

Journalism Studies for the Indigenous Sámi: From preparatory courses to worldwide Indigenous Master's Studies

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Abstract

Journalism studies for the Indigenous Sámi people began with one year of preparatory studies at Sámi University College in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino Norway in 1992. In 2000, Sámi University College launched a pilot project for a separate Sámi Journalism course. This course developed into a permanent Bachelor's program in the years to follow. Sámi language is the primary language of instruction in this program, and students are trained to function as journalists in Sámi society with special skills to work in Sámi media and with Sámi language as their working language. In January 2015, Sámi University College launched a new Master's program, the Master of Sámi Journalism from an Indigenous Perspective program. The Candidate and Bachelor's programs were developed to meet the needs of professional journalists in a growing Sámi media field prioritizing Sámi language production, and the Master's program aims to train experts with Indigenous media expertise for leadership positions in Sámi and other Indigenous media and academic institutions.

Keywords: Sámi media, media education, journalism studies, Indigenous education, language revitalization

Introduction

The main subject of this article is the establishment and development of journalism education for Sámis. I will address; 1) the history of Sámi Journalism Studies at Sámi University College, 2) how the program developed from preparatory studies to encourage Sámi students to start studying journalism in Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish colleges, 3) how the Sámi University College established a Bachelor's Program of Sámi Journalism and 4) established an international Master's program of Indigenous Journalism named "Master in Sámi Journalism from an Indigenous Perspective" in 2015.

As I will show, the development is dependent on multiple factors: individuals, innovation in one Sámi institution, decisions and allocations from Norwegian governmental bodies, cooperation with Sámi media, and support from non-Sámi academics in the field of media studies and research.

Nevertheless, it is impossible for me to write about these processes without presenting myself to the audience. Sámi media, Sámi language, and Sámi journalism studies are important parts of my life. I am a Sámi and speak the North-Sámi language. For most of my career, I have worked in Sámi media or within Journalism Studies at the Sámi University College in

Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino Norway. I hold a Master of Sámi Language from the University of Tromsø and finished two years of Journalism Studies at the Oslo University College in 1997. Since 2001, I have held a leading role within the Sámi Journalism Studies at Sámi University College and have completed a doctoral degree in Sámi sociolinguistic studies. My doctoral thesis (Rasmussen, 2013) investigates the ethnolinguistic vitality of Sámi languages and media's role in language revitalization. It is natural for me to analyze the development of Sámi media and Sámi journalism studies not only as a part of professionalization of Sámi media, democracy building, and empowering of an Indigenous minority, but also in a broader context in which Sámi media is a part of the revitalization process for Sámi languages and culture. This process started slowly after World War II, but gained strength and power in the 1990s.

Method and Theory

Empiric materials used for this article are mainly documents such as curricula from the Journalism Studies program and decisions from the Sámi University College bodies, government reports, and the work of other researchers. For the presentation of Sámi people and Sámi media, I have collected information from Sámi media houses and previous research reports (Hætta, 2003; Ijäs, 2011; Lehtola, 2001; Marklin, 2003; NRK Sápmi, 2015; Rasmussen, 2014; Skogerbø, 2000; SVT Sápmi, 2015; YLE Sámi, 2013).

Information about the initiation of Sámi journalism studies and the establishment and the first years of the Sámi Journalism Studies program are significantly detailed in Dr. Rune Ottosen's publications (Ottosen, 1996, 2009). To describe the development of the College's two year preparatory studies program in Sámi journalism into a Bachelor's of Sámi Journalism, I have used my own notes from this period, course curricula, and documents from the Sámi University College bodies. Information about the Master in Sámi Journalism from an Indigenous Perspective program are excerpted from the Master's program plan (Sámi University College, 2012a) and I also paraphrase the ideas of Dr. Lia Markelin from her presentation of the Master program (Markelin, 2014).

