



An analysis of how the political legitimacy of the Sámi peoples is perceived by actors in the indigenous community itself

“just to let people know that we are still here”

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Abstract

The Nordic countries continued disregard for their colonial past and persistent discrimination and forced assimilation has created a hostile environment for the indigenous population within the nation-states. The contemporary situation faced by the Sámi peoples of northern Europe is beset with inadequate political representation, an unequal hierarchical structure, and a neglect of the Sápmi region's nature preservation. The purpose of this thesis is to provide a contemporary perspective on the protection of indigenous rights as well as the political emancipation of the national Sámi communities contrasted against the academic research on the topic. Through the use of interviews with Sámi political and cultural figures various themes were developed that concerned the current situation. These were then used in the analysis to create a red thread through the academic literature and its connection and points of contention with the perception presented by the interviewees. This analysis showcases the hierarchical structure and subsequent insufficient political representation of the Sámi peoples and the current movement to reject the nation-states' agendas and challenge their policies rather than comply and try to negotiate for influence on matters that concern the indigenous group. Additionally, the green colonialism that continues the Nordic countries' neglect and discrimination is outlined, as well as how international organisations work towards improving indigenous rights by criticizing the nation-states. The interviews confirm how the national assemblies operate and regard Sámi interests as non-issues. This is further reflected in the academic literature that showcases the insufficient political representation and better chances of influence on the international scene.

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1: Introduction

While the Nordic countries of Europe now pride themselves on progressive reforms and the respect and promotion of human rights, the nations continue to disregard their past as colonial states and persists to discriminate towards their indigenous population. The Sámi peoples of northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland, as well as the northwestern parts of Russia have struggled for generations to preserve their culture, history, and languages (Rogers and Nelson 2003, 65) (Normann 2020, 80). Additionally, the continued disrespect of the Sápmi region's untouched landscapes in turn of profit has caused this last sliver of European wildlife to whittle away bit by bit (Normann 2020, 89-90). Furthermore, the forced cultural assimilation and banning of the varied Sámi languages has destroyed much of the culture that existed prior to the colonial aggression seen during and after the fourteenth century (Rogers and Nelson 2003, 70). Even with the establishment of the Sámi parliaments that are supposed to function as a forum for the Sámi peoples to raise their concerns of the development of their land with the Nordic states, they have limited political leverage. As a result of this, the Sámi peoples have transitioned to create the perception of one unified indigenous group within the nation-states of Northern Europe.

“[The] Sámi peoples actually never were one people. The need to speak with one voice, the need to show cultural and even mental unity, is just another form of cultural colonisation: it was the Nordic states that pushed for establishing Sámi institutions such as parliaments in order to have an institutional counterpart.”

(Toivanen 2019, 36)

The disconnect between the wants and needs of the indigenous groups and the nation-states in which they now find themselves inhabitants has contributed to creating the contemporary situation of underwhelming political representation. Ulf Mörkenstam, a seminal author within the field, elaborates on Toivanen line of thought by explaining that “it is impossible to create a minority policy of special rights, without simultaneously creating the very group meant for special treatment through the legal exception” (Mörkenstam 1999, 262). However, through this unified nation dependent collaboration between the Sámi peoples, the development of cross-border partnership and reliance on international agencies to criticize the Nordic states

has emerged. The interaction between these national indigenous groups, nation-states and international organisation is the backbone of this thesis. Furthermore, the research itself is structured around interviews with various political and cultural figures within the Sámi communities whose perspective will be used to create various themes connected to the contemporary situation. These interviews help create a red thread and a focus for the academic research and its connection and points of contention with the perception of the interviewees. The purpose of this is to allow the perception of those interviewed to guide the research as to allow a comprehensive overview of the topics.

The first part of this thesis is focused on the research design and key concepts used throughout the paper and will explore the epistemological approach and the theories that can help explain certain behaviour in the contemporary situation. Secondly, the methodology, interview techniques and the accompanying questions for the interviews will be presented as to clarify this approach, its intention and how it will guide the research section. This will be followed by the analysis of the interviews juxtaposed with the academic literature to dive deeper into the various themes discussed during the interview and explore what scholars have written on the subject. The purpose of which is to create a varied and thorough overview of the contemporary situation that is set against the red thread that was created by the interviewees themselves and their perception of the situation. Finally, the conclusion will try to evaluate what the analysis meant for the research question and outline the further research necessary to explore the topic further.

