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<http://www.samelandsfriuniversitet.com/blogg/samisk-forskningspolicy-pa-remiss-till-samiska-samhallet>

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Buoris!

This is a first draft of a Sámi research policy, guidelines and recommendations for individual Sámi, Sámi associations, Sámi reindeer herding associations and Sámi businesses. It is created by May-Britt Öhman, based on discussions within my academic research and association activity with individual Sámi, Sámi associations, Sámi businesses and Sámi reindeer herding associations since 2008.

This is the first draft, and everyone who is interested in discussing this further are welcome to submit comments and suggestions for both format and content.

The ambition is to have a finalized policy document fall 2017 at the latest.

Anyone who wants to undersign, as individual Sámi, Sámi association, Sámi reindeer herding association, Sámi business or something else will then be welcome to do so.

Welcome to contribute your concerns, comments and suggestions!

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In this research policy and recommendations for individual Sámi, Sámi associations, Sámi organizations, Sámi businesses is first provided in general standpoints how we (\*\*undersigned Sámi, Sámi associations, Sámi reindeer herding associations\*\*) perceive the research politics and relationship of research to Sámi territory, Sámi industry and culture, Sámi and how the research should develop.

Second, the policy contains guidelines about how we believe that scholarly research, its financiers – state and all others – should situate themselves visavi Sámi and the areas where Sámi are active agents. This is about ethical point of departures and guidelines for good research in tandem with our goals and ambitions.

Third, in this policy there are recommendations to Sámi reindeer herding associations, businesses, associations and individual Sámi – about how one can situate oneself visavi representatives for different research projects.

Finally, there is an account of points of departure for ambitions for continued work in relationship to research and collaboration with researchers.

## **General standpoints**

A recurring goal for the research politics of the nation/colonial state is to benefit society. A challenge we see here is that the Sámi society so far has not received specific attention in this context.

The needs for the Sámi society has as of yet never been granted any specific wording of its own. It is thus important to understand the needs and ambitions of the Sámi society based on the research in focus.

For instance, the Government research proposition (2012/13:30) says "The government's goal for the research politics is that Sweden shall be a premier research nation, where research and innovation is executed with high quality and contribute to society development and industry viability." Such wording is the norm for all governments' research propositions and the focus for all state financed research and innovation at the colleges and universities.

We argue that research and innovation also must be beneficial for the Sámi society, in ways that Sámi, Sámi organizations and representatives themselves believe are conjoined with Sámi societal development and Sámi industry viability in addition to the preservation and development of Sámi cultural traditions.

The Sámi have a long tradition of knowledge exchange with other peoples. In regards to the arena called academia, Sámi have been present at universities since universities were first established in the Nordic countries.

There are Sámi at different positions at colleges and universities also today, yet still most research about Sámi, about Sámi areas - including reindeer herding - is mostly done by non-Sámi.

Although there are plenty of good non- Sámi researchers who take their work seriously and do their utmost to contribute to a positive Sámi society development, it is warranted to have as ambition that significantly more Sámi themselves will actively participate in this research and knowledge production, and also design it.

We want to see different efforts to get more Sámi to earn college and doctoral degrees, with the goal of a significantly increased representation of Sámi in research. This is important for the contribution to a Swedish research politics that take the Sámi society into consideration and contributes to its development. It is also essential for ensuring that all levels of the focus and design of education will contain basic elements of Sámi culture, history, religion and tradition.

The academic scientific knowledge production should also consider Sámi perspectives to much greater extent than what has been the case so far. A precondition for this is that all

higher education contains education about Sámi history, traditions and also contemporary Sámi industry and culture.

In addition, Indigenous peoples – like the Sámi -have been the objects of study for centuries – research – by others, from outside. The purpose has often not been to benefit the Indigenous peoples’ – the Sámi – way of life and future survival, but rather foundational for different types of exploitation. The majority of today’s science disciplines are firmly grounded in a colonial perspective, where Sápmi has been positioned primarily as a resource exporter where resources such as water power, ore, forest, are extracted and research and higher education do not challenge this perspective.

