Johan Thuri: A Voice for the Sami, the Indigenous People of Northern Scandinavia

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Abstract

Johan Thuri (1854–1936) wrote *An Account of the Sami*, the first book written in the Sami language and translated into multiple languages. It gave him an international platform to speak about Sami issues. During his lifetime, he witnessed firsthand the impacts of rapid modernization on the Sami. The railroad connected Sweden, allowing mining operations and inviting tourists to the area, but it also disrupted the annual reindeer migration of the Sami. Settlers and tourists viewed the Sami as a primitive, backwards people. Thuri understood that the process of modernization was irreversible, but it did not mean that the Sami had to suffer. He used his writings and status to give a voice to the Sami, humanizing them. They were a people with unique culture, traditions, and history. Throughout his life, he remained in the international spotlight, so newspaper articles were used to piece his story together.

Keywords: Sami, Johan Thuri, Turi, Sweden, Scandinavia, Kiruna, Indigenous people, modernization, race biology

Johan Thuri: una voz para los sami, los pueblos indígenas del norte de Escandinavia

Resumen

Johan Thuri (1854-1936) escribió An Account of the Sami, el primer libro escrito en el idioma sami y traducido a varios idiomas. Le dio una plataforma internacional para hablar sobre los problemas de Sami. Durante su vida, fue testigo directo de los impactos de la rápida modernización en los Sami. El ferrocarril conectaba Suecia, permitiendo las operaciones mineras e invitando a turistas a la zona, pero también interrumpió la migración anual de renos de los Sami. Los colonos y los turistas veían a los Sami como un pueblo primitivo y atrasado. Thuri entendió que el proceso de modernización era irreversible, pero eso no significaba que los samis tuvieran

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que sufrir. Usó sus escritos y su estatus para dar voz a los Sami, humanizándolos. Eran un pueblo con una cultura, tradiciones e historia únicas. A lo largo de su vida, permaneció en el centro de atención internacional, por lo que los artículos de los periódicos se utilizaron para reconstruir su historia.

Palabras clave: Sami, Johan Thuri, Turi, Suecia, Escandinavia, Kiruna, pueblos indígenas, modernización, biología racial

约翰·图里：斯堪的纳维亚北部土著萨米人的发声者

摘要

作家约翰·图里（Johan Thuri，生于1854年，卒于1936年）撰写了《萨米人的记录》（An Account of the Sami），这是第一部以萨米语撰写的著作，被翻译为多种语言。这部书为他讲述萨米人问题提供了国际平台。在其一生中，他目睹了快速现代化对萨米族造成的影响。连接瑞典的铁路让萨米族居住地区的开采作业和游客观光成为可能，但也扰乱了每年萨米族驯鹿的迁徙。移民与游客将萨米人视为一个原始落后的民族。图里明白现代化进程无法逆转，但这并不意味着萨米人需要因此受难。他用其作品和身份为萨米人发声，对后者进行人性化。他们是一个拥有独特文化、传统和历史的民族。在图里的一生中，他一直受到国际瞩目，因此报刊文章被用于汇集其故事。

关键词：萨米人，约翰·图里（Johan Thuri），图里，瑞典，斯堪的纳维亚，基律纳，土著，现代化，种族生物学

Every year, tens of thousands of tourists visit Jukkasjärvi, a small town in upper northern Sweden, for the Ice Hotel. Guests enjoy the unique experience of sleeping in rooms sculpted from ice, with an opportunity to engage with the local Sami culture. Activities include reindeer sledding, tasting traditional Sami food, hand-feeding reindeer, and purchasing Sami trinkets. The Sami homeland spans across the northern portion of the Fennoscandia Peninsula, including Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia's Kola Peninsula. Another popular attraction is the Jukkasjärvi Church, located next to the Sami tourism company, where three plaques hang in the church's entrance. One memorializes Gabriel Gyllengrip's (1687–1753) expedition to survey the natural resources of the region, while the other two recount the experienc-

es of French travelers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many visitors leave with romantic images of the Sami and information about the accomplishments of non-Sami in the region. What did those accomplishments mean for the Sami and their way of life? Between the 1850s and the 1920s, Sweden pushed for the exploitation of its rich natural resources in the north because new techniques made it possible to extract iron. Sweden modernized the region, transforming the lives of thousands of nomadic Sami. Many settled down, becoming objects of curiosity for tourists. The nomadic Sami faced the possibility of violent clashes with settlers, who complained about trespassing and agricultural damages from reindeer. Settlers had little tolerance for the Sami, since most considered them an uncivilized, primitive race. This period was a turbulent time of expansion for the settlers and Sami, who had different social, political, and cultural needs in a modern society.

