

## A Shouting Arctic and Silent States: Indigenous Rights Against State Extractivism

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My starting point is fieldwork in Sámi reindeer herding over the years, above all learning about the increasing conflicts between Norwegian authorities and the reindeer herding organisations, due to state regulation. Now I am working together with fishermen, artists and researchers in the EU project Birgejupmi (Northern Sámi for getting by with what you have). The task is, among other things, to document indigenous peoples' sustainability expertise in Arctic coastal regions. I observe people and salmon around salmon traps in several of Finnmark's 90 salmon rivers. The state's goal is to stop humpback salmon in the estuaries. Local people protest because of doubts that the authorities know what they are doing, based on knowledge that neither state-employed professionals nor politicians listen to. In Indigenous peoples' mental images, linguistic practices and skills, nature(s) and culture(s) are interconnected in several different ways. Some of the issues are closely linked to the different points of view on national and international power struggles that are taking place in the Arctic, where law and justice are handled in uncertain and surprising ways. Enormous values derived from coastal and ocean fishing have, with the blessing of the state, been concentrated in the hands of a few billionaires over the past 70 years. How come state authorities do not respond to inquiries from local fisheries' organizations or to court decisions regarding international law obligations? Why and how is the Coastal Arctic being built down? What are the reasons for the aquaculture industry's growing despite fish and bird deaths? Is it a category error to compare "fish farming" with "agriculture"? The seabed under the fish farm cages smells like barns. How do we understand "profitability" in the agricultural and fish industries? What is "use", "usable" or "sustainable"? My Sámi colleagues undress the state's extractivism of land and sea under the "green shift" flag year after year ... just like other Indigenous peoples.





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# A Shouting Arctic and Silent States – Indigenous Rights and State Extractivism

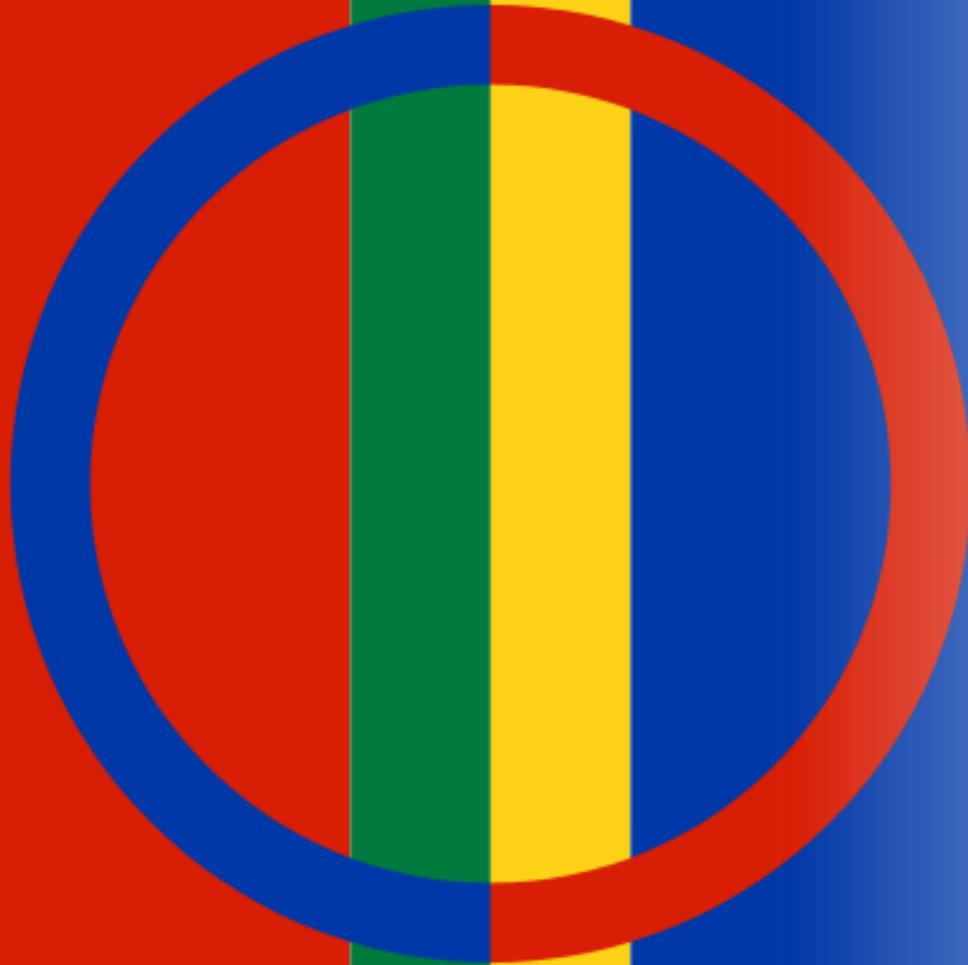
Coastal Sámi, other indigenous peoples, and their rights to fish in the sea, fjords and rivers – a fieldwork collaboration with fishers, artists and researchers from Sápmi, Kallaallit Nunaat (Greenland), Denmark, Germany, Taiwan, Estonia and Finland as part of the EU-project

