

## Life support in high age: Northern Norway 1865-1900.

### **Introduction**

This paper explores how very old people in the northernmost part of Europe supported life before economic modernization. It presents a study of the men and women of 80 years and above in the Northern part of Norway, as registered in three censuses in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, interpreted in a context of ethnographic sources.

Historical studies often define old age from 60 years, when many were still active. This study focuses the age when health and strength would be declining for most. The peoples of the North – particularly the indigenous Sámi – were in the 17<sup>th</sup> century said to maintain strength and agility in surprisingly high age,<sup>1</sup> but rheumatism and failing eyesight were common ailments of the old. When old people were invalided from stroke paralysis, rheumatism, or old age fatigue, nursing was indispensable in their support. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, high age was not medicalized; a small number of medical officers were scattered over the region, but local healers were preferred, and the doctor was seldom called to someone who was full of years. The parson would register the cause of death as “old age weakness”.<sup>2</sup>

The region today called Northern Norway cover a large area, the major part above the Arctic Circle. It was sparsely populated and its towns very small. It was the only part of Norway with no institutions for the sick and old poor in medieval and early modern time, and by mid 19<sup>th</sup> century there were no organised charities, nor institutions for old age’s infirmity.<sup>3</sup>

Historians and observers have concluded that traditions of family and neighbour care were strong, and the need for church relief modest.<sup>4</sup> When public relief was introduced by the 1845

Poor Act, the newly instituted municipalities provided a weak and irregular financial basis for the reform.<sup>5</sup> The question is how very old people lived in this economically pre-modern, though gradually changing, society, far from almshouses and workhouse infirmaries. The discussion concentrates on the great majority living in rural areas.<sup>6</sup> Some parallels and contrasts with Nordic, British and American studies are drawn, but no systematic comparison is attempted.

The family relations of people over 60 in the northernmost part of the region have been explored by Hilde Jåstad, in a demographic analysis of the same 19<sup>th</sup> century censuses. Her focus is not life support, but co-residence between elderly parents and adult children. Her findings are discussed in this study. Åsa Elstad's study of work life, gender and socialization in fishing-farming households in the region 1870-1970 supplies perspectives of household interdependencies over time, with a particular focus on socialization and young age. The development and practices of public relief in the region in this period have also been studied, as have regional practices of household nursing and care.<sup>7</sup> This study aims at an overview of life support in high age in the region in this period, including variations of ethnicity and gender. It discusses also how this support may be conceptualized.

### **Age and life support in rural Northern Norway**

Only 0,68 per cent of the population of the region were 80 or more in 1865, increasing to 0,94 per cent in 1900.<sup>8</sup> In this paper, the terms "above 80" and "high age" are used. On average, they had short time left to live; there were only 149 persons above 90 in 1865. Of those above 80 in 1865, 62 per cent were women, and around 70 per cent of the women were widows. The North of Norway entered the demographic transition late. The average marriage age was low in most of the region, the birth rate high, and population fast increasing during the whole 19<sup>th</sup>

century.<sup>9</sup> Jåstad found that contrary to the national tendency, the mean household size increased in the northernmost part of the region, where the housing situation was most difficult, to 7,21 persons in 1900.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the group above 80 increased even faster than the total population between 1865 and 1900, suggests that it generally did not become harder for the very old to support life.<sup>11</sup>

Until the end of the century, people from Finland and other parts of Norway settled in the region's fishing districts. The natives belonged to three ethnic groups with separate languages: the Kven, descended from early Finnish immigrants, the Norwegian majority, and the indigenous Sámi, living in today's Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. As Norway was transformed from a Danish province towards an independent state, the impact of government was strengthened on all levels. At the middle of the century, an official policy aiming at Norwegianizing the Sámi and Kven peoples was implemented, and their languages and cultures repressed.<sup>12</sup>

The majority of these old had supported life from varying combinations of subsistence and market economy. Small-scale husbandry - agriculture in sheltered parts - combined with fishery, among the Sami also with hunting and crafts, were supplemented with barter, sale at markets, or periodic work for others.<sup>13</sup> Also Sámi nomad reindeer herding combined subsistence and market. The dominant market economy was the great seasonal export cod fisheries, which engaged most Norwegian men and many Sámi for an increasing part of the year.<sup>14</sup> The fishing merchants paid with credit: for flour, fishing equipment, and consumption goods.<sup>15</sup> The credit system staged off want when fisheries failed, but left the fishermen in perennial debt. Money economy was around mid-century very limited in many rural areas; work was often paid in kind.<sup>16</sup> In the land-based, subsistence side of the economy, a

significant part of food, clothes, and fuel was produced by and for the household members. Local resources were utilized through the seasons, with long work-days also for children and old people. The households were primary units of socialization, culture, religion, and care. Husbandry and household were primarily the women's responsibility. Around 60 year age, fishermen gave up the seasonal fisheries and shifted to the subsistence side, continuing "home-fishing" for food.<sup>17</sup> When the fishermen were away, the old would assist the house-mother in running the smallholdings with the children, sometimes a servant.<sup>18</sup>

Famines and great acute epidemics had receded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>19</sup> although there were hard periods notably in the late 1860's, and in the years around 1900. Failed fishing, sickness, or premature death, would commonly lead to scarcity. Towards the end of the century, the tuberculosis epidemic arrived in the North, and peaked in 1905 at a record mortality in the northernmost county Finnmark. The epidemic spread through the great fisheries, particularly to the young and strong.<sup>20</sup>

High age in itself did not elicit municipal poor relief. Relief was consistently described as highly stigmatized, and a desperate last resort.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless the number of recipients in the region doubled between 1851 og 1866, as financing of relief was secured by implementation of income tax. Church charity was also added to the municipal poor-chest.<sup>22</sup> Towns, trade and fisheries expanded during the last half of the century. Money economy and consumption of industry goods increased in rural districts on a limited scale. The first mining venture began in 1830, and the 1890's saw a breakthrough of industrialization and modernization in the region. For the men, fishing became more frequently an only occupation. The rural combination economies kept their dominant positions, although need for money income rose when the fishery merchants' credit system dissolved late in the century. Wage work opportunities and

wages increased for both genders, but the majority engaging with the individual economies were younger men. When cod fisheries failed repeatedly at the end of the century, mass emigration to America began.<sup>23</sup>

Although no specific limit for old age was instituted in the region, norms of respect for age are recorded. The East Sámi community assemblies were led by elders, which may have been a general Sámi tradition.<sup>24</sup> Among the Sámi, re-naming of older relatives implied a particular relation between young and old namesakes.<sup>25</sup> Polite address was practiced in some Norwegian communities: When the young met someone "so old and disabled as to need the support of a stick" it was rude not to use the plural, 3<sup>rd</sup> person.<sup>26</sup> The young were expected to wait upon the old – family members or not – and run errands for them.<sup>27</sup> Pietist movements in the region reinforced these norms; the oldest men of the household would commonly read the Gospel on Sundays, and the Laestadian congregations were also led by elders.<sup>28</sup> In sum, respect for age was embodied in a number of customs that might or might not prevail in the particular case.<sup>29</sup> It is clear that old age could be regarded as a particular life-stage. Seen from the individual life-course however, age was the undetermined continuation of life.<sup>30</sup> Indeterminism might become explicit in the insecurity about life support often said to attend old age before modern welfare.<sup>31</sup> Life support of the individual must be temporally continuous, or fail. The question of security and continuity is consequently a focus in this study.

### **Method, sample and sources**

The primary material is registrations of all persons aged 80 or more in the region, in the censuses of 1865, 1875, and 1900,<sup>32</sup> digitalized by the Norwegian Historical Data Centre, University of Tromsø, Norway.<sup>33</sup> About two-thirds of the sample lived in the southernmost

county Nordland, a fourth in Troms, and less than a tenth in Finnmark, the vast, north-northeastern part of the region.

Bjørg Evjen and Lars Ivar Hansen have documented that Norwegianization policy influenced census registrations of ethnicity, with shifting definitions and a general under-registration of the “non-Norwegian” population.<sup>34</sup> Bearing these problems in mind, the census of 1865 registered the Sámi as the largest ethnic group among those above 80 in Finnmark, with 45 per cent – 38 persons. This proportion was higher than in the total population, which may reflect the immigration of younger Norwegians. The Sámi proportion of the very old in Finnmark remained 45 per cent in the census of 1900, when its population above 80 had doubled. The proportion of very old registered as Kvens, or of Finnish origin, increased in Finnmark from six per cent – five persons - in 1865, to one-fourth in 1900. Most of the remaining fourth in 1900 were probably ethnic Norwegians.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 1:**

**Persons of 80 years and above in the censuses:**

<b>Counties</b>	<b>1865</b>	<b>1875</b>	<b>1900</b>
<b>Nordland :</b>	676 (64%)	1136 (68%)	1657 (66%)
<b>Troms :</b>	293 (28%)	414 (25%)	619 (25%)
<b>Finnmark:</b>	84 (8%)	116 ( 7%)	234 (9%)
The region:	1053 (100%)	1666 (100%)	2510 (100%)

**Total: 5229 persons over 80.**

The Norwegian Historical Data Centre, University of Tromsø, Norway.

The search terms were *year of birth*,<sup>36</sup> *family position* and *occupation*; gender, marital status, ethnicity, municipality and birthplace. The census questions and instructions differ somewhat. The census of 1865 implied that married women were supported by their husbands, which was far from the reality of this region, and only one source of living was registered for each person, though combinations of livelihoods dominated. The censuses of 1875 and 1900 however aimed to detail all livelihoods of all individuals, regardless of age and gender.

A central problem is how to make continuity of support appear from the cross-section census material. As Tamara Hareven points out, a temporal perspective depends ultimately on the conceptualization in the research.<sup>37</sup> To gain a wider ground for interpretation, the census entries were interpreted manually, most in their household contexts, categorized, and further interpreted into a context of reminiscence records and ethnographic collections on social norms and practices from rural districts. These were however limited to Nordland and Troms.<sup>38</sup>

### **General results: How the very old were supported**

Individuals of 80 and more were divided into three categories:

#### **1) Persons who primarily supported themselves with own work, income, or means**

They were between 5 and 15 per cent of the very old. The proportion was higher in 1900 than in 1875.

#### **2) Support primarily based on family and other long-term relations**

The great majority, 78-77 per cent in the censuses of 1875 and 1900, received their *main support* from younger family or kin (certain or probable), or by younger people who were not kin in a narrow sense, but with whom the old had a long-term relationship. The support was organized in two ways:

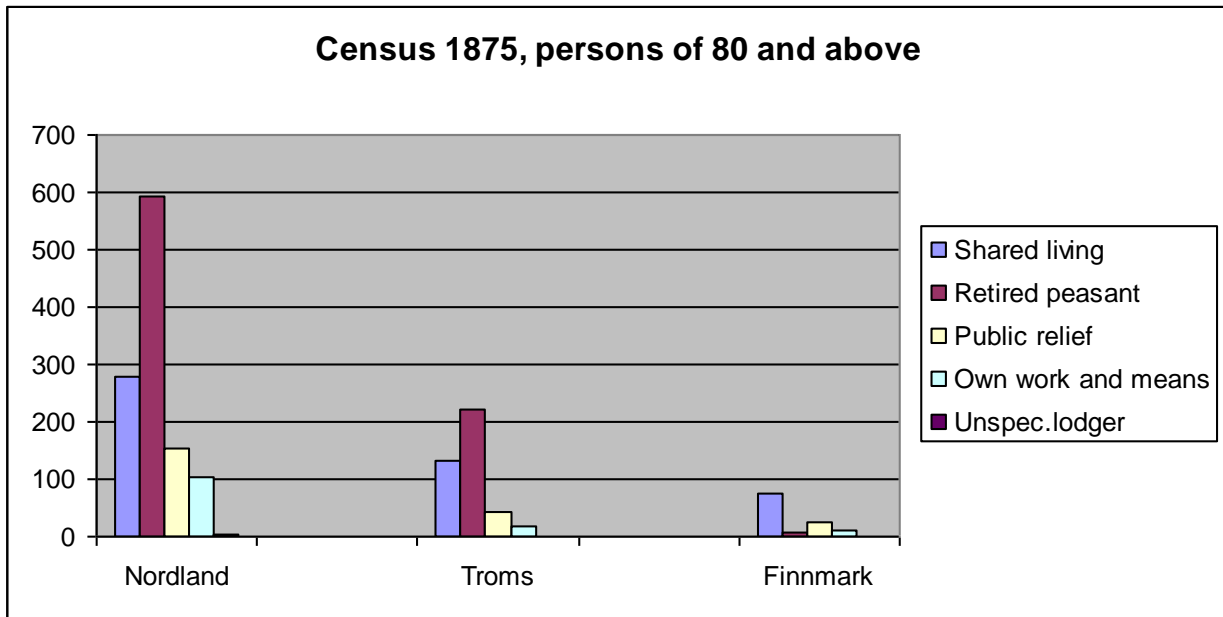
- Formal retirement agreement
- Sharing the living with the younger people, retirement not mentioned.

