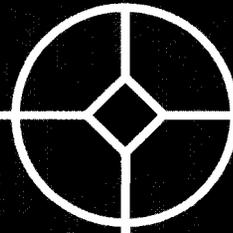


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Raporta/Report



# Sáme- ja álgoálbmot- dutkama etihkka

Seminára raporta,  
Kárášjohka 23.–24.10.2006

# Ethics in Sámi and Indigenous Research

Report from a seminar in Kárášjohka, Norway  
November 23–24, 2006



Sámi Instituhtta  
Sámi allaskuvla



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# From research as colonialism to reclaiming autonomy: Toward a research ethics framework in Sápmi

*Dr. Rauna Kuokkanen*

Among indigenous peoples around the world, one hears different versions of accounts how they have been researched almost to death. This refers to the countless number of studies of indigenous peoples and to the endless stream of researchers flocking to indigenous communities throughout history to 'collect data' (whatever form that may have taken) only to disappear with the knowledge for good. On a more fundamental level, this remark also refers to the fact that research is deeply implicated in the colonizing process of indigenous peoples. Not only has it been employed to define what counts as knowledge but also who counts as human. Categorized, collected, classified, represented or evaluated, indigenous peoples were often placed alongside the local flora and fauna. This and the use of zoological terms were forms of dehumanization and a way of legitimizing subjugation and the multiple forms of exploitation, including the expropriation of indigenous peoples' territories (Smith, L. T. 1999). The Sámi, for example, were a popular target of 'race research' such as physical anthropology until the mid-twentieth century. The goal of this kind of research, which included measuring skulls, was to prove that the Sámi belonged to the 'Mongoloid' rather than white, Indo-European race (Isaksson 2001).

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*Photo: Johan Isak Siri @NSI*



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Not surprisingly, after centuries of being studied, measured, categorized and represented to serve various colonial interests and purposes, indigenous peoples now require that research dealing with indigenous issues has to emanate from the needs and concerns of indigenous communities instead of those of an individual researcher or the dominant society. They have called attention to the fact that indigenous peoples and their communities are not resources to be exploited for individual purposes such as advancing academics careers.

In the past fifteen years, indigenous scholars have increasingly urged academics and researchers to acknowledge their responsibilities to indigenous communities as part of the healing and decolonization processes (see e.g., Battiste 2000; Battiste and Henderson 2000; Cram 1993, 1997; Menzies 2001; Mihesuah, D. and Wilson 2004; Mihesuah, D. A. 1998; Oakes, Riewe et al. 2005; Oakes, Riewe et al. 2003; Worby and Rigney 2002). Scholars are expected to 'give back,' conduct research relevant to indigenous peoples themselves and distribute the research results in an appropriate and meaningful way. A central principle of indigenous philosophies, 'giving back' calls for a commitment and desire to ensure that academic knowledge, practices and research are no longer used as a tool of colonization and as a way exploiting indigenous peoples by taking their knowledge without ever giving anything back in return. 'Giving back' in research may take various forms, such as reporting back, sharing the benefits, bringing back new knowledge and vital information to the community, or taking the needs and concerns of the people into account when formulating research agendas. It is part of the larger process of decolonizing colonial structures and mentality and restoring indigenous societies. In short, the participation of the community, acknowledgment of traditional genealogical and other organizing structures, relevance of research and culturally appropriate research practices and codes of conduct, capacity building as well as the commitment to eradication of the detrimental structures and elements resulting from colonization have become the hallmarks of what is today commonly known and recognized as 'indigenous research'.<sup>7</sup>

In this paper, I consider some of the central issues related to ethics in indigenous research. I illustrate this with an example of the Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch, a body and a process with which the Mi'kmaq have established their own research ethics guidelines and a body to oversee the implementation. I also briefly discuss the Canadian Research Councils' a section of the Tri-Council

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<sup>7</sup> In this paper, the term 'indigenous research' refers to any research involving indigenous peoples and/or their communities. Further, as Sonia Smallacombe notes, "Indigenous research must now be inclusive of Indigenous community interests" Smallacombe, S. (1999). *What Is Ethical Indigenous Research. A Question of Ethics. Personal Perspectives.* M. Langfield. Victoria, Australia, The History Institute, Victoria: 13-24.

Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans that deals with Aboriginal research. In conclusion, the article considers the process of establishing ethics standards for Sámi research. I discuss some of the questions that were posed at the conference in Kárášjohka and conclude with a list of questions with regard to the creation of Sámi research ethics guidelines.

### Prior free and informed consent

Free and informed consent is a central constituency of indigenous peoples' rights. The UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples refers to it several times, especially in relation to external pressures on indigenous peoples' territories and resources and access to indigenous knowledge. A recent United Nations workshop on informed consent and indigenous peoples further elaborated the concept's relationship to indigenous peoples' rights and the broader context of poverty reduction. According to the final report of the workshop, the underlying principles of free, prior and informed consent with regard to indigenous peoples are: "(i) information about and consultation on any proposed initiative and its likely impacts; (ii) meaningful participation of indigenous peoples; and, (iii) representative institutions" (*International Workshop on Methodologies Regarding Free Prior and Informed Consent and Indigenous Peoples 2005: 3*). Moreover, access to full information must be presented in accessible format which might require oral presentations in non-technical language and making information available in indigenous languages (Freeman 1993). Customary law and indigenous peoples' practices play an important role in defining how prior informed consent procedures are applied in indigenous communities (Tobin 2004).

Despite of being the cornerstone of ethical research, free and informed consent in indigenous research is often a source of contention. Due to differing cultural codes, standards and understandings as well as expectations and perspectives of research, the nature of consent may remain disputed by non-indigenous scholars who cloak their colonial attitudes and disrespectful approaches in arguments of academic freedom. Questions such as who has the authority to give consent on the behalf of a group or community and how does one ensure that the consent is prior, informed, free and ongoing continue to be debated in indigenous and academic communities alike (cf. Piquemal 2003). There can also be a tension between community (collective) and individual consent. Many Aboriginal organizations in Canada, for example, maintain that community consent has to be secured prior to obtaining consent from individuals.

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## Indigenous research ethics guidelines and protocols

Although universities and research institutions often have their own research guidelines, there is, however, a clear need for an “extra level of review” by indigenous communities. Native American scholar Tsianina Lomawaima argues that the universities’ internal review processes “do not address tribal concerns or interests very well” (Lomawaima 2000: 11). These concerns include the problems of anonymity in small communities, different standards for establishing the authority of ‘experts’ and different understandings of the ‘private’ and public’. Conventional ethics review processes also fail to address possible discrepancies between different frameworks of knowledge, such as local, indigenous knowledge and dominant scientific knowledge. University-based committees “usually have no first hand knowledge of local conditions, local needs or priorities” and “limited capacity to assess the potential local relevance” (Kaufert, Commanda et al. 2001: 53; see also Nahanni 1993). Perhaps most importantly, Lomawaima notes, “Most outside researchers simply do not have the kind of cultural, genealogical, and local knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about when the use of culturally sensitive or spiritual information is appropriate or not” (Lomawaima 2000: 11).

### *Mi’kmaq research principles and protocols*

The Mi’kmaq<sup>8</sup> First Nation territory ranges from Maine and New England (United States) to Canada’s Atlantic provinces and the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec. The Mi’kmaq population is approximately 40,000 of whom one third speak the Mi’kmaq language (Lnuisimk, part of the Algonquian language family). In 1999, the Mi’kmaq “established a committee to study and develop principles and guidelines to protect Mi’kmaq peoples and their knowledge” (*Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch. Mi’kmaq Research Principles and Protocols* 2006). The currently 5-member (initially 13) committee consists of Mi’kmaq academics, tribal leaders and legal advisors, elders, teachers, representatives of Mi’kmaq educational advancement organization and students. It has drafted a set of principles and standards to inform the Mi’kmaq of the costs and benefits of research, to ensure fair and ethical participation in the research process as well as to have the opportunity to benefit from research conducted in their communities. The ethics guidelines are grounded on the following five principles:

1. Mi’kmaq people are the guardians and interpreters of their culture and knowledge system – past, present, and future.

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<sup>8</sup> The word ‘Mi’kmaq’ is the plural form of Mi’kmaq.

