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RECONSTRUCTING FOOD WAYS: ROLE OF SKOLT SAMI CULTURAL REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS IN LOCAL PLANT USE

Natalia Magnani[1]

Cultural programs, such as revitalization forums, support community goals of resilience, whether by conserving and recreating particular plant uses, or by fostering dynamic traditions marked by innovation and adoption of new wild food uses and ideologies. This paper explores the significance of traditional plant revitalization forums for the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö community, located in northern Finland in close proximity to Norwegian and Russian borders. Along with Finns and other Sami groups, this region comprises a significant Skolt Sami population present in the area since relocation from Petsamo (in particular Suenjel sijd) after World War II. The unique history of the region and past marginalization and assimilation pressures have stimulated current revitalization initiatives, which seek to celebrate Skolt Sami culture and revitalize traditional skills and knowledge, including food traditions. The study compares food tradition presentations during a summer cultural festival with ethnographic data on wild food use in Sevettijärvi-Näätämö. This comparison explores selection of knowledge for revitalization forums, and the potential impact of this selection on wild food use. Results show that the types of plant and fungi uses (in particular Inonotus obliquus and the inner bark of Pinus sylvestris) presented in revitalization forums reflect a blend of historical and recent nutritional influences. These plants and fungi may be well-known and recorded anthropologically or commercialized and commonly available. On the other hand, cultural programs focus on food traditions while excluding medicinal plants. Data on local plant use demonstrates that the degree to which revitalization forums impact plant use may depend on opportunities for acquiring skills through other avenues.

Keywords: *cultural revitalization, Scots pine inner bark, chaga mushroom, wild plants, consumption trends*

Tän artikklest mon tu'tǩkääm šââddai ä'rbbvuõđlaž âânnmõõžž Če'vetjääu'r-Njauddâm vuu'dest da tõn, mâi'd tän ä'rbbvuõđ jeälltumuš miârkkšââvv päi'ǩkoummid. Laa'ddi, vuä'rrjelsämmlai da aanrõõzzi lââ'ssen Aanar kåå'ddest jälste miâlggâd šurr joukk sää'm. Sij lie jälstam to'ben tõn rää'jest, ko sij nuu'bb maai'lmvääin mâŋŋa juvddu se'rdded tok Peäccmest da Suõ'nnj'lest. Tän saa'mi assimilaatio histoor diõtt ânn'jõžääi'j jeälltumuš lij tä'rǩ Sää'mvuu'd oummid, da sij reâugga-i jiânnai jeälltem diõtt sää'mkulttuur da ä'rbbvuõttsilttõõzzid, -teâđaid da -porrmõõžžid. Tän tu'tǩkõõzzâst mon ve'rddõõlam Sää'mkulttuurneä'ttel porrmõščuä'jtõõzzid meertiõđlaž datain luâttporrmõõžži pirr Če'vetjääu'r vuu'dest. Puåđõõzzin puätt ou'dde, što šââddai da kuõbbri âânnmõ'šše ânn'jõžääi'j kulttuurjeälltummšest (jeänmõsân čään da pie'33) lie vaaiktam määŋgnallšem ää'šš histoorâst da ânn'jõžääi'j tiõrvâsvuõttporrmõšjurddi še. Täk šââdd da kuõbbâr vuäi'tte lee'd puârast tobddum da antropologiast tu'tǩkuum. Tõk vuäi'tte lee'd še vuäžžamnalla kaaupâst. Takainalla kulttuurjeälltemprogramm in porrmõšä'rbbvuõtt lij tää'rǩab ko taalkâssšââdd. Jeälltumuš vaaikat še uu'ccab le'be jeänab šââddai âânnmõ'šše, ko jeälltemprogramm veäkka vuäitt mättjed ođđ silttõõzzid. Näu'ddem jeälltemprogramm vie'ǩkte seeilted kulttuur. Jeälltummšest vuäitt ju'n-a seeilted da raajjâd o'đđest vuä'mm šâddââ'nnemvuõ'jid, le'be kâ'dded jie'lli ä'rbbvuõđid, mõõk lie innovatiivla da vä'ldde âânnmõ'šše jå'ttlõnji ođđ šâddââ'nnemvuõ'jid da jurddjid.

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Introduction

The Sami of Finland officially entered the global indigenous people's movement in 1973 (Nyyssönen 2008). During that decade, local revitalization initiatives gained momentum. Revitalization is a well-discussed topic, particularly concerning the revival and maintenance of selected local activities, yet few studies have examined the potential influences of contemporary revitalization programs on plant knowledge and use. Anthony Wallace (1956:265) defined the term "revitalization" as a "deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture," including the revival of perceived traditional culture and knowledge. Among other cultural, economic, and political efforts, revitalization programs aim to strengthen the use of traditional foods, medical systems, and pharmacological plants (Gigoux and Samson 2009). Cultural festivals are recurring events in Finnish Lapland and in the Skolt Sami areas. They serve as vehicles of revitalization by demonstrating, engaging participation, and inspiring interest in various activities considered traditional. In the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö area, the goal of revitalization activities and festivals is to rebuild and present Skolt Sami knowledge, skills, and community identity.

Drawing upon ethnobotanical and anthropological fieldwork in the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö area of Finnish Lapland, I explore social and historical influences on the selection of plants for revitalization programs, and how forums like cultural festivals may contribute in shaping plant use within the community. For the purposes of the study, the word "plant" also includes fungi growing on plants. I discuss methods of collecting ethnographic data to examine sources of learning and life events linked to individuals' interactions, or lack thereof, with plant knowledge and use. These life narratives and participant-observation experiences suggest how social and historical processes popularize certain plant uses while restricting others, thereby impacting the selection of plants for revitalization forums. I then compare plant use information at cultural festivals to other avenues of skill acquisition (i.e., books, popular media, knowledge exchange in the community, and individual improvisation). Through this comparison I gauge the potential of presentations to affect acquisition of plant-based skills. It may be proposed that the success of revitalization efforts depends on availability and variability of avenues for the development of skills. Ethnobiological studies or community programs have the potential to contribute as unique vehicles in this process. I preface this research with a brief background of ethnobotanical research, revitalization movements, and relevant contemporary festivals in the Skolt Sami region.