### **3) Persons primarily supported by public relief**

They were between one-tenth and one-fifth of the very old. The proportion was lower in 1900 than in 1875.



Figure 1:

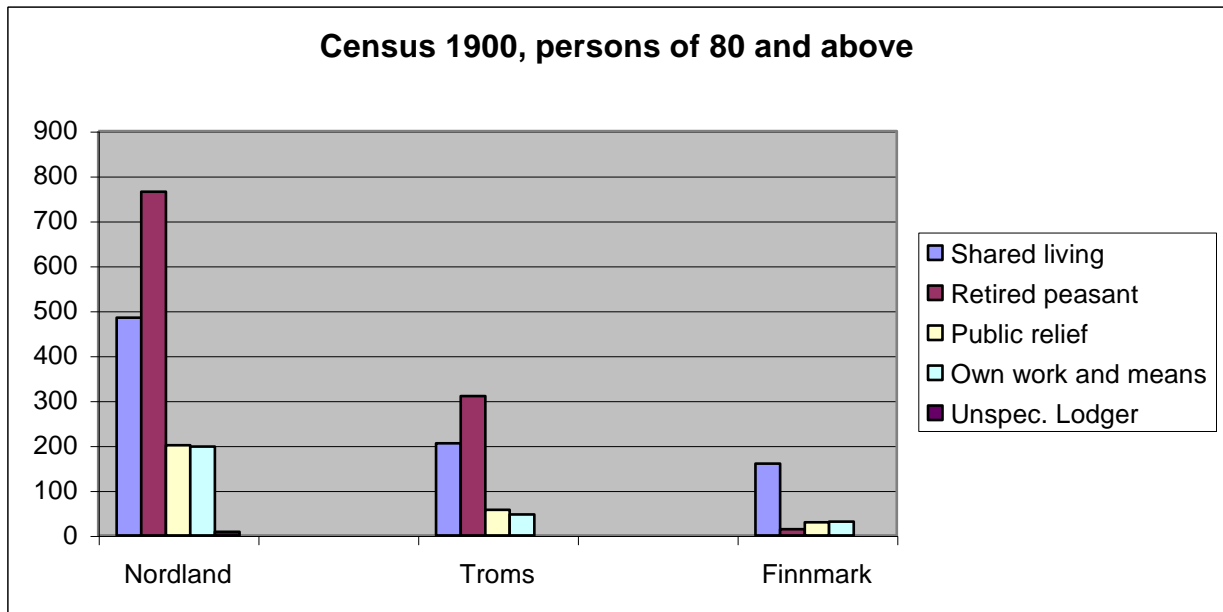


	Nordland	Troms	Finnmark	Total
	1875	1875	1875	
Shared living	277 (24%)	132 (32%)	75 (65%)	484 (29%)
Retired peasant	594 (52%)	220 (53%)	8 (7%)	822 (49%)
Public relief	155 (14%)	43 (10%)	24 (21%)	222 (13%)
Own work and means	105 (9%)	19 (5%)	9 (8%)	133 (8%)
Unspec.lodger	5 (<1%)			5 (<1%)

Sum: 1136 (100%) 414 (100%) 116 (100%) Total: 1666

N= 1666

Figure 2:



	Nordland 1900	Troms 1900	Finnmark 1900	Total
Shared living	485 (29%)	205 (33%)	160 (68%)	850(34%)
Retired peasant	765 (46%)	310 (50%)	14 (6%)	1089(43%)
Public relief	201 (12%)	57 (9%)	29 (13%)	287 (11%)
Own work and means	198 (12%)	47 (8%)	31 (14%)	276 (11%)
Unspec.lodger	8 (<1%)			8(<1%)
<b>Sum:</b>	<b>1657 (100%)</b>	<b>619 (100%)</b>	<b>234 (100%)</b>	<b>Total:2510</b>

N= 2510

In addition, the 1865 census registered 5 per cent of those above 80 as lodgers, with no livelihood mentioned, and no relation to other household members apparent. The 1900 census used the term ‘single lodger’, “not belonging to the family”.<sup>39</sup> Most single lodgers were registered with an income from own work or public relief, and have been categorized accordingly. The few unspecified lodgers in 1875 and 1900 are a rest.

The interpretation of the material, including the meaning of “primarily supported”, is discussed below. As in other parts, many old lived from combined sources that shifted with advancing frailty.<sup>40</sup> The proportion of support from family and relations averaged 69 per cent across the region in 1865, which seems too low, compared with 78 per cent in the census only ten years later, and 77 per cent in the 1900 census. Since the 1865 census registered only one source of living, the official matter of public relief was sometimes registered and household relations not.<sup>41</sup> Regarding family and relation support, I have therefore relied on the censuses of 1875 and 1900.

### **Very few lived on their own**

In 1865 only four persons above 80 in the region lived in a dwelling on their own. The number increased to 22 persons in 1900.<sup>42</sup> In 1865, it was also unusual for very old couples to live by themselves – only five couples above 60 years, one or both passed 80, lived alone. The number had increased to 40 couples in 1900. This contrasts with European findings. Ulla Rosén found in her study from the southern part of Sweden that the majority of the elderly over 60 in this period lived alone, single or as couples.<sup>43</sup> In Britain, the elderly usually did not live with their children, but near by.<sup>44</sup> People in rural Northern Norway did not live in villages, but in small, scattered clusters of holdings, a few neighbors in each. The great distances and long winters made co-residence the practical option for supporting an old

person. Continuous money support, which was common in Britain, was out of the question for most. This is reflected in the Poor Acts: Someone who would support a relative, was entitled to move the relative into his own home, taking her or him "into his bread".<sup>45</sup>

Did co-residence with family, kin and other relations include life support? According to the 1875 census, it did. One question was "occupation, or supported by whom?"<sup>46</sup> In the Nordland census (68 per cent of the sample), 86 per cent of those over 80 who were not retired, self-supporting, nor receiving any relief, were registered as supported by the people they lived with.<sup>47</sup> Of the remaining, many were simply registered as "wives", and in the dominant economy husband and wife supported each other, and were legally obliged to do so. Co-residents, not supported by the household, were a minority. These were the lodgers paying for board and/or lodging, and people entirely supported by public relief.

The high proportion of family and relation support was in a measure connected to the family organization of farming in parts of the region. In Norwegian tradition and legislature, land inheritance was a prerogative of the eldest son, who would marry and take over the running of the holding while his parents were alive, while the other children moved out. The old people might enter a retirement agreement, or simply go on living with the younger. Thus a stem family cycle dominated, with old and young living together at one stage of the cycle. Jåstad found a tendency towards dissolution of the stem family at the end of the century, which agrees with findings from other parts of Norway.<sup>48</sup>

### **The need for care**

There were no questions about sickness or care in the censuses; occasionally persons were mentioned as sick, bedridden or needing nursing.<sup>49</sup> According to the ethnographic sources,

sickness and death were primary occasions for neighbour and kin help. It was a neighborly duty for men and women to watch in turn over the dying.<sup>50</sup> Nursing was not an exclusive female domain; it was fairly common for a son to nurse his parents, or a husband his wife. The menfolk would at least lift and carry the sick, while it was the children's task to empty and scour the bed utensils by the seashore. Night and day nursing was recognized as extremely labor-intensive.

It is often thought that prior to modern medical care, sick old people did not survive for long. No doubt many trajectories were short, but it was not uncommon that old people were nursed a long time – often in the crowded living-room where people worked and ate.<sup>51</sup>

*Mother's paternal aunt... was bedridden for eight years and was excellently cared for and nursed by an unmarried granddaughter.*<sup>52</sup>

A servant-maid born in 1863 was quoted saying that it was regarded a shame to be slovenly with the care of the old.<sup>53</sup> Norms of good care clearly existed, but were often not easy to effectuate with limited labor, space, and clothing.

The widow Oline Andersdatter, aged 84, was in 1900 registered as supported and nursed on a yearly basis in a farming-fishing household. The Poor Board would contract the care to a local household for a monetary compensation. This is referred to as an old system. Those “put out to nurse” were not necessarily the most destitute, but they needed community support for their care. They were mentally ill, disabled, long-term sick, old, and orphaned children. The Poor Board might arrange public auctions where the lowest bidder got the care of the pauper. This practice was commonly regarded as extremely degrading, and was abolished by the 1900 Poor

Act. Contracting to own families or relatives was common.<sup>54</sup> Of the 37 over 80 mentioned as “put out to nurse” in the census of Nordland 1900, 16 were also registered as mothers or as family lodgers. One old woman was explicitly stated as *not* a member of the family. The Poor Board might request a family to take in an old relation, or a family might apply for compensation for their care for an old household member.<sup>55</sup> Public care, in sum, built on care by family and relations.

The contract system expanded in the second half of the century. The number nursed at public expense quadrupled in the region, to 27 per cent of all recipients in 1900. In all Norway, nursing contracts were used most frequently in Finnmark, for 30 per cent of the recipients in 1865, rising to 36 per cent, 330 persons, in 1900.<sup>56</sup> The Poor Board controlled the care. Neglect was sometimes reported to the medical officer.<sup>57</sup> There are stories of old people nursed with great charitableness, respect and skill, but cruelty and neglect also occurred. It was said that the old often suffered, but if they came to straight and friendly people they might stay for several years.<sup>58</sup>

Conflicts over the compensations were common, and the carers were generally accused of being callous and mercenary as public debate rose over public relief practices towards the end of the century.<sup>59</sup>

### **Own work and means**

Work was a necessity that went on in high age for everybody. The censuses registered very old people as supporting themselves with wage labour, and others as quite unable to work. The census takers of 1875 and 1900 graduated the occupation entry - “doing a little

housework”, “helping the house-mother” – making apparent the continuity between being ‘able-bodied’ and ‘disabled’. Indeed the category “supported by own work” is problematic, since the concepts ‘self-supporting’ and ‘supported’ were not mutually exclusive. This question is discussed below.

Åsa Elstad analyzes the common coastal household in Nordland as a working interdependence which necessitated flexibility and versatility across gendered and age-specific tasks.<sup>60</sup> The registered occupation of one old man was ”rocking the baby”, and in fact mothers were often too busy to look after their babies. The fishing-peasant household afforded a range of tasks for differing capabilities.