***Birgejupmi: Bridging knowledge systems for inclusive, resilient and prosperous Arctic coastal futures.***

Ida Hydle



Birge -  
jupmi



***BIRGEJUPMI*** (getting by with what you have) is a Northern Sámi term that refers to what is essential to maintain a liveable life: values, sustainable use of resources, a social network;

It encompasses: people, societies, landscapes and seascapes and their natural and cultural surroundings, i.e. social and spiritual relations and identities.



**Birgejupmi is integrated in the resistance of arctic communities and their living conditions in the encounter with changing environmental circumstances.**

**The term Birgejupmi in our project comprises working across knowledge systems from indigenous, local and academic communities, to strengthen community engagement and governance align with ONE HEALTH (WHO) in Arctic coastal areas and based upon Indigenous ethical research requirements.**



• *Here is the BIRGEJUPMI consortium gathered at Sámi allaskuvla (The Sámi University College) in Guovdageainnu (Kautokeino, Norway) at the first consortium meeting, January 2025*

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## **Goavve-Geabbil (grazing crises) at Tate Modern: In leat deike činjahit vuolgán (not here to decorate)**

On 14th of October, Máret Ánne Sara opened her monumental work Goavve-Geabbil at Tate Modern's Turbine Hall. The vast sculptural installation carries Sámi philosophy, stories, and worldviews into one of the most important art spaces in the world. The Queen of Norway was present, together with a strong Sámi delegation from across Sápmi. For many of us, it felt deeply personal, seeing our culture, land and thinking take up this kind of space. Artist partner Máret Ánne's work continues to open paths for Sámi art internationally, and we are proud beyond words.



- **An alternative basis for present and future governance in the Arctic; such as**
- **Taking the neo-colonisation of peoples, animals, territories, fjords, rivers, lakes and sea into account**
- **by investigating Indigenous peoples' governance strategies for sustainability**



**A special focus on young people's vision for a sustainable future**

**and their proactive involvement in environmental governance processes regionally, nationally and in the EU,**

**- best governance by whom, how and where?**



***Birgehalla* – to learn to read the nature**

**One of our three signal species: the pink salmon – The Sámi wish to catch it in the fjords and use it as food. Norwegian state authorities wish to extinct the species along the coast: best governance by whom, how and where?**



