# Memory-Making in Kiruna – Representations of Colonial Pioneerism in the Transformation of a Scandinavian Mining Town

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## Abstract

This article considers colonial rhetoric manifested in representations of early settlement in the mining town of Kiruna in northernmost Sweden. Kiruna was founded more than 100 years ago by the LKAB Company with its centre the prosperous mine on Sami land. Continued iron ore mining has made it necessary to relocate the town centre a few kilometres north-east of its original location to ensure the safety of the people. The ongoing process of the town's transformation due to industrial expansion has given rise to the creation of a memorial park between the town and the mine, in which two historical photographs have been erected on huge concrete blocks. For the Swedish Sami, the indigenous people, the transformation means further exploitation of their reindeer grazing lands and forced adaption to industrial expansion. The historical photographs in the memorial park fit into narratives of colonial expansion and exploration that represent the town's colonial past. Both pictures are connected to colonial, racialised and gendered space during the early days of industrial colonialism. The context has been set by discussions about what Kiruna "is", and how it originated.

My aim is to study the role of collective memory in mediating a colonial past, by exploring the representations that are connected to and evoked by these pictures. In this progressive transformation of the town, what do these photographic memorials represent in relation to space? What are the values made visible in these photographs? I also discuss the ways in which Kiruna's history becomes manifested in the town's transformation and the use of history in urban planning. I argue that, in addressing the colonial history of Kiruna, it is timely to reconsider how memories of a town are communicated into the future by references to the past. I also claim that memory, history, and remembrance and forgetting are represented in this process of history-making and that they intersect gender, class and ethnicity.

**Keywords:** memory, history, gender, postcolonial, Kiruna, town transformation

## Introduction

In a memorial park in the mining town of Kiruna in Northern Sweden a pair of historical, black-and-white photographs from the early days of the settlement are etched in large format onto concrete. These historical photographs depict motifs of the town's beginnings, highlighting, perhaps unintentionally, its colonial past. The first photo shows a family standing in front of what appears to be their home – a simple cabin or hut. The family's father is centrally placed in front of the hut door, with a baby on his arm. The mother and three older children stand beside him, their demeanour gravely solemn. What immediately strikes you is their house. The hut appears to have been built from wood that has just been lying around, and it has no proper roof. The photo is taken in wintertime and long icicles on the walls of the cottage indicate moisture and coldness inside. What gave rise to this photo?

Perhaps surprisingly, the central motive for its inclusion is the little baby girl on her father's arm. This picture represents Kiruna's "firstborn" and her family, and relates to the following story, announced in the local newspaper:  On August 21, 1899, a girl was born in a simple turf hut, on the shores of Luossajärvi. She is referred to as the firstborn in this locality, which was soon to become the town of Kiruna. She was named "Kiruna" as suggested by LKAB's Managing Director, Hjalmar Lundbohm. He became her sponsor and donated 100



Kiruna's "firstborn" and her family outside their residence in 1900. Photo: Borg Mesch. Belongs to the Kiruna Photo Collection.

Swedish kronor to be used as her "life annuity" (Hansson 2006). The photograph of her and her family was taken in 1900 and, as a remnant of the early days of the settlement, is used as a commemoration of colonial pioneerism. The girl grew up in Kiruna as Kiruna Söderberg, but died at a young age, only 27 years old. Nonetheless, her story has generated another link through time. Before she died, she gave birth to a daughter, who was also named Kiruna, and thus started a family tradition, dictating that the firstborn daughter would be given Kiruna as a middle name. Some years ago, the sixth generation Kiruna was born (Forsberg 2009). This family tree of girls/women can be viewed as a parallel to the history of Kiruna town.

The second photograph in this series shows a group of men standing on the doorstep of a big wooden house. They are wearing black suits with coats, walking sticks and tall hats, indicating that they are important men in society; however, three of them are wearing traditional Sami clothing. The Sami men stand on the bottom steps, and one of them is even standing on the ground, while the men



On the Doorstep of the LKAB Company Hotel: The Original Committee Separating Kiruna from Jukkasjärvi, May 1902. From the bottom left, they are: engineer C. I. Asplund, Kiruna; Lars Johan Jansson, Kiruna; E. Wikman, Vittangi; sheriff F. Bergstrom, Vittangi; reindeer owner Olof Olafsson Tuuri, Dálmá Sami herding community; the LKAB managing director Hjalmar Lundbohm; elementary school teacher Abraham Johansson, Vittangi; reindeer owner Mickel Mickelsson Inga, Lævas Sami herding community; the merchant Carl Hannu, Kiruna; Mickel Mickelsson Niia, Gabna Sami herding community; county sheriff CA Olsson, Kiruna and yeomen Joseph Lahti and H.W. Hansi, Vittangi. Photo: Borg Mesch. Belongs to the Kiruna Photo Collection.