*My grandfather ... was over 90 years and was blind while he still could work a little – the houses were close at that time, so it was just a few steps from their cottage to the shed ...and there he sawed firewood – cleaved, and carried in, although he was blind – The cow-house was a bit further up, and I do not think he managed to go there.<sup>61</sup>*

The immaterial work of the old, their advice and teachings, was clearly the most important part. Children were taught moral precepts, sometimes to read, by their grandmothers or grandfathers. In this period, the old were probably important teachers of the languages and cultures repressed by the authorities. Subsistence demanded the experience of age: particularized competences of perception, judgment and planning must be taught *in situ* over time and integrated with a variety of skills. The teaching of the old is a recurring theme in the sources. Industry and wage labor brought competing competences and authorities which emphasized strength and technical skill rather than localized experience.<sup>62</sup>

Agriculture was the most frequently registered occupation of very old men and women. Women were often registered as landholders’ and tenants’ wives, although an active old wife

could be the primary husbandry farmer. Some very old lived with families of sons and daughters in their teens and twenties, registered as "helping their parents", "working for their mother". These old peasants retained the authority over the holding, and were in fact supported by the young people. Others seem to have been self-supporting peasants in their high age. By 1900, some very old crofters and tenants lived in small households with spouse and/or servant, unmarried child or grandchild, and no other income registered. I have tentatively concluded that around one out of ten of the very old supported themselves *primarily* by their own work and means.

The old women's housework and textile work seems under-registered.<sup>63</sup> Household crafts – knitting, binding of fishing-nets, carpentry, shoemaking (Norwegian men), sewing of footwear and fur clothing (Sámi women), – were both inherent to subsistence, and independent incomes. Spinning, which demanded the experienced touch rather than good eyesight, was a particular old women's craft. Homespun woolen underclothing had been considered vital for the fishermen's survival, but imported textiles began to take over at the end of the century.<sup>64</sup> Ancient people kept up ancient crafts: A blockmaker, a pail-maker, men and women rug-makers above 80 were registered in 1900. A few unmarried craftsmen, immigrants to the region during the century, continued their craft in high age, and lodged with others.<sup>65</sup> A retired widow in Lurøy practiced as a healer in 1875. And a few very old men were merchants or held official positions; the bailiff of Hasvik was 87 years in 1900.

Of the very old women in Nordland 1900, 2,5 per cent, 23 persons, were registered as working for others, most as unmarried rural servants. A couple of men and women were registered as day laborers in their high age. Three old men over 80 were registered as mine workers in 1875 and 1900, living in the company's lodgings with their sons, a common



arrangement on the Swedish side.<sup>66</sup> Disabled old miners were entitled to support by the company, but no age limit was yet introduced.<sup>67</sup>

The number of women above 80 living from private means or property income in Nordland 1900 was also small. Saving banks that were established in the region encouraged saving for old age, which was increasing among farmers and laborers in Sweden.<sup>68</sup> The bedridden Jonetta Larsdr. lived in a large farming household as a pensioner off her means (*livørekone*). She had contracted her means to the farmer, in return for nursing and support for the rest of her life. Such contracts, mentioned in the ethnographic material, were common in Western Finnmark.<sup>69</sup>

In this period, municipalities began issuing small pensions on application. There were 23 pensioners over 80 in the region in 1900, mostly teachers, parish clerks and their widows in Nordland. Apparently women's work did not elicit pension: Former midwife Karen Arntsen received a pension in 1875, not for her public services, but as the widow of a parish clerk.

### **Sámi traditions of support**

It is sometimes speculated, in a utilitarian vein, that peoples subsisting from a harsh nature would not support old people who no longer could make themselves useful.<sup>70</sup> The Sámi fishing- hunting community, the Siida, used to support the household's maintenance of the old and infirm.<sup>71</sup> By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Siidas had become predominantly reindeer herding communities, except among the East Sámi. For the Sámi fishing-hunting peasants, household, kin, and neighbours seem to have been the basic social systems.<sup>72</sup>

It has been maintained that the Sámi cared little for old parents, or supported them from duty only.<sup>73</sup> Accounts from 17<sup>th</sup> century Swedish Lappmark relate that the Sámi took good care of

their parents and “nursed and maintained them until their death day with the greatest care”. Destitute people were taken in by their neighbours, often on a yearly basis.<sup>74</sup> Cultural conceptions of care would vary. A recent study suggests that care according to Sámi traditions might be expressed silently and indirectly, sometimes with a rough humour, and could be lost on outsiders.<sup>75</sup> Jåstad found that the probability of living with an own child was higher among Sámi above 60 than among other ethnicities in Finnmark and North-Troms in 1865 and 1875, but not in 1900.<sup>76</sup>

Nomad reindeer herders’ households crossed vast mountain areas with children and old people every year. Women of 89 years were registered as “nomadic”. The old people’s experience was important for reading the terrain, reindeer, and weather. A 20<sup>th</sup> century study of a reindeer herding province found that the old were treated with deference, their advice followed, and respect was shown even in “approaching senility”.<sup>77</sup> When the 80-year old widow Beret Aslaksdatter, living with her family of reindeer herders in 1900, was registered as “Grandmother of the tent”, a position of dignity was certainly suggested.

It has been suggested that when the old were unable to follow, it was considered quite natural to leave them behind in the mountains.<sup>78</sup> The first Sámi author, the reindeer herder Johan Turi, described a situation with very heavy walking and unexpected storm:

*and the old people, who are 80 years, they are exhausted, and they have weak eyes...and they get too tired to manage the long marches, and have to stop over the night in the wilderness; sometimes they do not manage to make fire, and if they do, they do not manage to tear dwarf birch enough to keep the fire going the whole night, and then they are so thoroughly frozen that life almost flees. If the weather in addition is rough, it is even worse; but for this there is no way out; neither reindeer nor people manage to carry them.<sup>79</sup>*

In his account, the old were left behind because of desperate circumstances, not as a cultural custom.

North Sámi reindeer herders had their *verdde* system of reciprocal co-operation, friendship – often including kinship and godparenthood – between nomad siidas and households, and resident households, both in the inland and at the coast. Old reindeer herders might possibly be taken into the households of resident *verdde*, to join their families when they returned.<sup>80</sup> Most old reindeer herders probably had to leave their households on giving up nomadism. Some old reindeer owners kept their identity and an income while others herded their reindeer; Anders Olsen Smuk, registered as "old reindeer herder" in 1865, lived with the families of sons who were fishermen. Those who did not live with resident family, lodged with peasants, supported by combinations of family help, poor relief, and their crafts and fishing.

Discontinuity and insecurity of old age could be a challenge of nomad life, with the risk of pauperization.<sup>81</sup> As far as the census registrations go, very old Sámi registered in Troms and Finnmark lived from relief to a slightly lower degree than the average population, while the degree was higher among the few very old Sámi registered in Nordland.<sup>82</sup> The poverty of resident Sámi was a recurring theme in the Medical Officers reports during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and beyond, and their nursing of the old generally described as negligent. Some doctors and district nurses in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century deplored the sight of old Sámi lying in a corner "on some reindeer skins" instead of sheets. On one hand, reindeer skins were the common bedding among the Sámi, and particularly useful for the bedridden; reindeer skins were procured for the prevention of bed-sores. On the other hand, poor people might not afford skins of good quality, and the skins were difficult to clean when soiled with urine.

The deacon Bertrand Nilssen of the Sámi Mission argued in the 1890's that bad conditions for the old and sick were not caused by lack of charity, but by ignorance about sick care, besides poverty and crowded dwellings.<sup>83</sup> The tuberculosis mortality in Finnmark must also have affected the care of the old, of all nationalities. In some homes, only children and helpless old people were left. Lack of labour resources was a recurring point in nurses' reports of insufficient care.<sup>84</sup>

### **Retirement**

A married peasant couple, widow, or widower, could decide to contract the authority over their holding to a son, less frequently to a daughter. Most entered retirement well before 80. The retirement agreement was not a transferring of ownership, though often formalized as a clause on the deed. It included the young people's duty to support the old couple for the rest of their lives from an agreed part of the holding's produce, with nursing in sickness, and the funeral. Retirement might extend to siblings, and a few "retirement maids" over 80 were registered in the censuses. The system was of medieval origin, common in Nordic countries, and peaked in Norway by mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>85</sup> Unlike Southern Scandinavia, retirement in Northern Norway was not affected by large-scale sale of land and rural proletarianization.<sup>86</sup> In the ongoing transition from tenancy to free-holdings, retirement helped to keep the land in the family. Although gradually decreasing, retirement was the dominant form of support in the region as a whole, with half the very old in 1875, and 43 per cent in 1900.

An informant explained:

*There was retirement as long as the old can remember, preferably put on paper. They should have a retirement cottage or room, and part of the produce of the farm: milk, potatoes, meat, wool, eggs. Peat for winter fuel. Preferably their own beasts that they tended as long as they managed.*<sup>87</sup>

Retirement cottages were actually few in the region, most in the south of Nordland.<sup>88</sup> When Ståle Dyrvik defines the household as a unit of people with separate dwelling and food, he emphasizes that the food implies a common economy.<sup>89</sup> The retired old usually had their room in the house and cooked some of their food. They could be registered as a separate household in the census, particularly when both man and wife lived, or as members of the young people's household. In his study of the living arrangements of elderly from historical and contemporary censuses, Steven Ruggles has defined intergenerational co-residence as residing in the same registered household, which excludes many of the retired.<sup>90</sup> In this study of the old above 80, the retired are categorized as supported primarily by their younger family. This is a consequence of the retirement system's capacity to contain the ageing process. Retirement could be described as a temporary, dependent and sheltered household, established within the holding's household, into which it gradually dissolved.<sup>91</sup> As Jåstad points out, retirement is not a kin term *per se*,<sup>92</sup> but retirement outside of the family was very infrequent in the period. Retirement always included work according to ability, and at the same time formalized the gradual withdrawal of the old from onerous tasks.<sup>93</sup> The "retirement sheep" and potato-patch were replaced with wool, meat and potatoes, then with care.

*Retirement couples made their own food as long as they both lived [...] if the wife died, the man usually went over to the young people's table [...] but if the retirement man or wife became old and frail, the young people must care for them entirely with food, care and nursing.*<sup>94</sup>

Official Norwegian systems took a formal male rule for granted. The husband was the owner or tenant in the land deed and tax lists, and the household's official representative. This however meant not at all that he usually would decide for his wife in matters of property.<sup>95</sup> Moring concludes that the contracts, usually set up by the retiring old themselves, tried to

protect the interests of both the man and the woman. The yield was equal for both; when one died, the yield was reduced, usually halved.<sup>96</sup>

The term “retired” was also used simply about old people living with the younger generation. Written contracts were infrequent among tenants, and a “silent agreement” might suffice.<sup>97</sup> In such cases, there was no clear distinction between retirement and continuing to live together. The census registrations may include both formal and informal agreements. Nevertheless, the census takers tried to draw that distinction. Not all could retire. The census of 1875 registered a number of persons as retired and supported by their children as well; their retirement was clearly insufficient. Retirement was of course no option for fishermen without land. The same went for crofters, whose contract with the landholder in this part of Norway was usually, though not always, inherited.<sup>98</sup> The Crofters’ Act of 1851 did not meet the challenge of old age security. On getting old, the crofter would frequently pass the croft to one of his children, and go “in bread” with him.<sup>99</sup> The widow was usually allowed to stay her lifetime. In all such cases, the old “had according to custom food and care with the young people, had their own chamber or lived in the common room with the others, and participated in work according to ability.”<sup>100</sup>

In the southern and middle municipalities of Troms, most peasants were landholders, and between half and two-thirds of those above 80 were retired in 1865. In the county’s northernmost municipalities, the proportion was one out of five. Still further north, in Finnmark, only nine persons above 80 were retired in 1865. The retired were 0,3 per cent of the county’s population, while the national average was 3,29 per cent.<sup>101</sup> The dominance of the retirement system did not extend to the northernmost parts of the region. In his study of retirement contracts, Kjeld Helland-Hansen found that northern Norway entered the contract

material late. All contracts from Finnmark, save one, dated from the 19th century.<sup>102</sup>

Consequently, the total proportion of very old supported by family and relations was lower in Finnmark than in the other counties, and the proportions supported primarily by poor relief and own work tended to be higher.

