Processes of Constructing Political Subjects in Sápmi

To compensate the lack of power in local and national levels, Sámi politicians have always invoked international norms, such as the discourses of indigenous peoples to support their claims. Despite of the positive development in indigenous people’s legislation, the possibilities of the Sámi in Finland to influence on the national and local levels were found limited.

During the project, extensive interviews were made in the Sámi territory. They focused on the the application of indigenous people’s principles in Finland, the land use of Sámi reindeer husbandry, the role of the Sámi in Finnish administration as well as questions pertaining to the Sámi cultural heritage, such as traditional handicraft.

It was found that the earlier development of the Sámi rights on national and international levels has increased controversies especially on the local level. This, in turn, has been reflected on the national level as a downturn of dynamic processes of the indigenous rights of the Sámi, especially concerning the Sámi land use.

According to the project, the prevailing Finnish interpretation of self-government, can be considered contrary to the goals of the constitutional statute.

Smaller-scale models acquired from indigenous peoples, such as the Akwé: Kon negotiation procedure between the National Board of Forestry and the Sámi, have been received positively, however.

The most remarkable positive development has been seen when, following international models, Sámi collections located in national museums have been repatriated to Sámi possession.