The liberal perspective on media is widely accepted in Scandinavian countries as it is elsewhere in the western world: media has a key task in the fight for fair forms of government and democracy. The media should be forum for public debate and dialogue, a meeting place for governing and control, and it should provide channels for information from government to citizens and from community groups to government. From the 1970s onwards, minorities worldwide have increasingly demanded access to communications and media on their own terms, not least with regard to media in their own language. Sámi media is often mentioned as playing a double role: Sámi media "shall have an inside role governing and controlling Sámi politics and bureaucracy but also at the same time governing and controlling state authorities policy towards the Sámi people" (Skogerbø, 2000, pp. 11-12).

Sámi politicians and media leaders have stressed many times how important Sámi media is and how important it is to have Sámi journalism studies to professionalize staff to work in Sámi media. Interestingly enough, the arguments for a free and vital Sámi media sector seldom operate alone in Sámi politics. Sámi politicians and activists also often point out that Sámi media plays an important role in Sámi language revitalization and identity building. The concept of language revitalization is a sociolinguistic term that includes all efforts that increase the use of a language and the number of users (Huss, 1999; Paulston, Chen, and Connerty, 1993; Rasmussen, 2014).

Sámi People and Sámi Media

Because both Sámi people and Sámi media might be unfamiliar topics to readers, I will provide a short explanation of both of them. Sámis are Indigenous people in four countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. We can only estimate that there might be more than 100,000 people belonging to the group (Pettersen, 2012; Store Norske Leksikon, 2015). Several censuses and reports from authorities and researchers suggest the number of speakers of Sámi languages are 30,000 to 35,000 (Rasmussen, 2014). Among them, about 90 percent speak the North-Sámi language and the latter 10 percent speak one of nine other languages. According to UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, all 10 Sámi languages are endangered (Sammallahti, 1998; Moseley, 2015).

Sámi Media Overview

The state of media for Sámi speakers is recognized as one of the best for such a small minority, despite the fact that about two-thirds of the Sámi population do not speak Sámi. There is a daily newspaper, *Ávvir*, published in North-Sámi. On television, there are cultural programs in Sámi, programs for children and youth, and daily news. There are also six to eight hours of daily radio transmission (NRK Sápmi, 2015; SVT Sápmi, 2015; YLE Sámi, 2013).

There are other media outlets as well that are bilingual or Sámi only. *Nuorttanaste*, a Christian newspaper, is published monthly in North-Sámi. There is also *Š – nuoraidbláđđi*, a magazine for youth, a women's magazine called *Gába*, and an academic magazine, *Sámis*, published two to six times a year. A newspaper called *Sáogat*, and two magazines, *Samefolket* and *Sámi Nuorra*, consider Sámis as their main audience, but they produce their editorial content mainly in Norwegian or Swedish. Television and radio programs in Sámi languages are mainly in North-Sámi language, but South-Sámi, Lule-Sámi, Inari-Sámi and Skolt-Sámi are also regularly used (Ijäs, 2011).

Sámi TV and radio programs are produced in journalistically independent Sámi units in the Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish public broadcasters NRK, SVT, SR and YLE (Markelin, 2003). These Sámi units do cooperate, especially with respect to daily TV–news producing, which are captioned into the majority languages and broadcasted throughout the three countries (NRK Sápmi, 2015; SVT Sápmi, 2015; YLE Sámi, 2013).

Sámi Media Development

Although Sámi print media has an old history that started in the 1870s and Sámi radio emerged in the years after WW2, it is fair to say that the Sámi language media sector was small up until the 1970s. Newspaper production at that time was sporadic and small. Radio transmissions were limited to five minutes per day on weekdays, and there were no TV programs. During the period 1970 to 1990, the situation changed as the National Broadcasting Companies started to build up their Sámi units and a Sámi language newspaper, *Sámi Áigi*, was established (Hætta, 2003; Ijäs, 2011; Lehtola, 2001).