Helland-Hansen connects the low incidence of retirement to the weak position of agriculture in Finnmark. He concludes that retirement had no customary basis in the country, but was constructed from the laws.<sup>103</sup> Finnmark had long traditions of combining fishing with sheep and cattle husbandry, although the scale was generally small. In many districts, Sámi peasants used to move seasonally to fishing and hunting sites and for pasture. The cultivation of rye and oats was introduced by Kven immigrants as late as the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>104</sup>

Although some Sámi entered retirement, the institution had clearly no part in Sámi traditions. In Finnmark, retirement was mostly concentrated to the Norwegian community Talvik<sup>105</sup> Jåstad has pointed out that the ultimogeniture inheritance practice common among the Sámi would reduce the motive for a retirement agreement, compared with Norwegian primogeniture. The property was inherited by the youngest son, sometimes daughter, usually the one to care for the parents in old age.<sup>106</sup> The differing practices of retirement may connect with land ownership and jurisdiction. In early medieval time, Norse settlements stretched as far as Northern Troms, where Sámi settlement took over.<sup>107</sup> Although Norwegian authorities finished their registration of Sámi land property in Troms by 1755, Sámi conceptions and practices on land use and inheritance were continued in North Troms far into the next century.<sup>108</sup> Except for parts in Talvik-Alta, the land in Finnmark was unregistered. The state claimed the unregistered land in Finnmark as Crown property in 1848, which would make Sámi peasants state tenants of their land and fishing-hunting areas. One community was

subsequently threatened with relocation.<sup>109</sup> Most peasants in Finnmark disappeared from view when the census of 1865 re-defined barely thousand combination holders that had been registered in 1855.<sup>110</sup>

Formal retirement presupposed a Norwegian deed of land ownership, which the government tried to introduce in Finnmark from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with varying success, to restrict seasonal moving and enhance the productivity of State land. Retirement also presupposed a clear agreement of succession, which people did not always considered necessary.<sup>111</sup> The frequency of voluntary peasant retirement indicates the efficacy of Norwegian land jurisdiction. By 1900, the proportion of retired over 80 had increased in Northern Troms, but not in Finnmark.<sup>112</sup> By then, retirement was generally decreasing in the region.

Culturally relevant structures – kin, neighbors, and communal systems - are generally vital for maintaining family and household care. These ties must have been under particular pressure in Sámi communities in the period. The closure of the border with Finland in 1852 and repeated legal regulations of reindeer herding added to norwegianization policy, the introduction of State land ownership, and the general population pressure with increasing needs for resident care in age and sickness. Hilde Jåstad points out that the Land Act of 1902, which made the purchase of land a prerogative of the Norwegian-speaking, would increase the probability of the younger generation leaving their birthplace upon marriage, to establish themselves in areas where they still had access to land.<sup>113</sup>

### **Shared living**

Reciprocal support between parents and children was mandatory in earlier Danish-Norwegian diocese decrees and in the Poor Acts, although only parents' failure to support their children



was penalized. The reciprocity was emphasized in that children born out of wedlock were obliged to support their mother only.<sup>114</sup>

Most frequently by far, the old lived and were supported by with their own children or children-in-law.

*..it was common that the old parents, and in case the grandparents, lived in the cottage with the rest of the family. This is known since the late 18th century... they had their place close to the hearth, on a bench with a table in front.*<sup>115</sup>

Jåstad, whose material does not include the never-married, found that two-thirds of those over 60 in Finnmark and North-Troms lived with an own child over 18 years in 1865 and 1875. In 1900, the proportion was far lower, a finding discussed below.<sup>116</sup> Although the censuses do not specify kin relations consistently, a range of household relations are registered. It occurred that several children supported an old parent who lived with one of them.<sup>117</sup> Some very old lived with grandchildren or step-children. Unmarried and probably childless old lived with nephews or nieces. Others made a living with a markedly younger sister or brother. The frequency of marriage and remarriage was rather high, and it was not uncommon that the spouse was much younger. The censuses registered a few women over 80 with husbands 15 to 20 years younger; younger men might marry widows with land, or with many reindeer.<sup>118</sup> Remarriage produced new sets of relations by marriage.

The distinction between kin and non-kin was not clear-cut. The Sámi recognized kin obligations in far more distant relations than the Norwegians did.<sup>119</sup> The godparent relation was also important in Sámi culture and might possibly include cases of old age support.<sup>120</sup> Fostering was very common, and the censuses registered foster-parents supported by their

foster-children.<sup>121</sup> The 84-year old Sara Catrina Rosenkrands, an immigrant from Finland, had lived fifty years in Norway in 1865. She was registered as a pauper, but also as the grandmother of the foster-child in the family where she lived, and it is probable that they supported her in part. Some very old servants were supported and nursed. The unmarried 82-year-old Henrikke Eriksdatter was supported by her employers “for long and faithful service”. According to the ethnographic sources, old servants should as a rule stay “in bread” with the family. The institution of the unmarried lifetime rural servant faded by the end of the century. The employers’ duty was weakened, and many old servants must look to relatives or end as paupers.<sup>122</sup>

The reminiscences relate of old people taken in by their children on becoming frail or widowed in a “nuclear reincorporation”<sup>123</sup> ; younger people moving to the old to nurse and keep house for a period; and old parents moving between their children.<sup>124</sup> A few persons and couples over 80 were registered living with younger people - a servant, a house-keeper, a lodger, or a pauper, – in so-called “no family households”.<sup>125</sup> It must have been inconvenient and often impossible to live alone in frail old age, and it seems that people usually found other solutions. Two or three couples fostered little children in their high age. It also occurred that the very old supported the young. The 80-year old Peder Olsen at Tjøtta was in 1900 a crofter with no land except a potato patch. He lived with his unmarried daughter, who was crippled and had a baby, and both received public relief. Several such examples suggest that a generational interdependency might be called upon.

The census of 1900 provided a general term for resident relations, the ‘family lodger’, defined as someone living and eating dinner with the family, and distinct from the single lodger.<sup>126</sup> The term was not restricted to kin, although many were in addition registered as mother or

father. In common usage the term lodger (*logerende, innerst*) referred both to lodgers who paid rent, and to household members living in bread.<sup>127</sup> In absence of additional information, the family lodgers are categorized as sharing the household's living, which accords with the support relations registered in the 1875 census. The 'family lodgers' were 25-30 % of the very old in all three counties in 1900.

In her study of elderly in Finnmark and North Troms, Jåstad found however that co-residence of family members was changing. The probability for people above 60 to live with an own child fell from two-thirds in 1875 to less than half in 1900, because the tendency of married sons to live with elderly parents decreased, in particular when the parents were widowed. British studies report similar findings in this period.<sup>128</sup> Jåstad concludes that the elderly who did not reside with an own adult child, lived as lodgers and boarders in households with non-relatives.<sup>129</sup> The grounds for concluding that they were non-relatives is however not clear. As we have seen, the censuses registered old people living with several kinds of relatives and relations beyond the parent-child nucleus. Also, if half the elderly over 60 were boarders and lodgers, they would presumably have to pay for their keep. It is probable that the majority of the elderly in 1900 had little separate income.

Åsa Elstad found that the coastal households generally were open and interacting, regulating need for labour and scarcity of food by exchanging household members. It was usual for children and young people to live with relations or neighbours for a shorter or longer time. The households were reciprocally supported by neighbourhood and non-resident kin, might develop in different directions and included a variety of positions.<sup>130</sup> Naomi Tadmor found similar traits in early modern Britain. She concludes that while the composition of the household-family was changing, an enduring continuity of structure was produced, which

accommodated life-course changes over time.<sup>131</sup> Pier Paolo Viazzo sums up that historians have joined forces with social anthropologists and ethnologists in uncovering a great variety of family forms, kinship patterns, and domestic arrangements in the past, while emphasizing their dynamic and transitional character.<sup>132</sup>

### **Relief in the household**

The introduction of poor relief was to a degree accommodated into the family and relations structures. Relief was a first priority loan and thus a market transaction as well as a social redistribution, and children inherited their parents' pauper debts. These obligations were enforced to different degrees.<sup>133</sup> One-fourth of all recipients in the region in 1900 received public relief on grounds of "old age weakness".<sup>134</sup> The proportion above 80 receiving full or part relief remained constant in the period, around 25 per cent in Finnmark, 17-19 per cent in Troms and Nordland. In 1900, 490 very old persons in the region were recipients. The Poor Statistics does not differentiate forms of relief as to age, and forms of relief are mentioned inconsistently in the censuses. Many of these old were not *primarily* supported by relief. A person who once received an old garment or a bag of flour would be registered as a pauper. Around 60 per cent of all recipients in the region in 1866 were only partly supported.<sup>135</sup>

Two-thirds of the 88 persons above 80 who had remained unmarried were registered in 1865 as recipients, which may indicate that the Poor Boards indeed prioritized old people with no children to support them.<sup>136</sup> Still, a major part of very old recipients lived with younger families, kin or other relations – in the three censuses and the three counties. Many of these were probably primarily supported by the housing, heating, and food they shared with the household, and the care they received, with relief as a much-needed supplement. In this study, this group is categorized as supported by shared living. The very old *primarily* categorized as

supported by relief, were those registered explicitly as “fully supported”, as nursed at public expense (even by their family), or as supported by municipal ‘*legd*’, which is discussed below. The category also includes persons registered with “poor relief” or “pauper” and no further information.

Of the 307 persons above 80 receiving public relief in Nordland 1900, 35 per cent combined relief with shared living or retirement. For 44 per cent, 135 persons, relief was the primary source of support (full support, *legd*, nursing at public expense). Not far from half this group lived with their family or relations too. The remaining 22 per cent were registered as recipients (paupers) simply. The Poor Acts were ambiguous: Nobody was entitled to relief who could be supported by their family. At the same time, relief was not intended as a livelihood, just a contribution. Running through 19<sup>th</sup> century Poor Act debate was the principle of maintenance by individual wage-earning. Relief to the few very old had long communal traditions and was probably not controversial. The yields were often scant and irregular, described in reminiscences as “crumbles” and “pittances”, and fluctuated with the insecure municipal finances. The poor-chest was frequently empty in crisis times, which probably explains the decrease in the proportion of very old supported by relief particularly in Finnmark by 1900.<sup>137</sup>

At that time, relief in kind - flour, fuel, clothing and footwear - was still most common in the region, although money support began to take over.<sup>138</sup> Relief granted to the individual was usually really a support of the household. Grandmothers’ pauper income of fuel, flour, or money contributed to the common fund of food and heating.<sup>139</sup> As income taxation in money was introduced, even a small income of money could be crucial.<sup>140</sup>

## Interdependence

In 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, the obligation to support elderly kin usually did not extend beyond the nuclear family.<sup>141</sup> In this region, the few very old were not infrequently supported by people who were not their children. According to the ethnographic records, support and care for old step-parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, and servants, went far beyond the reciprocal obligations of the law.<sup>142</sup> These conventions would be observed to varying degrees, depending on available resources and forces of circumstances, as well as personal charitableness and bonds of affection, and did not preclude conflict.<sup>143</sup> But they were not per definition relations of subordination.

