

Dreams and extractive industries in northern Fennoscandia

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Project: Understanding the Cultural Impacts and Issues of Lapland Mining: A Long-Term Perspective on Sustainable Mining Policies in the North

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Based on ongoing dissertation research

Case study of the planned re-opening of the Hannukainen mine in the municipality of Kolari, Finland

Main material, collected in 2015:

Stakeholder interviews among reindeer herders, mining company representatives, tourism entrepreneurs and municipal office-holders

Short timeline:

- Northland Resources S.A. began planning the re-opening of the old Hannukainen mine in Kolari, in 2006.
- Environmental Impact Assessment completed in 2014.
- Shortly afterward, the company declared bankruptcy and the plans regarding the mine are buried.
- Talks of re-opening the Hannukainen mine by a Finnish company, Hannukainen Mining re-emerge in 2015.

Argument:

Mining predominantly treated as a 'rational' space

Dreams, of prosperity and of a better future, have a prominent place in mining

Existence of a recurring phenomenon of mining projects generating disproportionate excitement and expectations

Among communities from different geographical locations and cultural backgrounds

Throughout history in northern Fennoscandia, since 17th century

Reasons:

- Influence of the Western development ideology
- Supported by the mining industry's operation model
- Mines and metals embody the promise of a better future & good life

Why is this important?

- Hinders the dialogue on actual benefits and risks related to planned projects
- Overrides environmental concerns related to projects
- Creates disappointments that would have been avoidable
- Make it hard to distinguish a viable mining project from an unrealistic one
- Plays a role in the polarisation of discussions around northern mining projects?