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“Masculinities” in Sami studies

ABSTRACT Sami masculinities must be understood as plural. This is the starting point for this article. There is little research done on gender and/in Sami society, especially concerning men and masculinity. The article deals with Sami masculinities as a field of research, and has two main goals. Firstly, the main trends in relevant research on gender in Sápmi in general and on Sami men in particular are presented and discussed. Secondly, a number of challenges related to doing research on Sami masculinities are explored. The theoretical perspectives are mainly drawn from the fields of gender studies and indigenous studies. The article will hopefully serve as a platform and a starting point for further research on Sami masculinities.

KEYWORDS Sami, gender, masculinity, intersectionality, Sami men, indigenous

Masculinity has become a common research topic and an integrated area within gender research (Lorentzen 2006). If you add “Sami,” the picture changes. There is little research either on Sami masculinities or the situation of Sami men. Other topics have dominated the research on Sami issues. Regarding gender, interest has mainly focused on women and the situation of Sami women. There is a lack of both empirical research and of more principal and theoretical examination.

It is important to distinguish between the term masculinity and that which relates to men. They are connected, but not synonymous. In this article, I discuss various aspects of researching masculinities in

a Sami context. The article has two main goals: firstly, I present trends in relevant research, that is research on Sami men and on gender in Sami contexts. Secondly, I will discuss challenges and issues related to masculinities in Sami settings. Perspectives on this come from gender research and research into indigenous issues. Hence, the article aims to serve as a platform and a basis for further research into Sami masculinities. The article is based on research literature from different kinds of Sami and indigenous studies. The empirical studies referred to in this initial work originate mainly from Norway. Further work will add cases and research literature from Finland, Sweden and Russia, and will also include empirical studies.

The article reflects a combination of indigenous perspectives and gender perspectives. Both of which are, of course, diverse. A central trend within research into Sami issues is to situate Sami society in the context of the international movement of indigenous peoples. Within research this can be seen in the spread and increasing use of the term "indigenous peoples," as well as in the presence of a particular methodology for research related to indigenous peoples. I raise the issue of whether gender and queer perspectives actually might challenge these methodologies.

Baseline and Background. Sápmi and the Gender Situation

Sami society is diverse, existing as it does in four different countries. Norway has the largest population (more than 50,000), Sweden has approximately 15,000, Finland 10,000 and Russia 5,000. These numbers are, however, difficult to confirm. A census in which ethnic identity is a factor has not been made since the first half of the twentieth century. EU legislation even restricts the registration of people based on ethnic identity. It is difficult to measure and define a person as Sami and today self-identification is a defining factor. Many people, especially in the northernmost areas, are also of mixed heritage. In Norway, somewhat fewer than 14 000 people are registered in the elections to the Sami Parliament. This gives some idea of the number, but it does not include children, young people and the many who do not define themselves as part of the Sami *political* society. In research, this means that some assumptions have to be made from the geographical context. This is a particular challenge in the areas that were struck hardest by the Norwegianization policy (Hansen 2012: 8).

Sami societies have undergone major changes. Policy regarding the Sami in all four countries has put pressure on the Sami throughout changing historical times. In Norway, the Norwegianization policy was quite successful in several areas, leading many Sami, especially along the coast, to give up their ethnic identity and become Norwegians. This policy end-

ed after the end of the Second World War. The new policy in Norway can be characterized as a state politics of ignorance, made obvious for instance in school textbooks and curricula, areas in which the Sami had almost no place until the 1970s (Folkenborg 2008). The Alta conflict around 1980, where the local protest against the building of a hydro-power dam developed into a national conflict concerning indigenous politics, became the main expression of the turning tide. From then on, the Sami revitalization process, which had already lasted more than a decade, gained momentum. In the 1980s, the Norwegian state started to recognize the Sami as an indigenous people, which also implied recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples. The Sami Parliament opened in 1989 and Norway ratified ILO Convention 169 on the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples in 1990. At the same time many Sami, despite greater public and official recognition, continued to experience both marginalization and discrimination (Hansen 2012).