2. Mi'kmaw knowledge, culture, and arts, are inextricably connected with their traditional lands, districts, and territories.
3. Mi'kmaw people have the right and obligation to exercise control to protect their cultural and intellectual properties and knowledge.
4. Mi'kmaw knowledge is collectively owned, discovered, used, and taught and so also must be collectively guarded by appropriate delegated or appointed collective(s) who will oversee these guidelines and process research proposals.
5. Each community shall have knowledge and control over their own community knowledge and shall negotiate locally respecting levels of authority. (*Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch. Mi'kmaq Research Principles and Protocols 2006.*)

The obligations and protocols for research on the Mi'kmaq require collaboration and 'negotiated partnership' which takes "into account all the interests of those who live in the community(ies)" (ibid.). The Mi'kmaq who participate in research must be treated as equals, not as 'informants' or 'research subjects'. Also the Mi'kmaq language and traditions must be respected by all research participants. Researchers are expected to learn the protocols and traditions of the people they are conducting research with, to be aware of and sensitive to cultural practices. Other requirements include:

- Provision of written and oral research descriptions in the participant's language, including the purpose of the research and "detailed explanations of usefulness of study, potential benefits and possible harmful effects on individuals, groups and the environment".
- Identification of sponsors and sources of financial support (academic and corporate).
- Identification of "tasks to be performed, information requested from Mi'kmaw people, participatory research processes, the publication plans for the results, and anticipated royalties for the research".
- Provision of all consent disclosure forms in Mi'kmaq and English. "No coercion, constraint, or undue inducements shall be used to obtain consent. All individuals and communities have the right to decline or withdraw from participating at any time without penalties".
- Provision of information regarding the anticipated benefits and risks involved in participating in research.

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- Provision of information regarding the overall research process and the dissemination of results. Moreover, research participants need to be informed of each step of research.
- Provision of new skills into the community (e.g., data collection) “whenever possible, advisable or desirable by the community”.
- Inclusion of “Mi’kmaw participation in the interpretation and/or review of any conclusions drawn from the research to ensure accuracy and sensitivity of interpretation.”
- Consideration of research methods (e.g., qualitative and participatory research methods) that empower indigenous people’s voice and skills and move beyond the dominant quantitative research methods. (Ibid.)

The Mi’kmaw research principles and protocols contain obligations also for the Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch. In addition to overseeing the review and implementation of the above research standards and protocols, this body considers issues related to the purchase or publication of private materials and removal of Mi’kmaq artefacts. Moreover, the Mi’kmaw Ethics Watch seeks to educate Mi’kmaq communities and individuals about various aspects of research involving Mi’kmaw people, culture and environment (ibid.).

The final section of the Mi’kmaw research principles and protocols is the application to conduct research. Addressed to the director of the Mi’kmaw College Institute at Cape Breton University, Nova Scotia, the application requests the following information: the personal information and institutional affiliation of the applicant, abstract of the proposed study, funding sources, a description of the procedures for recruiting, selecting, and assigning participants, a description of the process by which participants consent to be involved in the research project, a description of how linguistic and cultural differences will be accommodated and what protocols and traditions will be used for entering Mi’kmaq communities. The application also asks for the identification of intended research methods and procedures as well as the explanation of the process of assessing risk and benefit. Finally, the application shall include an explanation of the interpretation of data and whether Mi’kmaq will be involved in, consulted with or informed about this process; a detailed description of how the data will be stored, how the confidentiality of research participants will be secured, and lastly, a publication plan indicating how any royalties will be shared with the research participants (Ibid.).

The Mi’kmaw research ethics guidelines are extensive with a separate body in charge of the implementation process. There are other indigenous community-based research ethics guidelines that are less specific and only give general

guidance in conducting research in indigenous communities and with indigenous people.