How are we to understand family and relations' support of the very old? It was said to be self-evident, and the ethnographic sources give no moral *reason* for supporting and nursing old family and kin, other than the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment.<sup>144</sup> In Lutheran teaching, this meant the holy duty of serving and supporting one's parents in old age and weakness.<sup>145</sup> The religious and existential aspects appeared in Sámi and Norwegian folk tales of neglected old parents who returned as ghosts after death.<sup>146</sup> The actual practice went beyond Luther's filial duty. It also went beyond the Poor Act's utilitarian principle of reciprocity between children and parents. The legal principle of reciprocity in itself did not protect against insecurity; as the saying went, a father could support seven sons, but seven sons could not support a father. In the retirement system, reciprocity was however operative.

Anthropologists have regarded reciprocity as a basic principle of pre-industrial social systems.<sup>147</sup> Reciprocity is also sometimes regarded as basic to care. Marshall Sahlins however points out that reciprocity is "a between relation, the action and reaction of two parties" which

involves symmetry, while redistribution through the pooling of resources is the complement of social unity.<sup>148</sup> Historians have regarded pooling of resources as a key function of the household.<sup>149</sup> According to Peter Laslett, European pre-industrial households were characterized by a common fund maintaining all its members, largely administered by the women.<sup>150</sup>

The term ‘pooling’ is apt for the rural households of Northern Norway where individual money income was marginal. Work, experience and competences as well as resources were continuously pooled and usually administrated by the “house-mother”,<sup>151</sup> as expressed in the saying: “Blessed be many hands, damned be many teeth.”<sup>152</sup> The evolving collective was the primary economic unity, and it has been shown that household collectivity also functioned as a moral norm.<sup>153</sup> In consequence, support in high age was not primarily a redistribution of resources from independent to dependent individual members. The old participated in the joint household support.

In Tadmor’s analysis, household authority and management, not blood and marriage, composed the boundaries of 18<sup>th</sup> century British household-families.<sup>154</sup> We may compare with Stephen Ruggles’ conclusion that co-residence between parents and married children in 19<sup>th</sup> century USA did not reflect old age dependency, but was rather a relation of interdependence.<sup>155</sup> Kjeld Helland-Hansen makes the point even more forcibly when he emphasizes that retirement was *the farm’s* continued support of the old farmer.<sup>156</sup>

Conversely, the old people’s large and small contributions of work, experience, or relief money, were needed and utilized.<sup>157</sup> By continuing support and care for its weakest members, the collective was maintained as the basic security for survival.<sup>158</sup>

### **The destitute**

The 85 years old Karen Larsdatter lived alone in Lurøy in 1865, the widow of a fisherman with no land. She was supported by charity, which in her case probably meant neighbor help. Long-term support was customarily a kin obligation, but neighbor help – a few fish, some milk, a meal, a garment, and a hand in practical support – was vital in the day-to-day survival of destitute old people with no kin support. This was explained in terms of ancient custom, reciprocity (today me, tomorrow you), being a good neighbor, Christian duty, and God's blessings.<sup>159</sup> A woman remembered an old widow around 1910:

*She was poor, half blind, full of lice and miserable in every way. When she came to us she was given food and perhaps some clothing, and then I must take her by the hand to the place where she lived. It was not pleasant, but it was necessary.*<sup>160</sup>

Some old people went from house to house part of the year, staying a time with each, appreciated as workers or suffered as nuisances.<sup>161</sup> It happened that a farmer or merchant supported permanently one or two old people whom they knew, preferably relations.<sup>162</sup> One woman over 80, visiting Nordland in 1875, was registered as a beggar. Although begging was illegal, it was not uncommon, and in some districts old women used to make their rounds. The Poor Acts revived the medieval Norwegian *legd* system in rural municipalities. A *legd* was a unit of farms (tenants and self-holders), obliged to support a number of destitute persons. Municipal outlay was thus avoided. In this region, the *legdsman* or *legdswoman* usually stayed one to three weeks with each, and moved on.<sup>163</sup> They should be able to walk, but old bedridden *legdspeople* were registered in the censuses, transported on sledges in winter.<sup>164</sup> The system was based on discontinuity; but wealthier farmers sometimes supported *legdspeople* on a yearly basis.



Legd had long traditions in some communities, and none in others.<sup>165</sup> The system peaked in part of the region during the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, increased from 1851 to 1866, and was decreasing by 1875.<sup>166</sup> It was most frequent in the southernmost part of the region, with one-fourth of all relief recipients in 1866.<sup>167</sup> It was not used in Finnmark. An exception was the 90 year old widow Ane Olsdatter in Talvik, registered as a legdswoman in 1865.<sup>168</sup> She may have been contracted for long-term care; the census takers sometimes used the term legd generally about persons supported by relief.<sup>169</sup> According to the 1865 census, there were 112 legdspeople above 80 in Nordland and Troms.<sup>170</sup> It was quite a common form of old age support in some municipalities: In Vefsn in Nordland, one out of five of all above 80 –17 persons – were registered as legdspeople in 1865.

Legd was the destiny which the poor and old feared. Legdspeople were a burden on all households and belonged to none. They figured in a host of stories, about ill-use as well as charity.<sup>171</sup> By making the householders take the most destitute regularly into their homes, the municipalities utilized the communal potentialities of the peasant household. The system suggests that the proximity between scant means and destitution was generally recognized.

Who were at risk of ending their days on legd? According to the ethnographic sources, old crofters, crofters' widows, and old servants with nobody to turn to, would often end on legd in some communities, and rarely in others. It was said that some had toiled all their time and still sunk into penury.<sup>172</sup> The Poor Board was authorized to split households to reduce relief costs, and the practices differed between municipalities. There is no census evidence that legd was comparatively more common among any ethnic or immigrant group. Compared with all above 80 in Nordland and Troms, the proportion of women was higher - three in four legdspeople were women. And among the legdswomen, the proportion of widows was a bit lower, the married part was much lower, and the proportion who had remained unmarried much higher –

30 %, against 10 % of all women above 80 in the two counties. Also a larger part of the very old legdmen had remained unmarried. In 1865, four out of ten of the never-married over 80 in the two counties were registered as legdspeople. A number of old legdspeople were probably recruited from single lodgers. This accords with the general characteristic in the ethnographic records: The legdspeople were “those who had no home and nobody to turn to”. It was said that some had no settled home in childhood, and had lived from casual work. Others were long-term disabled.<sup>173</sup>

Legdspeople were obliged to work according to their ability, which was minimal for most. A few were registered as chopping wood, and several knitted; it was said that the legdswoman would usually ask for a knitting. Some were popular tellers of stories about old times, others sang for the children.<sup>174</sup> The legd system declined all over the country towards 1900, and was abolished by the new Poor Act.<sup>175</sup> The term ‘legd’ remained a symbol of the bad old days for the friendless old, far into the 20 century.

### **Towards the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

Hilde Jåstad associates the decrease in co-residence of elderly widowed parents and their sons with emigration, with the consequences of State land jurisdiction in Finnmark, and particularly with younger men’s increased engagement in industry and fishery towards 1900. The probability of the elderly living with their children was comparably lower in families with fishery as the only occupation. She suggests that economic development brought individualism in the relations between generations, weaker family ties, and looser kin obligations.<sup>176</sup> Importantly, Jåstad found that the probability of living with own child in Finnmark and Northern Troms decreased markedly *by advancing age*. Less than one-third of the old above 75 lived with an own child in 1900; the tendency was contrary to a nuclear re-incorporation of the frail old.<sup>177</sup> This indicates that a number of families were not able to keep

their parents into high age, as family composition shifted and less male labour was available, also for care. Some of these old over 75 were in all probability contracted to households other than their sons', for nursing and care.

As this study shows, the very old in Finnmark and Troms were supported by family and relations in shared living well to the same extent in 1900 as in 1875. The frequency of retirement, depending mainly on the sons' succession to the holding, began however to decrease in Nordland. Since daughters continued to live with elderly parents, the combined effects of economic modernization, emigration, colonialization and tuberculosis may have advanced a gender shift in care responsibility, rather than a general decline of obligations. This was probably the case in Nordland, where industry, in particular mining, rose as an important economy during the 1890's, and combined with more extensive fishing to keep the menfolk from home. Åsa Elstad found that by the turn of the century, women in Nordland were left alone for greater parts of the year with the smallholdings, the children, the old, and sick.<sup>178</sup> It seems that household care and nursing was increasingly gendered as a women's responsibility, in accordance with the general tendency in professional nursing of this period.<sup>179</sup>

Institutionalization of old age began in 1900. The region's public hospitals catered for the acutely sick only. Just one small hospital, established in 1882 by Polish sisters of St. Elisabeth, received the disabled.<sup>180</sup> The first six poor-houses, established in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were municipal housing for people of all ages, and usually provided no food or organized care.<sup>181</sup> The poor-house system expanded from the turn of the century. At the same time, old people's homes were initiated by missions and voluntary associations, in cooperation with municipalities and in accordance with the Poor Act reform. The deacon

Nilssen of the Sámi Mission Society, who pioneered nursing care for old Sámi, established the first old people's home in a rural district in Finnmark 1903.<sup>182</sup> The main expansion of old people's homes in the region came by 1910. They were planned as an alternative to municipal care contracts, but municipal homes were part of the Poor Relief system, often refashioned from poor-houses. Therefore they met with scepticism as well as praise.

### **Conclusion**

No specific securities for old age were instituted in the region during the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, except the tentative introduction of pensions. Public relief became however important to the very old. Money and kind contributions as well as nursing contracts clearly helped many households to keep their old in high age, despite some increasing challenges. Public support and care for the old in this period was effectuated by the common "private" household. A notion of public support of the old was emerging in public debate, but a general old age pension for the lower incomes was not introduced in Norway until 1937.

In the southern and middle part of the region, the ancient retirement and legd systems characterized old age support, creating a deep gulf among the old. The living of the retired majority was probably often scant, but the retirement typically ensured a continuity through old age that may contrast with modern care. At the other end, the small group of old legdspeople subsisted on the edge of the households and the society. The initial municipal emphasis on legd may have increased insecurity and humiliation of poor old age. In Finnmark, these systems were never really established. More research is needed on traditions of social care in the county, and on the possible impacts of State jurisdiction upon Sámi social systems, including old age care.

As expected, strictly individual life support was limited in this age-group, but it is a striking feature that very old people participated in common work if they had some ability at all. The distinction between the infirm and the active old was not institutionalized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For the majority, the continuity of the household structure accommodated changes at the end of life: Occupations were graduated and facilitated, experience conveyed, and slow decline as well as ruptures of health were contained. The family and household developed as a collective precisely through its asymmetries of ages and capabilities. The insecurity inherent in high age was met, but not neutralized. In small, vulnerable households with few kin resources, the future for the very old might be very insecure indeed.

<sup>1</sup> Samuele Rheen, *En kortt Relation om Lapparnes Lefwarne och Sedher* (Uppsala: Harald Wretman, 1897 [1671]), 61.

<sup>2</sup> Norwegian medicinal statistics: Sundhedstilstanden og Medicinalforholdene i Norge 1900 (Kristiania, Norway: Aschehoug, 1902), 251, 265, 279. The diseases of old age were not registered. The use of doctors was limited by cultural incongruence and economy. Ingunn Elstad, "Sjukdommane i dei nordlege landsdelane", in *Sykdom. Nord-Norge før 1940*, ed. Ingunn Elstad and Torunn Hamran (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2006), 14-45. 17, 23-24, 37-38.

<sup>3</sup> Elstad, "Sjukdommane", 18.

<sup>4</sup> Leif Nordstrand, *Mellom to fattiglover. Norsk fattigvesen 1863-1900* (Bergen: University of Bergen 1976), 6. Francis Sejersted: *Den vanskelige frihet. 1814-1851. Norges historie vol. 10*, ed. Knut Mykland (Oslo: Cappelen 1992), 268-269. Fredrik Rode, *Optegnelser fra Finnmarken samlede i Aarene 1826-1834* (Skien, Norway: Peter Feilberg, 1842), 292-293.