Gender is a factor in marginalization and social inequality, also in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie. Social anthropologist Ketil Lenert Hansen confirms this in his report on equity in Sami societies (Hansen 2012). In the geographical areas where villages are supported by the Sami Parliament, the population has decreased while the average age has increased. There is now a surplus of older men and the number of younger women is lower in these areas than in the rest of Norway (Hansen 2012: 11). When it comes to school and education, more boys than girls drop out of school in the aforementioned areas than in the rest of the country. When it comes to occupation there are not many differences between the areas, except that urban and town-like have a slightly higher employment rate. There are few women within the reindeer herding industry, and the number has only decreased since 2000 (Hansen 2012; more in the following).

Hansen points to the issue of marginalization amongst the Sami, stating that the experience of being marginalized is also expressed through class and gender. In addition, there are other relevant factors: few resources, small communities, and very limited choices. One interesting finding is that, with regard to working life, Sami men score highest when it comes to marginalization. Hansen argues that Sami men are less flexible in the job market and higher education than Sami women. This is not something that is limited to the Sami areas (Hansen 2012: 21–23). Nevertheless, an assumption can be made that the general social development in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie also includes what is termed an expanded room for action, both for men and women (to a greater degree), than has been seen in the rest of Norway (Lorentzen 2012: 168).

Læstadianism has played a major part in some areas of Sápmi/Sabme/

Saepmie. Læstadianism is a Christian conservative revivalist movement that started in the mid-nineteenth century in Northern Sweden. The movement arrived in Norway in 1848, and became an important religious and social movement in large parts of the Sami society, with the exception of the Southern Sami, from Finnmark and Troms to the northern parts of the Nordland counties. It is not as such a particularly Sami kind of Christianity, but it contributed to a set of conservative, Christian ideals related to gender, and a similar set of values and a language—or even lack of knowledge—related to sexuality and sexual identity (Olsen 2008).

Until recently, there has not been much talk in Sami society of same-sex sexuality or other kinds of sexual orientations and gender identities that break with the existing and established heteronormativity. The established practices and ideals of what men should do, be and desire have included a heavily felt silence. With the publication of *Queering Sápmi* (Bergman & Lindqvist (eds.) 2013) being queer in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie became a topic of conversation and debate. Through an exhibition and a book, the stories are told of Sami that in one way or another break out of the limits of heteronormativity and consequently find themselves on the margins of the Sami majority. This is what queer perspectives are all about—questioning and contesting gender identity and sexual orientation. In addition, *Queering Sápmi* shows how neither masculinity nor femininity is limited to men or women respectively.

The issues of gender equity and the situation for men and women in Sápmi are not related solely to the ideals and stereotypes of masculinity. However, they work as a backdrop and baseline for any discussion of masculinities. The claim that a macho culture exists is quite often mentioned in the public sphere. Despite this, it is barely given any emphasis in research. Historian Andrea Amft (2000) writes partly about this in her analysis of the changing way of life for Swedish Sami through the twentieth century.

The Research Status

This is not a complete literature review as the focus is primarily on the Norwegian aspect with a few side-views of Sweden. Generally there is space and need for more research in several areas. Both case studies and more principal, thematic studies are called for. Regarding the research on Sami masculinities and Sami men, the majority of the empirical studies come from contexts that are in part very different from one another making generalizations problematic. The situation in Inner Finnmark, for example, is not necessarily the situation in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie.

Women and Men in Sápmi

Early research on gender in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie covered first and foremost the place of women in Sami society. The work of Máret Sára (1990) and Vigdis Stordahl (2003) presents women as activists, women's organizations and women in working life. Other scholars have since contributed, also writing about more structural gender issues. What this research reveals is a complex discourse on gender. Firstly, social anthropologist Jorunn Eikjok (2004) describes an original male dominance, seen as an expression of men presented as the norm and normality in Sami society. An expression of this can be found in the Reindeer Act from 1978, in which only male owners of reindeer were defined and recognized as owners, whereas their wives were defined as subordinate in the business context. This had consequences both for the gender discourse and for the social organization of gender as men were given stronger legal protection than women. At the same time this contributed to the initial struggle for women's issues in Sami society, according to political scientist Beatrice Halsaa (2013). Even though this struggle had some success, the women's movement did not become a major part of society.