***Canadian research agencies: "Tri-council policy statement: Ethical conduct for research involving humans" and Aboriginal Peoples***

The three Canadian research agencies, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) have developed a joint research ethics policy called "Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans"<sup>9</sup> with a section on Aboriginal peoples. Due to the lack of adequate consultations, this section, however, only serves as a guideline for 'good practices' and a 'starting point' for considerations toward policies dealing with research involving Aboriginal peoples. The introduction of the section recognizes how "there are historical reasons why Indigenous or Aboriginal Peoples may legitimately feel apprehensive about the activities of researchers". These include the lack of respect by researchers, inaccurate or insensitive research and expropriation of cultural property and human remains for museums or for sale. Further, the introduction states:

In Canada and elsewhere, Aboriginal Peoples have distinctive perspectives and understandings embodied in their cultures and histories. This Policy Statement recognizes the international consensus that has developed over recent decades that Aboriginal Peoples have a unique interest in ensuring accurate and informed research concerning their heritage, customs and community. (*Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada 1998 (with 2000, 2002 and 2005 amendments).*)

The section also offers a list of "Good Practices" to be considered by researchers involved in Aboriginal research. The list echoes the principles and standards set by indigenous organizations and communities (respect, consultation, partnerships, community involvement, acknowledgement of contributions, and provision of information about research). The final point, the recognition of the significance of the community reaction to the study, is of

<sup>9</sup> This Policy Statement sets the research ethics standards for Canadian universities and for research funded or financially supported by the three research councils. The Tri-Council Policy Statement research principles are required to be applied by researchers and institutions as a minimum standard but for the most part, the implementation relies on voluntary compliance and the researcher's institutional research ethics boards.

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particular interest because it is rarely articulated as explicitly as in the Tri-Council Policy Statement. It calls for giving "the community an opportunity to react and respond to the research findings before the completion of the final report, in the final report or even in all relevant publications". Furthermore, it argues:

Aboriginal Peoples may wish to react to research findings. It is inappropriate for researchers to dismiss matters of disagreement with the group without giving such matters due consideration. If disagreement persists, researchers should afford the group an opportunity to make its views known, or they should accurately report any disagreement about the interpretation of the data in their reports or publications. (Ibid.)

This is a radical departure from previous positivist research that has rarely concerned itself with interpretations and perspectives other than its own. Notions of 'competent', 'objective' and 'scholarly' research die hard and the idea that indigenous peoples should be allowed to have a say in research involving them is still considered objectionable if not outrageous by some academics. Therefore, the step taken by the Canadian Research Councils to not only recognize that there might be criticism toward research results and interpretations by Aboriginal people, but also to explicitly state that it is not acceptable for researchers to dismiss such criticism marks a new opening into decolonizing research involving indigenous peoples and bringing indigenous research ethics into arenas where they previously have been rejected.

### **Bringing research ethics into Sámi research**

Indigenous research ethics are about establishing new, more respectful and responsible relationships, discourses and practices with indigenous communities and addressing and transforming the previous colonial, exploitative and asymmetrical relations of research. Indigenous research ethics are also increasingly becoming a standard for appropriate research and many mainstream universities and research institutions have established their own codes of conduct with regard to research involving indigenous peoples. Most importantly, however, indigenous research ethics are a matter of autonomy; taking control of our own affairs and knowledge. It is part of indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. Here self-determination is understood broadly, not merely as the existing political institutions or conventional practices of conducting political affairs which have alienated many ordinary people, including indigenous

people<sup>10</sup>. In the context of indigenous research, discussing self-determination is not to submit to the interests and agendas of indigenous political organizations and leadership but rather, to engage in intellectual self-determination: validate and restore our systems of knowledge and philosophies, decide ourselves what is considered valid, relevant research and methodologies. As many indigenous women in particular have pointed out, there is a pressing need for alternative models of autonomy that are not based on domination, violence or coercion (i.e., the nation-state model) but instead, on interdependence and mutual reciprocity (Smith, A. 2005).