Background

Previous Ethnobotanical Research in Skolt Sami Regions

Although the anthropological literature on Skolt Sami regions is extensive (Ingold 1976; Nickul1948; Pelto 1962), most of the primary ethnographies only briefly mention plant uses. These texts discuss gathering of *Rubus chamaemorus*, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea,* and *Vaccinium myrtillus* (Ingold 1976), moxibustion,

Figure 1. Peeling of inner bark of *P. sylvestris,* or *pettu*.

potentially referring to *Fomes fomentarius* (Nickul 1948), use of the inner bark of *Pinus sylvestris* (Tanner 1929), and a general list of Skolt Sami plants and healing treatments (Qvigstad 1901, 1932). However, there are some notable exceptions. Itkonen (1948) thoroughly discusses use of *Pinus sylvestris* inner bark and healing substances like *F. fomentarius,* and Kytölä (1999) also describes food traditions such as inner bark of *Pinus sylvestris* (known locally as *pettu*) and tea herbs such as *Inonotus obliquus,* a blackish fungal growth on *Betula* spp. (known locally as *pakurikääpä*). While past work primarily lists and documents plant uses in Skolt Sami areas, the aim of this study is to discuss current selection of specific plants for cultural forums and their role in shaping plant-based skills in the community.

The wild resources most often presented in cultural programs, namely *pettu* and *pakurikääpä,* are particularly well discussed in the regional literature (see Figures 1 and 2 for images of these species). While Finnish populations used *pettu* as famine food, research ties Sami collection of *P. sylvestris* inner bark to religious, ethical, and time-based values, health supporting fiber and mineral content, and potential for winter storage (Bergman et al. 2004; Rautio et al. 2013). For the Skolt Sami, *pettu* was enjoyed as part of a normal diet, particularly in porridge prepared with fish fat (Itkonen 1948). It has been documented as a gift brought to relatives living in areas without pine trees (Tanner 1929:124) and in the distant past even used to prevent scurvy (Tanner 1929). The majority of research on *pakurikääpä* focuses more on chemical aspects (Chen et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2006) than

Figure 2. *I. obliquus* or *pakurikääpä* growth.

ethnobotanical information (Kytölä 1999). *Pakurikääpä* is considered unique to Skolt Sami tea culture, developing from Russian influence in contrast to coffee preference among Fennoscandinavian neighbors. For example, families had a *samovar* (a Russian style tea kettle) to serve tea throughout the day (Kytölä 1999).

Origins of Revitalization Festivals in the Region

Cultural festivals provide an avenue for the achievement of goals associated with revitalization movements (Carvalho and Morales 2010; Müller and Pettersson 2006) and may involve revival of culture, food, and healthcare practices (Pilgrim et al. 2009 in Pilgrim et al. 2010). Often plant uses are presented as traditional food and combined with other focuses—as seen at events such as the annual Riddu Riđđu festival of indigenous art and culture (Leonenko 2008). Revitalization programs may also serve as opportunities to understand ideas of culture in ways benefiting the local community. This better understanding of culture has been discussed as a potential "liberating medium" in the attainment of Sami rights and resistance against a dominating power structure (Tuulentie 1999).

Following the Finnish acquisition of the Petsamo area, nascent attempts to revive threatened customs and language were headed by researchers in the Society for the Protection of Lappish Culture (Pelto and Mosnikoff 1978). These efforts occurred during a climate of general racist attitudes, unspoken Finnicization developments, and damage to livelihoods (Lehtola 1999 in Nyyssönen 2007;

Nyyssönen 2009). In fact, even promotion of the idea of "equal citizenship" within the Finnish state has been problematic for the achievement of special Sami rights (Nyyssönen 2011; Tuulentie 2003).

For the Skolt Sami community, which has suffered as a minority within a minority among other Sami groups and Finns, current revitalization efforts demonstrate resilience following marginalization. When Skolt Sami inhabited territories were ceded to the Soviet Union after World War II, people were relocated to new areas in Finland (from Suenjel sijd to Sevettijärvi, Petsamo sijd to Nellim, and Paatsjoki sijd to Keväjärvi). In these areas, they were faced with a new environment and social situation. A period of assimilation and discrimination, particularly within the Finnish school system, led to a decline in those activities valued as local traditions (Hill 1960). Meanwhile, the building of a road connecting the village to stores and hospitals began in the late 1960s, further reducing necessity for the collection of food and medicine resources from the wild. Traditional medical practices were scarcely recorded from 1965 to 1970 (Pelto and Mosnikoff 1978). A countermovement of revitalization efforts in the 1970s sought to reclaim perceived losses. In contrast to organizations like the Society for Protection of Lappish Culture, the new movement was led by the community itself, emphasizing its own perspectives and goals.

Present-day Sami Cultural Festivals

The Skolt Sámi Cultural Foundation in Sevettijärvi, often in collaboration with the Sámi Education Institute (SAKK) based in Inari, organizes cultural festivals and workshops for people in the Skolt Sami areas of Sevettijärvi, Nellim, and Keväjärvi. The population of Sevettijärvi-Näätämö is also home to migrants from other parts of Finland, and those who identify with Inari and North Sami heritage, all of whom belong to the wider Sevettijärvi-Näätämö community and attend its festivals and workshops. Cultural festivals gather people for multiple days to partake in traditional skill, livelihood, and handicraft workshops and demonstrations, song, dance, storytelling, and food presentations. Meanwhile, the events provide a context for presentation and interaction in the Skolt Sami language.

According to its public website (http://www.kolttasaamelaiset.fi/index.php), the Skolt Sámi Cultural Foundation seeks to "maintain and revive Skolt Sami language and culture." Conversations with community members reiterated these aims, emphasizing the desire to bring people back to the community and maintain traditional activities like handicrafts as viable economic options. In fact, the Foundation hopes to reproduce the positive trends of Inari and Keväjärvi, where young families are finding employment in Sami cultural initiatives.