In the Jukkasjärvi Church Cemetery, many tourists unknowingly walk pass the grave of a significant Sami historical figure named Johan Thuri (1854–1936). Thuri soared to fame when he published *An Account of the Sami* in 1910, with two subsequent publications: *Lappish Text* in 1919 and *From the Mountain* in 1931. He was the first Sami author to illustrate and write a work in the Sami language, which was translated into multiple languages, including Swedish and English. Thuri wanted to inform readers about Sami culture, history, and the injustices committed against his people by Norwegian settlers. Throughout his lifetime, he experienced firsthand how modernization and race biology impacted the Sami. Non-Sami wrote most of the literature about the Sami in the early twentieth century, so his work offered a Sami perspective of conditions and who they were as a people. Thuri humanized the Sami, while showing how they were active participants in history with a unique culture and story of their own.

Johan Olofsson Thuri was born on March 12, 1854 in Kautekeino, Norway to Inga Aslakdotter and Olof Thuri. In 1852, Finland, then a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire, closed the Norwegian-Finnish border, preventing the Sami from migrating with their reindeer to Finnish pastures. The competition for pastures became too much, and in 1856, Thuri and his family moved to Karesuando, Sweden. As Swedish subjects, the government allowed their reindeer to graze near the Swedish-Finnish border and undertake the annual migration to Norway, then part of Sweden.[1] Inga passed away when Thuri was in his mid-twenties, and within a year, his father married his stepmother Anni Aslakdotter. His father was a wealthy reindeer herder with about one thousand reindeer.[2] In 1883, Olof moved his herd and family near Jukkasjärvi, where they became part of the Talma Sami community. Along with his particular Sami language, he learned Finnish and some Swedish. After his father passed away, he inherited some reindeer, but many of his animals were stolen or lost.[3] To earn an income, he

tended to his reindeer in the winter and worked for mining companies in the summer, co-owning three ore mines.[4]

During the seventeenth century, Swedish and Danish investors opened copper and iron mines in northern Sweden and processed the ores in local forges. The nearest shipping ports were about 300 kilometers (185 mi) away, so the investors hired the local Sami to transport the ores using their reindeer. Investors or the state never established permanent settlements because the mines were closed, reopened, and closed again. Moreover, the Swedish government knew about the rich iron deposits outside present-day Kiruna, located about 20 km (13 mi) from Jukkasjärvi, but they did not have the technology to effectively process the ore. Without the proper technology and mining infrastructure, the state left the iron untouched. In 1856, the British inventor Henry Bessemer (1813–1898) developed the Bessemer process, an inexpensive method that removed impurities from iron. Sidney Thomas (1850–1885), another British inventor, improved upon Bessemer's method by developing a technique that removed phosphorus from iron. These two methods made it possible for prospectors to direct their attention to the untouched resources of northern Sweden.[5] Herman Lundborg (1868–1943), a Swedish physician and eugenicist, wrote, "The state's prosperity and security depend on better utilization of the natural resources in this part of the country."[6] Even though written in 1919, his statement echoes the sentiment of Swedish officials in the late nineteenth century. In order to promote mining ventures, the Swedish government passed new legislation in 1855 that allowed prospectors to obtain ownership of minerals through a claim system.[7] There were no efficient means of transporting the iron ore to any of the shipping ports in northern Sweden. From the 1860s to the 1880s, multiple British companies such as Gellivara Company (1864) and the Northern of Europe Railway Company (1882) started the process of building railroads from the mines to the ports. Their profits were too low, so by 1891, British investors sold their railroad properties to the Swedish government at a steep discount.[8] The acquisition of these railroads started the rapid modernization of the region.

