

Decolonizing knowledge production and objectivity

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Plan and learning outcomes

- 0915-1000:
 - Reflections on yesterday
 - Background: Åarjel Saepmie
 - Resistance through stories
 - The “advancement of the Sámi” hypothesis
- 10-1010: Break
- 1010-1040:
 - Group work
- 1040-1050:
 - Plenary discussion of group work
- 1050-1100:
 - Reflection in pairs on the relevance of today’s and yesterday’s perspectives for your projects
- **Course learning outcome:** *The candidate has knowledge of the historical, philosophical and sociological theories of science, with emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of science.*
- **Course topics:**
 - Science as institution and practice
 - Philosophy of science: method, demarcation and objectivity
 - The modern research university and the role of the modern scientist
 - Concepts within the field of humanities and interdisciplinary dialogue practices
 - Ethics of research and science

Readings

- Bhabra, Gurinder K. (2014) 'Postcolonial and decolonial dialogues' in Postcolonial Studies Vol. 17(2), pp. 115-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790.2014.966414>
- Fjellheim, Eva Maria (2020) 'Through our stories we resist', <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/oa-edit/10.4324/9780367853785-12/stories-resist-eva-maria-fjellheim>
- Kuokkanen, Rauna (2008) 'What is hospitality in the Academy? Epistemic Ignorance and the (Im)Possible Gift' in Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies vol. 30(1), pp. 60-82. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10714410701821297>
- SAIH: An introduction to decolonization <https://saih.no/assets/docs/Avkolonisering/Avkolonisering-ENG.pdf>

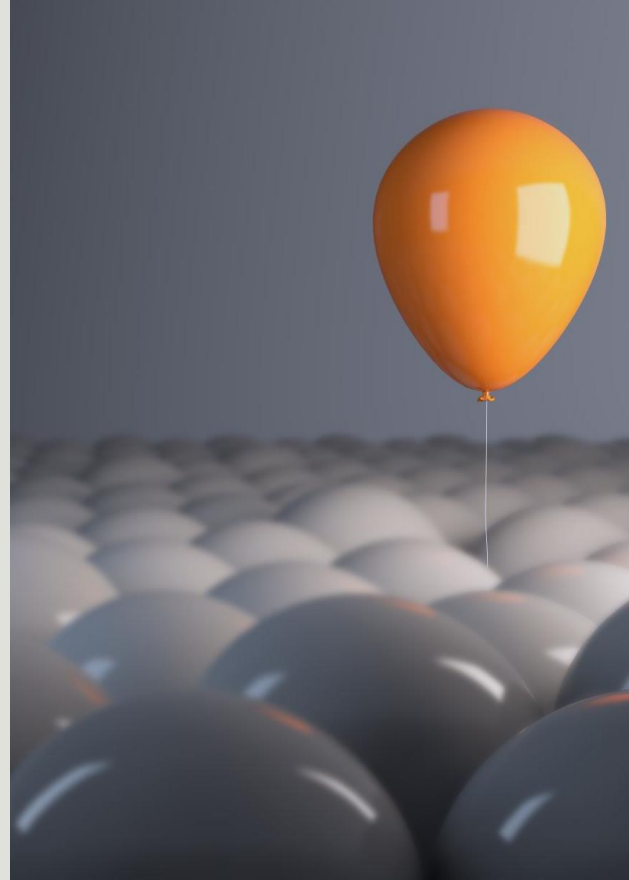
Additional reading:

- Dankertsen, Astrid (2022) 'Avkolonisering av akademia fra et samisk perspektiv' <https://nordopen.nord.no/nord-xmlui/handle/11250/3038295>

Waking up/warming up

- What from Sofia Moratti and Astrid Rasch's sessions yesterday did you find interesting/important/provocative/useful?





Is our path towards academia relevant?

Does who we are matter for what we do as researchers?

Coloniality and knowledge production

- **Coloniality:** Shorthand for coloniality of power and describes how epistemologies and power relations produced through and by colonialism continue to inform present-day society and institutions (Quijano, 2000; Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).
- Coloniality can be traced in education through the reproduction of knowledges that continue to justify European and white de facto supremacy and renders colonised peoples “knowledges and livelihoods backwards, inferior or non-existent” (Svendsen&Eriksen 2020)
- Knowledge production is not an innocent activity!