Methodology

This case study of plant use among the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö community includes research in the area stretching from Nitsijärvi to Näätämö in East Finland (the village center of Sevettijärvi is at 69°52′N, 28°63′E see Figure 3). Of course, the social community extends beyond the official geographical delineation, and

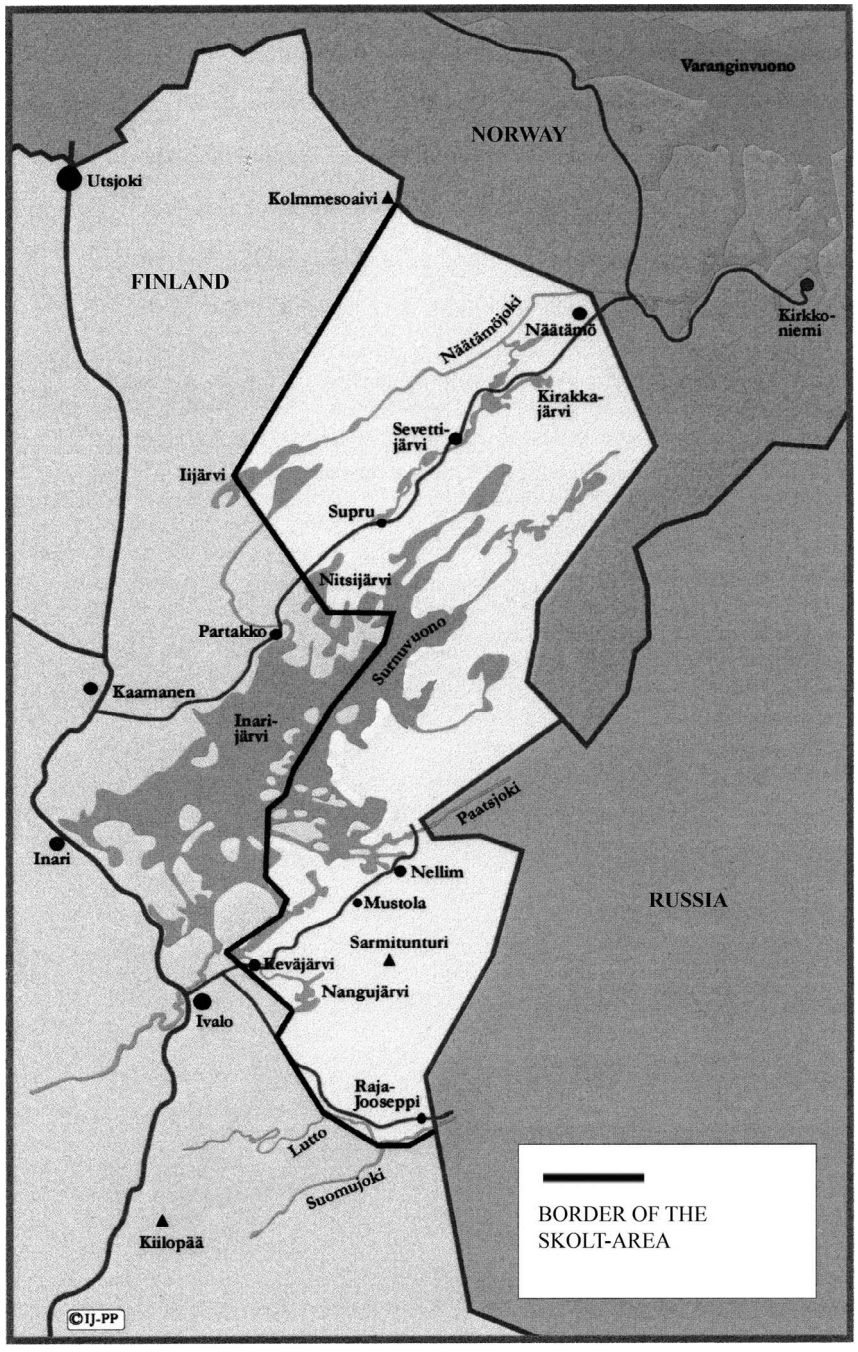

Figure 3. Map of the official "Skolt Border Area." This includes the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö and Nellim-Keväjärvi communities. The area is subject to "Skolt Law" in Inari municipality, aimed at the maintenance and promotion of Skolt Sami culture. Source: Adapted from map created by Irja Jefremoff.

therefore the study includes participants from a wider area than Sevettijärvi-Näätämö. For example, families living in Partakko southwest of Nitsijärvi may send children to the Sevettijärvi school and equally participate in community life. Relatives living in Inari, Ivalo, Nellim, and Keväjärvi routinely stay in Sevettijärvi-Näätämö and attend its events. I collected anthropological and ethnobotanical data in the area during fieldwork from July 2014 to July 2015.

The study aims to examine 1) social and historical influences in the selection of plants for cultural festivals, and 2) the potential role of cultural festivals in local plant use. In order to explore these phenomena, I collaborated with 37 individuals aged 25 to 85 in Sevettijärvi-Näätämö and the larger Skolt Sami community. The data include open-ended interviews, informal discussions, and participant-observation interactions, particularly plant-collection trips during which we discussed, collected, and identified plants. For each interaction I obtained written or oral consent as appropriate, based on prior approved methods by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of Cambridge. Approximately two-thirds of collaborators were women due to the local gender bias of plant collection and greater willingness among women to discuss plant-related knowledge. However, I was able to form a clearer picture of wider community attitudes and values across demographics through daily participation in community life.

Questions surveyed personal use of local plants and fungi while delving deeper into life history experiences of acquiring plant-based skills in the environment. I asked individuals about plant-use in childhood and adulthood, how they learned these skills, the role of ideas of tradition and more recent nutrition trends in daily life. I also asked individuals to describe any other life experiences, thoughts, or ideas they considered important. Results delve into plant use experiences and the motivations of this use (i.e., nutritional values, cultural identity, values of "tradition"), sources of learning, and plant-based experience during childhood and adulthood, and, in other cases, absence or rejection of wild plant collection and use. In this way the narratives illuminate various influences on the acquisition of plant use skills.