The Luossavaara-Kirunavaara mountains had the largest iron ore deposits, so Hjalmar Lundbohm (1855–1926) developed the city of Kiruna around the base of the mountains. Lundbohm was a Swedish geologist who became the first managing director for the mining company LKAB (*Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag*). In his book, *Kiruna*, published in 1910, he noted that there were only twenty small children in 1900, increasing to 241 in 1909. His statistics emphasized the expanding community. He worked hard to implement running water, sewers, tramways, housing, schools, and hospitals to meet the needs of the ever-increasing settlers and their families.[9] Moreover, Lundbolm was an art collector and promoted the beautification of Kiruna's public spaces, including the Kiruna Church. He promoted the local Sami culture, encouraging and publish-

ing Thuri's work. In 1910, Lundbolm wrote the Foreword for Thuri's *Account of the Sami*, acknowledging the clashing needs of the Sami and the settlers. He hoped the book would provide insight into the problem, so the Sami and settlers could co-exist, benefitting from one another.[10] Despite his words, he held some prejudices against the Sami, which influenced government policies. Lundbohm understood that the mining operations disrupted the Sami's traditional migration routes, but he never proposed to help them. He did not want to employ the Sami in the mines nor compensate them for losing grazing land.[11] The relationship between Lundbohm and the Sami was complicated, but he was an active force in helping Thuri with logistics and finances for his writing and artwork.

Between 1899 and 1903, the Swedish government improved and expanded the railways to key port cities, such as Narvik. Railroads connected the entire country, making travelling easier between the major cities, such as Kiruna and Stockholm. The Royal Administration of the Swedish State Railways and the Swedish Tourist Association (STF) pumped out advertisements promoting tourism in northern Sweden. For instance, in 1905, the STF published an article that described the land as a "poetic wilderness" and "majestic," where tourists would enjoy the sight of "the mountains reflected in the lakes."[12] One of those tourists was Emilie Demant-Hatt (1873–1958), a Danish artist and amateur ethnographer; she met Thuri while riding the train. They did not speak the same language, but there were two people who could translate for them. Thuri expressed to Demant-Hatt that he wanted to write a book about his people, and she expressed a desire to live as a nomad. Demant-Hatt returned home to Denmark, where she learned the Sami language, and she returned a few years later to live with Thuri's brother.[13] In 1908, she spent about two months with Thuri in a mountain cabin, assisting and prodding Thuri to finish his writing, so she could polish and translate it into Danish. In 1910, she published her own book, *With the Lapps in the High Mountain*, in which she described her experiences living with Thuri's family. She was sympathetic to the Sami and outraged at the disgusting behavior of the Norwegian farmers. Dogs were an important asset to the Sami, so the farmers set poison traps out along the Sami's migration routes, killing some of their dogs.[14] Demant-Hatt respected the Sami and their way of life, but her attitude was decades ahead of her time.

Even though the arrival of the settlers and railways destroyed the livelihood of the Sami, the state expected them to pay their taxes and fines. Thuri explained that conditions for the Sami worsened after Sweden and Norway separated in 1905. Sami racked up debts from Norwegians claiming damages to their land from the reindeer and the killing of their dogs.[15] Moreover, he claimed that Norwegians stole everything and anything from the Sami, such as hides, milk, and cattle, even killing some Sami.[16] Many Sami started to cater to the tourists to make enough income to survive, abandoning their

nomadic way of life. In 1910, Martha Buckingham Wood published *A Trip to the Land of the Midnight Sun,* describing her experiences with the Sami in northern Scandinavia. When her ship arrived in northern Norway, the Sami entered the ship and entertained the tourists with music, stories, and food. They wore traditional dress, confusing Martha on why some they wore their clothes inside out, and had reindeer, who she complained looked sick.[17] The Sami were a spectacle to behold, with critical eyes. Moreover, Demant-Hatt wrote,

> When the tourists gather around the corral, taking photographs and gesticulating, the atmosphere seems filled with exclamation marks… The Lapps go around with small bundles of wares; bargaining and buying goes on while the reindeer stand there drowsy and hungry after having run themselves ragged around the corral, frightened of the confusion and all the strange people. The children, who look like miniature adults, enthrall the tourists, who feed them candy and money. It's remarkable that so-called cultivated people can't conduct themselves with more dignity and understanding. It's as if, for the foreigners, the Lapps are only a flock of curious and sweet animals.[18]

The tourists' behavior stemmed from the mainstream ideas of superior and inferior races.

During the early twentieth century, race biology and eugenics were popular modes of social, political, and scientific thought. Herman Lundborg pushed the eugenics movement in Sweden, eventually becoming the head of the State Institute for Racial Biology. He argued that Sami had no culture or history, and so they were an inferior race. Moreover, he wrote that the Sami never created a great nation such as Sweden, nor did they possess the ability to do so. In 1921, he wrote, "mixed types occur, and not so seldom, among the Lapps which seem to indicate that they have revived an infusion of both Swedish and Finnish blood."[19] Five years later, Lundborg published *The Racial Characters of the Swedish Nation*, where Thuri's picture appears labeled as a Nordic-Lapp type. Under his picture, Lundborg wrote, "Nomad from Norbotten (Jukkasjärvi): Author of an ethnographical work about the Lapps of northernmost Sweden."[20] He believed that lingering traces of superior Nordic blood gave Thuri the ability to write a book.