in hats and suits are mainly positioned higher up in front of the door. This photo is usually called "On the Doorstep of the Company Hotel" [På Bolagshotellets trapp]. It was taken in early May 1902 and represents "The Original Committee Separating Kiruna from Jukkasjärvi to become its own Municipality and Parish." The Committee is posing at the entrance to the then newly-built Company Hotel, which was used for LKAB company affairs and guests (Brunnström 1981: 94). At that time Kiruna belonged to Jukkasjärvi municipality and parish, but was about to be separated off to become its own municipality.  Standing on the doorstep of the hotel, the men of this Committee represent the authority of the territory at that time. Hjalmar Lundbohm was the leading man in Kiruna, and the photograph signals a social hierarchy reflected in the appearance of these men, the way they stand, dress, etc. They were the few with sufficient income to qualify for a right to vote in matters concerning the town affairs in 1902. Representation on the Committee was a great advantage for the LKAB Company, as becoming a municipality would exempt the company domains from taxation. Hjalmar Lundbohm himself held over a hundred votes in this group. In contrast, the Sami Committee members had no right to vote, they acted solely as representatives for their Sami communities (Persson 2015: 120-121). The photo thus illustrates power inequality between men, especially between Swedish men and Sami men.

Kiruna was founded on Sami land by the LKAB Company around its prosperous mine. For the Swedish Sami, the indigenous people, this meant exploitation of their reindeer grazing lands and forced adaption to industrial expansion. Their land, Sápmi, stretches over four nations: the northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland, as well as the northwest corner of Russia. In the Kiruna region there are eight different Sami herding communities. As a result of the mining industry and urban expansion, the Sami population has gradually been marginalised. Today, the Sami faces further changes. The continued expansion of the mine has led to the risk of major subsidence, threatening the town of Kiruna itself. This has made it necessary to relocate the town centre a few kilometres northeast, to ensure both the safety of the people and the continued iron ore mining. This process, the Kiruna City Transformation, constitutes a profound change in Kiruna. The transformation has impacted upon areas that are relevant to reindeer management and has restricted the reindeer migration routes which are located close to the town.

For the town itself, the transformation involves both demolition of existing buildings as well as the careful dismantling and rebuilding of a few selected buildings in new neighbourhoods on new ground. The memorial park will serve as a barrier against the mine as the ground cracks. The park is laid out with footpaths, lawns and trees. Along these footpaths we find the photo stones, which are about two metres high and four metres long and designed as works of art, to be

viewed along the promenade. But now, as the open pit approaches the city, even the parkland is a temporary space – and the photo stones are removable.

The transformation process tends to recall the time of the original town plan, once built as a model city around the mining company. Certain ideas and ideals around Kiruna's history are being reinforced by these images. This article argues that both photos can be connected to colonial, racialised and gendered space during the early days of industrial colonialism. The context has been set by discussions about what Kiruna "is", and how it originated.

A starting point for this study is that, during the early 1900s, colonial, capitalist and patriarchal power structures were established, and that these structures have taken different forms in different locations/regions based on gender, class and ethnicity. There have been discussions as to which parts of the old town core are worth saving, which buildings will be moved and rebuilt, and which parts will be left to collapse as the ground falls away beneath them. This requires further discussion about whose history is allowed and legitimised for the future Kiruna.

This article explores the representations that are connected to Kiruna's colonial history and the creation of these memorial photo stones. My primary aim is to study the role of memory and nation-making in mediating a common past through these pictures; this article thus engages with the uses of history and narrative. In relation to the ongoing, progressive city transformation, what do these photographic memorials represent in relation to space? What values are made visible in these photographs? I also discuss the ways in which Kiruna's history becomes manifested in the city transformation, and the use of history in urban planning. I argue that, in addressing the colonial history of Kiruna, it is timely to reconsider how memories of a model city are communicated into the future by selective references to the past. I also claim that memory, history, remembrance and forgetting, the present and the future are all represented in this process of history-making and that they intersect gender, class and ethnicity.

The raising of memorial stones is one way to create and perpetuate a collective memory. However, memory has a history, and public or collective memory implies a shared memory or even common interests. But memory and history are far from synonymous, as historian Pierre Nora points out. "Memory is always a phenomenon of the present, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past" (Nora 1989: 8). History, in his view, is the problematic factor, being incomplete, a representation of the past. Memory, on the other hand, "is life" and emotions (ibid.). The strict separation of the two, as Nora suggests, is not necessarily the only way. The link between history and memory could be viewed as entangled, not sharply contrasting. Instead, in order to consider the connection between remembering and forgetting, the assumption is that memory is operationalised by forgetting (Dickinson et al. 2010: 9). The place and the

monument are both of great importance for the creation of collective identities. The monument can relate to places in different ways: materially, symbolically and functionally. In that creation, monuments and memorials can also exclude alternative memories and interpretations. Pierre Nora's conceptual memory location (lieux de mémoire) recalls that these are sites of memory, as there are no longer any real environments for memory (milieux de mémoire). The story is about both time *and* space. "Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things" (Nora 1989: 9).