Nevertheless, the last 25 years have been a period of rapid growth in the Sámi media sector. In 1990, approximately 60 people were employed in the Sámi language media sector. The biggest Sámi media house at that time was NRK Sámi Radio, which employed 50 percent of people working in Sámi media. In 2015, an estimated 200 people were working in Sámi language media, with 50 percent of this population working in the Sámi unit of NRK, although it has since changed name to NRK Sápmi. (Hætta, 2003; Ijäs, 2011; Näkkäljärvi, 2015; NRK Sápmi, 2015; SVT Sápmi, 2015; YLE Sámi, 2013).

This rapid development during and after the 1980s was a result of a paradigm change in Sámi policy in all three countries from one of assimilation to one of support for Sámi people and their languages. These changes are also visible in the media sector as subsidies for printed media has increased, time on ear has increased both for radio and TV, and the number of employees in Sámi media houses has expanded (Markelin, 2003; Rasmussen, 2014).

Journalism Studies for Sámis

The changes in Sámi policy on the macro level was a push factor for the establishment of journalism studies for Sámis. Another factor was Sámi media's choice to use Sámi languages and especially North-Sámi language as their main language of production. Still, a report from 1991 pointed out that there was a lack of educated Sámi journalists, and Sámi media at the time expressed a need for educated journalists fluent in the language with insights related to the dynamics and nuances regarding their own society. While the journalists that were working in Sámi media were often well educated, and many of them schoolteachers, only four of 38 editorial staff members employed in Sámi media were educated journalists (Ottosen, 1996).

NRK Sámi Radio also stressed a recruitment need of approximately five journalists every year. There was also a need for more educated journalists in the other broadcasting outlets and in the Sámi newspaper and magazines (Ottosen, 2009).

Initiating face

Journalism student Magne Ove Varsi first mentioned the need for an established Sámi journalism studies program in 1983 in a small dissertation at the Norwegian Journalism College in Oslo (Varsi, 1983). Varsi, a Sámi and native speaker of North-Sámi language, later played a key role in both Sámi journalism and Sámi journalism studies. The topic reached the Norwegian public sphere in 1987, when a Norwegian governmental report on Sámi cultural rights suggested establishing a Sámi journalism studies program (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 1987).

The Sámi University College was established extremely quickly, just two years after the governmental report was released.. However, journalism studies were not a part of the Sámi University College's studies from the beginning, as the college mainly was a teacher training college with a special responsibility for Sámi language studies. Instead, the late 1980s and early 1990s became an intensive lobbying and negotiation period for Sámi journalism studies (Ottosen, 1996).

The next step was taken by the College of Nordland, which already had a Journalism Studies program and special responsibility for Northern Norway. They established a Sámi journalism studies committee and appointed Varsi to lead the work. The committee's final report pointed out that there was a lack of educated Sámi journalists and great need for Sámi journalism studies, and they consequently recommended establishing Sami journalism studies as a three-year pilot project (Ottosen, 1996).

Pilot Project

This three-year pilot project was sanctioned by the Regional College Board for Finnmark and College Board in Nordland (Varsi, 1994, as cited by Ottosen, 1996). After allocations from the Ministry of Education's Research and Church Affairs, the pilot project started at the Sámi College in Kautokeino in collaboration with the College Centre in Bodo, Nordland. Sámi University College was responsible for organizing a training course in Sámi language and Sámi society, and the Journalism Studies in Bodo organized a two-year applied curriculum in journalism for Sámi students, with Varsi appointed to oversee the project (Ottosen, 1996).

The first cohort of 10 students were enrolled in 1992 at the Sámi University College. During the years 1992 to 1999, 28 students completed the first year of studies in Kautokeino. Unfortunately, most of them never made it to further journalism studies. I have not found the

exact numbers of students who continued and completed journalism studies, but it seems to be less than 10, which is a significant dropout rate (Ottosen, 2009; Norwegian Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, 2001-2002). In a report from the pilot project, Varsi concluded that there were problems with conducting an education based on two teaching environments, and it required extra motivation among students to move out of the Sámi areas to go to school in Norwegian, Swedish or Finnish cities. He proposed the creation of a journalism studies program permanently affiliated with and located at the Sámi University College in Kautokeino (Varsi 1994, as cited by Ottosen, 1996).