Even though Lundborg dismissed the work, many people in the world did not, praising it for its honesty, knowledge, and storytelling. Thuri became internationally recognized and sought after for his knowledge on the northern landscape. Some high-level state officials invited him to events. In 1912, Thuri attended a Swedish Exhibit in Copenhagen, where he met the Danish Queen. He dressed in traditional Sami clothing, forgetting to take off his hat in her presence. When a journalist asked about his blunder, Thuri respond-

ed "she kept her hat on," so he did too.[21] The report highlighted the differences between the Sami and Danes, especially since he did not know royal protocol.

There were tourists who travelled to northern Sweden, seeking the guidance of the famous wolf hunter. For instance, Ossian Elgström (1883–1950), a Swedish writer and artist, travelled around northern Sweden and Norway, illustrating Sami folktales and songs. Thuri helped him on his journey.[22] More famously, Thuri travelled with Frank Hedges Butler (1855–1928), a British wine merchant, across Fennoscandia, acting as an interpreter and guide. Butler published his experiences in *Through Lapland With Skis & Reindeer* in 1917, including a handful of journal entries from Thuri. Thuri described how he helped Butler to use the skis and showed him a traditional Sami wedding. When Butler had the opportunity, he slept in hotels instead of where the Sami slept.[23] Butler wanted a look into the Sami world, but in the comforts of "civilization" when the opportunity presented itself. Other visitors included professors who wanted to learn about Sami life for their lectures. Thuri's fame offered him the platform to teach others about the Sami culture and the injustices committed against his people, but he unintentionally promoted tourism to the area. On November 11, 1931, the *Norrskenflamman* reported that two Germans fell through the ice and drowned, attempting to reach Thuri's home.[24] People from the Western world travelled to northern Sweden, hoping for the chance to see and speak with him. Tourists learned about the Sami, which reinforced the need to develop the tourism sector, including hotels, activities, and restaurants.

In September 1929, the United States sent John Osborne (b. 1868), the American Consul General, to northern Sweden to explore investment opportunities. He travelled the region, learning about mining operations, natural resources, and tourism. Osborne and Thuri spoke for four hours, with Osborne describing him as a "really nice old philosopher."[25] Two months later, Osborne reported his findings in *Commerce Reports*, remarking on the Sami in passing. He wrote,

> Although the development of the resources of Lapland in the past 30 years has had a stimulating influence on all branches of Swedish industry and has contributed materially to the notable prosperity of the county, the northern territory remains practically an undiminished asset. Its greatest value lies perhaps in the future, when conditions favor a fuller development of its vast natural wealth.[26]

Moreover, Osborne mentioned the Swedish mines used American mining equipment.[27] He never commented on specific investments, but American companies earned profits from selling heavy machinery and their parts to Swedish companies. Sweden's expansion in its mining and harvesting industries benefited the national economy, while providing foreign companies investment opportunities. It was a win-win scenario, except for the Sami. Fur-

ther development meant more disruptions and seizures of land from them.

Thuri was aware of the massive political and social changes taking place, and he understood that the national push into the region was irreversible. He acknowledged that the Swedish government wanted to improve conditions, but they did not understand the needs of the Sami, creating social policies based on their own perspective.[28] Sami parents sent their children to school for nine months, with three months off for the summer, and they learned mathematics, reading, and writing. Thuri found these subjects beneficial for the children, especially since they protected them from being cheated by settlers or storeowners. On the other hand, children remained away from their families too long, changing the children's nature. Children started to prefer a settled lifestyle and returned home sick.[29] This education system slowly eroded the Sami nomadic character. In 1913, Sweden addressed these issues with the nomadic school system. Its main goals were to preserve Sami culture and character while providing an education to all Sami children for six years. For the first three years, Sami children travelled with their families and reindeer, learning the essential skills of reindeer herding. Parents were responsible for supplying the children with cultural knowledge that the state could not provide. In the last three years, parents sent their children to a localized boarding school, where the children slept in housing that resembled a traditional Sami home. Teachers conducted their lessons entirely in Swedish.[30] Only Sami children attended these schools, which segregated them from Swedish children. Sweden expected Sami children to assimilate into the Swedish culture, yet they kept them segregated. These schools remained in effect until 1962, when Sami and Swedish children attended school together. Thuri knew that the Sami had to speak up, clearly expressing their needs and interests.