Commemoration as a practice works to reinforce and reconnect a community by forging a consensus version of the past, the memory of a mythical city, a nostalgia – the fantasised memory of an irretrievable past. As human geographer Veronica Della Dora (2006: 212) points out, throughout history cities have constituted arenas for concurrent narratives. She argues that nostalgia is becoming a powerful political tool in urban planning. Dora shows how cultural, political and economic reasons are given in answer to the question of why nostalgic memories are revived in urban planning today. Cities are striving to communicate in a globalised world dominated by image. "Their success is largely determined by their ability to create evocative but at the same time easily readable icons, which characterize them as unique. The city stands as a totalizing, almost 'mythical' landmark for socioeconomic and political strategies" (Della Dora 2006: 231).

Thus, the following assumptions about public memory might lead the way in the discussion of these pictures: that memory is activated by present concerns; that it narrates shared identities; that memory is animated by affect; that memory is partial, partisan, and thus often contested; that memory relies on material and/or symbolic supports; and that memory has a history (Dickinson et al. 2010: 6). The source material consists of representations of Kiruna's history, such as historical accounts, photo collections, press materials, travel writings and policy documents about the city transformation. In a careful reading of this material I take guidance and inspiration from postcolonial writings, such as Anne McClintock's book, *Imperial Leather* (1995), which is a critical study of the progress of imperialism, shaped by western authority, knowledge and power. In her study, McClintock tries to understand how groups are created in historiography, through continuous processes of production and reproduction.

The article will proceed as follows: Firstly, I present how Kiruna was originally built around the idea of a Model City and outline some important historical meanings of its colonial history. Secondly, I discuss how photography came to be used in service of the colonisers, reproducing colonial values. Thirdly, I discuss the reproduction of power relations through these photographs, outlining the symbols of the colonising nation, and the reproduction of masculine ideals.

## Kiruna – the Model City

> Hjalmar Lundbohm created a Model City, which made Kiruna famous both nationally and internationally. It contained a climate-adjusted city plan and also a plan for social development within the city. Now, with the city transformation process, it's time to develop a new model society. (Kiruna kommun 2011)

Kiruna town was officially founded over a hundred years ago inspired by the concept of the model city. The historical writings about Kiruna tell us that from the beginning this was a well-thought-out town plan. Hjalmar Lundbohm, the Managing Director of LKAB 1900–1920, and also the founding father of Kiruna, was strongly influenced by other model communities when he designed Kiruna (Brunnström 2008: 16). A model city would counteract social deprivation through good architecture, education and good working conditions. The goal was to build an attractive community in order to recruit and retain labour in this young mining community in the far north. The ideas were taken from model communities in the United States, Germany and England. Lundbohm is often described as a patriarch, a father figure, the creator not only of the city's design but also of a model mining industry. By developing a network of cultural personalities, Lundbohm was able to establish a range of high-quality art, music, literature and education in Kiruna. He contributed with financial and practical assistance to scientists and explorers, for example to archaeologist Gustaf Hallström (1880-1962). Hallström undertook archeological field studies in northern Sweden in 1907, and on his arrival in Kiruna was captivated by the unexpected modernity.

> I went out for a walk around the town, admiring the plants in the glow of Lux lights. What do I see? An electric tramway, modern cottage houses, vast stores. One person with a kindly smile pointed me to a "men's outfitter's" while I was in a linen shop looking to get ends for my braces. They thought I was from the countryside. So I felt, too. The hundreds of lights of Kirunavaara glimmered in rows, steam whistled and hissed, cars roared. I felt at home. It was like Stadsgården [referring to a port, traffic and railway area in Stockholm at that time]. (Hallström 1907: 294–295)

Hallström's notion of a "retarded" rural north is blown away when he meets technological progress in this young community in the far north. Historically, too, there has been an imagined cultural distance between rural and urban areas, which includes differences in the degree of modernisation. Concomitantly, this description can also be seen as an example of how Kiruna becomes alienated from

the Sami culture, and how by its modernity becomes incorporated into the general Swedish striving towards the industrialisation and modernism characteristic of a modern Swedish city at that time. In contrast to previous descriptions of a foreign location in the far north, it could suddenly be likened to Stockholm. Electric light, steam power and consumption were associated with Swedish society, modernisation, industrialisation and progress, while the Sami culture was becoming more and more alienated. The official Swedish policy stated that "Lapp should be Lapp", which meant that the Sami people should stick with their traditional life and not integrate into modern Swedish life. The Sami population is "preserved as living monuments in the Swedish mountains," the newspaper *Expressen* wrote critically in 1948 (*Expressen*, January 2, 1948).