I then compared this information with data from observation and participation in public presentations. These presentations took place during the *Kolttakulttuuriviikko* or Skolt Sami Culture Week, a three-day event taking place in August 2014 in Sevettijärvi, and organized by the Skolt Sámi Cultural Foundation. Video footage of Skolt Sami Culture Week events allowed later review and analysis of demonstrations (*I. obliquus* and inner bark of *P. sylvestris*). Results of the study therefore comprise an overview and comparison of ethnobotanical and life-history data with food tradition presentations at the Skolt Sami Culture Week. The event was the only public cultural forum specifically displaying use of wild plants in Sevettijärvi-Näätämö from July 2014 to July 2015. The scope of this article does not investigate some private Skolt Sami food courses (which sometimes present berry additions to meat and fish), and Sámi Education Institute (SAKK) courses on food traditions, which may involve some teaching of *pakurikääpä*, *pettu*, and tea herbs accompanying primary presentation of bread, fish, and meat. The latter courses provide another avenue in the development of wild food knowledge but are only open to registered participants, have small class size, and therefore less impact on plant-use than public

revitalization festivals. It was not possible to attend these private teachings, but a study of cultural festival presentations may inform processes in similar courses. As in the Skolt Sami Culture Week, private forums primarily present use of *pakurikääpä* and *pettu* when teaching about local plant resources.

Results are divided between description of wild food presentations at the Skolt Sami Culture Week and ethnobotanical and life-history data surrounding plants selected for or excluded from cultural forums. The plants discussed are not all plants that people use or have used, but instead are represented by several with potential for inclusion in cultural forums (meaning plants to which local people ascribe particular cultural value).

The study analyzes all data by comparing plant-focused individual narratives and publically presented plant uses. The comparison yields insight into underlying social and historical processes, as well as the potential influences of revitalization efforts in shaping current plant-use. Personal narratives surrounding plant-use offered possible explanations for why some plants may be selected for cultural events over others. Furthermore, comparison of individual plant uses and learning experiences, and those uses presented in public forums, demonstrates the potential role of cultural events as avenues for development of plant-based skills in the community. Levels of overlap between public presentations and personal plant-use, as well as availability of other avenues of plant-based experiences, may indicate the strength of such forums in fostering specific sets of skills.

Regarding terminology, I refer to the "older" generation as those approximately 60 and over, growing up before improved roads and greater access to stores began in the 1960s and improved with a paved road in the 1980s. Those of the "younger" generation roughly refers to those under 40, many of whom lead or participate in current revitalization activities. This gap exists because of a "middle generation" who are considered to comprise the smallest demographic of general revitalization efforts.

Throughout the article I discuss "health" and "nutrition" trends. Health in this context refers to ideologies regarding general physical well-being and use of plants to treat particular pain or illness. On the other hand, nutrition refers to consumption-based well-being based on the "nutrient" content of food. Nutrients include such terms as vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Because these processes are often connected, I sometimes combine "health" and "nutrition" to describe influences on plant use.

Results

The Skolt Sami Culture Week

The three-day Skolt Sami Culture Week program involved the presentation of traditional Skolt Sami livelihoods, skills, handicrafts, stories, songs, and food traditions. Participant and audience members included all ages, from local school children to older community members, relatives from other areas (especially Skolt Sami areas like Nellim and Keväjärvi), visitors, and media personnel. Food presentations comprised the baking of bread in an outdoor oven and the making of *kurnikka*, a type of fish pie. Another presentation centered on wild food preparations

in the use of inner bark of *P. sylvestris* (*pettu*) and *I. obliquus* (*pakurikääpä*). These ethnobotanical presentations complemented the general cultural program.

The following description of the *pettu* and *pakurikääpä* presentations provides a source of comparison to ethnobotanical data on local plant-use. The presenter, an older woman in the community, describes the collection, preparation, specific tools, and unique use of the species in Skolt Sami culture. The inner bark layer of *P. sylvestris* is collected during *nila-aika,* the time (*aika)* when outer and inner bark (*nila*) may be removed easily. Then it is dried and roasted to remove resin, ground into a flour, and prepared into porridge fixed with fish fat and added to rye flour. The presenter emphasizes that unlike its use as famine food in surrounding Finnish culture, the Skolt Sami ate the porridge as a nourishing food several times a week. The resource was akin to "Skolt Sami vegetables," which kept the older generation healthy. The presenter then discusses the use of *pakurikääpä* by the Skolt Sami, particularly its use during forest activities away from the village if tea was not available. She also highlights the current trend in *pakurikääpä* use and administration for almost any ailment, but emphasizes that nevertheless it represents an old Skolt Sami use of wild resources. There were small samples of *pakurikääpä* tea known as *pakkulatee,* tasting of roasted *pettu* pieces, displays of *pettu* collection and preparation instruments, and jars containing either ground *pakurikääpä, pakurikääpä* pieces, ground *pettu*, or *pettu* pieces.

It is important to note that the presenter acknowledges both *pakurikääpä* and *pettu* for their health properties, albeit generally. She instead places emphasis on the very "traditional" Skolt Sami uses of the plants, discussing livelihoods in the forest for *pakurikääpä* and porridge preparation for *pettu.* The festival does not present any plants strictly as medicinal, and the presenter even assures the safety of tasting roasted *pettu* pieces.

Data on Plant Use Experiences Surrounding Selected Plants for Cultural Forums

Pettu and Pakurikääpä

During childhood, individuals describe collecting and preparing the inner bark of *P. sylvestris,* constituting more variable uses and preparations of *pettu* than presented in cultural forums. Children generally collected with their mothers or grandmothers. They scraped off the outer bark layer, peeled the inner bark layer from the tree, and eventually ground the *pettu* into flour. Individuals dried and roasted this layer to remove resin before mixing with fish, goose, or meat broth and adding to rye flour. They ate the porridge with fish fat poured in the center. This was a frequent meal considered nourishing but at the time not described in terms of nutrient content. Every family had different recipes and uses of *pettu*. While *pettu* porridge has become known as a unique Skolt Sami tradition, some families also made bread or added *pettu* to soup.

