

Whose Voice?

Forest and Land-Use Decisions by Sámi Reindeer Herders in Sweden

Sweden's legal instruments acknowledge the rights of the Sámi people to be consulted in decision-making. How do different actors perceive Sámi peoples' right to forest and land in Sweden? In other words, whose voice matters in a Swedish forest and land-use policy? This project aims to highlight these questions with a focus on the role of Indigenous people – Sámi reindeer herders – in decision-making over land issues.

The broad objective of this project is to understand the complexity of Indigenous identity and history combined with modern-day forest and land use policy. The Master's thesis will be fine-tuned with specific objectives and focused research questions based on the student's interests, aptitude, and out-of-the-box implementable ideas.

A few key potential questions are –

- how do recent forest and land use policies and decisions contradict or complement Sámi reindeer herders' livelihood and traditional community management of resources?
- what factors influence the change, how does the change matter – and to whom?
- role of key institutions promoting Sámi rights?
- youth and gender perception and how land-use decision impacts them?

Method: This qualitative interdisciplinary research blends social anthropology with forest science through the lens of forest policy. The conceptual framework of forest policy – who decides, exclusion and inclusion – will highlight in building the case study.

The option is open to either desk-based literature (legal, cultural, and policy analysis) review case study, or semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders.

Requirement: Strong understanding of forest and land use governance, and multi-stakeholders dialogue with ethical values and respect towards Indigenous peoples. Good aptitude for case study writing, qualitative research, and analysis of the interdisciplinary study. Ability to work independently.

Multiple students can work on different dimensions of this project.

The project is available from January 2023.

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