Scholars and politicians alike have recognized the need for ethical guidelines and a code of conduct for Sámi research in various occasions. Establishing ethics guidelines and a mechanism to implement and supervise their application strengthens Sámi research in several ways. First, validates Sámi epistemologies and research methodologies. Second, it asserts Sámi autonomy through exercising authority over Sámi knowledge and culture. Third, it broadens the scope of research areas and topics to questions that thus far, have not been widely studied and investigated. Fourth, it allows us Sámi scholars to embark on the path of transforming the previously asymmetrical, often exploitative colonial relations of research into a more reciprocal, respectful and responsible relationships. Fifth, it enables researchers to conduct research by Sámi values. Perhaps most importantly, it allows us to ask critical, important questions about the future and goals of Sámi research.

In order this to be the case, we must ensure that the process of establishing ethical standards for Sámi research as extensive, inclusive and representative as possible. Instead of a handful of scholars and politicians rushing into drafting a set of guidelines, an appropriate process would require community participation and involvement to discuss what is considered important for and in Sámi society at large. We can certainly take guidance from standards created by other indigenous peoples and institutions, but is also necessary to engage in community-wide consultations. In this way, the process of creating Sámi research ethics could possibly result in much more than merely producing guidelines for researchers to follow. If the emphasis – at least in the beginning – was in the process rather than the final product, the process might produce a blueprint for a shared, collective vision for the advancement of Sámi society and epistemological foundations through discussions on central questions

<sup>10</sup> This includes many Sámi people who are critical of the discourse of self-determination because it is so closely associated with the work of the formal Sámi political institutions. Their work is seen very centralized, making participation in the self-determination process difficult for those who are or consider themselves marginalized (e.g., those who do not live in the central Sámi region, do not speak the language, do not own reindeer).

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<sup>11</sup> The concept of 'Sámi from the audience, who a context, I use 'Sámi res people.

pertaining to indigenous research ethics. It would provide us with critical perspectives of doing research in Sámi communities. It would enable an examination of the earlier research practices: what are they, how have they impacted the Sámi people and our lives, what are their strengths and shortcomings, as well as how and what we can learn from them in our current scholarship? It might also assist us with analyses of previous, colonial discourses and processes that continue to affect the Sámi people, society and scholarship. Importantly, consultations in Sámi communities would give Sámi scholars a better sense of relevant research topics and create avenues for distributing research to those communities and individuals who are affected and might benefit from their studies.

As the conference on Ethics in Sámi and Indigenous Research in Kárašjohka demonstrated, there is a pressing need to consider and discuss research ethics in Sámi society. Nearly everybody who took the floor indicated that thus far, the public debate on the topic has not been adequate. One of the questions raised at the conference was the scope of research ethics guidelines in Sámi society. Do we need a separate guideline of ethical research for Sámi scholars? As some conference participants suggested, the number of Sámi researchers in various disciplines is greater than among many other indigenous peoples and therefore, it is more important to discuss ethics internally within the Sámi research than focus on external concerns that in many ways have already been resolved. I am not sure, however, whether this is the case and I do wonder if the question is about research ethics or about something else, such as possible tensions or lack of communication and collaboration between Sámi institutions of higher education and research. Second, as somebody who is from Sámi society but who has lived elsewhere for several years and worked within the field of indigenous scholarship, I would argue that although Sámi research<sup>11</sup> has fairly long roots – the Sámi Institute, a Run-run research body was established already in 1973 in the heart of the Sámi region – the number of Sámi scholars nevertheless remains relatively low compared to indigenous scholarship in North America, for example.

Moreover, I have to disagree with a view according to which Sámi scholarship had advanced to a stage where we no longer need to concern ourselves with research on Sámi issues by “outsiders” (i.e., non-Sámi). The Sámi people continue to be a popular research subject and often the research topics do not stem from the community needs, concerns or consultations. Topics that

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<sup>11</sup> The concept of ‘Sámi research’ was also raised at the conference by some individuals from the audience, who argued that it is not necessarily clear what is meant by it. In this context, I use ‘Sámi research’ to refer to research conducted by Sámi involving Sámi people.

continue to be of interest include various manifestations and representations of Sámi identity and issues related to international indigenous rights, while relatively little attention is given, for example, to the analysis of the Majority-majority power relations. Obviously, the “outsider” is not as clear-cut as one may think and one cannot lump all non-Sámi together into a homogeneous category. For instance, there are non-Sámi who have either married to a Sámi family or lived in a Sámi community<sup>12</sup> for a long period of time (in some cases, a lifetime) and may even speak or understand the language. The ‘cultural competence’ of such individuals is usually higher than those who come from abroad with preset research questions and with limited time to be spent in a Sámi community. (For some reason, there were very few – indeed next to none – non-Sámi researchers who are conducting research on a Sámi topic attending the conference.)