Figure 11.1 The picture was taken at Storelvvollen in 1922, near the family dwelling in Røros municipality. From the left: Paula Margrethe Paulsen (Fjellheim), Lisa Antonie Paulsen (Løkken), Sara Margrethe Nordlund Paulsen, Jon Alfred Mjøen and Morten Mortensen. © Sverre Fjellheim.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith on research from an indigenous perspective

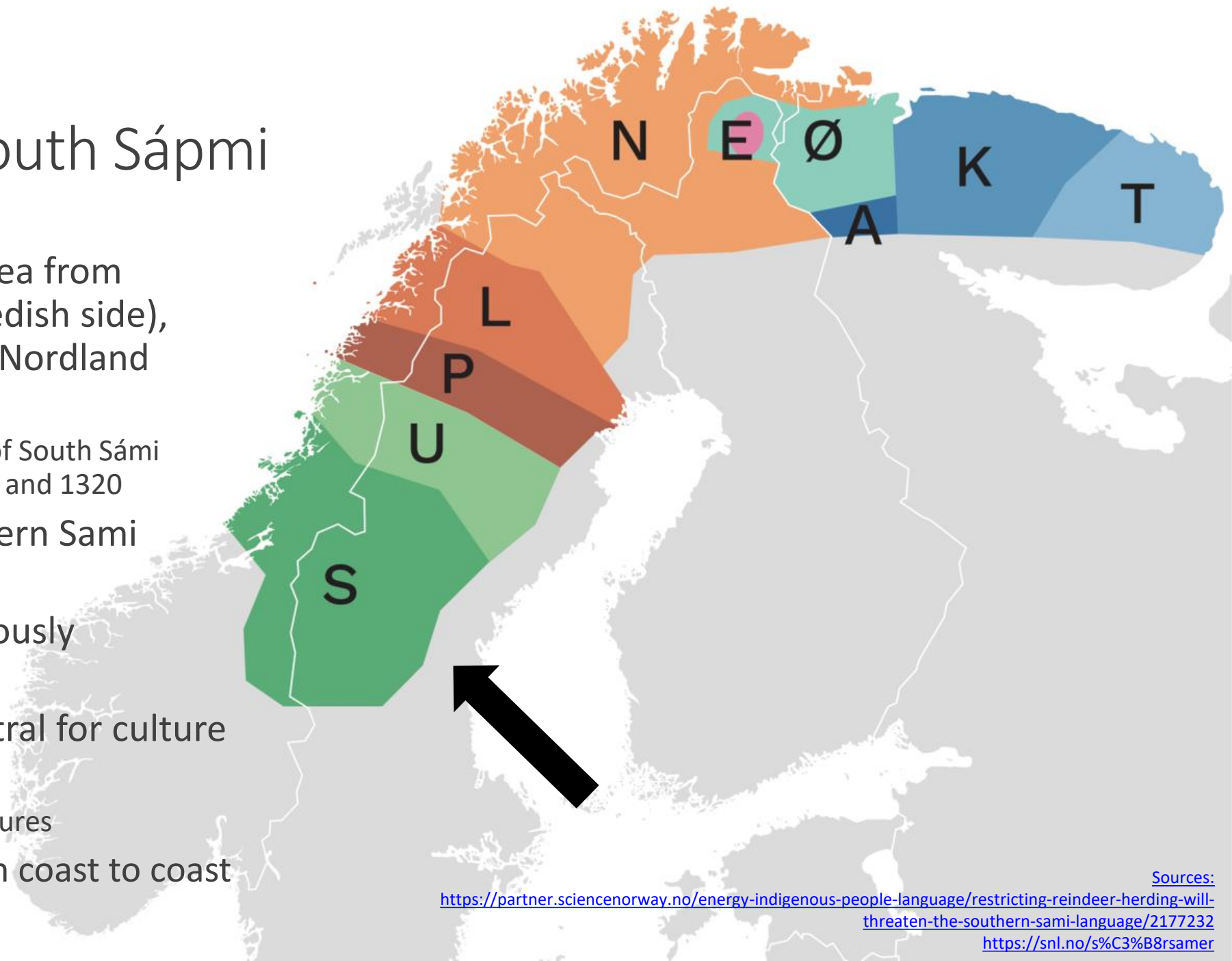
From the vantage point of the colonized, a position from which I write, and choose to privilege, the term 'research' is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, 'research', is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful. (...) Just knowing that someone measured our 'faculties' by filling the skulls of our ancestors with millet seeds and compared the amount of millet seed to the capacity for mental thought offends our sense of who and what we are. It galls us that Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that it is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us. It appals us that the West can desire, extract and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas and seek to deny them further opportunities to be creators of their own culture and own nations. It angers us when practices linked to the last century, and the centuries before that, are still employed to deny the validity of indigenous peoples' claim to existence, to land and territories, to the right of self-determination, to the survival of our languages and forms of cultural knowledge, to our natural resources and systems for living within our environments. This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetuated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized.

