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Ethical guidelines for the documentation of *árbediehtu,* Sami traditional knowledge

Documentation of the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples is becoming increasingly common; one reason for this is that such knowledge is becoming ever weaker and even in some cases disappearing. This is partly due to the increasing influence of Western ways of life on indigenous communities and the passing away of the older generation, taking with them a great deal of the knowledge. Indigenous peoples themselves are today often in the forefront in demanding that traditional knowledge be collected, preserved and passed on to the younger generations, and the indigenous peoples also want to be primarily responsible for such work (Burgess 1999). Traditional knowledge ranges from the limited traditions of specific families or areas to the more comprehensive traditions which the Sami people have in common, regardless of district affiliation. A Sami tradition can be very local in character and thus only apply to a small geographic area. Other Sami may not be familiar with the tradition, because they come from a locality where different customs developed (Gaup 2008). A myriad of different traditions is an expression of cultural wealth, and is also a reflection of how knowledge is adapted to the distinct ecological niches or environments found in *Sápmi* (Samiland).

The aim of the present article is an attempt to create guidelines for how *árbediehtu* (Sami traditional knowledge) should be documented without exploiting the culture. The article must therefore be regarded as a contribution to an ongoing discussion.

Conceptual Framework

This article employs certain concepts which are explained below.

Traditional knowledge can be found in all indigenous and other local communities. It is knowledge which was created out of local living conditions and passed on from generation to generation. It is adaptive knowledge, transmitted orally, containing both abstract and practical elements. The knowledge of indigenous peoples, including the Sami, is often more vulnerable than e.g. the traditional knowledge of Swedish local communities (such as pastoral farming in the Hälsingsland area of Dalarna), because Swedish traditional knowledge forms part of the norms of the majority society.

The Sami word *árbediehtu* means basically "traditional knowledge" and is increasingly used for the traditional knowledge of the Sami people. We can easily ascertain from the use of the term whether Sami knowledge or traditional knowledge in a more general sense is being referred to. *Árbi* means heritage and *diehtu* knowledge. *Árbediehtu* "[...] clarifies knowledge as both information and the process, emphasizes different ways to gain, achieve or acquire knowledge. The concepts indicates indissoluble ties between the past, the present and the future, which is validated by *árbi* 'heritage: inheritance' " (Porsanger 2010, 435).

Árbediehtu is knowledge inherited between generations which is often the foundation of Sami life and times. For the owner of such knowledge, it offers a clear link between the Sami past and present. In this article, *árbediehtu* is used as a common concept for both practical and theoretical knowledge of Sami traditions.

Árbečeahppi (plural: *árbečeahpit*) is a person who has, or can perform, *árbediehtu*. Other Sami words are also to be found in the article; these are explained in the brackets following the words.

Documentation of indigenous traditional knowledge

Traditional knowledge documentation is becoming increasingly common, partly because indigenous people themselves realise that much of their specific stores of knowledge will be lost if not passed on and preserved for future generations. Apart from the indigenous peoples themselves, others

have recognised that indigenous traditional knowledge includes much which may be of great importance for other societies; one example is the prominence given to indigenous knowledge on sustainable use of natural resources in many different contexts. Traditional indigenous knowledge takes into account the specific conditions that prevail in each area; in other words, it is not universal knowledge that can be applied everywhere regardless of local conditions. There is a tendency to document primarily material traditional knowledge – this applies also to *árbediehtu* – but the collection of non-material knowledge is of equal importance. What is documented depends on who conducts the documentation and his or her interests. A person who belongs to the culture may consider that one form of *árbediehtu* should be documented, while people outside the culture may judge other activities to be more interesting. Such traditional knowledge documentation from different perspectives should be considered positively as a strength, because the researchers thus have different approaches and emphasise different events in the documentation work. Irrespective of who conducts a documentation project, the guiding principle should be its usefulness and value for the communities involved. "Finally, those who collect indigenous knowledge should not do so solely for their own reasons, but always incorporate into their research aspects which are of benefit to the community" (Maundau 1995, 5). Before documentation work commences in the field, the researcher should ask the question: For whom is this work being done? The answer will determine the entire documentation process, from the method employed to the final product.

In the past, but even today, traditional knowledge has been collected without any benefit for the indigenous people involved:

> "Researchers have, in the past, typically violated Indigenous communities' sense of ownership over cultural property through their personal and individualistic appropriation, reconstruction and publication of knowledge shared" (WINHEC 2009, 5).

As a consequence of such procedures, many indigenous peoples and their institutions, e.g. in Canada, have reacted and developed ethical guidelines that researchers or collectors have to relate to and follow, in order to obtain permission to document traditional knowledge. This is an attempt on the part of indigenous peoples to protect their culture from exploitation by gaining

control and influence over current and future projects. For the guidelines to be useful and serve their purpose, i.e. to protect indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge, they must of necessity be accepted by the indigenous peoples themselves.

> "Recognizing also that any measure to respect, preserve and maintain the use of traditional knowledge, such as codes of ethical conduct, will stand a much greater chance of success if it has the support of indigenous and local communities and is designed and presented in terms that are comprehensible (and enforceable)" (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/6/4).

Indigenous peoples demand that documentation projects should be based on their needs and perceptions of what they consider to be valuable research or documentation.

> "Indigenous peoples now require that research dealing with indigenous issues has to estimate from the needs and concerns of indigenous communities instead of those of an individual researcher or the dominant society" (Kuokkanen 2008, 49).

If the traditional knowledge of indigenous people is to be preserved from their own perspective, a project must have its foundation in the indigenous communities themselves. This may result in established paradigms being challenged and changed, and new knowledge paradigms may arise. However, to base documentation work on an indigenous paradigm does not mean that Western paradigms are rejected (Kuokkanen 2000).

