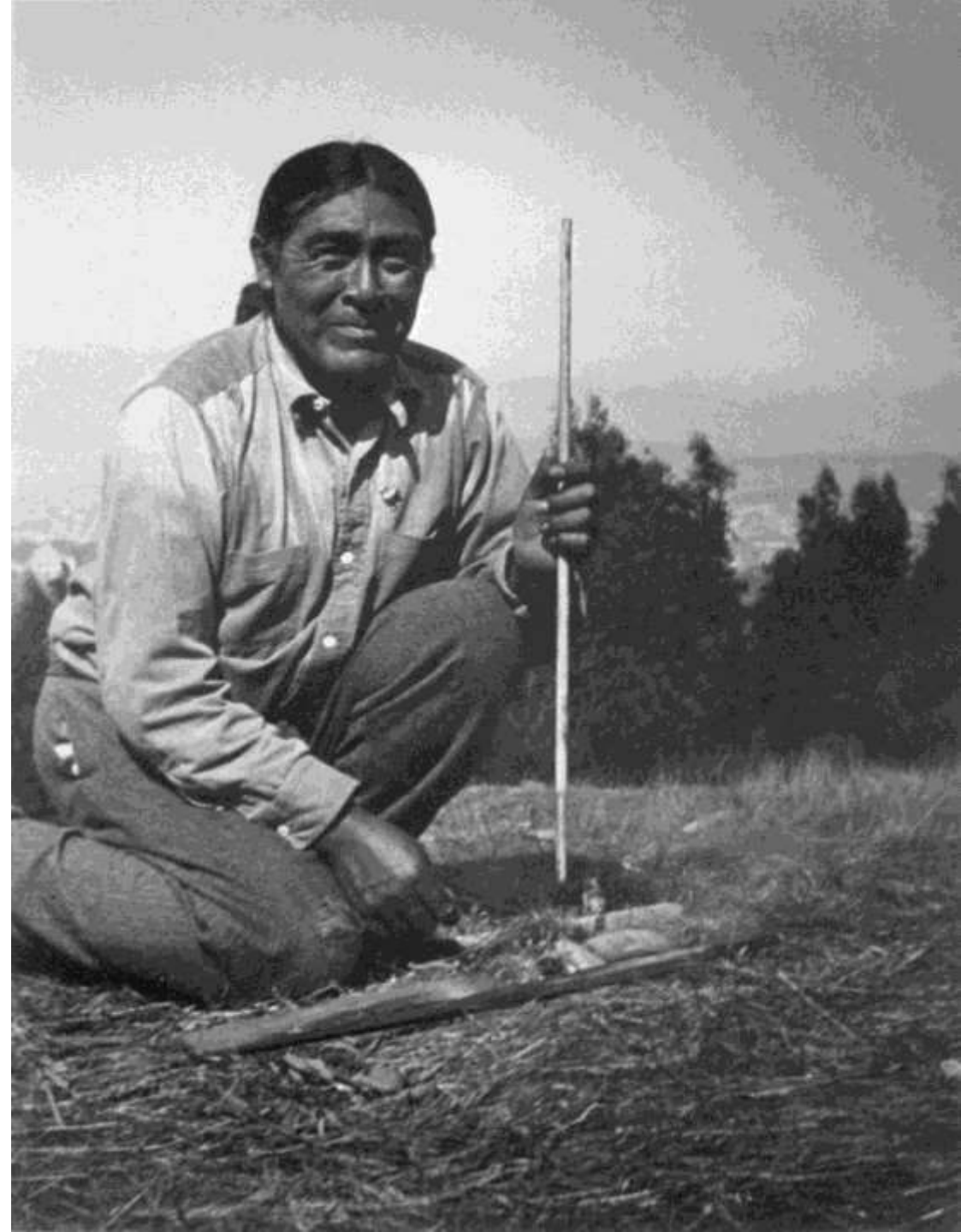
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First meeting – the genocide