Jorun Eikjok (2004: 57) argues that men have excluded themselves from the gender debate in modern Sami society. She emphasizes that in the Sami political debate there has been more room for ethno-politics than for gender politics. Indigenous scholar Rauna Kuokkanen (2007: 73–74) follows the same lines, and points to what she terms “the myth of the strong Sami woman,” claiming that this myth actually contributed to downplaying a real debate on gender. Hence, the various aspects and forms of social identity can be said to complicate each other, leading gender to be de-emphasized by ethnicity. This is still not a given situation; in other social contexts it can be the other way around.

Gender scholars Britt Kramvig and Anne-Britt Flemmen (2010: 191) argue that both ideals and practices related to masculinities should be understood as relational. They look at social changes, and how these have an impact on the gender situation in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie. They show that marital relations in different constellations—Norwegian/Sami, Norwegian/Russian, and Sami-speaking/non-Sami-speaking—in the same region lead to a series of challenges and negotiations related to identity. Gender is one of several aspects of this.

The Sami parliament is another interesting starting point for a discussion on gender in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie. In 2005, equal gender representation was achieved regarding the number of those elected to the Sami parliament. This was a major change from 2001, when only 18 percent of the representatives were women. Social scientist Eva Josefsen (2004) has

written on the Sami parliament as an arena for debate on gender inequality in Sami society. She argues that the efforts that were needed in order to achieve the gender balance also absorbed most of the focus and interest related to gender. Peace scholar Linn-Marie Lillehaug Pedersen (2014) argues that on the one hand gender has become an integral part of Sami politics since 2005, and on the other hand that different actors within Sami politics strongly disagree about how to deal with gender issues.

Literature scholar Vuokko Hirvonen (2007) compares Norway and Sweden, showing that the situation in these two countries is more or less the same. Hirvonen sees a tendency for Sami women to live with the tension of dealing with traditions on the one hand, and of having the ability to adapt to social changes on the other but argues that the development is still in the direction of more equity and equality (Hirvonen 2007: 17; see also Amft 2000). Also focusing on Sweden, historian Anna-Lill Ledman (2009) analyzes the representation of Sami women in the media. She finds that gender equality as an idea and phenomenon is primarily related to Swedishness and has therefore been difficult to put into a Sami context (Ledman 2009: 23).

Research on Sami Men. Managing Tradition and Marginalized Men

A majority of the research done on Sami men or Sami masculinities is related to reindeer herding and to inner Finnmark in Norway. At the same time, some trends can be discerned. The research can mainly be divided into the more empirically based, looking at the managing of tradition and socialization, and the more overarching, focusing on greater tendencies. In both cases, the starting point has been the transition from a traditional society with predominantly primary ways of living, such as reindeer herding, fishing and agriculture, to a modern society with more complex ways of living, urbanization and an increased use of technology.

Health scholar Else Boine (2007) writes on Sami fathers and sons in a particular area of reindeer husbandry. She shows that it is counted as valuable to be able to pass on and manage both traditional and modern cultural ways. Hence, Sami boys are supposed to manage both in their own worlds and in their fathers' worlds. This leads Sami fathers to consider the transition of values difficult in a more modern time than the one in which they themselves grew up.

In line with this are the findings of education scholars Kristine Nystad (2007) and Kirsten Stien (2007). Nystad (2007: 142) sees a tendency for Sami boys in Finnmark in Norway to drop out of education. Nystad's context is reindeer husbandry in inner Finnmark, and in particular the gender roles found there. Boys are expected to be the ones who follow the family traditions while the girls are encouraged to get an education. Hence, Nystad

(2007: 141–142) concludes that the boys are being given the responsibility for tradition, whilst the girls are given the modern responsibilities. This diverges from Boine's findings but the works of Nystad, Stien and Boine are important in the sense that they are based on empirical analysis, show gender differences and articulate a certain kind of preferred masculinity. Stien explores what she terms male modes of articulation in Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie referring to the discussion of gender and masculinity connected with education. Part of this entails seeing the situation of the Sami in a bigger indigenous context. Stien shows that there are differences between men and women with regard to the choices they make in education and work-life. Men tend to be less interested in gaining an education than women. At the same time, however, some Sami men see themselves as teachers later on in life. Hence, the situation is complex (Stien 2007: 156). The male modes of articulation mentioned by Stien concern how Sami men have ways of expressing and knowing that are related both to traditional activities and are redefined so as to be useful also in a contemporary setting. For example tourism gives Sami men new forms of expression (Stien 2007: 155–156).