Yet, today, Lundbohm's ideas for a model city are often associated with ideas of social equality. In the city transformation process, the specific character of Kiruna is highlighted, and is described as a unique and different city. Alongside the emphasis on the unique natural areas, the uniqueness of the city's history and heritage is also underlined.

> Kiruna is not an ordinary mining community. We expect that already through all the nicknames that the city has received. It has been called a model city, the world's best society, the democratic city, the artistic city, the largest city, and so on. (Brunnström 2008: 14)

During the transformation process, a central discussion has been to define, raise and exploit the values that characterise Kiruna. The official representations and information presented to tourists highlight what is unique about Kiruna: the unique location, the unique nature and the youth of the city. The geographical location, the climate, and the surrounding mountains are part of what makes Kiruna unique and form a central element of the image of the city as actively conveyed today. Nine different vision groups have discussed public services, housing, communications and sustainability, accentuating the values of democracy, equality and diversity. "We will set the bar high. This will be the world's most democratic city transformation", Kiruna Municipality wrote on their homepage. Ethnographer Bo Nilsson (2009) suggests that this emphasis on the democratic process is an approach to imbue the process with legitimacy. It gives the impression that everyone can participate, or that people at least have the opportunity to choose to participate in shaping the new Kiruna. This idea of consensus, the notion that the transformation is a common thing for all Kiruna's inhabitants, is largely a rhetorical product (Nilsson 2009: 25). In the vision documents for the city transformation, there is an ongoing discussion about what is worth saving for the new city centre, what should be preserved or re-built. Basically, the discussion appears to focus on

selecting past memories for the future Kiruna.

Another factor that can be said to characterise Kiruna is obviously the domination of the local labour market by LKAB. The mining industry traditionally means male jobs, which has also led to the accentuation of a male lifestyle in this region. Nilsson argues that, as mining is the predominant profession in Kiruna, the construction of masculinity in different types of representations is ongoing and reflects a masculine *continuity*. Women's labour and characteristics are of lower value. Nilsson claims that the "monumentalisation" of masculinity, in highlighting sculptures of male work in public spaces in Kiruna, is included in the shaping of a "we", a common identity. To be in control of the making of history is to be able to adjust history for your own purposes (Nilsson 2009: 83). This one-sided industrial life has meant that larger cyclical movements in the global market become highly visible and palpable in Kiruna, and have sometimes contributed to periods of high unemployment and other periods of labour shortages (Hägg 1993).

The way in which people talk about Kiruna also characterises the cultural environmental analysis that Kiruna Municipality has ordered, where one of the tasks is to determine the items of historical uniqueness and value and to save them. This is a rhetoric that is actualised in the work related to the city transformation and which struck the tone for what is stated in the vision document and investigations. Researchers in the field of communication, such as Burd, Drucker and Gumpert (2007), argue that cities are natural communication sites. Both interacting and conflicting practices, values, identities, dialogues and places constitute the countless symbolic artefacts that characterise urban areas. These artefacts help to construct the city by the ways in which streets and street names, buildings, residential areas, tourist attractions and other texts create and maintain meanings. According to Sieverts (2003), there is a myth about the "old" city, the urban city that has been there for a long time and which is assumed to persist. Seen from a settler perspective, Kiruna as a city has an unusually short history. Stretched out to its utmost, it started either when the LKAB Company was established in 1890, or in 1900 when the shantytown, which started growing in connection with mining the mountains at Lake Luossajärvi, changed its name to Kiruna.

In general, there are preservation acts to help preserve the character of a city. A preservation classification should guarantee protection of historic buildings. However, such protection has been rather violated in the city of Kiruna. Kiruna City Hall was protected as a historic building under the Cultural Heritage Act. LKAB and Kiruna Municipality jointly applied to cancel this protection, so that it could be torn down. The County Board approved the request. The decision to change the protection of historic buildings means that there are no restrictions on dismantling and reuse of parts of the features and functions of these buildings.