Candidate of Journalism

The lobbying for separate Sámi journalism studies continued in the late 1990s, and by 2000, Sámi University College received permission and grants from the Norwegian Government to start a new pilot project. This time, Sámi University College was in charge of the whole study and all education was at the campus in Kautokeino. Still, curriculum and organization for the Sámi Journalism Studies program had drawn most of its inspiration from Norwegian Journalism Studies. Varsi was appointed to oversee and lead the pilot project and Dr. Ottosen received a position as an Adjunct Professor, which he occupied from 2000 to 2003, and he played an important role in the establishment of Sámi journalism studies (Ottosen, 2009).

Eighteen students were enrolled in the first cohort in 2000, and 15 students graduated as candidates of journalism in the spring 2003. Although the program drew inspiration from Norwegian journalism studies, I would stress that it was also very different in some essential points. Sámi language was the working language in nearly all teaching, and as stated in the curriculum, the program “provides students with special skills for journalistic work in Sámi language media on topics that are particularly relevant in areas with Sámi populations [and] skills for journalistic work with minority and Indigenous issues and in multicultural societies” (Sámi University College, 2000).

On the other hand, the curricula for Sámi Journalism Studies and Journalism Studies in Oslo University College were very similar in the beginning of the third millennium (Oslo University College, 2000; Sámi University College, 2000). The program was divided into three substantive areas: Journalism with Social Sciences, Sámi Journalist Language, and Media Science. All streams aimed to provide students with basic theoretical and methodological knowledge of journalistic activities. Names, contents, and length of subjects were similar and they had the same amount of working practice in media. Nevertheless, the studies in Oslo aimed to provide students with skills to work in Norwegian media, with knowledge of Norwegian and international society and a wide range of journalistic styles in the Norwegian language. In the other part of the country, the Sámi Journalism Studies program aimed to provide students with

skills to work in Sámi media, with knowledge of Sámi society, Indigenous societies worldwide, and a wide range of journalistic styles in the Sámi language.

Crises for Journalism Studies

Towards the end of the pilot project period, Sámi University College experienced a budget crisis that also affected their Journalism Studies programs. Ottosen (2009) describes this crisis in detail, and this chapter is heavily influenced by his work.

I had taken over the role from Varsi to oversee and lead the Sámi Journalism Studies program in 2001. Together with Ottosen, I took a considerable amount of time to ensure that Sámi Journalism Studies had enough money during the pilot project period, and that Sámi Journalism Studies could continue after the pilot project. The Ministry of Education and Research signaled at that time that it was desirable that the Sámi Journalism Studies offerings continued, but this had to be done within the framework of the existing budget. Instead of strengthening the academic community in Sámi University College as part of plans to become a scientific institution, the Ministry set various groups of students and academics against each other.

For the University College, the message was clear: If we wanted to continue the Journalism Studies program, it had to be on expense of other studies at Sámi University College. The University College had on several occasions argued with the Ministry to get extra funding for Journalism Studies, but had been met with little understanding of the costs of providing academically defensible studies.

In 2003, Ottosen and I signed a demand for more resources to realize the plan to make the studies permanent. In a letter to the Ministry of Culture and Education, we pointed out that Norway was committed to offering separate Sámi Journalism Studies. In 1998, the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages came into force. In the ratifying process, Norway had voluntarily committed to offering separate Sámi journalism studies. The Charter's Article 11 on media in section 1g states that the country will "support the training of journalists and other staff for media using regional or minority languages" (Ottosen & Rasmussen, 2003). Norwegian authorities were therefore warned not to consider the establishment of permanent Sámi Journalism Studies program only as an internal affair in the annual budget meeting at Sámi University College.

