



Dear readers,

Easter is behind us, the snow drifts are gently thawing, and the researchers at Mistra Arctic are fully occupied with their preparations for the forthcoming programme meeting in Ylläs, northern Finland. Unlike most of the other hotel guests in Ylläs, the researchers will be leaving their skis at home. On this trip, winter tourism is a research topic for analysis and evaluation rather than something to take part in.

A new item on the programme for Ylläs is the one-day conference that Finnish research colleagues will be attending. Since people interested in our work have been asking us to report on other significant research, we take the opportunity here to tell you a little about what some of our Finnish colleagues will be presenting at the conference.

GovAda – a sister project to Mistra Arctic

Senior Researcher Seija Tuulentie from the Natural Resources Institute Finland in Rovaniemi and Professor Jukka Similä of the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi will be presenting GovAda, a research project that has many parallels with Mistra Arctic. For example, multi-level governance is a key concept, as it is for Mistra Arctic. In 2013, Finland was ranked as the world's most favourable country for mining. But industry sectors dependent on an unspoilt landscape, known as 'green infrastructure', are also very important for the northernmost parts of Finland; these include tourism, forestry and reindeer husbandry. The aim of the GovAda project is to create models that make it easier to balance these interests against each other and that can promote sustainable economic development in the longer term. Just as in Work Package 3 at Mistra Arctic, the starting point for GovAda's research is a number of different scenarios (known as scenario methodology).

Another important method is geographical information systems (GIS), in which various scenarios are illustrated in the form of maps. The GovAda researchers are also looking into how legislation is equipped to better meet the requirements of sustainable development. A fourth research area is that of reconciliation: How do we best coordinate the interests of various stakeholders and perspectives in a conflict situation?

Adaptation and vulnerability of local communities in the face of climate change

Professor Hannu I Heikkinen of the University of Oulu bases his presentation on the political ecology of climate change. Political ecology is the name given to the area of research that studies the interaction between society and the natural environment. The main focus is on the distribution of natural resources. In political ecology, local and global perspectives are both important, but it is the local perspective that Heikkinen highlights in his presentation. Local players, municipalities and business people give their views on how they feel they are vulnerable to global warming and how they might be able to adapt their activities to new circumstances. Heikkinen concludes that it is important not to assume that global narratives about the impact of climate change on society are immediately applicable to local communities. Although the global perspective is important, it is mainly at the local level that examples of practical solutions for a sustainable future are found.

Environmental conditions in the Muonionjoki valley

Doctoral candidate Teresa Komu from the University of Oulu presents her PhD project on the subject of the competition for land use that arises when mineral deposits are exploited in reindeer grazing land. As an ethnologist, Teresa Komu is interested in looking at how the local population, and particularly representatives of reindeer husbandry, perceive the growing mining industry. What is the purpose of the mining industry? What arguments do they raise for and against? In previous research, the mining industry has mainly been discussed in terms of technology, economics and multi-level governance.

However, Teresa Komu's research shows that the local population often see the mining project as having a deeper significance. Aspects highlighted by her informants include values, local identity, power relationships, historical trends, and the relationship between people and the environment. Teresa Komu is particularly interested in the informants' perceptions and views of well-being and how these influence their various attitudes towards the mining industry. What does the local environmental struggle tell us about today's society and about its values and relationship to the environment?

Mining conflicts in Kolari

Mikko Jokinen, researcher at the Natural Resources Institute Finland and based in Kolari, describes his research into the mining conflicts in the Kolari area. Kolari municipality first became an industrial centre in the 1960s, when iron ore extraction and manufacture of concrete started through the Rautuvaara-Hannukainen projects. However, both these industries had fallen silent by the end of the 1980s, and were generally considered to be a closed chapter. This remained the situation up until 2007, when Northland Resources Inc. came up with plans to restart iron ore extraction in the disused Hannukainen mine. The plans for the mine were welcomed by Kolari municipality and were given particular support by middle-aged and older men who had themselves been involved in the previous industrial phase.

The discussions around the mining project were dominated by optimism, mutual understanding and the wish to see another upswing in the economy similar to that of the '60s and '70s. In 2013, the tone of the debate changed dramatically when tourism representatives in Ylläs highlighted the negative impact of the mine on tourism and the natural environment. People drew comparisons

with Talivaara, a mine in eastern Finland, which was struggling with serious financial and environmental problems, and which was featuring prominently in the public debate. Mikko Jokinen's research aims to explain what actually happened in 2013. How could there have been such a sudden change in local support for the Hannukainen mine?

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