Moving on from the above-mentioned scholars, I would like to point out the need for a comparative study, which could also show trends in other similar places. What are the situations of Sami boys and men in other parts of Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie? Furthermore, a concept of intersectionality, or something along the same lines, would reveal how several aspects and issues have an impact on ethnic and masculine identity (more on this below).

There are some findings—tendencies rather than unanimous conclusions—which claim that it is difficult to be a Sami boy/young man in small communities. Kristine Nystad mentioned the school dropout rate among Sami boys. However, it might be that this is more a characteristic of small, below average size, communities in the periphery than of Sami places as such, but a potential correlation remains interesting. The philosopher Arnt-Ove Eikeland (2003: 95) writes on the high suicide rate in some, but not other, indigenous villages in so-called Arctic regions (Canada, Greenland, Russia and Norway). There are more suicides in indigenous groups than in non-indigenous groups. For Eikeland, the issue of indigeneity is more important than that of gender, although he shows that more men than women commit suicide, a finding supported by Swedish studies that show there are more suicides amongst reindeer herders than amongst the general population (Ahlm *et al.* 2010). In a study of young Sami in Sweden, scholars Omma, Holmgren and Jacobsson (2011) have found that over half of those asked reported ill treatment because of their ethnicity, with reindeer herders reporting the highest incidence. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that this cannot be generalized to all Sami men.

Queerness and Heteronormativity

Queer identity in Sami contexts has been almost absent as a topic for research and before 2013 it was in fact a topic that was hardly discussed at all. "Queer" indicates gender identities and sexual orientations that break with heteronormativity in one way or another. Queer studies are critical of the way gender and sexual categories tend to be static and taken for granted (Eng 2006: 140–142).

Ketil Lenert Hansen (2012) briefly touches on the issue of gays in Sami societies. Statistics show that there is a tendency for gay Sami to experience more discrimination than straight Sami. Sociologist Merethe Giertsen (2002/2003) argues that gay Samis have a tendency to experience and live a kind of double sense of minority identity; they are minorities as gays in a Sami context, and minorities as Sami in a gay context. Giertsen (2002/2003: 16–18) also discusses whether or not the problems of gay people in Sami groups can be related to the small rural communities. Here too, Læstadianism seems to have an impact, with its negation of any kind of same-sex relationships and its lack of language on sexuality as such. Within Læstadianism homosexuality is described using the term "sodomy" and is seen as a major sin and deviation (Olsen 2008: 160).

A masculinity ideal often mentioned as being typically Sami is related to machoism. Several of the stories told in *Queering Sápmi* mention machoism as a characteristic of—and a problem with—ideal manhood in a Sami context. Nonetheless, not much research exists to support this and, in my view, this talked-of machoism is a gender stereotype that has a big impact. People talk and tell about it, but how representative is it, actually? If it does exist—where is it valid? It seems in part to be related to the reindeer-husbandry culture. This part of Sami society has been seen as a kind of preferred Saminess, partly seeming to be related to a shared preindustrial gender structure. With its popular position, Sami machoism can be seen as existing in the shared space of a preferred Saminess and a preferred masculinity.

The stories from *Queering Sápmi* state that all kinds of breaks with heteronormativity seem to be defined as outside hegemonic Sami masculinity. There is perhaps nothing special about Sami society in this. In many cultural contexts—especially in male-dominated groups—there is a lack of acceptance of being gay which seems to be valid across ethnic boundaries. This article does not go into the issues of queer and gay identities or of so-called "two-spirited" people in other indigenous contexts. However, with the growth of indigenism it is perhaps likely that the idea/context of the two-spirited also will reach Sápmi/Sabme/Saepmie.

There is a great need for further research on these and similar issues. Both Hansen and Giertsen have shown that breaking the ideals of hetero-

normativity has potentially negative consequences for people's health and social identities. However, there are hardly any qualitative studies comparing how gay or LHBTQ people in a Sami and a Norwegian or Swedish context experience their situations. In a master's thesis Ane Løvold (2014) follows the lines of *Queering Sápmi*, telling stories of Samis that go against heteronormativity, and arguing for the need to break the silence over issues of queerness. *Queering Sápmi* repeatedly states that the experience of heteronormativity is part of a normative and preferred Sami identity. In fact, the book may prove itself wrong, as it pulls Sami society in a more tolerant direction (Bergman & Lindqvist (eds.) 2013).

