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## (Swedish) Epistemological, colonial and scientific racisms analysed and countered by Sámi scholars

### 1. Gunilla Larsson

#### Countering Swedish academic epistemological and colonial racism: Reclaiming Forest Sámi history and presence in Stockholm region through Archeological and ethnological research

##### Abstract

The Swedish state's policy towards the Sámi and in particular towards Forest Sámi has since long been genocidal and the ambition has been to erase this culture entirely.

As the history is erased also from school books and university curricula, and there is no support available to do reclaim our history from Sámi perspectives, doing so becomes an act of resistance, archeological and academic activism.

In the 17th and 18th centuries Sámi living in the middle of Sweden and in the coastal provinces, mainly Forest Sámi, were forced by the King to move north and to the inland. When the peasants complained that the Sámi were needed for taking away predators like wolves and bears, and for making handicraft products, it was decided that the Sámi employed by the local Parish as "sockenlappar" to do works that Swedes did not want to do, like killing horses, cats and dogs, were allowed to stay. The others had to move and were in the 18th century moved in prisoner's transports, and kept in Gävle prison before further deportation northwards. The racist, social Darwinist ideology of the 19th century placed Forest Sámi as the most inferior race. In 1928 Forest Sámi lost their rights to the traditional livelihood based on a mixed economy with hunting, fishing, handicraft and trade. One of the main goals in this project is to increase knowledge about this period of ethnical cleansing and destruction of the Forest Sámi culture. Studies in particular areas, including Stockholm, are made. With the help of archival records, ethnographic accounts and ancient monuments, the earlier settlements, the cultural heritage and history of the Forest Sámi in these research areas is documented and analysed.

#### **Bio: Gunilla Larsson, PhD, affiliated to the Technoscience Research Group, Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University/ Sámi Land Free University**

Gunilla Larsson, is PhD in Archaeology, and is affiliated to the Technoscience Research Group, Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala university, the Sámi Land Free University and also runs the consultancy company "Revita Archaeology and History" Larsson is member of the reference group for the research node *Science, validation, partial perspectives. Knowledge production beyond the norms.* financed by the Disciplinary Domain of Humanities and Social Sciences, Centre for Gender Research (CfG), Dept of Literature & Hugo Valentin Center (Dept of History), Uppsala University.

Larsson is a trained and experienced archaeologist with a specific focus on Sámi cultural heritage and also herself of Forest Sámi background from the Lule River Valley region.

Larsson has worked in her capacity as archaeologist since 1988 in several research projects regarding Sámi cultural heritage, in collaboration with renowned researchers and practitioners and linked to important institutions working with Sámi culture. Larsson has worked within the research project led by Dr. May-Britt Öhman “Rivers, Resistance, Resilience” (Formas, 2012-2015) investigating Forest Sámi remains in the Lule River valley. She is a member of the Stockholm Sámi association, and president of UPPSAM, the association for Sámi related research in Uppsala, since 2016.

Gunilla will participate in the research project lead by Katarina Pirak Sikku, *Give me my perspective - Traces of the race biologists into the Sámi people's home*, Vetenskapsrådet, KFoU, 2017-2019, 5,040 MSEK, placed at the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University.

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## 2. Ola Bergdahl

### **Racial biology, racism, genocide and exploitation of Indigenous Sámi lands and water: The Swedish state and church's colonial history**

#### Abstract

Science, racism, racial biology, genocide and colonial scramble for lands and waters went hand in hand in Sweden as in Germany. Swedish racial biology studies started in early 1800s. Soon thereafter Sámi land rights - hitherto somewhat protected - became questioned. Ore deposits had been identified and amongst other banker and politician Knut Wallenberg (1853 – 1938) searched to exploit these.