Consistent local accounts describe a decline in the use of *pettu* after relocation from the more isolated Suenjel sijd. The new area had small stores (which were still far for some, depending on location), but after improved roads beginning in the late 1960s, even greater access to stores meant accessible flour and grains. People also describe the thinner, tougher, and more curved *P. sylvestris* of the farther north environment as less favorable for *pettu* collection. Furthermore, the forest

governing body, *Metsähallitus,* demanded that *P. sylvestris* trees be cut down before *pettu* harvesting, forbidding taking *pettu* from live trees as had been done in the past. These social, political, and environmental factors combined to discourage engagement with the environment for the procurement of food resources.

However, individuals have developed renewed interest in *pettu* as both a vitamin rich food and important cultural tradition. This has stimulated some new motivations and uses of *pettu*. For example, older individuals (one elderly couple in particular), who in childhood commonly ate *pettu* porridge, now add a spoonful of this mixture as a healthy additive to other porridge grains like oatmeal, citing vitamin C and other nutrient content. Some younger individuals have received instruction or collected *pettu* with older members of the community and made *pettu* porridge. Others have only heard about the preparation and intend to collect and prepare the inner bark in future years. There is proposition to experiment with *pettu* dishes and cater to mainstream interest in "local" food. In the community, there are only several people who collect regularly, but many have tried or harvested *pettu* since renewed attention.

Possibilities to acquire experience in harvesting *pettu* are limited to several avenues. People seek information from books, museums, cultural forums, and others in the community (including the teacher of *pettu* at the Skolt Sami Culture Week and other women renowned for their traditional knowledge). Because of the particular skill and knowledge intensive nature of *pettu* collection and preparation, people rarely harvest the inner bark of *P. sylvestris* through personal experimentation without prior instruction and experience. Therefore, fewer opportunities for acquisition of *pettu* collection and preparation skills make revitalization forums a primary vehicle for engagement.

It is not only the younger generation who seeks to acquire plant-based skills and knowledge, but equally to those of the older generation who are said to have "forgotten" and cannot clearly remember *pettu* collection from childhood. I participated in a private *pettu* collection workshop, during which the teacher (the same from the Skolt Sami Culture Week) instructed two other adults her age and me in the collection and preparation of *pettu.* We cut down *P. sylvestris,* removed the outer bark, peeled off the inner bark, and then left the pieces to dry. We then practiced on already roasted *pettu,* crushing it into flour on reindeer skin with tools replicated from older models. This demonstration followed the information given in the oral lecture at the Skolt Sami Culture Week. It is important to note that the instructor is one of the few in the Skolt Sami community who regularly collects and prepares *pettu,* and therefore is able to teach others through direct demonstration rather than oral memory-based narrative.

Regarding *pakurikääpä*, interviews and discussions revealed childhood use primarily as a tea substitute but also some health uses. Just as with *pettu, pakurikääpä* use is more widely recounted from the childhood memories of the older generation than the younger generation. An older woman growing up in Sevettijärvi after post-war relocation explains that people in the past were upset when they ran out of store-bought tea and were forced to "eat birch bark again." Women usually collected wild food resources, but men prepared *pakurikääpä* during forest-based activities when store-bought tea was not available. *Pakurikääpä* was also a remedy for various ailments such as cold, flu, headache, and stomach problems.

Like the information at the cultural festival, interview and discussion data emphasized use of *pakurikääpä* due to significance in Skolt Sami tea culture, but with the addition of many more diverse influences from books, research studies, news stories of health and cancer fighting properties (Luhta 2013), and personal experimentation. People describe the past several years, when *pakurikääpä* became highly popularized and commercialized, and many started either collecting from the forest or buying as an herbal product. *I. obliquus* is sold in Ivalo at the natural products store, in the form of ground tea, tea bags, or concentrated droplets. Those who in the past used to drink *pakurikääpä* only as a tea substitute have found renewed meaning in drinking the tea. The same woman who once lamented about "eating birch bark" now keeps a concentrate of *pakurikääpä* in the refrigerator, to combine with hot water or add as a healthy addition to better-tasting black tea. She makes optimal use of popularized health properties by grinding *pakurikääpä* to add to porridge. Her husband says proudly, "I feel like a Skolt Sami when I drink *pakurikääpä.*" The younger generation (particularly women) expresses the importance of traditional knowledge, but also the valuable health benefits of using *pakurikääpä* (for example as an energy-giving substance, cold remedy, and general health aid). Aside from exchanging between friends and family, individuals also prepare the tea for older relatives to "keep them healthy."

Many people are connecting to their environment in new ways. Older individuals, primarily women, who drank the tea but were not interested in collecting themselves during childhood, are today inquiring how to prepare *pakurikääpä.* They now notice it as a valuable resource from the trees instead of a tea replacement. Likewise, younger individuals are recognizing the growth on *Betula* spp. as a usable substance, and inquiring from others, especially respected older "knowledge holders," about identification and use. Meanwhile, some who moved to the community from southern Finland and abroad say that it was not until they moved to the area that they began using *pakurikääpä.* A move to a new environment fosters a willingness to learn about the new surroundings, particularly as many recreational activities include time outside hiking and fishing. In response, people consult books, the internet, and other members of the community about local edible resources.

Methods of preparing *pakurikääpä* vary between individuals. Harvesting of *pakurikääpä* is more amenable to personal experimentation—it does not require the same level of prior experience as *pettu* collection. Anybody can collect *I. obliquus*, and instructions exist from many sources and can easily be improvised. Some make *pakurikääpä* grounds, add to water, and bring to a boil. Others break the fungus into smaller pieces and add to water after it has boiled. The infusion may be prepared to drink immediately or a concentrate may be stored in the refrigerator to dilute with hot water.