<sup>5</sup> Municipal government was introduced in Norway in 1837. Edgar Hovland, "Grotid og glanstid", in *Folkestyre i by og bygd. Norske kommuner gjennom 150 år*, ed. Hans E. Næss (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1987). Nordstrand, *Mellom to fattiglover*. Ingunn Elstad: "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa," in Elstad and Hamran: *Sykdom*, 128-148.

<sup>6</sup> The census of 1865 registered thirty persons of 80 years and above in the region's towns, less than 3 per cent of the age group.

<sup>7</sup> Hilde L. Jåstad, "The effect of ethnicity and economy upon intergenerational coresidence: Northern Norway during the last part of nineteenth century." *Journal of family history* 36, 3 (2011) 263-285. Hilde L. Jåstad, *Northern Co-residence across Generations in Northernmost Norway during the Last part of the Nineteenth Century*. Thesis (Tromsø, Norway: University of Tromsø, 2011). Hilde L. Jåstad, Endring i samisk og norsk husholdsstruktur: Nord-Troms og Finnmark i perioden 1865 til 1900. *Historisk tidsskrift*, vol. 90 (2011), 33-61. Åsa Elstad, *Arbeidsliv i fiskarbondeshushald. Kulturelle perspektiv på sosialisering og kjønnsidentitet. Bø og Hadsel i Vesterålen 1870-1970*. Thesis (Tromsø, Norway: University of Tromsø 2002). Åsa Elstad, "Kvinnfolkarbeid i Vesterålen gjennom hundre år." *Heimen*, 46 (2009) 197-210. Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa." Ingunn Elstad, "I ei seng i stua", in Elstad and Hamran, *Sykdom*, 46-81.

<sup>8</sup> Census of 1865, Norway, *Resultaterne av folketellingen i Norge i januar 1866, C. No.1*, 36 (Christiania, Norway, 1869). Today (2011) the national proportion is 2,8 per cent.

<sup>9</sup> Randi Rønning Balsvik and Michael Drake, "Menneskene i Nord-Norge", in *Nordnorsk kulturhistorie. Bind I*, eds. Einar A. Drivenes, Marit A. Hauan, Helge A. Wold (Oslo, Norway: Gyldendal, 1994), 82-145, 106.

<sup>10</sup> Jåstad, *Northern Co-residence*, 43-49.

<sup>11</sup> Census of 1865, Norway: *Folketellingen, C. No.1*, 60, 65.

<sup>12</sup> Håvard Dahl Bratrein and Einar Niemi, "Inn i riket. Politisk og økonomisk integrasjon gjennom tusen år," in *Nordnorsk kulturhistorie I*, ed. Drivenes, Hauan, Wold, 146-281.

- <sup>13</sup> Alf Ragnar Nielssen, "Economic adaptation among the coast Sami population in Finnmark c.1700." *Acta Borealia*, 1 (1986) 21-41. Lars I. Hansen, "Sami fisheries in the pre-modern era: Household sustenance and market relation." *Acta Borealia* vol.23, No 1, (2006) 56-80. Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, Ch.2.
- <sup>14</sup> Hansen, "Sami fisheries", 66-68. Fishermen increasingly participated in both the Finnmark and Lofoten fisheries, and were away from home from January to Midsummer. Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 112-113, 176,190-191.
- <sup>15</sup> Reminiscence 1964 Nordland 43. Elstad, "Kvinnfolkarbeid," 197.
- <sup>16</sup> Reminiscences 1964 Nordland 13, 22, 36.
- <sup>17</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, ch.2. Crofters' reminiscences (Husmannsminne) Alstadhaug mappe 2. Håvard.D.Bratrein, *Karlsøy og Helgøy bygdebok : folkeliv, næringsliv, samfunnsliv*, vol. III (Hansnes, Norway: Karlsøy kommune, 1993).
- <sup>18</sup> Crofters' reminiscences Nordland, Hol and Valberg.
- <sup>19</sup> Smallpox was weakened by vaccination, and cholera never reached the region. Elstad, "Sjukdommane", 22-23.
- <sup>20</sup> The first tuberculosis institution in the region was established in 1903. Teemu Ryymin, *Smitte, språk og kultur. Tuberkulosearbeidet i Finnmark* (Oslo: Scandinavian Academic press. 2009) ch.2.
- <sup>21</sup> The Poor Act of 1845 was revised in 1863 and reformed in 1900. Elstad: "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa", 135-136.
- <sup>22</sup> Municipalities introduced taxation gradually. General income tax act was introduced for Finnmark 1860, in the rest of the country in 1863. Norwegian public relief statistics: *Fattig-statistik for 1866*, (Kristiania, Norway: 1868). Hovland, "Grotid og glanstid". Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa," 129-130. Edgar Hovland, *Hadsel bygdebok 1. De bygde landet*. (Stokmarknes, Norway: Hadsel bygdeboknemnd, 1995) 297.
- <sup>23</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 141-184. Ivar Bjørklund, Eivind A. Drivenes, Siri Gerrard, "På vei til det moderne. Om jordbruk, fiske, reindrift og industri 1890-1990", in *Nordnorsk kulturhistorie vol. 1*, eds. Drivenes, Hauan, Wold, 282-345.
- <sup>24</sup> Lars I. Hansen and Bjørnar Olsen, *Samenes historie fram til 1750*, (Oslo: Cappelen, 2004) 180-184. Erik Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, (Oslo: Aschehoug 1933) 83, 94-99.
- <sup>25</sup> Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, 50-51.
- <sup>26</sup> Reminiscence 1964 Nordland 69, Troms 54. G&G I 44 Beiarn. Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 171.
- <sup>27</sup> Reminiscence 1964 Troms 12.
- <sup>28</sup> G&G I 73 Beiarn. Cf. Lynn Bothelho and Pat Thane, "Introduction", in *Women and ageing in British society since 1500*, eds. Lynn Bothelho and Pat Thane (Harlow etc., UK: Longman, 2001).
- <sup>29</sup> Botelho and Thane, referring to British society, states that the impression that older people in the past received more respect from the younger "is a stereotype that deserves explosion". "Introduction", 1.
- <sup>30</sup> Tamara Hareven, "Aging and generational relations: A historical and life course perspective", *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol.20 (1994) 437-461. Howard P. Chudakoff and Tamara Hareven, "From the empty nest to family dissolution: Life course transitions into old age", *Journal of Family History*, 4:1 (1979) 69-83.
- <sup>31</sup> Ida Bull, "Enkers levebrød i et førindustrielt bysamfunn." *Historisk tidsskrift* vol. 65, (1986) 318- 342. Stephen Hussey, "'An inheritance of fear': older women in the twentieth-century countryside", in *Women and ageing*, eds. Bothelho and Thane, 186-206. Ulla Rosén, "The subject's duties and the citizen's demands: on changes in elder care in Swedish agrarian society," 1815-1939. *Journal of Family History* (2008) 33-81, p.92. Botelho and Thane, "Introduction."
- <sup>32</sup> People who were 90 and more in 1875 were consequently counted twice in the total material.
- <sup>33</sup> The searches in the census databases of the Norwegian Historical Data Centre were completed before 2011. I have been informed from the Data Centre that the inclusion criteria for the census databases were altered in 2011.
- <sup>34</sup> See Bjørg Evjen and Lars I. Hansen, "One people – many names: on different designations for the Sami population in the Norwegian county of Nordland through the centuries." *Continuity and Change* 24 (2), (2010) 211-243. Bjørg Evjen and Lars I. Hansen, "Kjært barn- mange navn. Om forskjellige betegnelser på den samiske befolkningen i Nordland gjennom århundrene", in *Nordlands kulturelle mangfold. Etniske relasjoner i historisk perspektiv*. eds. Bjørg Evjen and Lars I. Hansen, (Oslo: pax, 2008)17-47. Ethnicity was self-ascribed or ascribed by the census takers on family grounds. The censuses of 1875 and 1900 erroneously categorized sea-Sámi as Kvens, and introduced a category of "mixed origin". Following Evjen and Hansen, four persons registered as "mixed Sámi" are included among the 78 Sámi over 80 in Finnmark 1900, and eight of "mixed Finnish" ethnicity among the 42 Kvens. For 25% of those over 80, no nationality was stated. Those registered with no ethnicity markers in 1865 and 1900 were in all probability the ethnic Norwegians.
- <sup>35</sup> Jåstad concludes that about one-third of the population in northern Troms and Finnmark were registered as Sami in all three censuses, while the proportion of Norwegians rose from 48 to 55 per cent between 1865 and 1900. "Endringen i samisk og norsk husholdsstruktur", 43.

- <sup>36</sup> The numeral age limit is used consistently. Ulla Rosén has included younger spouses in her study of people over 60. In this study it is a point that a younger spouse might support the older. Rosén, *The subject's duties*, 87.
- <sup>37</sup> Tamara Hareven, "The family as process: The historical study of the family cycle". *Journal of Social History*, vol.7, 3(1974) 322-329: 326.
- <sup>38</sup> See Pier Paolo Viazzo, "Family, kinship and welfare provision in Europe, past and present; commonalities and divergences". *Continuity and Change* 25 (1) (2010) 137-159,153. The sources are: 1) The National archives of Norway: Privatarkiv PA 424: Gards- og grannesamfunnsundersøkinga, hereafter G&G. 2) Department of culture studies and oriental Languages, University of Oslo: Reminiscence records: 112 reminiscences collected in 1964, written by men and women of Nordland and Troms, most from fishing-peasant homes, the oldest born in the 1870's, the majority Norwegian. 3) The Norwegian museum of cultural history (Norsk folkemuseum): Crofters' and workers' reminiscences: Husmannsminner, Arbeiderminner.
- <sup>39</sup> Census of 1900, Norway. Instruction to the census takers. The single lodgers are marked with an x "to signify that they do not belong to the family household". Norwegian Historical Data Centre website.
- <sup>40</sup> Richard Wall, "Economic Collaboration of family members within and beyond households in English society, 1600-2000". *Continuity and Change* 25 (1) (2010) 83-108. Botelho and Thane, "Introduction", 8. Bull, "Enkers Levebrød," 318- 342.
- <sup>41</sup> In the census of 1865, family position and occupation were combined in one question. Many were registered as poor relief recipients and their family position left unanswered.
- <sup>42</sup> In 1965 two persons over 80 in addition lived in retirement cottages of the family holdings. See Jåstad, "Northern co-residence", 48-49.
- <sup>43</sup> Rosén, "The subject's duties", 90-88.
- <sup>44</sup> Wall, *Economic Collaboration*. 93-95. Susannah Ottaway, "The old woman's home in eighteenth-century England", in *Women and ageing*, eds. Botelho and Thane, 111-138: 131; Viazzo, "Family, Kinship and Welfare Provision".
- <sup>45</sup> The Poor Acts av 1863.
- <sup>46</sup> "Livsstilling (Næringsvei) eller av hvem forsørget?"
- <sup>47</sup> 187 out of 216.
- <sup>48</sup> Jåstad, "Endringen i samisk og norsk husholdsstruktur," 61. See Jåstad, "The effects of ethnicity", 265-266; Richard Wall, "Introduction", in *Family forms in historic Europe*, eds. Richard Wall, Jean Robin and Peter Laslett (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University press, 1983), 1-63: 61; Lutz K. Berkner, "The Stem Family and the Developmental Cycle of the Peasant Household: An Eighteenth-Century Austrian Example", *The American Historical Review*, vol. 77, No 2, (1972), 398-418; Steven Ruggles, "Stem families and joint families in historical perspective". *Population and Development Review* 36:3, (2010) 563-577.
- <sup>49</sup> Only 21 persons over 80 (less than 1%) of those supported by families or kin in the census of 1900.
- <sup>50</sup> G&G II 51, 69-70. Elstad, "I ei seng," 65-66.
- <sup>51</sup> Reminiscence 1981 Nordland 30, 1964 Nordland 3, 5, 69. Crofters' reminiscences Nordland II, Saltdal. Elstad, "I ei seng," 56-57, 71-78. Kjeld Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningens historie i Norge*, (Oslo, Norway: Riksantikvaren, 1997),169.
- <sup>52</sup> G&G I 71, Buksnes and Hol.
- <sup>53</sup> Lise Lorentsen, Sortland, quoted in G&G I 79 Vesterålen.
- <sup>54</sup> G&G I 20 Trondenes, Hadsel. Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa", 140.
- <sup>55</sup> Adolf Steen, *Alder og aldersproblemer hos samene* (Oslo: Norske gerontologiske skrifter nr. 6, 1961). Reminiscence 1964 Troms 54.
- <sup>56</sup> *Public relief statistics*, 1866, 75-76; 1900, 2-3, 76-77. Norwegian medicinal statistics 1900: *Sundhedstilstanden*, NOS 4:55 1900: 32-33.
- <sup>57</sup> 1863 Poor Acts, §34. Hovland, *Hadsel bygdebok 1*, 294.
- <sup>58</sup> G&G I 20 Lurøy. Reminiscence 1964 Troms 22, 54., 1981 47.
- <sup>59</sup> Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa," 140-142.
- <sup>60</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 81-84, Elstad, "Kvinnfolkarbeid." She argues that gender labour division in coastal society was generally not rigid, but included overlapping and co-operation. Compare Jåstad, "Endringen i samisk og norsk husholdsstruktur," 54-55. Gender and age distinctions were in general sharper on larger farms with many servants, and of course in the small upper class of merchants and civil servants. G&G I 30, 34.
- <sup>61</sup> Reminiscence 1964,Troms 4.
- <sup>62</sup> Reminiscence 1964 Nordland 12, 23, 65, 69, Troms 1964 2,9, 14. G&G I 73, 74, 76. Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 77-81, 181-182.
- <sup>63</sup>Cfr. Beatrice Moring, "Nordic retirement contracts and the economic situation of widows." *Continuity and Change* 21 (3), 383-418. (2006) 386.
- <sup>64</sup> Åsa Elstad, *Moteløver og heimfjøringar*. (Stamsund, Norway: Orkana, 1996), 96-97.