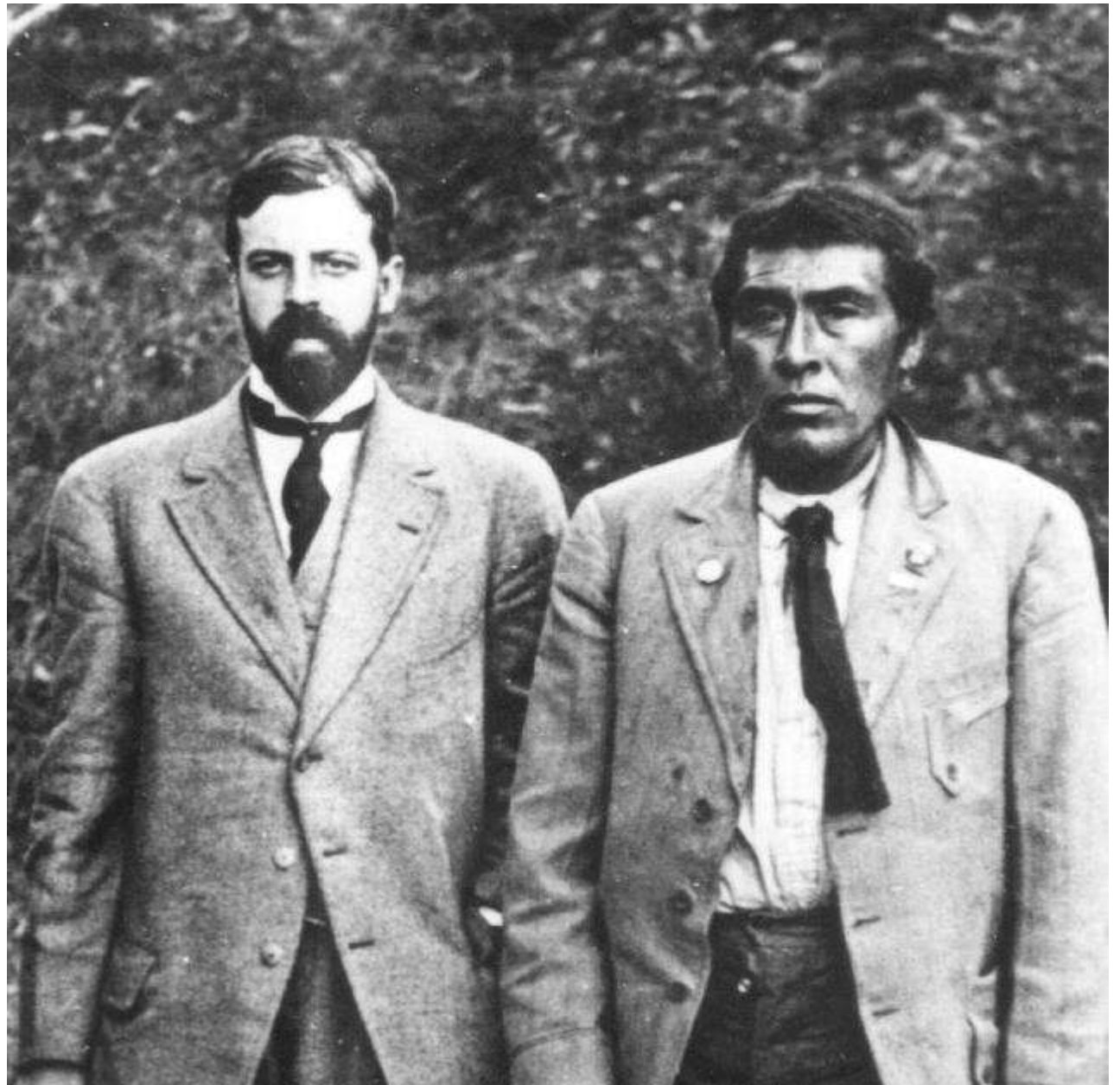
Was an object of study for
researchers, but refused to be a
victim



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«Ishi» and the anthropologist Alfred Kroeber



- Ishi a reminder of our brutal history of colonization, genocide and assimilation.
- A trickster – a paradoxical figure
- Be able to make one's own choiced, and decide for oneself how one want to live and develop.
- Resist stereotypes about how Indigenous people should be and live.
- People are not just victims, but active agents in their own lives, even in the most extreme conditions.



Survivance

- “Survivance” – more than just surviving
- A way of nourishing Indigenous ways of knowing, including the complexity, contradictions and self-determination of Indigenous lives (Vizenor 1999).



Homemaking as survivance

- Homemaking can be seen as a form 'survivance', which involves more than just survival.
- A way of nourishing Indigenous ways of knowing, including the complexity, contradictions and self-determination of Indigenous lives.



WWII and Indigeneity: The evacuation, burning and rebuilding of Finnmark and Northern Troms



The Sámi – the Indigenous people of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia

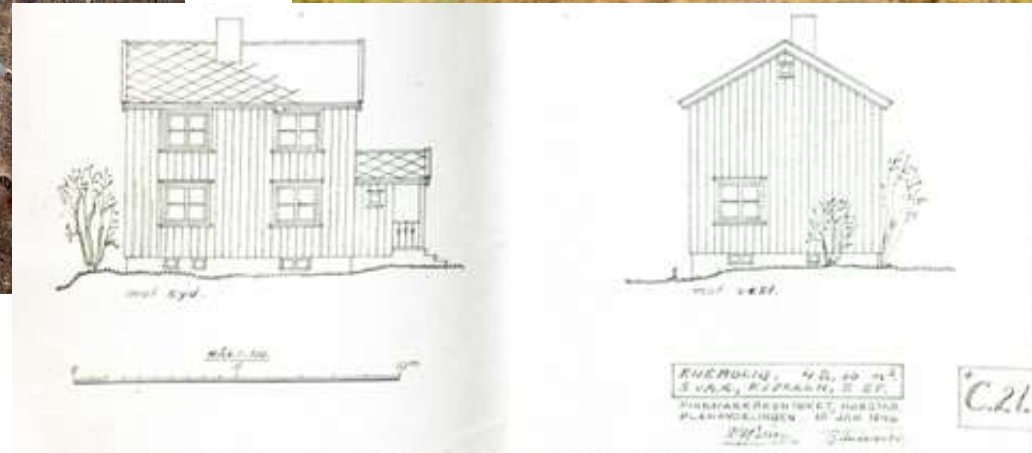
- Norway: Assimilation policy from the 1850s and onwards
- Sweden: Assimilation and «Lapp shall be Lapp»-policy and nomad schools – segregation of different Sámi groups according to «purity» - Reindeer Sámi the «real Sámi»
- Finland: No official policy, but no special consideration regarding the Sámi
- Russia – nomad schools and Russification (1956-1970s).