The crisis in 2003 was solved in the spring of the same year, with an additional grant making it possible to plan for the future. However, it was not solved before the leadership group at the Sámi University College indicated that they would resign their offices if the Norwegian government would not allocate grants needed for the budget. Due to the chaotic situation in the spring of 2003, it was impossible to start up the studies with a new cohort in fall 2003. The

situation for funding was still uncertain, there was not enough time to recruit and enroll students in a serious way, and the majority of employees chose to resign. In the autumn of 2003, I was the only one left and my work became to prepare for a new cohort to start in autumn 2004.

Towards a Bachelor's Degree

Before the pilot project ended, we evaluated the program and reported the last three years of education in details (Sámi University College, 2003). Problems pointed out in the evaluation report included the feedback that students had not learned enough about specific Sámi and Indigenous issues during the pilot project. We would like our students to know and be able to critically analyze Sámi and other Indigenous societies and cultures, and the dynamic between Indigenous societies and majority. They should have a better understanding of Indigenous medias' situations and they should learn more about Sámi and other Indigenous peoples storytelling traditions to be able to use them in their professional work as journalists. For us, it was obvious that they could not learn this all in two years and that a third year of education was necessary.

The board of Sámi University College considered our report and gave guidelines approving the criticisms mentioned above. They decided to start a permanent Journalism Studies program in the autumn 2004, deciding there should be two years of Candidate Studies of Journalism and a voluntary third Bachelor's year. My work became to integrate Sámi and Indigenous issues in a good way in the Candidate Studies program, and to plan a third year of more advanced studies of Sámi and Indigenous journalism. In addition, I had to adjust the program and all subjects, according to the Bologna process that reshaped the entire university sector in Norway at that time. Mainly, this meant a division into shorter subjects and a new evaluation system, as we were to adopt the ECTS credit system.

The new program plan still mainly followed the same structure as the other journalism studies programs in Norway. It was nevertheless Sámi in content, and in practice. Journalistic techniques and methods were taught in Sámi, and all practical work is done in Sámi. The focus on both teaching and journalistic homework is in Sámi or Indigenous issues at the local, national, or international level. The aim for the third year of Bachelor's studies was to give the students deeper insight in Sámi and Indigenous journalism. Five subjects were specially designed for this purpose: Indigenous people in national media (10 ECTS), Storytelling—Indigenous Peoples Oral Tradition (10 ECTS), Basic Principles for Indigenous Journalism and Minority Media (10 ECTS), Indigenous and Sámi public sphere (10 ECTS), and Bachelor's thesis (20 ECTS).

Implementation of Bachelor Studies 2004 to 2005

Briefly explained, the implementation of the Sámi Journalism Studies happened smoothly at the Sámi University College in 2004. The internal bodies at the College approved the program plans for a Candidate Studies of Sámi Journalism program and a year of Bachelor's studies of Sámi and Indigenous Journalism. The Ministry allocated grants for the programs and it was possible to reengage some of the former employees. Fifteen students started in the new program and 14 students graduated as candidates of journalism in 2007. Some of them continued and achieved a Bachelor's degree of journalism in the spring of 2008, together with some of the students from the first cohort.

When the first Bachelor's Group graduated in 2008, the Sámi Journalism Studies program stopped temporarily for a year due to building of a new science building in Kautokeino named Diehtosiida. In the construction period, there was a lack of classrooms and other facilities. However, the new building offered excellent possibilities for all studies, including journalism. At the same time, there was some internal reorganization at Sámi University College, which effected the Journalism Studies program too. The College's board decided to transfer the position as sound and vision technician to the IKT unit and the Sámi language teacher to the Language faculty. Necessary resources were still available for the Journalism Studies, but there was no longer anyone responsible for media language or radio/television training. In 2009, 11 students were enrolled in the Candidate Studies of Sámi Journalism. Nine of the students graduated in 2011 and six students chose to continue for a bachelor year in 2011 to 2012.