German professor of anthropology and eugenics Eugen Fischer developed a methodology for genocide without fire arms among the Herrero and Nama in Africa, leading to the death of 80 000 people through starvation. In 1913 Fischer established contact with the Kiruna mine superintendent Hjalmar Lundbohm, proposing to pursue studies of “mixed breed” between Swedish and Sámi. The Swedish church was involved through the priest Georg Bergfors and bishop Olof Bergqvist - also Cabinet Minister responsible for Swedish schools. Wallenberg provided funds to research in anthropology and eugenics. As Minister of Foreign Affairs 1914 - 1919, Wallenberg also established important economic trade relations with Germany.

Racial biology research “showed” that the Sami were an inferior human race and data on the nomadic Sámi were used by Adolf Hitler in “Mein Kampf”. Meanwhile Sweden supplied the German war industry with the best quality ore. Both countries used race biology research for political purposes: in NaziGermany, children “with defects” were killed, in Sweden the Sami were forced to live under regulated forms, with socially miserable living conditions leading to increased infant mortality - a genocide covered up, to promote Swedish state industrial exploitation interests. Throughout all of this, the highest representatives of the Swedish church were present, informed about actions and consequences.

#### **Bio:**

Ola Bergdahl is a student of Theology at Johannelund Theology Seminary, which is an independent college founded in 1862, owned and run by by the Lutheran Swedish Evangelical Mission (Evangeliska Fosterlandsstiftelsen) located in Uppsala, Sweden, and cooperates with Uppsala University and Linköping University. Bergdahl is finalizing his bachelor thesis in History of Religion. The thesis focuses on the Swedish church implications in racial biology research on nomadic Sámi and the consequences for the Sámi.

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### 3. Anti-racist and decolonial Feminist/Indigenous/Sámi strategies for brighter futures: the Sámi land free university

May-Britt Öhman

Abstract

The production of technological modern identities within Scandinavia rests on the dispossession of Sámi people from our traditional lands, and thus our identities related to land and water. Technoscientific language and imagery continue to shape and reflect power relations which favor the colonial nation states and dis-favor Sámi rights.

The vast majority of scholars doing research on Sámi territory and Sámi people are themselves non-Sámi. Academic studies in Sweden/Europe is (has for long been) a rigid site of settler logics, which to a large extent both excludes and rejects Sámi voices and experiences in research and education. The current situation contributes to the maintaining of epistemological contexts which support increasing colonial exploitation and destruction of Sámi territories, as well as structural violence. It also leads to a continued ecocide even of the colonial states themselves.

This presentation describes the ongoing work to establish platforms to accommodate and strengthen research and higher education initiated and led by the Indigenous Sámi in order to promote decolonization of technoscience for the benefit of the Sámi and Sámi society, parallel with a painful work to claim space and voice within academia.

The presentation will focus on the progress of this work – the work with the Sámi land free university - methods and ambitions, disclose both resistance and support from academia as well as collaborations with Sámi organisations, the Sámi parliament, individual reindeer herders, Sámi artists and film makers and other Indigenous scholars.

Amongst other I will talk about the film research project Everyday struggles for the protection of Forest Sámi cultures against “environmental friendly” power production and other destructive colonial, racist and genocidal technoaggressions with Petri Storlöpare, Henrik Andersson and how technological design of large infrastructures as well as “green energy production” can be changed to become less colonial.

**Trailer by Petri Storlöpare** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LmzFxU7rb-g>

**Bio/contact:** May-Britt Öhman is Lule/Forest Sámi, deputy member of the Sámi Parliament, PhD of History of Science and Technology, researcher at the Centre for Gender Research, Uppsala University and founder of the Sámi Land Free University. She has led several research projects, amongst other “Rivers, Resistance, Resilience. Sustainable futures in Sápmi and in other Indigenous Peoples’ territories” (Formas, 2012-2015, 6MSEK) Öhman is one of three research leaders of the research node *Science, validation, partial perspectives. Knowledge production beyond the norms.* financed by the Disciplinary Domain of Humanities and Social Sciences, Centre for Gender Research (CfG), Dept of Literature & Hugo Valentin Center (Dept of History), Uppsala University <http://www.histfilfak.uu.se/scival/> In 2013 she set up the Technoscience research group at the Centre for Gender Research, UU.

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