Sami Masculinities in a Wider Context

The encounter between indigenous research and gender research is an interesting one in that within it lies the possibility of discovering and highlighting new sets of relations and causalities. The main challenge, I argue, is that scholars of gender studies ought to be more open to indigenous perspectives and that scholars of indigenous studies ought to be more willing to acknowledge gender as a category.

George L. Mosse, a scholar who examines masculinity and nationalism, works on masculinity as an ideal (Mosse 1996: 4). He discusses how stereotypes of men have entered into and have become a part of the normative ideas of society. The ideals have become a part of and have contributed to shaping societies. This is especially true of the body, and strongly normative ideas about what the male body should look like are related to ideals for all human kind (Mosse 1996: 4). Ideas like these might be termed stereotypes.

Within gender research the concept of intersectionality has been well integrated, even becoming the object of a massive critique as an approach to describing and analyzing how *different*—or different kinds of—social identities can both coincide and contest one another. Intersectionality is used in particular within women's and gender studies related to postcolonial perspectives. As a scholarly approach it opens the way for the recognition of differences between women and between men, not only between women and men (Berg, Flemmen & Gullikstad 2010: 14–15). Thus, the relation between Sami men and other men is as relevant as the relation between Sami men and Sami women. An intersectional perspective attempts to look at people in a variety of contexts simultaneously.

Gender scholar Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen highlights the crossroad dimension of intersectionality as a concept, and also refers to masculinity scholar Robert/Raewyn Connell: social categories like gender and social class, for example, can de-emphasize, emphasize, strengthen, twist, soften and complicate one another (Nielsen 2006: 156). It is not difficult to add ethnic identity

to this mix. With regard to Sami issues, one could ask: how can a Sami identity emphasize, de-emphasize, soften or complicate a masculine identity?

Despite its common usage, intersectionality is not necessarily the concept that needs to be used. I do not discuss the concept further as the important here is the need to look at identity broadly. Gender scholar Øystein Gullvåg Holter (2009: 139) discusses various perspectives on the study of masculinity and gender differences. Holter points to how gender and the discourse of gender similarities has to be seen in the context of other forms of and discourses on equality, for example of class and race.

Gender scholar John Beynon follows the same argument when he states that masculinity has to be understood alongside other social factors. Beynon's model for the study of masculinity describes how different factors all shape masculinity; historical and geographical location, culture and subculture, class and profession, sexual orientation, education, age and physique, religion, and ethnicity all contribute to the formation and shape(s) of masculinity. This makes masculinity a *contingent* social formation (Beynon 2002: 10). In Sami contexts this means that the ethnic identity in itself is a social factor with a potential impact on masculinity. Conversely, different ideals of masculinity can have an impact on the ethnic identity. As contingent social formations Sami ideals of masculinity are bound to vary, due to other factors such as geography, class, and sexual orientation. Hence, it makes it difficult (impossible?) to talk about A Sami Masculinity or The Sami Man in the singular. The contingency implies variation in time, place and social context.

Several scholars discuss masculinities in the plural rather than the singular form (e.g. Connell 1995; Lorentzen 2006: 126; Beynon 2002: 1). Connell (1995) presents four types of masculinity—hegemonic, subordinate, complicit and marginalized. Hegemonic and complicit masculinities both work for the status quo having more or less dominant functions in society, primarily through their appearing as "normal." Subordinate and marginalized masculinities are, on the other hand, situated lower in—or even outside of—the hierarchy.

A concept that might be equally good or relevant is preferred masculinity (Olsen 2008: 111). This relates to Connell's terminology, but downplays to some extent the power dimension. Connell (1987: 171) uses another term in an earlier work, the concept emphasized femininity, which can easily be transferred to the issues of masculinity and relates to the term "preferred masculinity." An interesting aspect of this is its intersectionality. Preferred masculinity can also be transferred to other kinds of identity. Not only gender ideals and identity can be preferred, one ethnic identity can be preferred over others.