> "*Indigenous paradigm* is to raise questions of relevant research regarding indigenous communities and to contribute our understanding of different ways of knowing and theorizing. It can introduce new perspectives to research by challenging and deconstructing dominant values, world views and knowledge systems" (Kuokkanen 2000, 414).

The starting point should thus be the indigenous peoples' own values when traditional knowledge projects are planned, implemented and disseminated. If the starting point is close to the values of a particular culture, this is a good basis for the researcher to reflect the knowledge in his work in a way which is acceptable to the tradition bearers involved. The indigenous paradigm should not replace the Western paradigm, but rather develop methodologies

to enable the preservation of traditional knowledge based on the norms and values of the culture bearers themselves.

> "The main aim of indigenous methodologies is to ensure that research can be carried out in a more respectful, ethical, correct, sympathetic, useful and beneficial fashion, seen from the point of view of indigenous people" (Porsanger 2004, 107).

The starting point for the documentation of *árbediehtu* is the values of the local communities involved. Sami values may vary between different local communities or groups; an example of this can be seen in the perception of reindeer and fish. A Sami who has mainly lived on fish will have a more detailed knowledge than a reindeer herder of all aspects of fish, e.g. their behaviour and movements, and also of where, when and how to fish. This does not imply that one *árbediehtu* is more correct than another, but that each one has value in itself, being based on distinct ecological conditions. "Sami traditional knowledge is not the knowledge of the scientific world about the Sami, but the Sami people's own tradition-borne knowledge and experiences of the surrounding environment and its impact on living conditions" (Utsi 2007, 61). If the particular values of a culture are not taken into account, the essence of the knowledge can be lost in the documentation process. Using an indigenous approach means that the researcher bases his work on the indigenous peoples' own values and the ethics of the culture, which in turn determines the choice of theory and method (Porsanger 2004; Brant Castellano 2004). Earlier documentation on Sami practices was often conducted from a top-down perspective, where the main goal was to preserve Sami knowledge (Nordin Jonsson [2010]). There are often source-critical problems in the collected material. Whose views are represented? Is the material a "knowledge clip" of more general traditional knowledge? These are the kind of questions the researcher must consider when working with data collected in the past and found in archives.

Contextualisation

Each project to document *árbediehtu* will have its own context, so it is not possible to develop ethical guidelines to cover every possible situation that may arise during the documentation of traditional knowledge. The guidelines developed for *árbediehtu* are therefore rather general, permitting adaptation to the various aims of different documentation projects. The goal of ethical

guidelines for the documentation of *árbediehtu* is not to create uniformity with regard to documentation and traditional knowledge. Since *árbediehtu* itself is dynamic and varies between regions, individuals, etc., the guidelines must also be flexible and adaptable; otherwise there is a risk that the diversity of the traditional knowledge will be lost in the documentation process. In the context of the *árbediehtu* project, the main point is that it is not possible to develop ethical guidelines based on only one Sami community, but rather guidelines which are so open that they can be applied to most of the various Sami communities. The guidelines should not be made too narrow. They should spring from general Sami norms and values to enable them to be acceptable to the majority of the Sami population and also to those working with documentation of *árbediehtu* or otherwise involved in work on Sami traditional knowledge. This benefits the preservation and dissemination of *árbediehtu* in the long term. One example is that the guidelines specify that the language of documentation should be Sami in those areas where this is possible. If the guidelines stated that all documentation of *árbediehtu* was to be conducted in Sami, they could not be applied in certain areas of *Sápmi*. The guidelines should be considered as a guide and inspiration. Each individual context will determine the guidelines to be used.

Ethical guidelines for the documentation of *árbediehtu*

No one culture has exactly the same structure another culture. Each culture is unique, which makes it impossible to develop general guidelines for the traditional knowledge of all cultures. Rather, each culture must develop guidelines based on its own values, norms, etc. Established ethical guidelines for the documentation of indigenous traditional knowledge can serve as inspiration when other indigenous peoples develop their own guidelines. The objective of ethical guidelines in a wider perspective is to ensure that indigenous peoples are no longer exploited, whether intellectually, materially or culturally, by the claim that the research or documentation is done in the name of science, which was common in the past (Kuokkanen 2008): "(...) indigenous research ethics are a matter of autonomy; taking control of our own affairs and knowledge" (Kuokkanen 2008, 55). Through the development of ethical guidelines in e.g. the *árbediehtu* project, Sami researchers and other cultural workers are attempting to take responsibility for not allowing Sami traditional knowledge to be exploited in various ways. This is, however, a

discussion that must take place together with the Sami general public if the guidelines are to be accepted and have real significance.

The holistic perspective

In indigenous communities the holistic perspective has been of great importance. "(...) the practice of Indigenity as a 'whole system' is the best real protection for maintaining Indigenous identity and knowledge from loss, erosion and exploitation" (Armstrong 2010, 84). All aspects of life, both tangible and intangible, are interconnected and cannot be separated from one another.

> "Indigenous knowledge is therefore holistic; deeply related to land, stories and ancestors where the past is made manifest in life within the local environment, family or even through these connections of past, present and future" (WINHEC 2009, 7).