## Photography in the service of the colonisers

Both the photograph of the Committee in front of the hotel and the Söderberg family photograph were originally taken by the famous Kiruna photographer Borg Mesch (1869-1956), who photographed Kiruna's emergence during its industrial development. He moved his studio to Kiruna in 1899, and thus came to follow its expansion from a central position within the new society. These photographs mainly came to be associated with displaying the growth and rise of Kiruna town and are regarded as two of Borg Mesch's most famous and widely-known images. Kiruna municipality owns a collection of these photos: "It's unique! […] The Borg Mesch collection is Kiruna Municipality's great pride" (Kiruna kommun 2012). A worker for Kiruna Municipality tells me that it was obvious that these two photos would be selected for exposure in the memorial park. They are typical Borg Mesch pictures, in part because of their historical motives. "The [memorial park] is to become an important symbol for the future Kiruna," Kristina Zakrisson, the Municipal Chair, said at the inauguration of the park in September 2011. This includes giving prominence to Borg Mesch as the photographer who documented the first decades of colonisation. Mikael Westerlund, LKAB's Planning Manager, believes that this type of image, depicting Kiruna personalities, creates a certain characteristic mood, a sense of Kiruna's history. "I think this is of great interest – not just to the people of Kiruna but also to visitors from outside" (*LKAB Nyheter* 2011).

> At lunchtime on Wednesday, the first phase of the [memorial park] in Kiruna was inaugurated. A joint project between LKAB and Kiruna Municipality, the park will serve as a mobile oasis between the mine and the town. […] LKAB's Managing Director, Lars-Eric Aaro, gave the opening speech and unveiled the park's artwork, two towering cement blocks bearing designs from the photographer Borg Mesch, picturing Hjalmar Lundbohm and the city's firstborn child, Kiruna Söderberg. (Westerberg 2011)

The physical size of the monumental photographs also helps to emphasise the message that modern Kiruna has evolved from extreme simplicity and poverty to prosperity. It is reminiscent of the early settlers' hard-working durability and abrasive resistance. It has become a tradition in Kiruna to honour the memory of the navvies and pioneers, where the term "pioneer" applies to the immigrating Swedish settlers, not the Sami.

Photography became big business during the second half of the 19th century. In growing towns like Kiruna, the commercial photo studio played a crucial role in this process, glossing over the contradictions between the coloniser and the colonised, providing a pictorial language to communicate "the truth" (McClin-

tock 1995: 123). Pictures and photographs provided a seemingly democratic and universal language, equally accessible to all. But, in fact, this seemingly impartial technology was in the service of Western knowledge production. With photography, the view of the coloniser became synonymous with the real, thus serving its purposes. "Photography became the servant of imperial progress" (McClintock 1995: 125).

To have one's photograph taken alongside a reindeer sledge, dressed in a Sami costume, against the background of a snowy landscape, could create the illusion of being in a different time period. As in colonial postcards, arrangements including primitive icons and relics around the posturing, meant that time could be reorganised as a spectacle; by choreographing these icons, the story becomes organised into a single, linear narrative with a clear relationship between photography and colonial advancement. Some exotic decor was provided to people by Borg Mesch in his photo studio. One day in August 1900, his brother Thor came to visit and then took the opportunity to be portrayed.

> Thor wanted to have his photograph taken wearing a Sami costume, which for some time was part of the studio props. Borg got several costumes, in which he attired railroad workers and many others of his customers. He had costumes for both summer and winter, Sami knives of various sizes, etc. For the future photos in this dress, he simply noted "Sami" in the record. (Hedin 2001: 51)

In the type of photo studio that was usually at hand in colonised communities, colonisation was created, replicated and reproduced as an exotic spectacle, the public performance of a course of events, apparently seen in full length, according to McClintock. Access to this vantage point and that sort of overview, the panoptical stance, was reserved for the privileged only (McClintock 1995: 122). The camera eye was seen as a reflection of nature and, with this approach, camera technology became integrated into the process of industrialisation and scientific progress (Hamilton 2003: 83). The images also reflect the priorities of the (white) photographers who took the pictures. Thus, photographing Sami people made them representatives of a less progressive race, and indigenous people came to implicitly represent all races that are considered less progressive. Stuart Hall speaks of this as the more incidental or supposedly documentary feature of photography. Photographs may seem to provide a very quick and easy way to "the truth". But placing people in a photo frame is not just a meaningless, practical action. What the photograph conveys is also determined by the arrangements around the person photographed, body language and situation, even if the photographer is not focused on these aspects (Hall & Back 2009).

The imperialist message was effective: colonial industrialisation is the progressive way. It might also be perceived as the only way. Being opposed to progression and advancement is a difficult position to sustain – even today. According to Gallagher and La Ware (2010: 90), marginalised communities, made invisible by urban development, struggle to regain access to and influence over public space. Yet, open resistance to the ongoing transformation process is seldom found. Nilsson suggests people in Kiruna have a small-town mentality and that they are used to the patriarchal structure and to placing their fate in the hands of the company (Nilsson 2010: 441). Or as a young woman interviewed for the national daily SvD expresses it: "No one is opposed to the city transformation. Without LK [the mining company] we are nothing, everyone knows that" (Efendić 2011).