My own engagement in Sámi journalism studies was also interrupted for a period. In 2007 to 2008, I was overseeing a project aimed to establish a Sámi radio station on the Kola Peninsula in Russia. In 2008 to 2011, I was engaged in a sociolinguistic project at Sámi University College, which gave me the opportunity to complete my doctorate degree (Rasmussen, 2013). At that time, Dr. Arne Johansen Ijäs was offered a permanent job at the Sámi Journalism Studies program and he was often assisted by a journalism teacher, Ann-Irene Buljo. Ijäs is still working with the program, and he has done some interesting research on Sámi press history and discourse analyses on Sámi issues in Norwegian media (Ijäs 2005, 2011 & 2012).

As illustrated above, the Sámi Journalism Studies' academic staff has primarily been comprised of two people. We have often been dependant upon support from other academics and experts in the fields of media and education, and we have recruited them with help of the adjunct professors or through a network established by the Nordic Cooperation Committee for Journalist Educations (Nordic committee, 2015). The scholars and researchers that have contributed to the program in presenting guest lectures have been from many colleges in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and from institutions internationally. This group of lecturers has included distinguished leaders and representatives from Sámi media who are experts in their fields within Sámi society.

These lecturers have made great contributions to the studies: Rough estimates show that guest lecturers have conducted one third of the program lectures.

The Bachelor's Program

The board of the Sámi University College made a new decision concerning the Journalism Studies program in 2012. Since then, all students in the Sámi Journalism Studies program are enrolled into a full three year Bachelor's Program of Journalism (Sámi University College, 2012b). The former system of two years of candidate studies is no longer an option.

As shown in Figure 1, the program plan for the Bachelor's of Sámi Journalism consists of subjects similar to those found in Journalism Studies. It is obviously a primary goal to prepare students for work as professional journalists in media. News Journalism, Feature Journalism, Commentary and Culture Journalism, Investigative Journalism and Editorial Work Experiences are courses that comprise important and extensive parts of the program.

Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
News Journalism I (15 ECTS)	News Journalism II (15 ECTS)	Feature Journalism and Media Specializing (15 ECTS)	Commentary and Culture Journalism (10 ECTS)	Investigative Journalism (10 ECTS)	Basic Principles for Indigenous Journalism and Minority Media (10 ECTS)
Sámi and Indigenous Society Studies (10 ECTS)	Editorial Work part 1 (10 ECTS)	Media Science 10 (ECTS)	Short Interdisciplinary Thesis (10 ECTS)	Indigenous People in National Media (5 ECTS)	Indigenous and Sámi Public Sphere (5 ECTS)
			Editorial Work part 2 (5 ECTS)	Storytelling – Indigenous Peoples' Oral Tradition (10 ECTS)	Bachelor's Thesis (15 ECTS)
Journalist Language 1 (5 ECTS)	Journalist Language 2 (5 ECTS)	Journalist Language 3 (5 ECTS)	Journalist Language 4 (5 ECTS)	Journalist Language 5 (5 ECTS)	

Figure 1: Subjects of the Sámi Bachelor's of Journalism program offered during the program.

On the other hand, other subjects focus on special Sámi or Indigenous issues using normal journalistic or academic techniques and methods in teaching and student work. Course offerings with these foci include Sámi and Indigenous Society Studies (10 ECTS), Indigenous People in

National Media (5 ECTS), Storytelling – Indigenous Peoples Oral Tradition (10 ECTS), Basic Principles for Indigenous Journalism and Minority Media (10 ECTS), and Indigenous and Sámi public sphere (5 ECTS). It must also be stressed that the aim of the Media Science (10 ECTS) course is to introduce the students to the role and power of Sámi, Nordic, and Indigenous mass media. The focus on both the Short Interdisciplinary Thesis (10 ECTS) and Bachelor's Thesis (15 ECTS) must be Sámi, other Indigenous peoples, or minorities.

Sámi language as a journalistic language also has a more central position than the national language has in Journalism Studies in Nordic countries. The Bachelor's plan has taken into account Sámi language's unique situation as a threatened Indigenous language and a minority language in all countries of residence. Journalistic Language is a 5 ECTS subject in terms one to five, making a total of 25 credits throughout the program.