The holistic perspective is also present in Sami culture and society. Man and the environment (the surroundings) are interrelated and cannot be separated. A holistic starting point or perspective is almost a necessity when *árbediehtu* is to be documented. In order to build on indigenous peoples' own understanding, we must adopt a holistic approach that includes language, culture, practices, spirituality, mythology, customs and habits, as well as the social organisation of the community (*Native Science* 2009). The documentation should include the preparatory work, the implementation and the follow-up work of the selected activity to be documented by the project. If only part of the implementation of the activity is documented, it will be taken out of context. One example is the process for preparing skins; it is not just a question of the skin preparation itself, but the knowledge in fact begins with the selection of skins and what they will be used for, which bark is to be used, how the bark is utilised, the actual tanning process, and the subsequent knowledge of how the skins are softened, stored, etc. A person who later learns from the collected material must be able to follow the documentation work and perform the same task himself, which will be impossible if parts of both the preparatory and follow-up work are missing. A documentation which merely reveals selected parts of the process can be regarded as a "knowledge clip". However, the theme of a documentation project could also be e.g. the selection and peeling of bark, without the necessity of describing the skin preparation process. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that a documentation project

is not just a knowledge clip of a specific activity, but also includes a holistic perspective.

Male and female *árbediehtu*

Traditional knowledge is developed in close harmony with the living conditions that prevail or used to prevail for each individual, and there is thus a difference between the traditional knowledge held by women and men (Grenier 1998, 37–41). Sami male and female *árbediehtu* differ, which means that the traditional knowledge of both genders must be documented systematically. The differences in *árbediehtu* are partly because the genders have/had different responsibilities, tasks and roles in life. The Sami woman's traditional knowledge can be linked to the family, the home/hut and the vicinity of the settlement(s), since she was/is more stationary. The Sami man has other responsibilities and tasks and hence different knowledge. It was/is a natural division of responsibilities and tasks to facilitate the daily life of the family, as everyone knew what was expected of them (Hirvonen 1996, 7–12). These areas of responsibility and work were learnt by each individual during his or her upbringing in a natural way (children were involved in daily life, learning by observation and trying out various tasks according to their ability), with the goal of eventually enabling the individual to subsist independently in the area (*Reindriftskvinner i Norge* 2010, 4). There are of course also individuals who have learnt the duties or responsibilities of the opposite gender for various reasons. The researcher planning to document *árbediehtu* should be aware of whether it is female or male *árbediehtu*, as this will for example facilitate the selection of informants. Female traditional knowledge has generally been documented to a lesser extent than male traditional knowledge (Grenier 1998, 37–41).

Contact with *árbečeahpit*/the local community

The collector of knowledge in a documentation project is directly dependent on a local community and the willingness of its members to share their *árbediehtu*. It has been and still is common procedure that those wishing to document traditional knowledge have contacted the local community and potential knowledge bearers (*árbečeahpit*) after they have received funding for the project, which many indigenous people want to see changed. A requirement commonly found in indigenous ethical guidelines is that the

affected community and its members at an early stage should be informed and consulted on the proposed project and thus have the opportunity to participate in influencing its content and structure (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008; Longley Cochran [2009]). "Traditional knowledge bearers must play a central role in shaping the project and be involved as equal partners in terms of consultation and decision-making" (Oskal & Turi & Sundset 2007). If the community members and tradition bearers have increased influence, the projects can be of more value to them, since traditional knowledge documentation may then be directed to issues and activities they consider to be of major importance. In determining what should be documented, the basic rule must be that the local community has influence (IIRR 1996; *Inter Tribal Health Authority* 2005); a top-down perspective can thus be avoided. Involving the local community at an early stage is beneficial; the people affected may then feel more involved in the project and acquire a particular interest in it. The opportunity to carry out a documentation project on traditional knowledge and benefit from the knowledge of tradition bearers should be regarded as a privilege (Longley Cochran [2009]). Not everyone who works on a documentation project has the privilege of being allowed to share in the unique knowledge of a culture by those who really know it, because there is sometimes a fear of sharing *árbediehtu* with outsiders. Tradition bearers should be treated with respect, as should their culture and society, even after the documentation project is completed. The collector of knowledge is responsible for carrying out the documentation in a professional and humble way, so that the *árbečeahpit* may have a positive experience of participating in such projects.

It may be important to consult with the local community and its members as to when it would be suitable for them to document their knowledge (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007). The documenter should be flexible and consider when it suits the *árbečeahpit* to participate, and when specific knowledge is performed most naturally. Participating in an activity can provide a completely different insight than simply listening to someone talk about it. It is easier to show how to do things, what to think about, etc. if the activity is actually performed. If knowledge is transmitted orally, parts of it are easily forgotten. The opportunity to participate actively can give a better end product even if it means using other methods than those which may have been originally planned. There are thus many advantages to being in contact with prospective *árbečeahpit* before the project begins, in order to achieve the best possible result for the documentation work.

Agreement between the parties concerned

Many of the ethical guidelines stress the importance of free, prior informed consent (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Alaska Native Knowledge Network* 2009*; Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008; Longley Cochran [2009]; *ITC (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) Research principles for community-controlled research with the Tapirisat Inuit of Canada*, further refered as ITC [no date]). In the process of free, prior informed consent, the community involved will have received basic information about the objectives of the documentation project, how it can affect the community, the consequences of the project, etc. Free and prior informed consent implies that information is provided freely, that consent is given before the project begins, that sufficient time is allowed to obtain the views of the communities involved and to adapt the project to such views, and that there is an unambiguous contract or agreement between the parties (Henriksen [2009a]; Kuokkanen 2008). Such agreements will uphold the parties' best interests in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts.

The Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic, drawn up by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (2009), set out clearly what should be included in free and prior informed consent. The following points should be incorporated:

- funding for the documentation project, by which person or institution
- leader of the project and other people involved
- need for consultants, guides and interpreters from the local community
- documentation methods
- the language of the documentation work
- predictable positive and negative results of the documentation project
- the effects, both positive and negative, that participation may have on tradition bearers
- copies of the final product, descriptions of the data and other relevant material from the project for the benefit of tradition bearers and other community members
- what will happen to the end result and collected material when the project ends
- the researcher must respect the customs and values of the local culture and the local language

With regard to the documentation of *árbediehtu*, there should be free and prior informed consent or a similar agreement between the researcher and the *árbečeahpit* (the interested parties). "Traditional knowledge (...) should only be used with the prior informed consent of the owners of that traditional knowledge" (*Akwé: Kon*[1] 2004). Such agreements should be in writing, so that all parties involved know the preconditions for the project and what will be required not only of the *árbečeahpit* but also the researcher. An agreement can eliminate possible misunderstandings and conflicts between the parties concerned. The main intention behind free, prior informed consent and similar agreements is that the knowledge bearers and the local community agree to their *árbediehtu* being mapped, archived and used and that they understand what it entails to share the knowledge and what consequences it may have, both positive and negative, short-term and long-term (Henriksen [2009a]). Those who document *árbediehtu* must be sure that the tradition bearers have actually received the relevant information and are fully aware of any repercussions participation may have for them (Oskal & Turi & Sundset 2007). Free and prior informed consent is a form of protection for both *árbečeahpit* and researcher, so that neither of them will be used for purposes other than those agreed upon. Such consent can also regulate the use of the knowledge they share, so that the tradition bearer need not be afraid that the knowledge he or she is sharing will later appear in a completely different context from the intended project.

The meeting with *árbečeahpit*

The documentation of *árbediehtu* involves a meeting where one party shares his or her knowledge and the other party acquires new knowledge and/or the possibility of documenting such knowledge. It is a joint work process

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1   The Akwé: Kon guidelines are an important tool published by the Convention on Biological Diversity. They play a major role in the continuing work of the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity and are to be implemented by the countries which sign the Convention, in which the traditional knowledge of indigenous and local communities is protected and highly valued. Akwé: Kon is a set of guidelines developed in cooperation between the signatory countries, indigenous peoples and local communities, based on the premise that development may take place, but not at the expense of traditional indigenous lands and waters, sacred sites, etc. The use of these guidelines will ensure that cultural, social and environmental impacts can be presented to the indigenous peoples before any change or development takes place. The guidelines are a means to protect indigenous cultures from exploitation and instead contribute to improved living conditions for them.

between the researcher and the *árbečeahpit*. In order for the documentation process to achieve a positive outcome, both parties must be committed and willing to share. Basic requirements are two-way communication and respect between the individuals concerned (*Kahniakehaka Nation* 1995). Success in *árbediehtu* documentation requires reciprocity and a positive relationship between the researcher and the local community (Grenier 1998; Smith 2000). The respect for the other party also implies that the researcher considers when it is convenient for the *árbečeahppi* to receive him/her and share the traditional knowledge. *Árbečeahpit* may have family and other commitments, and therefore give short notice that they cannot attend a meeting. In the documentation of *árbediehtu* one must respect the local community and its activities as well as the family life of the *árbečeahpit* (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007). The collector of knowledge should also show consideration for the *árbečeahppi*; sometimes he or she may turn up because a meeting has been agreed upon, but actually have his or her mind elsewhere, perhaps because of something that has happened in the family or community. In such a situation, the researcher should be able to put the *árbečeahppi* first and offer to postpone the meeting to a later date. *Árbečeahpit* should never feel compelled to meet the researcher (IIRR 1996).

In the documentation of *árbediehtu*, one meeting is not sufficient; a number of conversations/meetings are often a prerequisite for achieving successful documentation. In the first meetings, much of the time and conversation will involve the parties getting to know each other and building a trusting relationship. The data collected must then be understood and perhaps analysed; here it is important that the researcher's understanding of the *árbediehtu* corresponds to the perceptions of the activity held by the tradition bearer. The researcher has a responsibility for communicating the knowledge conveyed by the *árbečeahpit* in a well thought-out manner (Longley Cochran [2009]). It is also important that the holistic perspective of the activity is preserved in the final product.

Anonymity and confidentiality

In all traditional knowledge documentation, it is preferable that the tradition bearers agree to the use of their name in the final product. This strengthens the documentation project and its subsequent results in many ways. In many of the methods used in documentation work, it is a prerequisite that the *árbečeahpit* cannot demand to remain anonymous. The data collected

can be perceived as stronger and more reliable, both from the perspective of the indigenous people and other sections of society, because the separate groups know whose knowledge formed the basis for the data. From a Sami perspective it may be important to know that it actually was Sami who shared their knowledge and no one else. To take tin wire embroidery as an example, it is not only the Sami who have mastered the technique, and in the documentation of patterns, it is important for the Sami to know that a Sami designed the pattern, and also where the pattern comes from. For the Sami population, it is also important to be aware of who shared their knowledge, and the tradition bearer's name enables the Sami to determine directly from which area e.g. a pattern originated. A Sami from the same area as the tradition bearer can determine from the pattern to which family it belongs. This knowledge can be of great significance for those trying to regain their identity and their lost heritage; via non-anonymous tradition bearers it is possible to recreate e.g. a *gákti* (Sami costume) from the area they came from, perhaps with patterns, colouring of bands, etc. peculiar to the family. Who the tradition bearer is and which area or family he or she belongs to can be of much greater significance for the individual Sami or other indigenous person than for the researcher. There may be several different ways of using the collected data at a later stage, and how it is used depends on who the user is.