Smith 1999: 1

Background

Åarjel-Saepmie/South Sápmi

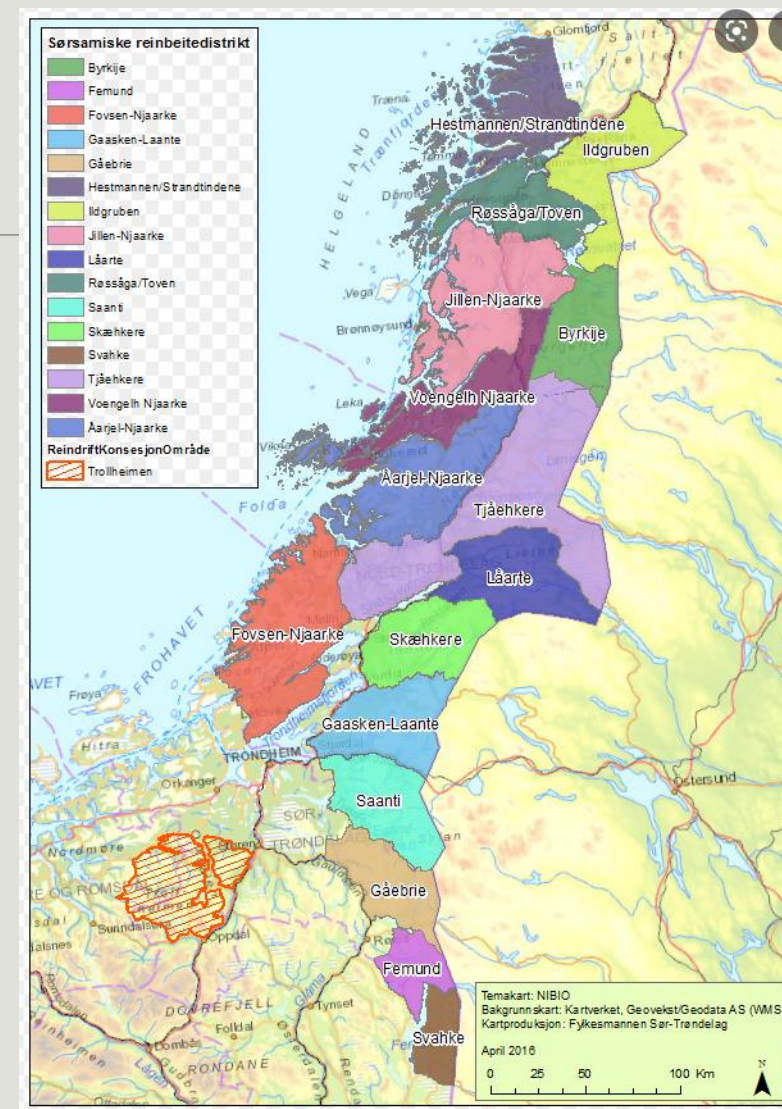
- Historically South Sámi area from Innlandet to Dalarna (Swedish side), and north to Saltfjellet in Nordland county
 - Archeological documentation of South Sámi settlement dated between 690 and 1320
- Between 800-2000 Southern Sami speakers
- South Sami language seriously threatened
- Reindeer husbandry: Central for culture and language
 - Based on family- and sijnje strutures
- Traditional movement from coast to coast



Background

Åarjel-Saepmie/South Sápmi

- Violence in the Southern Sami area: Documented in historical sources from the 17th century
- The massacre at Dalbusjøen in Østerdalen in 1811 (p. 166 in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report)
- State regulation of reindeer husbandry
 - Laws (Felleslappeloven 1883, Supplementary Läppeloven 1897): Negative consequences!
- Internal colonization:
 - Colonisation of land that was already in use by the South Sámi
 - Røyrvik, Namsskogan and Hattfjelldal were Sami areas before the 19th century
- Closed borders: Many lost their herds when the Norwegian-Swedish border closed at the end of the 1800s
 - Led to political mobilising
- Norwegianization, assimilation



