

Continued growth in area owned by environmental organisations, with some rationalisation of the area owned by the state' (Glass *et al.*, 2019, 10). The percentages of land owned by communities 3.1% and environmental organisations 2.5% in 2014 is still modest (Glass *et al.*, 2019, 12). In farmland: 'In recent years, the profile of rural landowners has shifted, with family farmers and life-style buyers joined by a range of institutional investors.' (Glass *et al.*, 2019, 17) This may negatively the potential for rural regeneration for small scale farmers: 'The treatment of land as a financial asset by institutional investors drives up demand and prices, causing new patterns of exclusion, potentially limiting access to land by local family farmers.' (Gallent *et al.*, 2018, 16) The issue of access to land for new entrants is an area of concern for the Scottish Land Commission (McKee *et al.*, 2018).

A very specific access-to-property aspect mentioned in a Scottish study (with 4 out of 6 case studies in remote areas) on 'The impact of diversity of ownership scale on social, economic and environmental outcomes' is the access to affordable housing: 'Lack of affordable housing (to buy or rent) is one of the factors that focus group participants in all case studies said led to out-migration of younger families.' (Thomson *et al.*, 2016, 50) This was amplified by the fact that there was a mismatch between locations with available affordable housing and locations with employment opportunities.

5.1.1.2 Sami

The Northern regions in Sweden and Finland, just as the adjacent areas in Norway and Russia, are the home of Sami who practice a traditional form of reindeer husbandry (Sara, 2019).

'As the situation stands today, the land and the way of life of the Sami people are under constant threat. The reindeer economy is especially endangered by competing land use. All three Nordic states have to be held responsible for the fact that they have reduced the grazing lands of the Sami reindeer herds through national exploitation of natural resources and through development projects.' (Carstens, 2016, 88)

This relates not only to mining explorations at which decision making Sami communities were not well involved, but Sara (2019) also found studies that indicated that Sami were not consulted in decisions on wind power plants and decisions to protect state-owned forests in Sweden. The potential construction of an Arctic Ocean Railroad in Finland may also impact the area. High costs and fierce Sami opposition have resulted in a standstill of this project (Nilsen, 2020). Recently the Swedish Supreme Court has ruled that hunting and fishing rights North of the agricultural boundary in Norrbottens län rest with the Sami communities and not with the county administrative board as was stated in the Reindeer Husbandry Act of 1886 because the Sami already exercised these rights, at least, since the mid-1700s (Ravna, 2020).

In Finland 90% of the Sami homelands are owned by the state (Carstens, 2016; Sara, 2019). The way, and legislation governing it, how the state allocates these lands is so of eminent importance. Most young Sami live currently outside the traditional Sami homelands and debates about Sami rights also includes discussions on who have access to land:

'Those living outside the Sami homeland claim that the existing legislation violates their right to transfer cultural heritage to next generations, since they are denied

access to ancestral land where they could engage in traditional livelihoods. ' (Sara, 2019, 130)

The issue of access to land for rural newcomers is so also an issue for Sami returning to their homeland. More generally it can be said that in political debate land is central.

'Land use interests dominate in the discussion (...), as land is increasingly a scarce resource evoking competition between, for example, businesses like forestry, the extractive industry and transport, the state, municipalities, local entrepreneurs and other local people that all want their share of land use and see the realisation of the rights of the Sami as a threat to their own rights.' (Sara, 2019, 175)

So, not only land is a scarce resource in the least dense-populated region of the EU (1.8 inhabitants per km²), but also the issue of access to land for new generations is of importance. Political decision making is central here. Traditional agents promoting other interests had much better access to policy making than the Sami communities and step-by-step actions are taken to change this. However, this is a slow process.

5.1.1.3 Åland Islands

A very specific remote area are the Åland Islands, which is an autonomic region in Finland of about 6,000 islands halfway the Bothnic (Suksi, 2011; Joenniemi, 2014). In all regional Quality of Government surveys by the QoG Institute, the quality of government scores of this region are way higher than in any other region in Europe (Charron *et al.*, 2015). Åland is 'an outlier at the top of the index ranking' (Charron *et al.*, 2019b, 31), which is exceptional as Finland itself is already one of the 'top performers' (Charron *et al.*, 2019b, 36) amongst the EU member states; these top performers show few regional variation. It is a small region, with just under 30 thousand inhabitants, the population is growing and the GDP per head is higher than in any other remote region. Over 80% of the land has nature land uses and just over 15% is in use for agriculture; in the last decade, many smaller farms have stopped and there is a growth of larger farms, but overall, the GINI decreased from 0.48 in 2015 to 0.43 in 2016; so, it has become more equal. In 1921, when the League of Nations decided that the Åland Islands should remain with Finland, it got a series of guarantees to prevent Finnishization, including the preservation of its Swedish language (Joenniemi, 2014; Simolin, 2018; Williams, 2018). As part of the cultural protection a specific set of land rules were established:

'When landed estate situated in the Aaland Islands is sold to a person who is not domiciled in the Islands, any person legally domiciled in the Islands, or the Council of the province, or the commune in which the estate is situated, has the right to buy the estate at a price which, failing agreement, shall be fixed by the court of first instance (Häradsrätt) having regard to current prices.' (League of Nations, 1921, 701)

This pre-emption right still exists today in a form that people from outside the Åland Islands must apply for permission for any land purchase or lease, and has, as established principle of international law, been approved as an existing derogation of the EU single market regime at the accession of Finland to the EU (Williams, 2018). At the time of establishment '...the League of Nations experts that promoted the Åland regime predicting that its maintenance would