If the method used permits it, anonymity and confidential treatment of data should be offered (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Inter Tribal Health Authority* 2005; *Kahniakehaka Nation* 1995; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008; Longley Cochran [2009]). In other cases, the researcher must discuss with the tradition bearers the possible implications of anonymity. Researchers should also be aware that a demand for anonymity might arise from the tradition bearers. Sami communities are often small, and the inhabitants know each other and to some extent also control one another. In such small communities it may be difficult to ensure full anonymity for an individual, and this should be explained to the tradition bearer. At the same time, the tradition bearer may wish to remain anonymous in the material. The requirement of anonymity and the possibility of meeting such a requirement are closely connected to the particular methods used in the documentation project. If the documentation is concerned with general subject matter, it is easier to promise anonymity. In the presentation of *árbečeahpit* it is possible to omit the age and place of residence (district affiliation), but the gender can be more difficult to leave out, as it may be relevant to the study. If the researcher considers it difficult to ensure anonymity, this should be communicated to the

tradition bearer, who can then determine whether he or she is still interested in taking part in the project.

Confidentiality is equally important. The researcher and the informant must agree on what may constitute confidential information in the joint project. The person who shares knowledge may not want parts of this knowledge to reach the public domain, e.g. private family matters, certain knowledge about individuals, other specific events, etc. If the knowledge collector is known to the chosen tradition bearers, they will often be much more forthcoming with information than they would be with a collector who was a complete stranger. It is thus a considerable challenge for the researcher to decide which information is too sensitive to be made public. This may be information that the tradition bearer provides in all confidence, which really has nothing to do with the documentation project (Gaup 2008; see also Nordin 2002). The researcher must then ensure that such information is not presented in the final material.

If knowledge is stored in a database in close connection to the documentation work with the tradition bearer, it must be made clear to those who possess the required knowledge that it will be difficult to edit and remove parts of the material at a later stage; they will thus be aware of this if they reveal personal and sensitive information. This must, however, be stipulated in the agreements between the researcher and the tradition bearer before the actual documentation work begins, as the latter will then have time to reflect on whether he or she is interested in joining the project. There is another aspect to be considered here, namely that if the data is to be transferred to the archives or databases that store and preserve *árbediehtu*, this must have been discussed with the *árbečeahpit* in advance, and must be stated in the agreements between the interested parties. There are various options for dealing with confidential material. One is simply to remove the confidential data on the grounds that it was the wish of the *árbečeahpit*. Another option might be that the researcher agrees with the *árbečeahpit* that the material should be marked as secret before it is released, and that the respondent can determine when the material will be made available, e.g. 10 or 20 years after his or her death, or in agreement with the person involved. Allowing relatives to participate in such decision-making after the person in question is no longer with us can be fraught with problems. The relatives may disagree on the extent to which the knowledge should be made available to others than themselves. All aspects of the availability of material to which *árbečeahpit* have contributed must be

determined together with the person concerned, and regulated by agreements.

Compensation for *árbečeahpit*

Some of the ethical guidelines which form the basis for this study mention the issue of financial compensation for tradition bearers. During one of the first seminars of the *árbediehtu* project, in Kautokeino in August 2008, attended by Sami tradition bearers, the question of compensation of *árbečeahpit* was discussed.

The ethical guidelines of other indigenous peoples suggest that a fair and adequate compensation should be paid to those who volunteer as knowledge bearers in a project (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute 2007; Kahniakehaka Nation 1995). It is important to emphasise that it is the time the *árbečeahpit* devote to the project through their participation which is compensated financially, and not the knowledge conveyed. Those involved in the project cannot assume that *árbečeahpit* are able to take part without financial compensation, because such participation may involve several meetings and each meeting may last several hours. *Árbečeahpit* offer their time, which they may in fact need for other activities. The time involved belongs to the researcher's working hours while the knowledge bearer is expected to give of his or her "free time". The relationship between tradition bearers and researchers should be based on equality in all respects (*Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch Principles and Guidelines for Researchers Conducting Research With and/or Among Mi'kmaq People* 2008; Kuokkanen 2008). One way to address the issue of financial compensation may be to offer *árbečeahpit* the equivalent of the lost income according to the relevant salary scales. Those who are planning to implement a project can at the financing stage apply for funds to cover the costs of the participation of the knowledge bearers based on the time they are expected to dedicate to the project. The compensation will therefore not be arbitrary but regulated.

In agreements between the parties, e.g. free and prior informed consent, the terms of compensation should be set out in order to avoid misunderstandings. Compensation or participation in the project can be recommended but must not be required. Compensation for *árbečeahpit* is a sensitive issue; the researcher may have to deal with it carefully and decide on each case separately, while at the same time giving all tradition bearers in the same project fair and equal treatment.

Acceptable practices in the local community

In traditional knowledge documentation, there is no given method which is more suitable than any other; indeed successful documentation work usually requires a combination of methods (Hansen & Van Fleet 2003; DCI 1991; Grenier 1998). Many of the methods used in connection with the documentation of traditional knowledge are derived from the methodology of the social sciences and give priority to qualitative rather than quantitative data collection.

> "(...) to describing traditional knowledge in a written form, the local community may want to include maps, photographs of preparation or plant involved in a process, drawings, audio and videotape for interviews. Group discussions, individual interviews, and firsthand experience are essential in capturing traditional knowledge as accurately as possible. In addition, it may be necessary to collect and preserve physical artifacts and specimens as a part of the traditional knowledge-documentation process." (Hansen & Van Fleet 2003, 35.)

There are many methods to choose from, and the researcher must decide which of them is/are most suitable for the implementation of the project (Grenier 1998; Hansen & Van Fleet 2003). The choice of method must also involve a certain degree of flexibility. A basic rule might be not to keep to only one method.

> "It is important to use a variety of methods and all possible means to capture this knowledge, as a single method alone cannot capture all aspects of traditional knowledge, and different methods work better for some types of traditional knowledge than others" (Hansen & Van Fleet 2003, 35).