We argue that research and higher education should benefit and contribute to the development of traditional Sámi knowledge, and that traditional Sámi knowledge should be recognized as science and that Sámi knowledge transition should be positioned equally to higher education and research and therefore receive equally sizable state support for its development.

The research area *Indigenous studies* exists since three - four decades. Within this research area the main goal is to benefit Indigenous continued existence, survival and culture. To support Indigenous land and water rights then become an essential part of the research activities and knowledge production. To claim belonging to this field requires also that one actively contributes to healing, decolonization, ethical engagement, participation, Indigenous/Sámi sovereignty, and providing the participants control over the research results. Another crucial part is that Indigenous peoples and our cultures and traditions are described with respect.<sup>1</sup>

This field is well developed in Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and India with many researchers who themselves are Indigenous. We welcome the establishment and development of this research area also in Sweden, and that the ethical guidelines within Indigenous studies become the rule for all other scholarly areas where Sámi, Sámi areas and Sámi societies are researched.

We also argue for the need to create platforms where research directed by Sámi can be executed from Sámi perspectives. Therefore, we argue that the creation of a Sámi university is desirable, and the creation of a Sámi scholarly academy.

### **Guidelines and ethical considerations for researchers**

During the work with this research policy, many examples of research activities and researchers not commensurate with good research and ethical guidelines have surfaced. Below are these observations now transformed into guidelines.

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, Linda Tuhivai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed.

- Sámi should not need to educate researchers who want to do research about Sámi. It is a crucial minimum that the researcher is already educated about the Sámi culture and place they want to research, and that they have good knowledge about ethical engagement and cultural codes.
- If Sámi who are not researchers themselves are contributing with their knowledge in different research projects, they should be offered compensation equal to a researcher compensation in the project. Sámi who so desire, should also be involved with the possibility to do their contribution as part of higher education and/or a doctoral program and hence receive the opportunity to design the research in that area themselves in the future.
- Research results must quickly be made available to the participants, in accessible ways regarding language and communication forms. It is important that results from research projects are communicated in a way that ensures that the participants understand the contents and can make use of it. It can be achieved through for instance non-academic publications, film, and presentations and workshops where the results are presented to the concerned parties and where the opportunity for discussion is provided.
- Interviews done by researchers must be made available to descendants and now living family members. It has happened that older persons have been interviewed, and that interviews are used without contextualization. When relatives have asked the researcher for the interviews they have been denied access. This is not ethically justifiable.
- Photos of Sámi should never be used anywhere without clear consent from the photographed person/persons. This consent shall be made at the time of use of the photography.
- Photos of Sámi should never be used without the depicted persons being identified by name and never without clear identification of the context where the photo was taken, unless the depicted person has explained that he/she wants to be anonymous.
- It is not obvious that interviews with Sámi should be anonymized. This is partly because Sámi society is so small, so it is challenging to make Sámi informants completely anonymous; and partly because some Sámi want their voices heard and their stories tied to their person. Because of this the issue of anonymity needs to be thoroughly discussed with the informant in question in every research project. This is an example of a research ethical question that should be developed in collaboration with Sámi society and Sámi researchers.

Researchers who come to Sámi reindeer herding associations and Sámi associations must show respect for that it is time consuming to participate in research projects, and that it is not self-evident that Sámi shall participate in various research projects.

Researchers who are established in academia should contribute to the possibility of that research being initiated by Sámi reindeer herding associations and Sámi associations.

Research should have a holistic perspective on the landscape, the waters, reindeer herding and other industries.

Ethical guidelines must be established for the photos of Sámi from earlier race biology research, held in state archives. These guidelines must be created in collaboration with Sámi organizations and representatives, and Sámi scholars.

The Sámi human remains held in different archives must be returned and buried.

It is not self-evident that a researcher who is Sámi inhabits a better point of departure in regards to research ethics. Therefore it is important that Sámi who are researchers also reflect upon these issues.