It needs to be emphasized that the question is not that Sámi society does not need or want more research done by “outsiders” but rather, ensuring, like Deloria already noted several years ago, “We need to eliminate useless or repetitive research and focus on actual community needs; it is both unethical and wasteful to plow familiar ground continually” (Deloria 1992). This remains a pressing question also in Sámi society, and although there is a growing body of Sámi researchers and research, it does not imply that we no longer need to address or consider issues of decolonizing and transforming power relations in research and of ensuring that Sámi communities benefit from research involving them. These issues naturally apply also to Sámi scholars and therefore, I cannot see why we would need two different sets of ethics guidelines. The questions dealing with ethical approach and procedures in research and the requirements set for researchers apply to everybody as we can see, for example, in the Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch guidelines above. The objective of indigenous research ethics guidelines is to ensure that indigenous peoples are no longer exploited – whether intellectually, materially, culturally or otherwise – in the name of knowledge, science or individual careers and that indigenous individuals and communities have a say in research involving them. This objective applies to everybody, whether the researcher is indigenous or non-indigenous.

Moreover, if we want to continue building a strong Sámi research environment, we cannot have separate research ethics guidelines in every country where the Sámi live. First of all, creating separate research ethics procedures only because of the differences in various state bureaucracies would signal accepting and giving in to the ‘divide and rule’ regime imposed by the state borders with their institutions, practices and structures of power. If the Sámi are as strong as it is

<sup>12</sup> For tensions between the insider/outsider positions in indigenous scholarship, see Linda Smith 1999.

often being claimed, that seek to distract (which, of course, is research). There is no society – in this regard mainstream or indigenous – an establishment of impossibility. The not taking and being in control. true that Sámi society cannot prevent us from mean is that we need needs and specific issues able to ensure the most unique characteristics

Another central question relevant research. As define and decide with consideration the division there would be an issue concern that has been. Obviously, there cannot parameters of relevance question of relevance research ethics. While one guidelines and both community or grassroots debated and decided research project. More needs there are or what Bia from the Pima C “real issues” are similar policy, whether economic with regard to the labor youth, the future of indigenous

In other words, relevant dealing with and is indigenous

<sup>13</sup> For example in 2003 Social Sciences Network indigenous communities.

often being claimed, we also must be able to resist and refuse outside pressures that seek to distract and disrupt attempts of building Sámi self-determination (which, of course, goes beyond the Sámi political institutions and includes research). There is very little doubt that there are great differences within Sámi society – in this regard, Sámi society is no different from other societies, mainstream or indigenous – but these differences are definitely not so big that an establishment of a Sámi research ethics guidelines and board is an impossibility. The need is obvious and it would represent a significant step in taking and being in charge of Sámi research and thus, advancing it. While it is true that Sámi society is unique and different from others (as is any society), it cannot prevent us from learning from other indigenous peoples. What it does mean is that we need to examine those differences and find out what exactly our needs and specific issues are which require specific attention. In this way we are able to ensure the most effective and meaningful guidelines that take those unique characteristics into account.

Another central question raised at the conference in Kárašjohka was the issue of relevant research. As one conference participant noted, it can be very difficult to define and decide what the ‘real’ issues are, especially when we take into consideration the diversity of Sámi society. Would some issues be left out if there would be an internal mechanism of defining “real issues”? This is a concern that has been widely debated also in other indigenous scholarship<sup>13</sup>. Obviously, there cannot be one single body or mechanism that would decide the parameters of relevant research. It is important in this context to note that the question of relevance is different from – though closely related to – the issue of research ethics. While the research ethics procedures can be harmonized under one guidelines and board, relevance of particular research is often decided at the community or grassroots level. Ideally, the question of relevance should be debated and decided by those individuals and groups directly involved in the research project. Moreover, it is not too difficult to assess what kind of research needs there are or what the “real issues” are in a given community. As Johnson Bia from the Pima Community College, Arizona, pointed out in his response, “real issues” are simply those linked to research that helps leaders to make policy, whether economic, educational, environmental or any other, especially with regard to the land. According to Bia, they are also issues that affect the youth, the future of indigenous nations.