This can be related to one of gender studies' most famous and well-written one-liners, Judith Butler's description of how gender is not only about ideas, but about practice: "We regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right" (Butler 2007: 190). The Sami people who tell their stories in *Queering Sápmi* can surely attest to this; they have in different ways been punished for not doing their ascribed gender identity right. Gender is what you are, what you are socialized into, and what you do—your practice. You appear, perform or act in a certain way as a "man," a "woman," or as another kind of category, and there are sanctions—or punishment—related to doing it right.

The theoretical discussion on gender is to some extent transferrable to ethnicity as with the gender dimension, there are several ways of being Sami. Your Sami identity is who you are, what you are socialized into, and something that you do. Sami people can, of course, experience their Sami identity in different ways and there are also most definitely sanctions related to Sami identity. There are preferred ways of being Sami, of how you do your Sami identity.

Sami masculinities are played out and expressed in a set of tensions between ideals and practices. Referring to the aforementioned George Mosse, it is important to remember that stereotypes and ideals regarding men contribute to the formation of society. Stereotypes are, however, simpler and more univocal than practices. Hence, the ideals can present pictures of Sami men that are clearer than the actual situation for these men.

The traditional picture painted of the Sami man involved in reindeer husbandry shows a man who copes with his way of living, who is at home in nature and is flexible in the face of a demanding environment. However, the modernization of society brings with it both an increasing range of opportunities and a potentially bigger set of problems than other men face. Some Sami men experience the tension between tradition and modernization.

Gender in itself is not an isolated set of structures. No person can be only a man or only a woman—or only a queer. Adding ethnicity is important to understanding people and, of course, it is possible also to add in class, education, religion, center/periphery, age and sexual identity (Beynon 2002: 10). Men in Sami society, like all men, will have the experience that their social identities exist at the crossroads between different kinds of identities. As Sami men they can also be villagers, fishermen, Læstadians, gays and youth. All at the same time.

The issue of class is often examined in connection with race and/or ethnicity. Class is important to social identity as societal resources are not shared equally. Writer and gender scholar bell hooks emphasizes the importance of using class as an analytical category taking as her starting point the

way in which unequal social conditions characterize the situation of black people in USA, in addition to the racial aspect. In such a context, race and gender can be used in order to draw attention away from the harsh reality shown by class as a category (hooks 2000: 7). Hence, it is of huge importance to be able to accept more than one category in an analysis. With regard to Sami society ethno-politics have held such a central position that it may have overshadowed, for instance, gender issues. This is shown and argued by Rauna Kuokkanen (2007), Jorun Eikjok (2007) and Linn-Marie Lillehaug Pedersen (2014). Ethno-politics may even have overshadowed class issues, which brings me to the next issue.

Challenges from Indigenous Methodology

During recent decades the Sami political struggle has gained momentum, partly arising from the revitalization of Sami identity. The inscription of the Sami in a global indigenous identity and movement has been an important factor in this process. This international development has also become part of the research in indigenous issues.

A belief within indigenous research is that research is to be carried out for the benefit of indigenous peoples and through the use of a set of methodological principles. Even though there are multiple approaches, the term *indigenous methodology* is used to describe a particular part of this research. *Methodology* as such supplies a bridge between practical methods and theoretical perspectives, providing reflections on the use and choice of methods and—most often—building on a set of theoretical premises. Included in the methodological reflection is also—and this is particularly true for indigenous methodologies—ideas concerning epistemology.

Indigenous methodologies share the decolonizing and power critical approach. This means that there is an emphasis on showing that research tends to be biased by colonization and on exploring how indigenous communities are in part governed by colonial power and an asymmetry of power (Chilisa 2012: 13–14; Smith 2010; more on indigenous methodology in Olsen 2016).

Transferred to gender studies, the book *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Green (ed.) 2007) is relevant. This book includes several contributions to the discussion of the situation of indigenous women worldwide. Editor Joyce Green describes the purpose of the book as being the need to show that feminism is relevant both theoretically and politically to indigenous women (Green (ed.) 2007: 15). The aforementioned Rauna Kuokkanen and Jorun Eikjok contributed articles to the book on gender and women in Sami contexts. However, even though the book is an important asset in the study of gender and indigenous issues, men and masculinity issues are

absent. Hence, room is still available for research that believes that “gender” does not necessarily mean the same as “women.”