Bildebeskrivelse: Kart over sørsamisk område

Resistance through stories: Decolonial perspectives on Sámi history, indigenous people and rights

- The article discusses some of the long-term consequences of racism, discrimination and othering
 - Social Darwinism
 - Lost rights to land and water = loss of livelihood
- Telling your story: An act of resistance
 - We can resist colonial knowledge structures (in academia and elsewhere) by telling counter stories



Fjellheim: Resistance through stories

- Critical exploration of the consequences of colonial narratives that have defined South Sámi history, indigenous status, and land rights around the Røros area
- NTNUs role in South Sámi history



Foto: Bente Haarstad

A brief introduction to «The advancement of the Sámi» theory

Discrimination of South Sámi because of Yngvar Nilsen's «the advancement of the Sámi» hypothesis (1889)

- Sosial darwinisme

Court cases throughout the 1900s about grazing rights, losses because of Nilsen's hypothesis

Argument: Archeologists had not found place names, burial sites, religiously significant places to prove Nilsen wrong. Simultaneously, South Sámi people knew of all these but were not heard.

South Sámi have always disputed the hypothesis

From the 1970s: Historians and archeologists have found traces in Áarjel Saepmie of Sámi settlement dated before year 1000 – in other words disproven the hypothesis from a scientific perspective

2023: Apology from the rector Anne Borg for NTNU's role



Vårflytting i Saanti Sijte (Essand reinbeitedistrikt) Foto: Bente Haarstad

Foto: Bente Haarstad. Bildebeskrivelse: En stor reinflokk beveger seg i et snødekt landskap.

Groupwork

«Framrykkingsteorien»/ «The advancement of the Sámi» theory

Read about the «Advancement of the Sámi» theory in the texts below. Divide the texts between you. Some are in Norwegian. Feel free to use google translate or similar where possible. Answer the following questions:

- In what ways has the “advancement of the Sámi” theory been a problem for the South Sámi? How has NTNU been involved?
- How do you read former rector Anne Borg’s apology?
- Thinking from a decolonial perspective and drawing on theoretical insights: If we were to work on this specific case now, how might we go about doing it?
- Thinking in a ten-year perspective, what do you think NTNU should do?

Take notes and be prepared for a brief plenary discussion.

Book chapter on historyography in Åarjel-Saepmie by Sem: See end of page 157 onwards:

<https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/id/e6c3f247-8356-4052-9eaf-103a761fccb8/1007260.pdf>

NTNU board meeting case (In Norwegian):

https://www.ntnu.no/styret/saker_prot/22.02.06web/O-6.06%20vedlegg.pdf

Page 211-212 in the Thruth and reconcilliation committee’s report (in Norwegian): <https://www.stortinget.no/globalassets/pdf/sannhets--og-forsoningskommisjonen/rapport-til-stortinget-fra-sannhets--og-forsoningskommisjonen.pdf>

Opinion piece (in Norwegian, but translatable):

<https://www.midtnorskdebatt.no/meninger/kronikker/2017/02/14/Det-er-p%C3%A5-tide-%C3%A5-si-unnskyld-14214017.ece>

Opinion piece (in Norwegian, but translatable):

https://www.nrk.no/ytring/nei-takk---samer-ingen-adgang_-1.12054367

Lexicon piece on Yngvar Nilsen (in Norwegian, but translatable):

https://snl.no/Yngvar_Nielsen

Anne Borg’s apology: <https://nyheter.ntnu.no/jeg-vil-pa-vegne-av-ntnu-beklage-at-vi-ikke-har-oppfylt-vart-ansvar-overfor-det-sor-samiske/>

Current project on South Sámi history: <https://nyheter.ntnu.no/skal-lofte-sorsamisk-historie-ut-av-skyggen/>

How is decolonial theory relevant for you?

Write individually reflecting on the following:

- What do you think might be blind spots in your field? Which and whose perspectives are often left out?
- How might decolonial theory/perspectives/practices be relevant in your doctoral work (or not)?
- Thinking about SAIHs decolonial toolkit and the other texts that were on the reading list for today and yesterday: What changes would you like to see at your department or in your field?

Discuss your thoughts and perspectives with the person next to you.