## The empty land

> A fair society, founded in the middle of nowhere in the kingdom of reindeer and wolves and bears. No harmful traditions existed. The inhabitants came from all regions in Sweden. The navvies constituted the core, and the followers must have been of good material, too. (Landin in Frank 1950: 11)

> Only the sons of Sami travelled across the vast expanses. Here they were born, lived and died, stung by the Almighty at last. They did not know much about the world, delighted however, and during the journey they grew their ancient, pagan cult. (Landin in Frank 1950: 14)

When Kiruna celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1950, a memorial book was published, beginning with this historic poetic work by Ernst Landin. What was expressed in the talk of the wild and pristine lands in the story about the colonisation of Kiruna? The place is described as a "no man's land", open to the conquerors. Landin's poem hailed the ideas of progress and the modern industrial society. It was a story of how the will of steel characterised the first Swedish immigrants, the pioneers, and how the wilderness was described as giving way to a rich industry. All this was shaped by the genius of the modern Swedish man, but at the same time it alienated Kiruna from its Sami background, which in this poem represents the unenlightened. According to McClintock, the myth of the virgin land in colonised areas creates specific dilemmas for women, especially colonised women. Women *are* the earth that is to be discovered, named and owned. From a male perspective, this female land is reduced to a space for male struggle. For women and colonised people, it is difficult to claim the stories of origin, of being "the first". With their symbolic connection to the land, women are relegated to a world beyond history

and thus have a complex relationship to narratives of historical change. Women are seen as property belonging to men (McClintock 1995).

"The myth of the virgin land is also the myth of the empty land", as McClintock points out, "empty of desire and void of sexual agency, passively awaiting the thrusting, male insemination of history, language and reason" (McClintock 1995: 30). In colonial narratives, the eroticisation of "virginity" is also a territorial appropriation, "for if the land is virgin, colonized peoples cannot claim aboriginal territorial rights" (ibid.). Historian Åsa Össbo uses the concept of industrial colonialism, which becomes central in her analysis of Swedish hydroelectric power development on Sami land. It is a concept that illustrates the utilisation of land for mining exploitation in Kiruna, where the Sami rights to land have gradually been restricted. "The naturalness of displacing and reshaping the original society is a colonial thought found in the Reindeer Breeding Act" (Össbo 2014: 47). Historian Patrick Lantto states that the Sami raised barely any protests against land development, despite the fact that the city of Kiruna emerged in the middle of the reindeer herding area of the Gabnea Sami community. The leaders of the mobilising Sami movement had little contact with these areas and, therefore, scarcely any attention was directed towards what was happening.

> The biggest industrial trespassing took place in the northern parts of Norrbotten where the political mobilization among the Sami was low for much of the study period. In areas where the Sami movement was more established similar intrusions probably had been met by larger and more pronounced protests (Lantto 2000: 288).

As a result, the Swedish male colonial expansion met with hardly any resistance. Land and land ownership became central in Kiruna both in terms of valuable ore deposits, and as plots of land in the new town plan. But at the same time the Sami population was prohibited by law from owning land. Thus, the state could take control over the right to land for mining. Legislation at the end of the 19th century was characterised by the idea that nomads could not acquire proprietorship. In contrast, they had "rights and easements". The settlers, however, arriving from all over the country, could acquire and use land, and ultimately pass on land, forest and water to their descendants. Many Sami took up homesteads to protect their tax land [skatteland], which was the land area that the Sami used and for which they paid a certain tax. If not, their nomadic life made it possible for settlers to settle on their tax land as the Lappmark Regulations no longer protected land that was not under cultivation and occupied within two years (Lundmark 2008). But the choice to stay on, inhabit and protect their tax land meant that they lost their Sami rights. "Those who took up new buildings stopped counting as Sami in the population statistics" (Lundmark 2008: 70).

# The Kiruna Family

In the alternative story, the narrative of Kiruna Söderberg, encapsulated in the displayed photograph of her as a baby, can be read as a matriarchal family tree, a counterbalance to the "Macho City". In the ongoing city transformation, there is a desire to change the masculine features and attract women to stay (Nilsson 2010: 437). However, the Swedish rural North, as a region, is constructed as typically male and contemporary geographical notions of northern Sweden are dominated by rural problems. In this perspective, the sparsely populated northern Sweden is an area of emigration and unemployment. The mining character of places like Kiruna, Gällivare and Pajala has contributed to a gender-segregated labour market. The men here have traditionally been miners and is the reason this environment is full of masculine symbolism (Andersson 2012). The gender-segregated labour market thus plays an important role in contributing to the notion of the typically male northern Sweden.