Politically conscious, Thuri attended the Sami political conference in Östersund, Sweden held February 5-9, 1918. About three hundred Sami attended the conference. The Sami criticized Sweden's nomadic schools, preferring local education for their children. Parents were not against modern education, but they did not want to send their children away. Moreover, they argued against the law that prohibited Sami from settling down in permanent homes, claiming it led to the neglect of reindeer herds. If a Sami decided to settle and abandon reindeer herding, then they were no longer recognized as Sami.[31] Not much resulted from the conference, but it emphasized the need for the Sami to organize and express their needs to the state. Moreover, there were state officials who were receptive to the Sami, arguing the state should provide financial support for Sami organizations.

Thuri, due to his works, was the most famous Sami, but there were others who fought for Sami rights, including Elsa Laula (1877–1931), who was born in the Vilhelmina Municipality in Sweden to Lars Tomasson Laula and

Figure 1: Sami meeting with Hjalmar Lundbohm, pictured in front, in Jukkasjärvi, 1905. Borg Mesch (photographer), Digital Museum, *Järnvägsmuseets foton,* January 5, 2019. CC pdm. https://digitaltmuseum.se/021018133364/text-pa-baksidan-av-fotot-lappmote-i-jukkasjarvi-1905-framst-synes-hjalmar (accessed August 17, 2020).

Figure 2: Sami Johan Thuri. Borg Mesch (photographer), Digital Museum, Sweden. *Nordiska muskeets arkiv,* June 3, 2016. CC By-NC-ND4.0 https://digitaltmuseum.se/021016466499/samen-johan-turi-forfattare-till-muitalus-samiid-birra-1910-en-bok-om-samernas (accessed August 17, 2020).

Figure 3: Johan Thuri's grave at Jukkasjärvi Church visited, 1957. Borg Mesch (photographer), Digital Museum, Sweden, *Nordisk muskeets arkiv.* January 12, 2018. CC By-NC-ND4.0. https://digitaltmuseum.se/021016466499/samen-johan-turi-forfattare-till-muita lus-samiid-birra-1910-en-bok-om-samernas (accessed August 17, 2020).

Figure 4: Professor Emilie Demant-Hatt donates items belonging to Johan Thuri to the Nordic Museum, December 4, 1940. Photographer unknown. Digital Museum, *Nordiska muskeets arkiv,* November 1, 2016. CC pdm. https://digitaltmuseum.se/021016667338/professorskan-emelie-demant-hatt-overlamnar-en-samling-foremal-som-tillhort (accessed August 19, 2020).

Kristina Josefina Larsdotter. The *Svenska Amerikcanaren* reported that she grew up in poor conditions, learning the hardships of life, but she had a strong desire for knowledge. She succeeded in gaining entry to the Nyhyttan's Mission School located in Västmanland in 1899.[32] In the same year, her nine-year-old brother, Matteus, and father, were found bound together, with their bodies beaten and thrown into the local swamp. The police never investigated the murders. After finishing her schooling, she devoted her time fighting for the rights of the Sami.[33] In 1904, she travelled to Stockholm to speak with the Queen and King about Sami affairs, offering to pay for her schooling to become a midwife with the recommendation of Pastor Lars Dahlstedt. She completed her midwife training in Stockholm.[34] Moreover, she wrote the pamphlet *Before Life or Death: The Truth of the Lappish Conditions* in 1904, but she wrote it in Swedish, limiting those who could read it. Her pamphlet emphasized the problems that the Sami community faced, such as intoxication and the right to their own land. Their conditions would never improve without the Sami community organizing and demanding their rights.[35] Eventually, she married Thomas Renberg and moved to Norway, living as reindeer herders. Laula's work was more about the political and social problems of the Sami, while Thuri focused on social problems, history, and culture. With his work translated into multiple languages, his work reached an international audience.