Before a traditional knowledge project is begun, the choice of method should be well thought out and thoroughly examined, and one should also be aware that the method or methods may have to be modified or completely replaced after the commencement of the documentation process. The documentation work must clearly describe how all traditional knowledge and related material have been collected, how they are used and from which group they originate.

This information may be of importance at a later stage, e.g. if questions arise concerning the data collection.

It is vital that the chosen methods are acceptable to the local community (*Inter Tribal Health Authority* 2005; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008). The people involved must not be humiliated in any way or take offense at any of the methods used in the documentation project. The methods should not be such that *árbečeahpit* feel upset or cheated long after the project has been completed.[2] The methods employed must treat people with respect before, during and after the project.

Gollegiella: language use

A great deal of traditional knowledge lies in the indigenous languages (Guttorm & Labba 2008; Ryd 2001). There are many words describing natural phenomena, handicraft terminology, etc. and various special expressions which cannot easily be translated into another language. It is by no means certain that all words, expressions, nuances, etc. can be translated satisfactorily into another language, so that some of them may become lost in translation. "There is a fear of loss in translation when writing down the information because some components of language cannot be translated into another" (Longley Cochran [2009]). If the documentation is conducted in a language other than the local one, the words and expressions of the local language should be recorded and used in the final product, with a translation of the meaning of the words given in brackets. In the procedure proposed here, words, expressions, etc. will be preserved even if the researcher does not know the language. If special words and expressions can be preserved intact as accurately as possible, they can be passed on to future generations.

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2   In the late 1910s and the 1920s, Herman Lundborg of the State Institute for Racial Biology in Uppsala carried out, recorded and photographed skull measurements of Sami people on the Swedish side of Samiland, which the descendants of the Sami concerned found insulting and degrading. There is also a book which presents images of these Sami with accompanying notes on their skull dimensions, etc.

Ideally, all documentation should be in the language spoken in the community, but this is not the reality.[3] If the circumstances allow, the local language should be used in meetings with the tradition bearers and in the documentation work (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008; Longley Cochran [2009]; IIRR 1996). This recommendation should also apply to the Sami community, especially if the *árbečeahpit* speak the Sami language. It is often easier for Sami speakers to express themselves in the Sami language, both because this may be their everyday language and because the subject matter belongs to Sami culture or Sami society. It may be easier to express oneself in Sami as the words, memories and experiences connected to the activity at hand are more readily found in one's own language. It may seem unnatural and artificial to talk about *árbediehtu* in a different language than the everyday language.

In contact with the local community and its members, information about the project should be provided in the local language (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; ITC [no date]). This could be particularly important if the documentation cannot be conducted in the local language. The project manager can for example distribute written information in the local language as to what the project is about, its purpose and goals, and how individuals can get in touch with the project. If there are linguistic complications which may affect the quality of the documentation work, it can be advantageous to use interpreters and translators, so that such language problems will have minimal influence on the final result. It may also be important to use interpreters in other communication with the community to ensure that everyone receives the same information (*Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008).

When a researcher or other person works with the collected data, the traditional names of people, animals, places and objects, together with other local expressions are to be used (*Assembly of Alaska Native Educators* 2000; Hansen & Van Fleet 2003; IIRR 1996; DCI 1991). If names are altered, translated or the names on a map are chosen, it may be difficult for others in the local community to benefit from the documented traditional knowledge. The local people have first-hand knowledge of the indigenous names, and

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3   In some areas of *Sápmi*, Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish or Russian is the everyday language for many Sami as a result of the various countries' policies towards Sami in previous centuries. In these areas it may be more natural to carry out the documentation in the majority language, into which the *árbečeahpit* readily incorporate special Sami expressions. The choice of language for the documentation work can be determined in the course of the initial contacts with the local community.

these names can contain much information for those familiar with the language. A place name may provide a description of nature which can help people find their way in the countryside and know what to expect there. This kind of *árbediehtu* will disappear if the local words and phrases are not used. This should apply in the documentation of *árbediehtu*, for a person familiar with the Sami language can extract much information from a study of the material with its regular use of special Sami words and turns of phrase. In this way, documentation projects also serve to preserve languages.

Who owns *árbediehtu*?

The ownership of knowledge is a complex issue. An equally complex issue is whether one can own Sami traditional knowledge. *Árbediehtu* is owned both collectively and individually by the Sami population; the researcher must be well aware of this fact. Neither international nor Norwegian law can give adequate protection to *árbediehtu* as collectively owned knowledge (Henriksen [2009b]). Not all Sami possess the same *árbediehtu* and therefore the ownership rights must be determined on a case by case basis (Henriksen [2009b]). The context of the documentation work will thus give an indication of who has the right to the knowledge.

> "The resources and knowledge of indigenous and local communities can be collectively or individually owned. Those interacting with indigenous and local communities should seek to understand the balance of collective and individual rights and obligations. [The right of indigenous and local communities to protect, collectively or otherwise, their cultural and intellectual heritage should be respected.]" (UNEP/CBD/WG8J/6/4.)

After the documentation process, the researcher should not claim any ownership rights to the collected *árbediehtu*; it will continue to be owned by the Sami population. The only difference is that the researcher chose to record it, but that does not give him any authority to sell the knowledge or commercialise it for his own account. How the collected knowledge may be used is an issue to be addressed in agreements between the researcher and the community involved.

> "Ownership of Indigenous knowledge (intellectual and cultural property rights) gained by the research team, will need to be

negotiated with the relevant community/individuals, (...). This refers to all aspects of written works, recordings, photographs, artworks, and music composition with commercial potential, to ensure ownership protection of all parties." (WINHEC 2009, 11.)