The foundations of today's gender segregation can be traced back to old gendered patterns in the mining fields in northern Sweden, as shown in previous research. Historian Eva Blomberg demonstrates that a strong masculinisation process took place during the 19th century, especially in the newly-opened export pits represented by Kiruna. This differs from the older iron mills in Bergslagen in mid-Sweden, where this process was not as strong. Personnel policy in these mines did not operate in the same family-centred way (Blomberg 1995: 347). The masculine emphasis in the northern mining areas coincided with the ban on women working underground in 1900, which reinforced the process. Blomberg describes how a strictly gendered division of labour found its early forms in mining towns like Kiruna, where women and men belonged to different spheres and where the role of women as prospective wives was emphasised. She also points out that socially engaged managing directors, like Hjalmar Lundbohm, formed model societies in which women played an important role based on family and reproduction. Blomberg shows that the educational programmes were based on marriage between a man and a woman, not least as unemployment insurance for women, and emphasised women's role as wives. The arena for women was not formed for them as active participants, but as stabilisers. An active family and housing policy strongly encouraged a male breadwinner model (Blomberg 1995: 348). This societal organisation, combined with a social housing policy, aimed to keep workers on the site, but it was also an endeavour to curb the growing radicalisation among the workers at that time. In model societies for industrial workers from the late 19th century, parks and private garden plots were interesting features both for planners and residents. Housing types with distinctive privatisation tendencies were not only intended to bind the worker to his own turf, but also worked as an active agent against socialism (Brunnström 1981: 136).

The reproduction of Kiruna, symbolised by the photograph of Kiruna Söderberg and the story of her family tree, can also be seen as a recurrent accentuation of the importance of Kiruna as a place: the rebirth of Kiruna, the reproductive period of time. As suggested by Simone de Beauvoir, this reproductive linking to the body, as a natural order, thus represents cyclical time, while men, who claim to arrange nature and the body in terms of culture and reason, represent linear time (de Beauvoir 2002). The two models thus correspond to the notion of woman as an embodied creature and man as a rational subject not tied to his body. For her, only future time is open, she should not dwell on the ongoing present.

Therefore, the family has been central to national symbolism, using the bonds and hierarchies that are represented within it. As historian Ida Blom has suggested: "Identifying the nation with the family – a timeless and global unity of loyalty, evoking sentiments as well as hierarchies of gender and age – facilitated the construction of national identities and national loyalties" (Blom 2000: 8). This drawing on the connection between family, reproduction, nation and unity also points in a direction that means the opposite of democracy, party politics and conflicts of interest (Åse 2009: 107f). Personal memories can be seen as active elements in the creation of national memories. Rosalind Brunt shows how British nationalism, rooted in the royal family, and national consensus can act as a denial/ rejection of class differences, and how it is enveloped in the family metaphor as organiser. From Orwell, she draws an illustrative example of how national identity interacts with class, and could also interact with a space metaphor: "Britain is a family. It has its private language and its common memories, and at the approach of an enemy it closes its ranks" (Brunt 1996:147). Here she is referring to the importance of using symbolic figures to maintain the myth of the family.

McClintock argues that the significance of the family metaphor is twofold. First and foremost, it acts as a rhetorical image to legitimise social hierarchy, which, within the family, takes on the significance of an almost natural given power. The family symbolises a harmonious and agreed-upon unity as a natural part of historical development, and became necessary to legitimise exclusion and hierarchy also in non-familial associations, such as nationalism, liberal individualism and imperialism. This metaphor of the social hierarchy as natural was therefore dependent upon the previous naturalisation of women's and children's social subordination.

Secondly, the family picture is invaluable to denote historical time, according to McClintock. She shows that, within the family metaphor, both the social hierarchy and historical change are presented as natural and inevitable, rather than as historically constructed and changeable. Projecting the family picture onto national and imperial progress legitimised its advance as an almost natural progression. Colonial intervention could therefore be perceived as a linear, non-revolutionary

progression with a natural hierarchy within the unit: paternal heads as benevolent rulers over immature children. The image of the family became invaluable through its ability to provide the imperialist state with a natural alibi. Therefore, the notable thing about claiming "first", or memorising the "firstborn", is that it only focuses on the colonisers. Nothing is said about those who lived in the place before. "There is no hint that the 'new locality' may not be so 'new' and that the process of 'forming a community' might be somewhat unfair" (Loomba 2005: 7).

Regarding the construction of a common Swedishness in the racialisation of cities and urban areas, Irene Molina points out that the creation of cultural distance separates "native" Swedishness from the "immigrated". A cultural distance is created regardless of whether or not the Sami is culturalised and distinguished from the Swedish. "Is there really one thing that unites all 'native Swedes' that automatically means that their cultural distance to any immigrant citizen whatsoever is larger than that of any other Swedish born citizen?" (Molina 1997: 50).