Master's Program

The position of adjunct professor was vacant for a short period after the second pilot project, after which time Sámi University College appointed Tom Moring from the Swedish School of Social Science at the University of Helsinki to the position. In one of our first meetings, we discussed the professionalization of Sámi journalism studies and the development of an academic environment in this field. Moring asked us how many Sámis we could get into a doctoral program of Sámi journalism and media science, and my answer was “probably none”, because at that time there was only one Sámi person with a master's degree in journalism. Moring's reply was, “Well, then we have to start a master's program.” If not before, the idea of a master of Sámi journalism was born.

According to Markelin (2014) the need for more education in the field of journalism had been discussed for a long time in the international Indigenous community, and had been examined at United Nations (UN) conferences on Indigenous media held in Madrid in 1998 and in New York in 2000. Indigenous media is an expansive sector and is in continuous need of educated journalists. The education of journalists demands, however, a supply of teachers in Indigenous journalism studies. Another development influencing the field of Sámi journalism studies took place in Indigenous television broadcasting. During the early 2000s, NRK Sápmi had started a worldwide cooperation with other Indigenous television broadcasting companies, and in 2008, they were active establishing the World Indigenous Television Broadcasting Network (WITBN), which arranged the World Indigenous Television Broadcasting Conference (WITBC) every second year (NRK Sápmi, 2015; WITBN, 2015).

Markelin (2014) describes these events as mind openers. The small academic environment that had been built up around Sámi Journalism studies followed the UN conferences, the establishment of WITBN, and the WITBC conferences. They realized that an expanding

Indigenous media industry would require experts and policy makers with Indigenous media expertise. There had been an increasing demand for research and statistics on Indigenous media and journalism, and as international cooperation created more Indigenous media options, increased knowledge and networks were required. However, at the same time, Indigenous journalism lacked centers for education and research.

It was not clear whether Sámi University College would take a leading position in establishing the Master's Studies of Journalism program at an international level, as the College was small and its resources limited. However, it soon became clear that there were a few players on the field. This knowledge led to the conclusion that it might be possible to offer a Sámi Master's of Journalism program in combination with an international Master's of Indigenous Journalism. Sámi University College responded to this challenge and tasked Markelin with developing a curriculum for the Master's program of Indigenous Journalism.

Planning Process

Markelin had already made an important contribution to research on Sámi media. Markelin defended her doctoral thesis, *Media, Ethnicity and Power: A Comparative Analysis of the Nordic Sámi Media Environment in Relation to State Policies*, at the University of Bradford in 2003 (Markelin, 2003). She has held an adjunct associate professor position at the Sámi University College since 2009, and has given several lectures for the journalism students at the College.

From 2008 to 2012, during the planning process for the Master's program in Indigenous Journalism, Markelin held discussions, hearings, and presentations with and for Sámi and other Indigenous media including WITBN and WINHEC. Based on the input received, she and the planning process team wrote the draft for the Master's program. An important part of the planning team was Dr. Charles Husband, Markelin's former supervisor from the University of Bradford, who visited Sámi University College several times during this process and played an active role in developing the Master's program. Sámi media leaders were also involved (Markelin, 2014). Finally, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT), an independent expert body under the Ministry of Education and Research, accepted the proposal for the Master's Program in 2012 (2012). The goal was to enroll 15 students every three years, with approximately five international students and 10 Sámi students (NOKUT, 2012).

Students and Organization

The first cohort of 14 students started the Master's program in January 2015. In this first cohort, 50 percent are foreign students and 50 percent are Sámi students. These students are currently

enrolled for full time studies for three semesters (90 ECTS) or four semesters (120 ECTS). Students may choose between a short (30 ECTS) or a long (60 ECTS) master’s thesis. The option for four semesters of study for a total of 120 credits (ECTS) with a long master’s thesis provides competence and eligibility for doctoral studies. Due to the international customization offered, it is possible to meet the course requirements in English. Because of the diversity in the intended student group and the Sámi University College’s language policy to promote Sámi languages, students can complete all their written work in either Sámi or English (Sámi University College, 2012a).