Different fields of research have different tendencies and directions. Within Sami and indigenous research the focus has mainly been on ethnopolitics and rights. Such research can to some extent be labeled gender-blind. More recently, the Sami research on gender that actually exists has generally overlooked men and masculinity as outspoken topics. Hence, you can talk of blindness when it comes to men. This shows the difficulty of looking at several aspects of identity at the same time. The same tendency is seen in Nordic gender research, which seems to neglect indigenous and minority issues unrelated to Muslim immigrants. Two examples are presented below. In *Complying with Colonialism* (Keskinen (ed.) 2009) which covers gender and conflict with regard to the Nordic welfare states, there are no references to indigenous issues. The same goes for *Forskjeller i klassen* [‘Differences in class’] (Nielsen 2014), which covers issues of gender, class and even ethnicity in the Norwegian school. There are no references to or mentions of indigenous issues. Hence, there are two tendencies that are worth correcting: Sami research needs to include gender issues in general and masculinity issues in particular, and explicitly intersectional gender research needs to include Sami issues.

Indigenous methodology sets important challenges for the research into Sami masculinities. Firstly, it raises the issue of including a power-critical perspective. Secondly, it can shed light on which parts of Sami society are explored. Thirdly, the experiences and situations of Sami men need to be addressed.

This perspective can also be turned around. A gender perspective can challenge indigenous methodology. A simple aspect concerns the role of gender issues within indigenous methodology. In important books on indigenous methodologies (Kovach 2009; Wilson 2008; Kuokkanen 2007), gender is hardly treated at all, masculinity even less so. Furthermore, you can ask to whom you listen amongst indigenous people—whose interests, concepts and voices are to be highlighted. So far I have argued that the Sami voices on these matters can disagree or be diverge. Neither “indigenous peoples” nor “Sami” is a uniform group. Hence it is—through the concepts of indigenous methodology—necessary to have a closer definition.

Based on the idea of intersectionality—or at least on the idea of looking at several aspects of identity simultaneously—geography, social class, age, religion, and language can function both together with or in contrast to gender and ethnic identity. This makes it more difficult to state the “premises, interests and wishes of indigenous people” as if they were non-negotiable issues. A young, educated resourceful man who speaks Sami and can cope well with urban and rural life, may not be representative of all Sami

men. His wishes, premises, and interests may not be the same as those of an elderly, disadvantaged man who does not speak Sami and is living in a small village in a geographical periphery. And what if one of them is gay and the other is not? There is not one single Sami perspective or epistemology. Instead it is most probably more correct to pursue research based on plural Sami perspectives—or even based on the perspectives of a plurality of Sami men, queer, women or whatever category you wish to use. And several aspects need to be addressed at the same time.

Concluding Remarks

This final statement is the core of this article. If you are to carry out research on masculinities in Sami settings you have to be able to include different kinds of contexts and social structures. There is not one single Sami masculinity, as there is not one single Sami perspective or way of thinking or acting. However, there might be a number of Sami masculinities that are given content and meaning through their relation to other social formations. Of course, this means that my curiosity is aroused concerning the existence of something that makes some kinds of masculinities “more Sami” than others.

“The Sami Man” as such does not exist—or he only exists as a stereotype. In further research I would, for instance, look critically at the different stereotypes of Sami men that are reproduced today. The indigenous perspective herein lies in the importance of raising and listening to a plurality of voices. In another kind of empirical research I would, for instance, look into the ways Sami fathers and fathers with crossover ethnic identities talk about being men.

This article is an exploration of research literature and of theoretical discourses. Here masculinities are mainly treated as constructs and on a conceptual level. The advantage is that it is not far removed from other fields of research. Hence gender and masculinity studies surely have something to contribute just as indigenous studies can give something back.

NOTES

¹ Læstadianism is a topic that touches on the boundaries of what is counted as part of Sami society and Sami identity. Within the contemporary Sami public sphere the—to some extent—Norwegianized Saminess seems to be considered a less preferred Saminess. Along the coast of Troms and Finnmark, that is in the same areas in which the Norwegianization policy struck the hardest, Læstadianism has had its core areas, regardless of ethnic identity. By the end of the Norwegianization period, many Læstadians had lost their Sami language—some had even lost their Sami identity. Læstadianism today can be described as de-emphasizing and toning down ethnic identity rather than emphasizing and strengthening it.

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