When traditional knowledge is collected and preserved in different sites from where it traditionally belongs, it is easier for more people to benefit from it and utilise it in different ways. The local communities and individuals involved must therefore be able to influence who has the right of access to the knowledge and especially how it can be used, without their indigenous culture being exploited. *Árbediehtu* belongs to *árbečeahpit,* local communities or in some cases the whole of Sami society, irrespective of whether it is still handed down in a traditional way or whether it is collected, recorded, and preserved at various institutions.

Storing and preserving documented *árbediehtu*

Documented traditional knowledge that has been recorded by a researcher will normally be stored or preserved elsewhere than with the tradition bearers and the community. Indigenous people often feel that they willingly share their knowledge but when the researcher goes home, it ends up in a place a long way away from them and they have little opportunity to benefit from the material which results from their knowledge. Researchers may find it difficult to promise that the material will be kept at a site near the indigenous people because of practicality, but this should be the ideal goal.

When knowledge is documented, we also face questions about how and where it should be stored and preserved, and who will have access to the material. These are important issues for indigenous peoples, because they no longer merely want to share their knowledge but also demand that it be made available to them. Traditional knowledge researchers should thus reflect on such aspects of their work and discuss them with the tradition bearers and the community involved, or at least they should be able to explain exactly what will happen to the knowledge when it has been documented. If the material is to be archived upon completion of the documentation project, the *árbečeahpit* should be made aware of this. When material is submitted to an archive, it is difficult to know who will access the material because archives are often available to the general public. The *árbečeahpit* have the right to receive such

information before the project commences as it may be an important factor in their decision to participate.

Árbečeahpit and other people from their community must also have free access to the databases, archives, etc. containing the relevant material, and this should preferably be stored in or near the local indigenous community, so that they can realistically consult the collected material (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Assembly of Alaska Native Educators* 2000; *Kahniakehaka Nation* 1995; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008; ITC [no date]). The data often ends up at an institution in another part of the country and the indigenous community who have shared their knowledge thus find it difficult to gain access to it (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; Myrvold 2002, 45–55). In the agreements drawn up between the researcher and the tradition bearers/local community, it must be stipulated how the collected material will be returned to the people involved, e.g. how many copies of the final material each tradition bearer will receive. The parties concerned must also come to an agreement on how the original material will be preserved on completion of the documentation project. This is not something for the researcher to decide of his/her own accord, but the local community must decide how the material should be preserved.

In all storing and preservation of traditional knowledge occasioned by living people, the fundamental guiding principle should be the protection of the participants and their knowledge (*Inter Tribal Health Authority* 2005; Hansen & Van Fleet 2003). The people who volunteer to let others partake in their stores of knowledge must not run any risk of being misused or ridiculed in any way. The researcher has therefore a responsibility to review the material before he/she hands it over to e.g. an organisation in order to ensure that no *árbečeahppi* can appear in a negative light through his/her account or information. If there is information in the material that the researcher considers to be false, or if the tradition bearer felt unwell during some meetings, the person responsible for the material should consider carefully whether it should be released to a wider audience, as storing or preservation in e.g. a museum may imply. All of the above-mentioned points constitute information which can be regulated in an agreement between the knowledge collector and the *árbečeahpit*.

Árbediehtu – locality-specific

All *árbediehtu* is more or less locality-specific. *Árbediehtu* may be concerned with inner nature, i.e. psychological aspects which may be shared by much of the population, while e.g. knowledge of how best to move reindeer between different areas is linked to people within a specific geographic locality. On the other hand, knowledge of how to make *nuvtah* (winter shoes of reindeer skin) or *gákti* (Sami costume) may even be connected to just one family. It is therefore important that the collector of traditional knowledge in a certain area respects not only the local culture in general but also the variations within individual families with respect to customs, habits, practices, etc. (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008). "Local knowledge from different locations or groups are often inappropriately combined or generalized to present a generic picture of local Inuit knowledge which is, in fact, distinct or unique" (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute 2007). If the researcher collects cultural elements from one area before he/she has already documented similar traditional knowledge in a nearby Sami area, there is a danger that the unique traditional knowledge of some communities will not be documented. For this reason, traditional knowledge from different geographical areas must never be mixed, as it may give a distorted picture of the *árbediehtu* in the areas concerned and at a later stage provide false information to those who make use of the knowledge (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007).

If we begin to merge traditional knowledge from different areas, the picture of *árbediehtu* which emerges will be too general, leading to the possible disappearance of the unique traditional knowledge of each individual area. An awareness that every local community is unique will enable us to more easily demonstrate how dynamic and flexible society is, and that there are many local adaptations and solutions based on the various ecological niches to be found in *Sápmi* which have formed the livelihood of the Sami.

Giving credit to the *árbečeahpit*

In projects aiming at the documentation of traditional knowledge, it is vital that local people take part. The Sami, like the Inuit and many other indigenous peoples, have had negative experiences of not being acknowledged or compensated fairly in e.g. documentation projects; it has not been made clear that they were the knowledge contributors. However, the knowledge

contributed to a project by indigenous peoples is often a prerequisite for its implementation. "Inuit participants in research projects have not always received appropriate credit in research publications, reports etc. and/or have not been compensated fairly for their important contributions" (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007). The negative feeling mentioned above also applies to the Sami population; they share their knowledge, experiences and memories, but receive nothing in return. They are often not acknowledged in the final product. Therefore, the people who shared their knowledge must also get credit for it (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; Longley Cochran [2009]). At the very least, they should be named and thanked in the credits of the project, e.g. in the preface to a book or in the scrolling text at the end of a film. It should be made clear that the participation of the *árbečeahpit* was a prerequisite for the implementation of the project and that it is thanks to them that it has been possible to document, preserve and transmit the knowledge.