- <sup>65</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 106-107.
- <sup>66</sup> Dan Bäcklund and Kristina Lilja, "Att förlita sig på barnen eller själv hantera försörjningsbehovet. Sparbeteende inför ålderdomen under 1800- och tidigt 1900-tal", *Historisk tidskrift* 129:2, (2009) 171-204: 187.
- <sup>67</sup> Mining Act of 1842, *Lov Ang. Bergverksdriften*, §§ 61-64. One woman over 80 in Alta was registered in 1875 as entirely supported by the mining company's relief fund.
- <sup>68</sup> Bäcklund and Lilja, "Att förlita sig på barnen".
- <sup>69</sup> Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 278-279. G&G I 79, 80.
- <sup>70</sup> Steen, *Alder og aldersproblemer*, 9.
- <sup>71</sup> Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, 88-89, 100-101. Jan Erik Henriksen, *Fra siida til samfunnsplanlegging. En betydnings- og endringsanalyse av siida og verdde som sosiale relasjoner i det samiske samfunnet*. Master thesis. (University of Trondheim: Trondheim, Norway, 1993) 29, 58-59.
- <sup>72</sup> Hansen and Olsen, *Samenes historie*, 253-260. Henriksen, *Fra siida til samfunnsplanlegging*, 39-40.
- <sup>73</sup> Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, 63-64. Anders Larsen, *Om sjøsamene*. Tromsø Museums årshefter vol 70, 2. (Tromsø, Norway: 1950), 36. Compare Ole Thomassen, *Lappenes forhold* (Kåfjord, Norway: Samisk språksenter, 1999) 114. Ian Whitaker, *Social relations in a nomadic Lappish community* (Oslo: Norsk Folkemuseum, 1955) 38, 39.
- <sup>74</sup> Johannes Tornæus, *Berättelse om Lapmarckerna och deras Tillstånd* (Uppsala, Sweden: Harald Wretman 1900 [1653]) 46, 48. Rheen, *En kortt relation*, 28-29. Both authors concentrated on Lule Lappmark on the Swedish side.
- <sup>75</sup> Berit Bongo, "Samer snakker ikke om helse". Submitted thesis (Tromsø, Norway: University of Tromsø, 2012).
- <sup>76</sup> Jåstad, "The effects of ethnicity", 274-275.
- <sup>77</sup> Whitaker, *Social relations*, 83. The reindeer herding community Lainiovuoma on the Swedish side migrated annually to the Norwegian side (Troms). Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, 63.
- <sup>78</sup> Steen, *Alder og aldersproblemer*, 9.
- <sup>79</sup> Johan Turi, *Muittalus Samid birra. En bok om lapparnas liv*. Swedish edition (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1917), 21. Present author's translation.
- <sup>80</sup> Cfr. Henriksen, *Fra siida til samfunnsplanlegging*, 110. Randi Nymo, *Helseomsorgssystemer i samiske markebygder i Nordre Nordland og Sør-Troms*. Thesis (Tromsø, Norway: University of Tromsø 2011), 137.
- <sup>81</sup> Henriksen, *Fra siida til samfunnsplanlegging*, 58.
- <sup>82</sup> In the 1865 census, ten of 23 Sámi over 80 (43%) in Nordland were registered as primarily supported by relief, nine of 57 Sámi registered in Troms (16%) and six of 38 in Finnmark (16%). In the census of 1875, 6 out of 32 Sámi over 80 in Nordland (19 per cent), 6 out of 47 Sami in Finnmark (13 per cent), 5 out of 40 in Troms (12,5 per cent) were registered as primarily supported by relief. In 1900, eight out of 51 (16%) Sámi in Nordland were registered as primarily supported by relief. Three of those lived as single lodgers.
- <sup>83</sup> Elstad, "I ei seng," 71-72, 78. A. Forfang, *Norsk Finnemission's historie* (Trondhjem, Norway: Norsk Finnemission's forlag, 1920) 70-72.
- <sup>84</sup> Ingunn Elstad, "Inn i tuberkulosestida", in Elstad and Hamran, *Sykdom*, 149-165, 162-163
- <sup>85</sup> The retirement could be a legally notified contract linked to the deed of conveyance, or a written, but not notified contract. For tenants, the retirement was part of the lease and must be accepted by the landholder. Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*. Moring, "Nordic retirement contracts". Inger Johanne Liabø, *Gammel i "gamle dager"*. Rapport nr. 7. (Oslo: Norsk gerontologisk Institutt, 1980), 92. Ingebjørg S. Heiberg, *Kårkontrakter fra matrikelgårder i Sogndal kommune fra perioden 1851-1970. En analyse av utviklingen i kontraktene antall og innhold*. Thesis (Bergen: University of Bergen, 2004), 169. Beatrice Moring, "Conflict or cooperation? Old age and retirement in the Nordic past." *Journal of Family History*, 28 (2003) 231-257.
- Berkner, "The stem family", 401.
- <sup>86</sup> Rosén, *The subject's duties*.
- <sup>87</sup> G&G I, 76 Buksnes og Hol.
- <sup>88</sup> The census of 1891 registered 36 retirement cottages in Nordland, 6 in Troms, none in Finnmark. See Moring, "Nordic retirement contracts", 397. Heiberg found in her study from Western Norway that half of the retired had their own dwelling. Heiberg, *Kårkontrakter fra matrikelgårder*, 65.
- <sup>89</sup> Ståle Dyrvik, *Historisk demografi*. (Bergen, Oslo, Tromsø: Universitetsforlaget, 1983).
- <sup>90</sup> Ruggles, "Stem families", 566. Wall writes that British census authorities debated around 1851 whether the retired constituted separate households. Wall, "Economic Collaboration", 89. Peter Laslett, "Introduction: The history of the family", in: Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, *Household and family in past time*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University press, 1972, 1-89.
- <sup>91</sup> Cf. G&G I 71-73 Tjeldsund.
- <sup>92</sup> Jåstad, *Northern co-residence*, 35.



- <sup>93</sup> G&G I 7: Tjeldsund, Leiranger, Beiarn. Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 10. Moring, "Nordic retirement contracts", 389.
- <sup>94</sup> G&G I 71- 73 Kjerringøy.
- <sup>95</sup> G&G I 30, 34, Velfjord, Kjerringøy. Elstad, *Kvinnfolkarbeid*.
- <sup>96</sup> Moring, "Nordic retirement contracts", 386.
- <sup>97</sup> G&G I 78, 79, Kjerringøy. Leiranger. In the 1866 census, 53% of the agricultural population in Nordland were tenants, 29% in Troms and 21% in Finnmark. Helland-Hansen confirms that written retirement contracts were common among landholders, less common among tenants, and even less among crofters. Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 159.
- <sup>98</sup> The majority of crofters in 1866 were registered in Nordland. *Folketellingen*, 1866 p.x.
- <sup>99</sup> G&G I, 20 Vesterålen. Crofters' reminiscences 69 a, Sømna.
- <sup>100</sup> G & G I 78, Kjerringøy. See Liabø, *Gammel i "gamle dager"*, 117-118.
- <sup>101</sup> The retired were 2,9 - 3,3 per cent of the populations of the southern municipalities Trondenes and Ibestad, and 1,2 -1,3 per cent of the northern municipalities Skjervøy and Lyngen. Four over 80 were registered as retired in Lyngen 1865 - two Sámi, two Kvens. The census of 1845 registered only 16 retired persons of all ages in the subsequent county Finnmark. The incidence of retirement was low also in Northwestern Finland, cf. Moring, "Nordic retirement contracts", n.4, 411. Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 7,14.
- <sup>102</sup> Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 14.
- <sup>103</sup> Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 278-279.
- <sup>104</sup> Hansen, "Sami fisheries". Nielszen, "Economic adaptation". Elina Helander, "Sámi subsistence activities – spatial aspects and structuration", *Acta Borealia*, 2 (1999) 7-25.
- <sup>105</sup> In the 1845 census, 15 out of 16 retired of all ages lived in Talvik and the neighbour community Alta. In 1865, seven of the 14 retired over 80 lived in Talvik. Jens Petter Nielsen, *Altas historie, Vol.1, De glemte hundreårene*, (Alta, Norway: Alta kommune, 1990) 123,154.
- <sup>106</sup> Solem, *Lappiske rettstudier*, 169-180. Jåstad, "Endring i samisk og norsk husholdsstruktur," 37. Steen, *Alder og aldersproblemer*, 13.
- <sup>107</sup> Hansen, "Sami fisheries", 59.
- <sup>108</sup> Ivar Bjørklund, "Samiske rettigheter til jord i Nord-Troms på 17- og 1800-tallet." *Ottar* 163, 6 (1986)19-25. Hansen and Olsen, *Samenes historie*, 302-303.
- <sup>109</sup> Øyvind Ravna, "Rettsvernet for samiske rettigheter fram til siste halvdel av 1700-tallet – og betydningen av dette i dag." *Kritisk Juss* 29 (2002) 75-90. A. Eide, Legal and Normative Bases for Saami Claims to Land in the Nordic. *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 8 (2001) 127-149. Steinar Pedersen, "State or Saami ownership of land in Finnmark? Some remarks on Saami rights and historical evidence", in *Readings in Saami history, culture and language II* ed. Roger Kvist (Umeå, Sweden: Center for Arctic Cultural research, 1991), 69-84. Solem, *Lappiske rettsstudier*, 27.
- <sup>110</sup> *Folketellingen i Norge 1866*. C. No. 1. ix, viii. The number of landholders in Finnmark was 1227 in 1855, 323 in 1865. Also many crofts in Troms and Finnmark were re-defined. Most were registered as fishermen only. Agriculture should be the dominant livelihood for peasants who were registered.
- <sup>111</sup> Solem, *Lappiske rettstudier*, 35-36. Robert Paine, "Property deeds and divisions, auctions and mortgages: Revsbotn fjord, 1858-1957." In: *Festskrift til Ørnulv Vorren. Tromsø museums skrifter XXV*. (Troms, Norway: University in Tromsø, 1994), 130-138.
- <sup>112</sup> In Finnmark 14 retired peasants above 80 were registered in 1900, seven of those in Talvik, one in Alta.
- <sup>113</sup> Jåstad, "The effect of ethnicity", 281.
- <sup>114</sup> Poor Act 1863, §4.
- <sup>115</sup> G&G I 71-73 Beiarn.
- <sup>116</sup> Jåstad, "The effect of ethnicity", 274-275.
- <sup>117</sup> Whitaker suggests that this was a Sámi tradition. Whitaker, *Social relations*, 39.
- <sup>118</sup> Amundsen found that in one coastal community, the wives in farmer and tenant families were in 1801 on average older than their husbands, and particularly in remarriages. In crofter couples however, the husbands were on average older than the wives. Johan Amundsen, *Jordeiendomsforhold og overgangen fra leie til selveie i Borge i Lofoten ca. 1800-1875*. Thesis (Bergen: University of Bergen, 1969) 4-5. Balsvik and Drake, "Menneskene i Nord-Norge", 107. Martin Dribe and Christer Lund write that the age gap tended to be bigger in regions where joint family or stem family systems dominated. Martin Dribe and Crister Lundh, "Status homogamy in the preindustrial marriage market: partner selection according to age, social origin and place of birth in nineteenth-century rural Sweden", *Journal of Family History*, 34 (2009) 387-40.
- <sup>119</sup> Solem, *Lappiske rettstudier*, 41-46. Nymo, *Helseomsorgssystemer*, 65-68, 269-270. Whitaker, *Social relations*.
- <sup>120</sup> Whitaker, *Social relations*, 88-89.