Since the democratic aspirations of the city transformation process have been greatly emphasised, the colonial past should be commented upon in the construction of the memorial park, to prevent the legitimisation of power relations by these images. Different stages of the ongoing city transformation reveal the different needs for both capturing and quickly forgetting, in a place that will be gradually emptied, relocated, disappeared, and futurised. But no discussion has yet argued what the democratic content should be, or what a democratic city transformation *is*. To create "a sense of Kiruna's history", or to create a future city by means of historical references, means balancing on the verge of a manipulated, problematic, national creation. With discursive references to the nation there is a risk of limiting the democratic discussion. In addition, a national unity might obscure the hierarchies and power structures that appear to operate in a national "we" (Jansson et al. 2011: 122).

The question of what memories represent can be problematic for the authorities since traces and fragments of buildings and streets may represent aspects of Kiruna's history that stand in contrast to the aims of the transformation process: masculine ideals, social inequality, colonising. In this light, the representation of the historic structure of the city risks limiting the meanings attached to the place (Crowley 2011: 360). When a place is threatened by dissolution, this may in itself create and reinforce an emotional commitment, a national community of emotions (Nora 1989, Dickinson et al. 2010). The past is an important aspect of national identity. It has the ability to channel an idea of continuity into contemporary time.

## Conclusions: The legitimacy of the ancestors

In this article I have studied the role of memory and nation-making in the mediation of a common past by asking: What do these photographic memorials represent in relation to space? What are the values made visible in these photographs? I discuss the ways in which Kiruna's history becomes manifested in these ready-picked memories of a vast city. The picture of the Söderberg family and the men on the doorstep of the Company Hotel are considered to be two of the most significant images for the town of Kiruna. Through my reading of these photos, I have tracked down a classic model of colonialism in a country that has difficulty accepting its past as a coloniser. By forging a consensus version of the past, the Kiruna Transformation process works to reconnect with the mythical Model City. When evoking the image of the perfect city, or model city, a question appears out of the social structure; namely: how are the Sami included in Kiruna's history? How has the Sami past been legitimised in the story that is told about Kiruna? I discuss how power in the relationships between the Sami (minority group) and the nation (majority group) has played out, and how references to the past, but also how memory, history, remembrance and forgetting, the present and the future are represented in these photographs. These photographs become framed by our awareness that human ways of acting and being in place and space are dialogically generative, that people produce themselves through their spatial practices. Photographs invite speculation on their broader social and political ramifications, due to the way in which they invite the viewer to look and to position him/herself in a certain relation to meaning. Images are both a point of access to the social world and an archive of it. The Sami subject positions and their possibilities to speak, as colonised, are restricted in this process.

In my striving to study the role of memory and nation-making in the mediation of a common past, I have discussed representations that are connected to and evoked by these historical images. In the resurrection of Kiruna's history, the Model City, in denial about its colonial past, becomes the fantasised memory, the nostalgia of a mythical city. Nora's definition of history could be related to McClintock's declarations about photography as the colonial servant: its denoting of historical time and linear colonial interventions – a colonial time. The city transformation process generates a narrative around what Kiruna *is* and what it grew out of. A study of these stories may contribute to increased knowledge about how collective identity is produced and reproduced. Otherwise, the process propels a history that never challenges the colonial foundations upon which the site is built. In the arrangement of historical images in the memorial park, the photographs have a decorative role, according to LKAB, but they are also intended as identification, so that the people of Kiruna will recognise themselves. This allows the family picture to be used as a unifying factor and a reproductive resource, while

resistance or conflicts of interest are undesirable.

At the same time, the persistent male breadwinner ideal is an element that the future Kiruna is expected to expunge, but never does. The reason that we need to pay attention to the existing and ongoing history-writing in Kiruna is that the establishment of an official history of the town identifies and reproduces a normative history, and this conceals how the present is controlled by components of the past. The meanings that might be read into the image of the infant Kiruna Söderberg either allow or restrict democratic involvement in shaping the city of Kiruna. How are women positioned, as a resource or as part of the foundations of collective reproduction? The monumental photographic block picturing the firstborn Kiruna suggests that her role is to be the place, instead of taking place. "Kiruna", like Mother Svea, Marianne or Germania, becomes a national symbol, she appears in a metaphorical role. It is a way for power to reproduce itself, "by producing useful bodies and subjects" (Gedalof 2003: 93). With the powers of nationalism often at stake, McClintock sums up: "Nationalism is thus constituted from the very beginning as a gendered discourse and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power" (McClintock 1995: 355). While the remains are chosen to represent a common past, they might also represent a kind of oblivion. At the same time, as unwanted attention is drawn to the absence or the remains of a demolished past, they can also be seen as a memory of abuse by a past colonising authority.

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