In other words, relevant research deals with issues that the community is dealing with and is involved in. By conducting research on topics which the

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<sup>13</sup> For example in 2003, “H-AmIndian”, an online discussion list of the Humanities and Social Sciences Network, had an extensive online discussion on scholarly responsibilities to indigenous communities.

indigenous society/nation/community is working with will assist the building, rebuilding and transforming indigenous societies into more autonomous and thus stronger communities. To paraphrase Native American scholars Duane Champagne and Jay Stauss, also in Sámi society we need researchers with analytical skills who study, among other things, Nordic-Sámi history and policy and who have an appreciation and understanding of Sámi self-governance models and culture to enable them to become critical, informed, and active participants in Sámi community life as well as in Sámi issues at the regional and national levels. Sámi research must be in a good position to assist Sámi communities with issues of law, policy, the environment, repatriation, recognition, state-Sámi relations, and other concerns. The advantage of direct engagement with Sámi communities is that the separation of academic and community life is broken down, and scholars learn firsthand about a Sámi community and its important issues and have an opportunity to work directly within the community (cf. Champagne and Stauss 2002: 9). What are the issues that Sámi society at large or individual Sámi communities are grappling with at the moment? Answers to this fairly straightforward question give us a clear point of departure when considering what the "real issues" in Sámi society are and which might need closer examination and further research.

A third question raised at the conference that I want to briefly call attention to deals with the question about "using past rituals to find solutions in the present or for the future," a concern that was presented by one of the attendees but that often comes up in other contexts as well. It is somewhat surprising that such a comment is expressed by a Sámi scholar but in my experience, the person asking this at the conference is not alone in Sámi society who sees "using past rituals" as a concern (if not a problem) and therefore, it requires further consideration. As far as I am concerned, Sámi scholars' concerns framed as "going back in time" or "dwelling in the past" reveal a marked lack of familiarity with other indigenous scholarship and its central discourses of decolonization and transformation also at the level of research and knowledge. In this process, looking back in order to go forward ensures that the modes of producing and reproducing knowledge no longer alienate indigenous peoples from their own ways and sources of knowing or make this knowledge and methods of acquiring knowledge invisible or meaningless. As Deloria puts it: "No one is suggesting that Indians 'revert' to the old days or old ways. Rather we must be able to understand what those old days and ways really were and model our present actions and beliefs within that tradition" (Deloria 1992: 16). This also applies to Sámi society and research and is very much a question of research ethics.

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Instead of a conclusion, I end with an opening for further discussion. Based on other indigenous peoples' work and experiences related to research ethics, the list below is intended to offer some preliminary questions pertaining to creating Sámi standards for research ethics. It also may give some food for thought in general with regard to future directions of Sámi research.

1. What are considered ethical issues in Sámi research?
2. What are the objectives of Sámi research? (Advancement of knowledge, decolonization, building autonomy and strong Sámi communities?)
3. What kind of research is currently needed in Sámi society? For what ends? Who represents the interests of Sámi society?
4. Who has the authority to give consent on the behalf of a group or community? Is community consent required prior to individual consent?
5. How does one ensure that the consent is prior, informed, free and ongoing?
6. Who owns the research data and results?
7. Does traditional Sámi knowledge require protection (if so, what kind)?
8. Is genetic research involving the Sámi considered appropriate?
9. How to ensure widest possible representation in research ethics boards?
10. What is the role of elders with regard to Sámi research?
11. How to ensure that such body would remain independent of Sámi political institutions?
12. How to ensure the general awareness of rights and obligations of both Sámi individuals and communities?
13. How to define and ensure community control of research?
14. What kind of procedures and mechanisms are required for distribution of research results (i.e., giving back to the community)?
15. What are the cultural values and protocols upon which Sámi research ethics would be founded?

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