While there are individuals across generations who have actively learned to use *pettu* and *pakurikääpä,* there are many who have not. For older individuals and those of the middle generation who used *pakurikääpä* only as a tea substitute, the ideology of the "birch-bark, poor man's substitute" is still present. Many of these individuals prefer store-bought items to wild ingredients referring to *pettu* as time-intensive and *pakurikääpä* as inferior in taste. "It is not something you want to drink everyday," one man says. Even among those who use local plants,

Table 1. Selected plants of cultural significance for the Skolt Sami community.

Botanical name	Local name	Uses	Presentation in cultural festivals
Fomes fomentarius	Finnish, *taulakääpä;* Skolt Sami, niiusikčäänn	Pain in various areas of the body, particularly teeth, ears, and back	no
Inonotus obliquus	Finnish, *pakurikääpä*	Tea, cold, flu, stomach-ache, headache, energy, general health	yes
Pinus sylvestris	Finnish, *pettu* (inner bark); Skolt Sami, *pie'ʒʒ*	Porridge preparation or additive, soup thickener, bread, general health	yes
Rhododendron tomentosum	Finnish, *suopursu;* Skolt Sami, *olžvuei'vv*	Soreness (i.e., feet, back, hands), rheumatism, cold or flu	no

the use is spontaneous rather than regular. Individuals cite time as the primary limiting factor. Those who did not harvest and prepare wild foods from a young age must invest time in developing these skills. Even for those who have already learned, the current lifestyle, not based on subsistence activities, precludes frequent collection of these resources.

Data on Plant Use Experiences Surrounding Plants not Selected for Cultural Forums

While many local plants are not presented in cultural festivals, the ones discussed for the purposes of this article are those with perceived cultural value for potential selection in cultural forums. Data revealed medicinal plants of such cultural significance, all of which were excluded from revitalization forums in favor of food tradition presentations (Table 1). Narratives surrounding these plants are enumerated below.

Culturally-valued "older" uses of particular medicinal plants are often replaced today by simpler preparations. Therefore, those asked to present plant traditions may not have enough personal experience with the "older," more medicinally powerful, and multi-step uses to confidently present them in cultural forums. *Rhododendron tomentosum,* used to treat inflammation or pain (particularly back, feet, and hands), as well as cold or flu, is described by individuals as "poisonous," only to be used if absolutely sure of identification and method of preparation. Most common present-day uses include aromatherapy and foot bath for soreness and circulation in the sauna. However, individuals also describe more technique-specific topical use for aches and rheumatism following preparation in boiling water, as well as hot infusion to treat cold or flu (using very low concentrations of the substance due to potency). Women are more likely than men to revive and experiment with uses of local medicinal plants. People generally do not use *R. tomentosum* for serious medical treatment; many instead go to the health center in Sevettijärvi or Ivalo for prescription medication. Life-history narratives describe that the relocation from Suenjel to Sevettijärvi favored doctors and pharmaceuticals over local remedies. Therefore, there may be a shortage of presenters for medicinal plant remedies considered unique to the older generation.

Fomes fomentarius, or *taulakääpä*, constitutes what is considered special cultural knowledge only to be used with the instruction of "those who know," mainly older women. *F. fomentarius* is a fungus growing on various trees—in the region particularly on *Betula* spp. It is burned on the skin at specific points in order to remove pain in areas such as the back, ears, or teeth, and on rare occasions it has been used to treat mental ailments such as depression. In the past only those trained in this particular healing technique administered the treatment. However, the last people with such skills have died. Individuals across generations state that relearning from ethnographic or community accounts cannot replace direct learning from an experienced "knowledge holder."

According to life history narratives, the demise of the *taulakääpä* treatment is part of a larger story of marginalization and subsequent "forgetting." The younger generation laments a time when "the Skolt Sami wanted to be Finnish." Following revitalization and rights initiatives in the 1970s, ambiguity surrounding traditional knowledge for the Sami in Finland shifted from discourses of assimilation to empowerment. As one older woman in the community explains, it is important for the Skolt Sami to have "something of their own," because so much has already been taken.

To cross-check results from ethnobotanical and life-history data, I asked the presenter of *pettu* and *pakurikääpä* at the Skolt Sami Culture Week to answer questions regarding motivations for selection of plants at cultural forums. I asked why she does not present medicinal plants such as *R. tomentosum*. She responded that in order to teach about specific plant use, she must have personal experience and "exact knowledge," which she does not feel she has with resources like *R. tomentosum* or *taulakääpä.* There are social factors and restrictions in claiming to "know." Although there are people who have experience using *R. tomentosum* in the "traditional" ways, there is general hesitance to claim expertise without definite certainty; more accepted and modest methods of exchange occur through group activity or dialogue.

Discussion

The choice of *I. obliquus* and inner bark of *P. sylvestris* at the Skolt Sami culture week reveal the merging of the region's unique history and social movements with larger consumption patterns in Finland. Meanwhile, revitalization programs can, in many ways, selectively preserve some aspects of traditional plant use while excluding others, thereby shaping the current knowledge and use of plants within the local community. Within festivals, courses, and workshops, a general focus exists on food ways instead of medicinal plants, and some of the presented plants have greater presence in trends of natural products and wild foods. Comparison of food tradition presentations and ethnographic data on plant use demonstrates that wider social patterns may help to popularize food and medicinal plants at the local level, strengthening their role in discourses of tradition. Possibility for personal experimentation with the environment further enhances opportunity for acquisition of plant use skills. But for plant uses requiring particular skill and regionally-unique preparation, cultural forums become the primary vehicles of adoption of plant-based skills, recreated from ethnographic accounts and oral histories of the older generation (Table 2).

Table 2. Potential influences on plant use for selected plants.