Aim of the Program, Structure, and Courses

The aim of the Master’s program, as pointed out in the program curriculum, is to provide Indigenous and other communities with media professionals, academics, and policy makers in the field of media with experience in an Indigenous and multicultural setting.

An important aspect of the program is to enable students to reflect upon what it means to be an Indigenous journalist, and what, if any, bearings this perspective has on journalistic practice. The program offers theoretical and research based knowledge of journalism and of the methods and skills that are required for working as journalists in advanced positions (Sámi University College, 2012a). The program structure, shown in Figure 2, consists of mandatory courses, optional courses, and two alternatives for the master’s thesis (Sámi University College, 2012a).

Term 1	1. What is Indigenous Journalism? 2. Ethics, Law and Professional Identity 3. Optional course (e.g. Indigenous Societies and Structures)	(10 ECTS) (10 ECTS) (10 ECTS)
Term 2	4. Advanced Journalism Course for Indigenous Journalism/Optional course 5. Theory and Methodology	(10 ECTS) (20 ECTS)
Term 3	6a. Master’s thesis writing	(30 ECTS)
Term 4	6b. Master’s thesis writing (optional)	(30 ECTS)

Figure 2: The structure of the Master’s in Sámi Journalism from an Indigenous Perspective program

Figure 2 shows that the program seeks to provide advanced instruction and learning in core areas of journalism and media studies. Mandatory courses include What is Indigenous Journalism? (10 ECTS); Ethics, Law and Professional Identity (10 ECTS); and Journalism Research: Theory and Methods (20 ECTS). Optional courses include Indigenous Societies and Structures (10 ECTS) and the Advanced Journalism Course for Indigenous Journalism (10

ECTS), as well as other courses that amount to 10 + 10 ECTS and that strengthen a specific area of Indigenous journalism. These courses can be focused on matters related to the Sámi language, such as Sámi language and writing, or Sámi history; Indigenous issues; Indigenous philosophy; or other Indigenous studies or media or journalism courses.

The aim of the master's thesis is to deepen the student's knowledge within the journalistic academic field and sharpen the students' analytical skills. The master's thesis can be either 30 ECTS or 60 ECTS in scope. A thesis of 60 ECTS is focused on providing scientific excellence with an aim to prepare the student for further academic training at postgraduate level. A thesis of 60 ECTS leads to competence for doctoral research.

Conclusion

The Journalism Studies program at Sámi University College was established to meet the need in Sámi society for professional journalists in Sámi media. Since 2000, three cohorts of students, 38 in all, have graduated as Candidates of Sámi Journalism, and 12 of them have graduated with a Bachelor's of Sámi Journalism. Despite the fact that only one-third of the Sami population speaks Sámi, Sámi media has prioritized Sámi language production. On the basis of that fact, the development of Sami media can be interpreted equally as part of a language revitalization process as it is democracy-building and empowering to Indigenous peoples.

Sámi journalism studies, from preparatory studies to master's studies, has heavily depended on the work of both Sámi individuals and non-Sámi academics, resource allocation and permission from governmental bodies in Norway, and innovation at a Sámi institution for higher education. The necessity for governmental approval and support might be interpreted as a lack of Sámi self-determination because it was not possible for any Sámi body to start journalism studies at any level when Sámi society had identified the need for education. The dependence on non-Sámi academics in the initial phase of Sámi journalism studies is understandable, as there have been very few Sámis educated for professional media work, and even fewer possess an academic background in the fields of media or journalism.

The Master's in Sámi Journalism from an Indigenous Perspective program has just started, and it is too early to draw any conclusions on the effect it might have on Sámi, on academia, and on Indigenous media. The years to come will show if we are able to recruit students to our programs and succeed in building up a core of academics with Sámi and other Indigenous backgrounds to take leading positions in media and journalism studies.

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