Finmark Fylkesbibliotek



The introduction of «modern» houses after WWII: Standardized houses



Is Nordic colonialism more «innocent»?

- The self-image of being “the good guys” in the world makes it difficult to see how colonialism continues to affect Sámi people

COMPLYING
WITH COLONIALISM
Gender, Race and Ethnicity
in the Nordic Region

EDITED BY SUVI KESKINEN, SALLA TUORI,
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Indigenous homes and the welfare state

- Because of the welfare state and its housing policies, homelessness is not an big social problem among Indigenous people in the Scandinavian countries (even though it might exist)
- The states' housing policies and welfare policies, in addition to centralization, has changed Indigenous homes drastically.
- While welfare is often considered as something «good», the housing policies has had a drastic effect on Indigenous communities, and has reinforced the states' domination over Indigenous lives.

Patrick Wolfe: Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native

«The logic of elimination not only refers to the summary liquidation of Indigenous people, though it includes that (...) it strives for the dissolution of native societies. Positively, it erects a new colonial society on the expropriated land base—as I put it, settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event » (Wolfe 2006, 388).

Colonization or inescapable fate?

*«In earlier Lappology or studies made by outsiders, the status of Lapps was interpreted sympathetically as subjugation of a weaker people by culturally stronger peoples. Being run over by a modern society was considered their regrettable, but inescapable fate»
(Lehtola 2015, 23)*

What is Indigenous homemaking?

- Homemaking - creating a space that provides shelter, comfort and a strong sense of being oneself - is one of the most foundational cultural practices, yet curiously overlooked.
- While housing is a practical, material and economic foundation to the experience of home, a home is a relationship that is created over time, connected to a sense of belonging



«No, I think a lot of it comes from the fact that his father grew up during the Norwegianisation policy. He never emphasized that he was Sámi. Or rarely. And he was such that he would rather not be seen. And I've probably been influenced by that too. (...) He was very little... well, he was probably in the Sami environment, I remember that he subscribed to Ságat, a newspaper, and was part of a Sami association and such. But he never took it home to us. I remember asking him if he could teach me Sámi - no, I can't because I don't know Sami well enough. And then it was like gone».



«But it's probably not that relevant today with something like that, but it has always been the case that you always have some extra guest bed options. (...) It's not like it used to be. But as I remember, like my mother, she couldn't cook such small portions of food. She always cooked a little extra so that 3-4 guests could well come and there would be food for them too.»

«We had a lot of cousins who were here and spent the night here. (...) So it was like that when I was very small I got mad at mum and dad, and then I packed my things in a wheelbarrow and then I wheeled over to my aunt's, and I stayed there for a week and refused to come home. So it was probably, yes, so very safe.»

Homemaking practices – turning houses into homes



- A: *“We needed firewood, so that had to be sorted out. One part of my upbringing, was that we had to work with our grandfather, father and uncles in the “firewood forest” It is hard physical work”*
- Q: *“How old were you when you started?”*
- A: *“I must have been a preschooler the first times. Then the work was less physical, such as removing the smaller branches from the trunk. But we had to participate. Getting away was not an option”*

“These things are still important for me to do. Me and my husband, there are things that, that I need to do during the summer. We have to fish with nets, get firewood and pick berries”



Craftmanship

“I have the old gákti that my mother used. If she used it as an everyday gákti, I don't care, but I have it in the closet, and it's quite important to me”

“And it's the same with crafts, duodji, or sewing, that there is not enough space, and everything has to be tidied up constantly.”



Homemaking beyond the physical house

“And ice fishing and the mountains, and in the fjords. We followed the seasons then, with hunting and fishing and trapping animals, and.. So it is very close to nature, indeed. And at the same time it was a bit of our income, both planting potatoes, trapping and fishing. So that was sort of what we lived on, and the farm”

Decolonization of everyday life

- To create a home – physically, spiritually, in nature and through relations – a part of the process of decolonization
- A (re)negotiation of place, identities, power and sovereignty through everyday activities
- Move beyond stereotypical images of Indigenous people and explore how homemaking is done today among Indigenous people