Botanical name	Local name	Potential influences on plant use
Fomes fomentarius	Finnish, *taulakääpä;* Skolt Sami, *niiusikčäänn*	Current absence of use
Inonotus obliquus	Finnish, *pakurikääpä*	Books, internet, and other media, health trends, commercialization, friends and family, personal improvisation, cultural forums
Pinus sylvestris	Finnish, *pettu* (inner bark); Skolt Sami, *pie'ʒʒ*	Books and other ethnographic media, nutrition trends, friends and family, limited personal improvisation, cultural forums
Rhododendron tomentosum	Finnish, *suopursu;* Skolt Sami, *olžvuei'v*	Books, internet, and other media, health trends, friends and family, personal improvisation

Selection for Revitalization Forums

Motivations in the personal uses of *pettu* and *pakurikääpä* reflect potential social and historical factors in the selection of plants for revitalization in public forums. Individual use of *I. obliquus* reveals influences of commercialization, health ideologies, and cultural values. Wider consumption ideologies in Finnish Lapland therefore also influence local revitalization of *pakurikääpä* and its inclusion in cultural forums, as demonstrated by cultural forums' advertisement of both health benefits and traditional use of *pakurikääpä* in tea. Nevertheless, the unique significance in tea culture and nature-based activities is stressed. It may be proposed that motivations in individual plant-use affect motivations for presentation at cultural festivals. Health trends serve to bolster the revitalization of particular uses, influencing cultural initiatives and raising the status of *pakurikääpä* from a birch bark tea substitute to a traditional health drink.

Likewise with *pettu,* individuals are reinventing use of the inner bark in order to recapture knowledge of a nutritious resource and culturally important tradition. According to residents in the community, use of the inner bark constitutes important Skolt Sami traditional knowledge of a local resource. While those of the older generation simply refer to *pettu* porridge as a nutritious food, they also rename these general benefits in the context of recent research on carbohydrates, micronutrients, B1, B2, and C vitamin content as incentive to use the inner bark (Kytölä 1999). These discourses may equally influence cultural festivals, as health discussions were present at the Skolt Sami Culture Week. Although other uses of *P. sylvestris* exist in the form of pine resin to treat cuts and toothache, and the inhalation of tar from *P. sylvestris* to treat cold, it is the more marked distinctions of *pettu* for every-day use compared to surrounding cultures' famine-based use that constitute selection and discourse in public demonstration narratives. Presented uses do not reflect all those described in ethnobotanical accounts but instead those uses of local people and written accounts which are most distinct from surrounding cultures (i.e., *pettu* porridge). Presentation of *pettu* in revitalization forums fuels renewed interest in those plant uses considered unique to Skolt Sami culture, meanwhile reinventing past nutritional values within current nutrient-specific health ideologies. In this way, wider consumption ideologies not only affect local plant use, but may be used to incentivize specific uses of *pettu* connected to cultural revitalization goals.

The role of cultural festivals appears to be greater in the transmission of *pettu* use than *pakurikääpä* use. Individual use and revitalization of *pettu* follows more exactly the methods of preparation at the Skolt Sami Culture Week, while *pakurikääpä* use and preparation is highly variable. An explanation for these phenomena is *pakurikääpä's* presence and *pettu's* absence in wider commercial trends, as well as higher skill demands in *pettu* collection and preparation. Unlike *pakurikääpä*, *pettu* is generally not sold in stores. Skills must be developed with the help of others, especially as skill requirements prevent spontaneous experimentation. Variation in *pettu* use is less likely to occur because there are not many who use *pettu* regularly, experimenting and adapting uses to personal experience. Influences on *pettu* use are therefore more limited to historical sources, private instruction from the older generation, and venues like the Skolt Sami Culture Week. The cultural festival recreates skills from a particular point in time and place. This is different from the process described as LTK, in which continuity of skills actually occurs through improvisation and engagement with the environment whereby people "remember as they go along" (Ingold and Kurttila 2000). Of course when many no longer collect *pettu,* few avenues for learning remain beyond the somewhat discontinuous teaching of plant-use from particular points in time instead of a spectrum of *pettu* uses from different families. Cultural festivals are nevertheless empowering sources of knowledge for the community, a connection to a past before marginalization and other disruptive pressures.

On the other hand, use of *pakurikääpä* is discussed in countless media and commercial forums and is more amenable to personal experimentation with the environment, so that cultural festivals constitute only a fraction of available skill-acquisition potential. *Pakurikääpä* preparation is less knowledge- and time-intensive than *pettu,* and therefore variation in use may also arise from greater opportunity for improvisation. It is possible to prepare *pakurikääpä* even without instruction. Boiling time and size of *pakurikääpä* pieces may vary without detriment to the final product, while *pettu* may easily lose palatability if prepared improperly. "Imitation and improvisation" are key processes in continuity of skills and active engagement with the environment (Ingold and Kurttila 2000). It appears that the level of engagement with the environment in the Sevettijärvi community is substantial for the development of skills in the use of *pakurikääpä* more than the use of *pettu.* The transmission of *pakurikääpä* use may occur through "imitation" from friends, family, and media sources, and "improvisation" from personal experience with local surroundings. In this way, uses of *pakurikääpä* reflect traditional food ways which are not stable, but instead dynamic and constantly being renegotiated.

Exclusion from Revitalization Forums

Pakurikääpä and *pettu* were presented as components of local food culture at the Skolt Sami Culture Week, while medicinal plants considered culturally valuable were excluded. Interview and other ethnographic data suggest that particular life-events have influenced individuals' medicinal plant use so that it is not always possible to find appropriate presenters, especially for those uses considered older and therefore more culturally significant. Furthermore, restrictions preclude experimentation and improvisation of particularly valued skills.

Discourses of "forgetting" refer to larger historical and social processes. While better roads gradually eased access to stores and other institutions beginning in the 1960s, there was a wider process of assimilation in response to oppression and attitudes after relocation (Ingold 1976; Lehtola 2004). The practices that most marked difference, in this way clashing with assimilation pressures, were less favored to be taught to, or adapted by, subsequent generations. This accompanied, and perhaps influenced, a general disengagement from the environment, where decreased need and value in the collection of wild food resources impacted acquisition of plant-based skills. However, cultural elements (i.e., language) that were once marginalized in a subtle, integrative manner (Nyyssönen 2011), have become sources of pride and symbols of identity, sometimes more powerful when kept private rather than public. Medicinal plant knowledge may strengthen the community when regarded in a similar fashion, transmitted privately as cultural knowledge and as "something of their [the community's] own". In this way, activities may be recreated in a new social context, and the community empowered in selecting which plants and uses to reclaim.