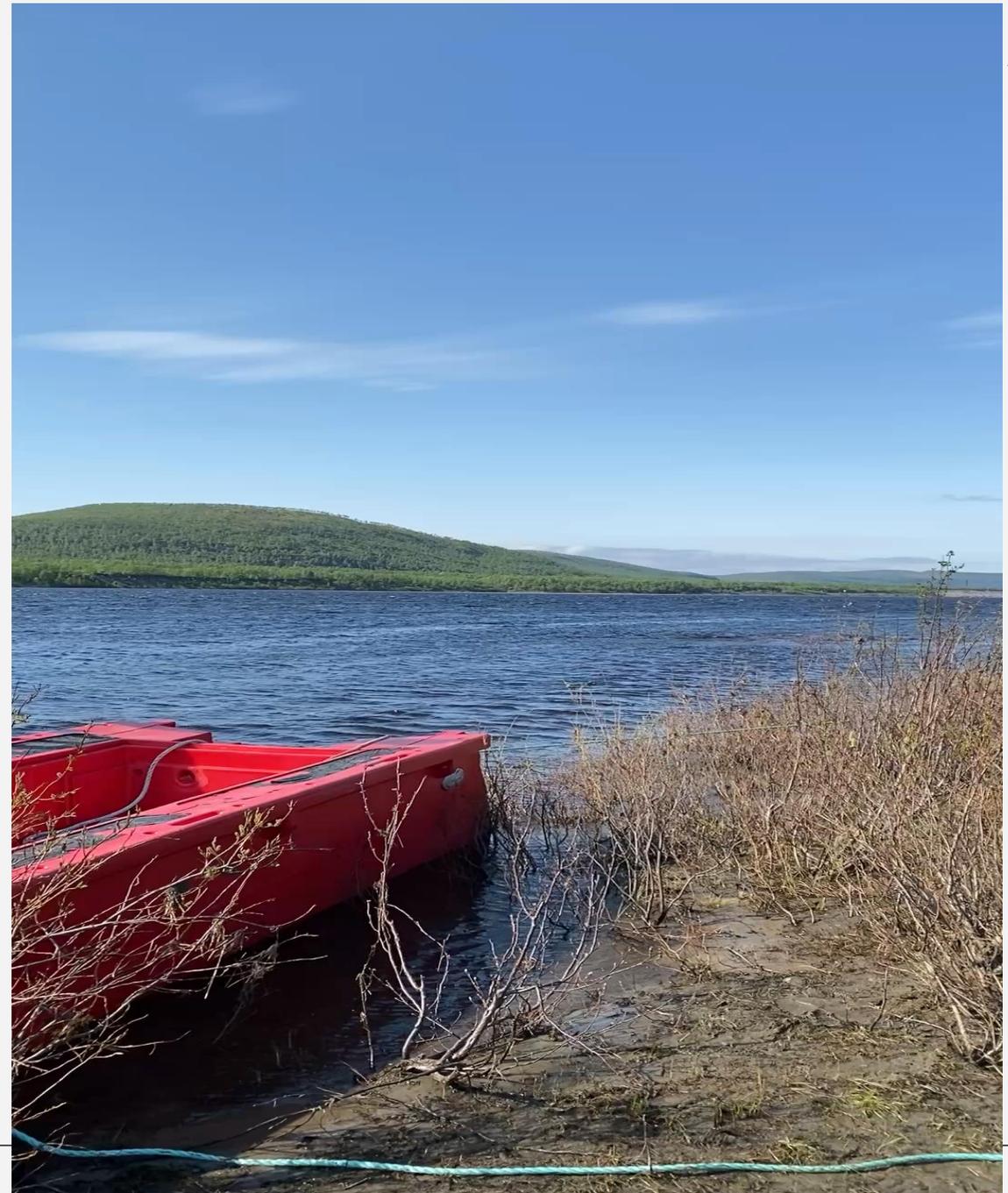
**The Atlantic salmon as well as the pink salmon commutes between rivers, fjord and sea – and participate in landscapes, seascapes, memories, archives, art, *duodji* (handicraft in Sámi), catching knowledge, child rearing, boat building, social networks, food supply, tourism, local, national and international economies, political systems and policies...  
best governance by whom, how and where?**





## Nature is culture?

**In Indigenous mental images, language practices, knowledge and skills are tied together in natural and cultural networks in many different ways. In our project some of the problems are tightly adhered to the different viewpoints on national and international power struggles in the Arctic, where laws and rights are handled in uncertain and surprising ways.**



**Our second signal species is the king crab, at first seen as a migrant enemy from Russia - and the State authorities tried out an extinction policy. Now it is seen as luxury catch – and fishing is regulated by quotas...best governance by whom, how and where?**



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First enemy – then friend – a fight  
against Norwegian authorities

A coastal Sámi sustainable industrial  
history

Following up of Elinor Ostroms  
principles of polycentric social  
sustainability

And Henry George (1839-1937):  
«owner monopoly over ground and  
natural resources is gross theft from  
the community»



## The king crab fisheries

**The Sámi author, inventor and fisher Seipajärvi writes:**

**What is to learn from the king crab story: Media, fishers and the local population are engaged in what is to learn for developing the use of pink salmon. Vi learned from the exploitation of the king crab that there is a two-step development solution: develop the resource/find markets and simultaneously control the stock. For pink salmon this duality is ideal. Pink salmon caught at sea give the best quality and restricts the spawning run in rivers.**



**Our third signal species is the seal, which also like humans eat salmon, commutes between rivers, fjord and sea – and participate in landscapes, seascapes, memories, archives, art, *duodji*, catching knowledge, child rearing, boat building, social networks, food supply, tourism, local, national and international economies, political systems and policies... best governance by whom, how and where?**