- <sup>121</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 153.
- <sup>122</sup> G&G I, 13, 14, 20, 69,79. Velfjord, Tjeldsund, Rødøy, Lurøy.
- <sup>123</sup> G&G I 78 Buksnes & Hol. David I. Kertzer, "Towards a Historical Demography of Aging", in: David I. Kertzer and Peter Laslett, eds., *Aging in the Past: Demography, Society, and Old Age* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1995) 363-383:376. Eli Fure concludes in her study from Eastern Norway that few older women moved in with their children, and then only for a short time. Eli Fure, "Gamle i flergenerasjonsfamilier – en seiglivet myte?" *Historisk tidsskrift* vol. 65, (1986) 16-35: 22.
- <sup>124</sup> Reminiscence Nordland 1964 65. G&G I 78 Buksnes and Hol. Bratrein, *Karlsøy og Helgøy bygdebok*, 114. Elstad, "I ei seng", 61.
- <sup>125</sup> Wall, "Economic Collaboration", 87.
- <sup>126</sup> Census instructions 1900, 1906:86. I have not followed Jåstad's definition of the "family lodgers" as boarders, which would suggest that they paid for their keep. Jåstad: "The effect of ethnicity", 270-272.
- <sup>127</sup> The relations "mother" and "father" are not explicit in the 1900 census questions. Bratrein, *Karlsøy og Helgøy bygdebok*, 92-93.
- <sup>128</sup> Jåstad: "The effect of ethnicity", 274-298. Wall, "Economic Collaboration", 83.
- <sup>129</sup> Jåstad, "The effect of ethnicity", 281. Jåstad, *Northern co-residence*, 48-49.
- <sup>130</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*. Elstad, "Kvinnfolkarbeid". Bratrein, *Karlsøy og Helgøy bygdebok*. Compare Tamara Hareven, "Aging and Generational Relations: A Historical and Life Course perspective". *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 20 (1994) 437-461, 443.
- <sup>131</sup> Naomi Tadmor, "The concept of the household-family in eighteenth-century England." *Past & Present*, 151, (1996) 110-140. Naomi Tadmor, "Early modern English kinship in the long run", *Continuity and Change* 25, (2010) 15-48, 31.
- <sup>132</sup> Viazzo, "Family, kinship and welfare," 138.
- <sup>133</sup> 1863 Poor Act §§7-10. Hovland, *Hadsel bygdebok 1*, 297. Einar Richter Hanssen, *Porsanger bygdebok bd. 1*. (Porsanger: Porsanger kommune 1986) 167, 180, 247.
- <sup>134</sup> 2205 persons in the region 1900. Public relief statistics 1900: *NOS Fattigstatistik for Aaret 1900* (Kristiania, Norway 1903) 48-49.
- <sup>135</sup> Public relief statistics 1866: *Fattig-Statistik A No.2*, 1866 (Kristiania, Norway) 56.
- <sup>136</sup> Nationally, single persons with no children constituted almost half of the recipients in the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Liabø, *Gammel i "gamle dager"*, 64.
- <sup>137</sup> Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa," 142-143.
- <sup>138</sup> Liabø, *Gammel i "gamle dager"*, 41. NOS Nr.80. Public relief statistics 1900, 76-78. Poor Board archive of Tromsø, Tromsø town archive.
- <sup>139</sup> Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 2010.
- <sup>140</sup> Peasants, and also crofters and servants in fishing districts, usually paid municipal tax. Elstad, *Dei sjuke på fattigkassa*, 129-130. Nordstrand, *Mellom to fattiglover*, 37-41.
- <sup>141</sup> Ottaway, "The old woman's home," 122.
- <sup>142</sup> G&G I 71-73, Kjerringøy, Velfjord.
- <sup>143</sup> G&G I 61, 62, 71, Velfjord, Leiranger, Kjerringøy. Tjeldsund. See Moring, "Conflict or cooperation?"
- <sup>144</sup> G&G 69a Velfjord, I 61 Kjerringøy.
- <sup>145</sup> Martin Luther, *Store Katekismus* (Kristiania, Norway: Lutherstiftelsen, 1910) 36-40.
- <sup>146</sup> Elstad, "I ei seng," 60-61.
- <sup>147</sup> Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944). Marshall Sahlins, "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange", in: Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine Publishing, 1972) 185-230. Dan Bäcklund and Kristina Lilja uses Polanyi's concepts in their analysis, "Att förlita sig på barnen".
- <sup>148</sup> Sahlins, "On the Sociology", 188-189. He also defines pooling as a system of reciprocities. See Viazzo, "Family, kinship and welfare", 147.
- <sup>149</sup> Laslett, "Introduction", 25. Wall, "Economic collaboration", 90-91.
- <sup>150</sup> Peter Laslett, "Family and household as work and kin group: areas of traditional Europe compared", in Wall, Robin, Laslett, *Family forms*, 513-563, 537, 544-546.
- <sup>151</sup> Reminiscences Nordland 1964 13, 22, Troms 1964 12. Wall, "Economic collaboration,". 90-93. Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, ch. 2 and 3. On the pooling of children's income, see p. 154. Compare Polanyi, *The great transformation*, 52-53.
- <sup>152</sup> Quoted from Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 61.
- <sup>153</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 81-82.
- <sup>154</sup> Tadmor, "The concept of the household-family", 120.

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- <sup>155</sup> Steven Ruggles, "Intergenerational coresidence and family transition in the United States, 1850-1880." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 73 (February 2011) 136-148.
- <sup>156</sup> Helland-Hansen, *Føderådsordningen*, 69.
- <sup>157</sup> G&G, I 74 Buksnes og Hol.
- <sup>158</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 81-83.
- <sup>159</sup> G&G I 20, 69-70, II 6, 61, 70. Workers' reminiscences, emne 5, from Ballangen. Crofters' reminiscences Nordland & Troms II, Valberg and Hol, Drevja. Reminiscences 1964 Nordland 59, 1981 24.
- <sup>160</sup> Reminiscence 1964 Troms.
- <sup>161</sup> Richter Hanssen, *Porsanger bygdebok*, 245. G&G Berg and Torsken I 20.
- <sup>162</sup> G&G I 20, Velfjord, I 42 Beiarn.
- <sup>163</sup> G&G I 19-20, I 41-43, II 43. Crofters' reminiscences Nordland & Troms I and II, Valberg and Hol, Drevja, Gratangen, Alstadhaug. Reminiscence 1964 Nordland 34.
- <sup>164</sup> G&G I,20, II, 43 Velfjord. Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa", 137-139.
- <sup>165</sup> G&G I 20 Lurøy. I 42 Vesterålen.
- <sup>166</sup> G&G I 19-20 Lurøy, I 42 Vesterålen, II 42-43 Tjeldsund. Elstad, "Dei sjuke på fattigkassa", 138. The number on legd in Nordland increased with a third from 1851 to 1866. Public Relief Statistics 1866, 20.
- <sup>167</sup> Søndre and Nordre Helgelands fogderi. Public relief Statistics 1866, 56.
- <sup>168</sup> Yields in kind were not mandatory where the land was not registered.
- <sup>169</sup> G&G II 43 Velfjord, I 20 Rødøy.
- <sup>170</sup> Public relief statistics 1866, 74-75.
- <sup>171</sup> G&G I 28, 41, 50 Tjeldsund.
- <sup>172</sup> G&G I 20 Trondenes, Vesterålen. I 14. Salten, Velfjord, Tjeldsund, Rødøy.
- <sup>173</sup> G&G Velfjord 69a, I,20 Trondenes, Berg and Torsken.
- <sup>174</sup> G&G I 41 Rødøy, Bodin. I,20 Velfjord, Berg and Torsken.
- <sup>175</sup> Public relief statistics 1900, NOS 4:80.
- <sup>176</sup> Jåstad, "The effect of ethnicity", 279, 281. Jåstad, *Northern co-residence*, 52, 60.
- <sup>177</sup> Jåstad, "The effect of ethnicity", 277.
- <sup>178</sup> Elstad, *Arbeidsliv*, 188-191.
- <sup>179</sup> Ingunn Elstad, "Hospital nursing in transition, Northern Norway 1850-1910," in *Healthcare systems and medical institutions*, eds. Astrid Andresen, Tore Grønlie, William Hubbard, Teemu Ryymin,. (Oslo: Novus press 2009) 111-128, 117.
- <sup>180</sup> Elstad, "Hospital nursing," 113-116. Ingrid Immonen, *St. Elisabeth hospital i Hammerfest. Sykepleie ved St. Elisabeth hospital i Hammerfest med fokus på gjenreisningstiden*. Master thesis (Tromsø, Norway: University of Tromsø, 2002).
- <sup>181</sup> By 1900, there were poor-houses in the towns of Tromsø, Hammerfest, Vardø, Bodø, and the rural municipalities of Vågan and Hammerfest. Tromsø Town Archive, Tromsø Poor Board, Boks 1398.
- <sup>182</sup> G&G I 20 Trondenes. Torunn Hamran, "Å skape et hjem- kvinners plass i den tidlige institusjonsbyggingen", *Sosiologi i dag* 37, 2 (2007)71-89. Torunn Hamran, "Mellom isolasjon og misjon. Sosiale eller medisinske ordninger for syke og gamle", in Elstad and Hamran, *Sykdom*, 442-493. Elstad, *Dei sjuke på fattigkassa*, 139-142. Forfang, *Norsk Finnemission's historie*, 70-78.