Although individuals experiment with *R. tomentosum* (in sauna foot bath with other local herbs), there are fewer today using the plant in ways considered particular to the culture. These uses (i.e., use of *R. tomentosum* as a poultice for various aches) constitute childhood experiences of the older generation, often recalled from memory rather than present-day experience. As such, those enlisted to present plant traditions often feel more comfortable presenting food rather than medicine-based plant uses.

Furthermore, there are social restrictions in claiming knowledge on a subject, particularly without personal experience in what is perceived as correct knowledge. In this way, revitalization forums support use of consumption-safe plants based on direct experience of presenters.

Use, and therefore public presentation, of *taulakääpä* is restricted according to skill and social role. It is not suggested to experiment with *taulakääpä* collection and treatment without direct instruction. Accounts from ethnographic literature or older people in the community are not sufficient to ensure safety. Unfortunately, there is nobody today in the community to provide this direct teaching of the healing technique. The easy access of doctors and medicine is a facet of the environment that cannot be overlooked. The "environment" may therefore refer not only to natural surroundings, but also institutions. People generally prefer easily accessible resources (i.e., pharmaceuticals, doctors) to time and knowledge demanding collection and preparation of nature-based resources. Without life-long experience, the time and effort required to learn medicinal skills becomes an added obstacle in revitalization. Consequently, there is currently nobody in the community considered to have the proper training to conduct or publicly present *taulakääpä* treatment.

Meanwhile, uses of other medicinal plants, such as *R. tomentosum,* are fostered by knowledge exchange in the community, wider media, and personal experience with local plants. The absence of medicinal plant use in revitalization forums may diminish occurrences of such skill acquisition, which otherwise has the potential to thrive like the use of *I. obliquus*.

Conclusions

Revitalization festivals and workshops in the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö area form an important avenue for local people to maintain and revive selected knowledge and skills, with the greater aim of ensuring a thriving community for future generations. Recent nutrition ideologies merge with plant use considered dietary practice, as in the case of *pettu,* while popular products such as *pakurikääpä* grow in cultural meaning.

Further Implications for Plant Use

The information presented at cultural programs comes in part from conversations with people in the community, but also local and anthropological literature (Itkonen 1948; Kytölä 1999), popular herbal books, magazines and websites, and museums. However, all sources contribute their own perspective in the information they present, and so the subsequent presentation from popular texts encourages innovation in plant use, while conversely the presentation of information from literature and memories of the older generation encourages a conservation that otherwise would not exist (Leonti 2011). The resulting demonstrations and presentations invariably become mixtures of conservation and innovation, encouraging the revival of older uses (such as the more past-oriented discussion of *pettu*), while stimulating experimentation (such as with *pakurikääpä* and its popularized health uses). At the same time, the absence of medicinal plants (even if by choice) eliminates cultural festivals as avenues for medicinal knowledge transmission, making other vehicles of plant skill development (stimulated through personal initiative) essential within the community.

Formal and organized events teach specific plant knowledge and use, to be expanded on through experience in the community and the local environment. Traditional research on transmission states that passage of biological knowledge occurs primarily through vertical, genealogical transmission (Hewlett and Cavalli-Sforza 1986; Lozada et al. 2006). According to this model, festival demonstrations fall under the category of alternative one-to-many, teacher-to-audience, oblique transmission, constituting higher acceptance of innovation and very rapid cultural change (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman 1981). The transmission of traditional skills and knowledge at festivals only reaches the second observation level (Ruddle and Chesterfield 1977). Therefore, subsequent learning is left to the experimentation and interpretation of participants. In the Sevettijärvi-Näätämö community, younger people who learn and practice wild food preparation do so from a later age, stimulated by personal interest and initiative—a pattern of delayed transmission that has been discussed as problematic for optimal passing on of skills (Ohmagari and Berkes 1997). These theories leave unclear how culture festival participants do in fact develop skills past the levels where they are presupposed to have ended. An alternate or expanding view argues that treating knowledge as a substance to be transmitted is incomplete—instead it is an active engagement with the environment, influenced by activities of others, that shapes development of skills (Ingold and Kurttila 2000). This active engagement involves experimentation, which is necessary for development of skills whether or not revitalization festivals provide an impetus.

In addition to the formal teaching of plant use through cultural programs, there is an accompanying non-public exchange occurring through people, written sources, and personal interactions with the environment. Cultural programs have the potential to stimulate these interactions and exchanges of plant knowledge and use. Information may be sought from books (often either local publications or ethnographies in the Finnish language), museum exhibitions (usually lacking depth and breadth on the topic of medicinal plants), the internet and plant books (often not containing culturally or regionally specific information), exchange with friends and family, and improvisation of plant-based skills that combine with other sources of transmission. It is common for younger people to request specific advice, information, or teaching from those of the older generation who grew up collecting in the environment, and then experiment and innovate with slightly varied uses. In this way, a private sphere of skill development exists beyond the public forum of cultural festivals and workshops. Top-down cultural events are powerful tools for promoting plant use and experience already occurring in the community; specific food ways receive this stimulation, while medicinal plant skills must be acquired through other processes. It would be valuable to create more vehicles for development of plant-based skills in the community. Collaboration between communities and ethnobotanists is an option for organizing more avenues of direct, participatory learning.

Revitalization programs are less about reviving all local plant uses and more about selectively promoting certain practices, and in many ways, illustrate how what we conceive of as "traditional" is often dynamic and negotiated. There may exist a bottleneck of knowledge transmitted on both food ways and medicinal plants due to selection of particular species and uses. However, as members of the community decide which practices and narratives are most valuable for revitalization efforts, the forum becomes a powerful avenue for community resilience regardless of potential bottleneck effects. Participants at cultural festivals decide how to imitate and improvise presented knowledge in their local environment, in this way fostering living experiences of plant use.

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