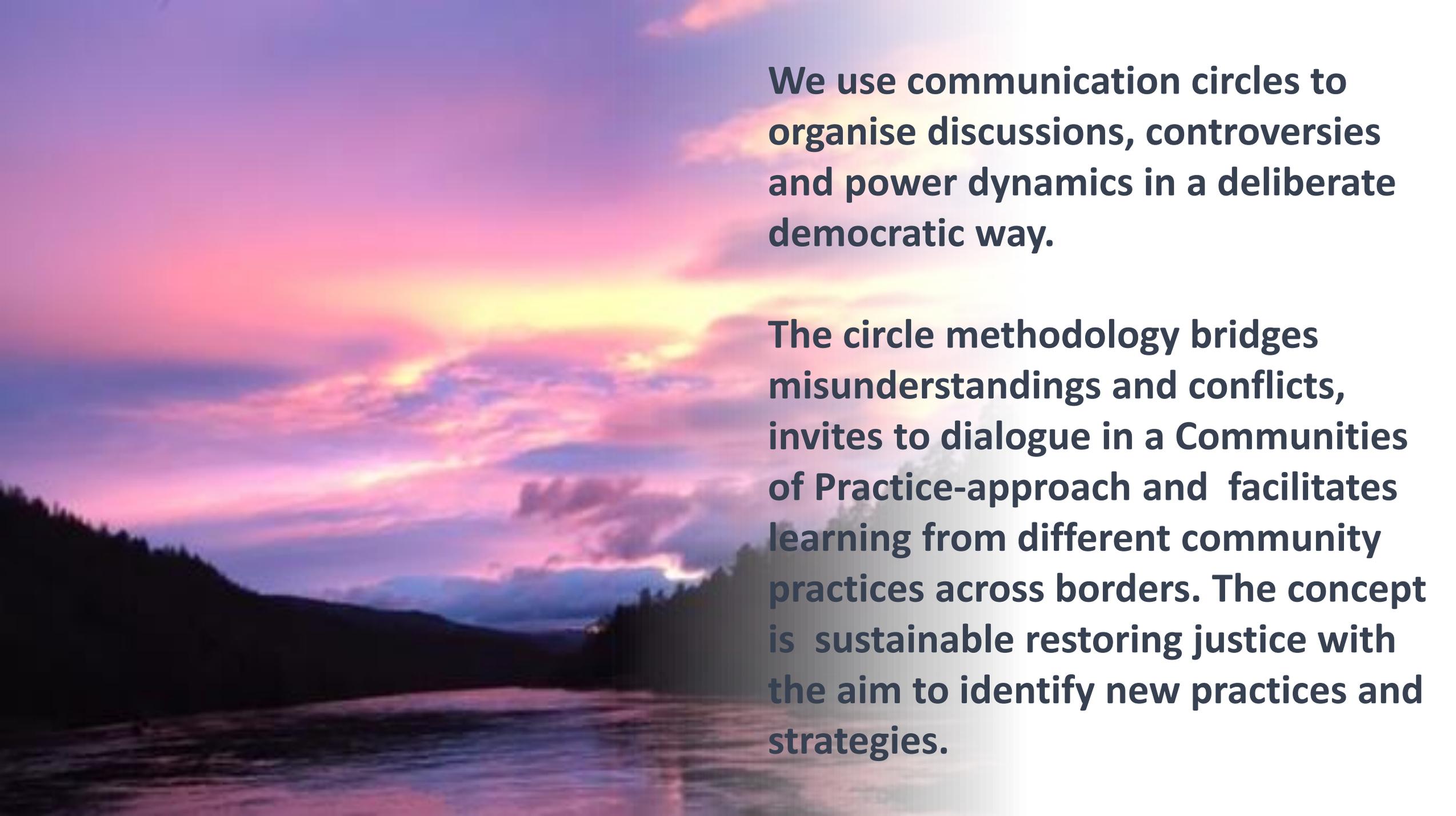
## Reviving Sea Sámi Traditions: Seal Hunting and Craftsmanship Course in Oslo

**A hands-on course on traditional seal hunting, tanning, and sewing was held at the National Library in Oslo, led by duodji experts Inga Elisa Påve Idivuoma and Linn Margrethe Påve. Participants explored Sea Sámi heritage and learned about seals as vital cultural and ecological resources.**



**We use many multimodal methods, including different media practices, technologies, engagements and expression forms such as photo voice, film, dance and digital storytelling in cooperation with local people. With this approach, people may communicate and express experiences, expectations and needs.**





**We use communication circles to organise discussions, controversies and power dynamics in a deliberate democratic way.**

**The circle methodology bridges misunderstandings and conflicts, invites to dialogue in a Communities of Practice-approach and facilitates learning from different community practices across borders. The concept is sustainable restoring justice with the aim to identify new practices and strategies.**



**Important and challenging questions:**

**Practicing local and community representation in research?**

**Acknowledging the complex relationship between salmon – king crab - seal, land-and seascape and humans, i.e. develop sustainable practices and livelihood and welfare for all.**



## Challenges emerging:

How do state authorities omit response to local fisher organisations or court decisions concerning common law commitment?

How and why are coastal Arctic destroyed? How does the fish farm industry expand in spite of extreme fish and sea bird death? Is it a mistake of categories to compare fish farming with farming? How to understand “profitability» in agriculture and fish farming?

What is “use”, ”useable” or “sustainable” when the seabed under the fish pens smells barn?

My Sámi colleagues, like other Indigenous peoples, undress state extractivism of territories over and under sea level by using the excuse “green shift” year after year ...