Even though Thuri was politically active for Sami rights, attended events with high state officials, and educated those who listened, he lived in poverty, with frequent financial problems. Lundbolm built a house for Thuri on the far side of Lake Torneträsk, hoping to detour tourists from bothering him. Moreover, Lundbolm provided regular financial support to Thuri, even gifting him a fishing boat with an engine, but this ended with his death in 1926 from a heart attack. Bad investments in mining and timber operations placed Thuri in bad financial straits. Demant-Hatt sent small amounts of royalty money to Thuri, but he did not understand the business of publishing. His books earned little money, but he believed his books sold well from Lundbolm's gifts. He questioned Demant-Hatt about holding income from his books, placing a strain on the friendship.[36]

Thuri received an annual stipend of 600 kronor from the state. Knud Rasmussen (1879–1933), a Danish explorer and anthropologist, visited Thuri in 1921, finding him in poor health. In his late sixties, Thuri was unmarried and childless and found it difficult to earn enough income through hunting and fishing. He reportedly had thirty reindeer, but his frequent bouts of illness forced another person to take care of them. Rasmussen petitioned the Swedish government on Thuri's behalf for financial assistance, which they granted on March 18, 1921. Thuri received 600 kronor annually until his death.[37] Towards the end of his life, Thuri hired a lawyer to contact Demant-Hatt about royalties from the British edition of *An Account of the Sami.* In 1930, his lawyer threatened her with a lawsuit if she

did not stop withholding the funds. Demant-Hatt worked hard to translate and promote his book, so she wrote the British publisher asking for compensation for her and Thuri. The publisher declined her request because the book contract was between Elizabeth Gee Nash, the British translator, and the publishing company. There were no funds, and neither benefitted from the British edition. Thuri dropped the threat of legal action, reconciling with his long-time friend.[38] In Thuri's later years, he embraced aspects of modernization, such as using a fishing boat with an engine and owning a fully furnished wooden cabin.

In the last years of his life, he remained in the public eye, never forgetting to give the Sami their voice. On his seventy-fifth birthday, he celebrated with a close circle of twenty-five friends, including Carl August Olsson (1848–1926), a Swedish architect, who gifted money to him. Additionally, he received many flowers and telegrams from friends and relatives of Lundbohm, who could not attend the celebration.[39] For his eightieth birthday, King Gustaf V (1858–1950) honored Thuri with the King's Medal for his life's work and a large birthday banquet. High profile friends attended such as Borg Mesch (1869–1956), a Swedish photographer, who travelled with Thuri on his journey with Butler. The newspaper reported that the guests gave him many presents.[40] Thuri had status within his community and friends in high places, but he never forgot his people and their problems. In the Jukkasjärvi municipality, there was an agreement that the Talma Sami's reindeer had their own grazing land, separate from the settlers. For three years, the settlers ignored the agreement, allowing their reindeer to graze on Sami land. In 1930, Thuri spoke up for them. The Swedish Crown intervened on behalf of the Sami, and they decided with the Sami that a fence would be built to keep the settlers' reindeer off their land.[41] Even with his rise to fame, he kept his community close to his heart. On November 30, 1936, Johan Thuri passed away at the age of eighty-two.

Emilie Demant-Hatt spent a year with the Sami and described her impressions of them in her book, *With the Lapps in the High Mountains*. She wrote that the Sami had "always understood that to be oppressed is to develop a great deal of sharpness and flexibility that, along with his intelligence, makes it easy for him to adjust how he responds to whatever he faces."[42] Thuri lived during a time of rapid social and political change, with the Swedish government pushing into the Sami homeland. Modernization of the region with the railways and permanent settlements invited tourists and settlers into the area, disrupting the annual migration of the Sami. Norway's independence from Sweden mixed with racial prejudices caused endless conflicts between the settlers and the Sami. Thuri understood that modernization was permanent and would continue; however, this did not mean the Sami had to suffer. His book sought to dispel the belief that the Sami were inferior and had no history; rather, the Sami were a unique people with a culture and story of their own.

Sweden based their Sami policies from their perspective rather considering the interests of those they impacted. Thuri argued that this had to do with many Sami's inability to clearly express their needs and interests to the Swedish government. Throughout his life, he tried to be that voice. He was buried at Jukkasjärvi Church, with his tombstone reading Samernas Författare, or Author of the Sami. After the Second World War, Sweden slowly started to abandon their discriminatory policies, viewing the Sami with more sympathetically and as people with needs and interests of their own. The Swedish Parliament formally recognized the Sami as an Indigenous people in 1977, giving them special cultural rights under the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, such as the repatriation of Sami remains from museums and private collections. It was not until 2011 that the Swedish Constitution acknowledged the Sami as a people, giving them political rights.

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Notes

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4 Thuri, "Johan Thuuri," 6.

5 Dag Avago et al., "Constructing Northern Fennoscandia as a Mining Region," in *The Politics of Arctic Resources*, ed. Carina Keskitalo (London: Routledge, 2019), 81.

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11 Sjoholm, *Black Fox,* 125.

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