### **Recommendations for individual Sámi , Sámi associations, national Sámi associations, Sámi reindeer herding associations, and Sámi businesses regarding research and higher education**

There is continuously a large number of inquiries about participating in different research projects and contributing with knowledge regarding the Sámi society. There is reason to weigh pros and cons for every single inquiry.

#### **What happens with the information you provide? What are the results of the research?**

It is important to be cognizant of that all research executed within colleges and universities is subject to the **principle of public information access**. This means that for instance provided information that is stored by researchers at public educational institutions (all colleges and universities in Sweden) can be accessed through the principle of public information access. It does not happen often, but it has occurred. Therefore no one can be guaranteed total and secure anonymity. In addition can sensitive information never be guaranteed total protection. It is therefore important to be well informed about the research project at hand and to thoroughly understand its purposes and goals.

A researcher can never have complete control over the finished result and how it will be used. This is important to be aware of in advance. It can turn out very good or it can turn out very bad. It can also happen that it will not make any difference for the person who provides information.

In addition, research often takes long time and the hopes and ambitions the researcher has about achieving positive changes will not always be realized.

### **Compensation for participation in research projects and education within colleges and universities**

It is time consuming to participate in research projects. It is not reasonable to participate for free and on your own time. Therefore Sámi reindeer herding associations, associations and individuals are recommended to request compensation equal to a researcher salary – the same as the researchers in the project at hand – when the participation is substantial.

Regarding **interviews** that requires time commitments it is difficult to propose a fixed recommendation for possible compensation. There is currently no praxis in research to offer the person usually called “informant” (the interviewee) compensation for the time used. It is however time to change this.

When individual Sámi/ Sámi associations/ Sámi reindeer herding associations often are asked to become informants because they are Sámi and have the Sámi experience, everyone needs to think carefully about if one wants to contribute to the specific research study. Then it becomes important to request information about the purpose of the study and how the researcher in question envisions that the research results can be useful for the Sámi society – or specifically for the association or the individual.

Ask the researcher to directly describe this, and request to get it in writing via email for instance. Email from a university address – at Swedish institutions – are public documents and therefore also something that can be used later for follow up questions.

It is positive if the interviewer/researcher can grant financial compensation for time worked – the interview and reading and approving the interview afterwards. This should reasonably be part of the costs for the research project. However, this is currently usually not possible. The question about compensation should however be asked to every researcher who wishes to do interviews. It does not have to be large amounts, but just correspond to a certain time worked. First after information has been provided about how the researcher/research project plan to address this should one as individual Sámi, Sámi association, and Sámi reindeer herding association decide whether one wants to participate.

### **Compensation for lectures and other educational work**

The recommendation is that **lectures** by Sámi in different contexts at colleges and universities should be compensated with a minimum equal to a professor salary. This because the knowledge offered by Sámi is comprehensive and should be considered equal to professorship competency.

Many universities have a template for hourly compensation for teaching on their websites, which can be used as a starting point.

What is compensated for is teaching hours, equal to 45 minutes. If a one hour long lecture will be provided shall also at least two hours of preparation time be included in the compensation.

If compensation is billed, an addition equal to salary cost compensation is made, usually around 50%.

### **Point of departures for continued work considering research and collaboration with academia**

We want to see a significantly increased Sámi representation – i.e. Sámi who are open about their Sámi identity – within research and higher education.

Platforms that increase Sámi accessibility to academia and exchange with the reindeer herding and other traditional forms of Sámi industry shall be strengthened.

Sámi, Sámi organizations and Sámi researchers should participate in all national governmental contexts where research and higher education is designed.

Researchers who themselves are Sámi should be prioritized. It should be possible to be Sámi – i.e. open about your Sámi identity – and have an academic career.

State financiers who decide the distribution of research funding shall have specific qualifications in Sámi/Indigenous issues.

The European Union financiers who decide the distribution of research funding shall have specific qualifications in Sámi/Indigenous issues.

Specific and sufficient funding shall be assigned for the strengthening of Sámi perspectives in academic knowledge production.

A university with specific focus on Sámi/Indigenous knowledge and perspectives should be established in Sweden.