If the collected material results in a book, the authorship should be shared with whoever contributed knowledge to the project (*Kahniakehaka Nation* 1995). This should also be stipulated in the agreements before the actual project starts, so that no one will feel overlooked or exploited after it has been completed. It will have been a joint effort by the researcher and the *árbečeahpit* to successfully record, photograph or film the traditional knowledge material. The entire product is based on the knowledge of *árbečeahpit*; the researcher has merely recorded the knowledge in a form that can be preserved and archived. In the documentation of *árbediehtu*, the researcher should reflect on such issues as: Whose knowledge will be published, his own knowledge or that which he has helped to preserve?[4] In most cases shared authorship is recommended.

Árbediehtu can also be used in other ways in the final product, e.g. in documentation of land use, where a number of *árbečeahpit* have shared their knowledge of how a specific area was cultivated and used according to the season. In this type of traditional knowledge, the central goal is not to preserve a creative process, but to document how a specific geographical area has been used, e.g. where various families cut their shoe hay, or where they picked cloudberries. In the documentation of this type of knowledge,

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4   One example where shared authorship should have been used is Yngve Ryd's book "Snow – by a Reindeer Herder". The entire book is based on John Rassa's *árbediehtu* of snow. Ryd himself writes that he and Rassa worked on the book for five winters, meeting about twice a week. It is clear that the entire book draws on Rassat's store of knowledge about snow, and that Ryd reproduces that knowledge (see Ryd 2001).

shared authorship will generally be less important as the final product will be based on the *árbediehtu* of many individuals. However, the names of those who shared their knowledge for the project should be mentioned.

How to deal with shared authorship is to some extent for the researcher to decide. It will also depend on the subject matter and the form of collection, e.g. whether one individual has shared his or her knowledge or a number of people have been involved in the project. It is not possible to give one clear guideline for all cases, since there are many external factors. The individual context must determine how the tradition bearers will be acknowledged and thanked. The questions outlined above should be considered carefully by the researcher before the final result is made available to the general public, if only because the researcher is the one who knows best to what extent the various participating *árbečeahpit* should be given credit.

Final products based on the knowledge of *árbečeahpit*

If traditional knowledge documentation is carried out in indigenous communities, the requirement is that the results should be returned to the communities involved and especially to the tradition bearers (*Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Nunavut Research Institute* 2007; *Principles for the Conduct of Research in the Arctic* 2008; Longley Cochran [2009]; DCI 1991). A collector of knowledge must give tradition bearers the opportunity to benefit from the final material, whether recorded in books, films, databases, etc. If the material is in a database, the tradition bearer should be enabled to access the database without difficulty. The local community of the tradition bearer should also be given the same opportunity since the dissemination and sharing of traditional knowledge is vital for it to survive. If the material is sent to schools, for example, teachers will be able to integrate traditional knowledge into their teaching, even if only at a theoretical level. Another way of giving back something to the community is for the researcher to return to the area after the project is over, and hold one or more lectures/film shows/slide shows, etc. based on the material collected there. How the project can give something back to the tradition bearers and their community must be adapted to the methods the community itself uses to pass on information and knowledge. The form of feedback to the local community should be stipulated in the agreements drawn up between the parties concerned. It must never be the case that the researcher returns to the community to teach the people about their own *árbediehtu*. The tradition bearers will continue to be the experts,

even though their knowledge has now been documented. The outcome of the collected material must be presented to those who participated in the project with the utmost respect and humility.

When the collected material has been structured, it must be returned to *árbečeahpit* or other knowledgeable local people, so that they can study it and confirm that the researcher has understood the traditional knowledge correctly and recorded it in an acceptable manner (*Assembly of Alaska Native Educators* 2000; *Kahniakehaka Nation* 1995; ITC [no date]). For the *árbečeahpit* it may be important to go through the material to which they contributed, in order to give them the opportunity to verify that they said what they intended to say, or to check whether they forgot to talk about or demonstrate any aspects of the traditional knowledge relevant to the goal of the project. The researcher also benefits from this approach of letting the experts in the field go through the material to ensure it is correct. In addition, sending copies of interviews, photographs, films, etc. is often appreciated by relatives of the tradition bearers, who can thus also benefit from the knowledge. When the tradition bearer has examined the material he or she contributed to, only to discover that the researcher interpreted the *árbediehtu* in a different way than what was intended, the researcher must take account of this information from the *árbečeahpit*. If the two parties cannot agree on some aspect of the *árbediehtu* collected, this should be reflected in the final report, but also in the raw data. The exact difference between the parties' points of view should also be indicated, preferably with comments by the *árbečeahpit* in brackets after the relevant place in the text (Oskal & Turi & Sundset 2007). This approach protects both *árbečeahpit* and researcher. The reader of both the raw data and the final product thus becomes aware that there has been disagreement on some details. In this way, *árbečeahpit* have no need to be afraid that their knowledge has not been reproduced correctly.

Final comment

In the above, I have presented a number of ethical guidelines which I consider could be useful starting points for guidelines for the documentation of *árbediehtu*. The guidelines I mention here are by no means definitive; I see this article as a basis for further discussion on how such guidelines should be devised. It may well be that more should be added in order to achieve as comprehensive guidelines as possible, or that other people may consider that some of the guidelines I have chosen here are not relevant to the Sami

community. Ethical guidelines are context-dependent. A basic document therefore fulfils its function as a guide to enable suitable guidelines for each individual project in *Sápmi* to be developed. The main objectives of the guidelines presented here are to protect *árbediehtu* in different perspectives and to protect tradition bearers from exploitation. This approach has been grounded in the Sami values. *Árbediehtu* is of great importance to the Sami identity, culture and way of life and it should therefore be documented according to the wishes of the Sami themselves.

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