1.1: Exploration of a research topic and formulation of a research question

The research of this thesis is centered around the indigenous rights of the Sámi peoples within the framework of various international organizations and their promotion of these indigenous rights. The main focus will be to contextualise the contemporary situation, the political development as well as the discrimination and assimilation that has created a hostile environment for the Sámi peoples within the Nordic countries. Additionally, an analysis of the European Union, the United Nations, as well as the Council of Europe efforts to promote the protection and improvement of indigenous rights will help explain the disconnect between these international efforts and the domestic politics within the nation-states. Furthermore, the

problem formulation is based around the individual Sámi perception of these international efforts as well as the current situation and national agendas within the Nordic countries. To aid in exploring these topics and to validate as well as challenge the academic research, the investigation aspect of the thesis is built on interviews with various political and cultural actors within the Sámi community. The aim of these interviews is to provide a wider and more inclusive view of the promotion of indigenous rights and to gain insight into how the Sámi peoples themselves view the diverse range of national agendas and intergovernmental efforts. The interviews will be used to create various themes that will aid in analysing the academic literature and help create a holistic view of the contemporary situation. Thereas, the research question is formulated around this approach and reads as follows: How does political and cultural Sámi representatives perceive the national and intergovernmental promotion of indigenous rights, and does it reflect the reality of their political emancipation?

2: Research design and defining key concepts

As mentioned above, the use of interviews would provide a contemporary perspective on the protection of indigenous rights as well as the political emancipation of the national Sámi communities. The interviews would both be used to gauge how the indigenous group themselves view the effectiveness of the international efforts and how their own endeavors as a community have contributed towards the political development. The research topic's emphasis on indigenous rights then guides the exploration of the historical context and helps structure the interview questions. Furthermore, as some intergovernmental organisations, such as the United Nations and European Union, work towards the protection of indigenous peoples examining these efforts contextualise how international criticism can guide national agendas. The work that these intergovernmental organisations conduct is done through international conventions and agencies that function to uphold the protection of human rights. An example of this would be the United Nations *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* which aims to “condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms” (United Nations Human Rights Council 1965, Article 2).

The European Union as an entity itself promotes the protection of fundamental rights through the Treaty of Lisbon stating that “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities” (EU Member States 2007, Article 1a). However, to what extent the European Union actually upholds these values and more importantly how useful it has been for the indigenous peoples of Northern Europe is debatable. Moreover, the European Council founded the independent body of the Fundamental Rights Agency “for promoting and protecting human rights in the EU /.../ [and that] defend the fundamental rights of all people living in the EU” (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights). Thus, by looking at the European Union level one can gauge how successful the promotion of human rights has been, whether the unions position as a trendsetter has been effective, and in turn if the various union agencies actually protect the rights of minorities and the indigenous population within the Nordic countries of Europe. This short analysis of the international protection of indigenous rights connects the thesis to the academic research on human rights, as well as helping guide how the interviews will explore this topic.

2.1: The use of the territorial field of tension to analyse regional trends

The concept of the territorial field of tension presented in Christer Jönsson’s, Sven Tägil’s and Gunnar Törnqvist’s book *Organising European Space* will support the analysis of the Sápmi region being a separate entity from the individual Nordic countries. Additionally, the concept of ethnoterritorial identity is useful as it details the overlap of the cultural background, including ethnicity, and the territorial segment (Tägil 2001, 18).

As presented in their book, the territorial field of tension is described as the friction “between the globalizing and regionalizing trends that stimulates pressure for change” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 25). It is abstracted as a competition between four organisational spheres - that of the union, the state, the region, and networks. *Organising European Space* characterizes the state as a unit with defined borders where political activity has been organised and where the state governance exercises full sovereignty (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 21-22). They claim that “sovereign states remain the most important

territorial units today. In much of the world, most political life is organized within state parameters” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 25). Furthermore, the region is conceptualised as a unit smaller than the state but larger than a local community which in turn operates and influences the area with limited interference from the state and that can be separated from a national context (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 24-25). As may be evident, the dynamic that exists between the region and state can sometime be perceived as a blurred line and examining the interaction between these two concepts plays an important role in explaining both the historical and contemporary situation in the Sápmi region, which itself transcends national borders. One additional relevant concept that is presented in *Organising European Space* is that of the union which is illustrated through the European Union as well as being explained by the conflicts that existed on the continent which ultimately led to deeper cooperation (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 22-23). The historical development towards this idea of a functioning, collaborative yet prominently state independent partnership is presented as the precursor that “signalled a new phase in the quest for 'an ever closer union between the peoples of Europe'” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 23).

In this thesis the friction that exists between these three territorial spheres are of utmost importance since the challenges that exists between the regionalizing and globalizing trends indicate that “we are today moving toward geopolitical patterns that existed before the dawn of the large territorial state” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 27). These patterns of a geopolitical struggle, which in turn dictates how the different territorial spheres interact with one another, highlights that “sovereign states [can be] caught between supranational integration /.../ and self-aware regions. The tension among them becomes apparent in contemporary discussions about the foundations of political power, democracy and legitimate normative systems” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 26). With this statement Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist argues that this competition influences national agendas and dictates discourse on varies topics such as the environment and the extraction of natural resources. Furthermore, they claim that “supranational integration is assumed to point unambiguously to the widening of the territorial sphere, if not to a global [one]. /.../ Similarly, the rise in regional self-confidence is considered to lead unequivocally to the strengthening of the regional level /.../ [and ultimately that these] two trends interact and reinforce each other”

(Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 26). This statement is central in understanding how the intergovernmental organizations of the European Union and United Nations work towards the promotion of indigenous rights in the Sápmi region, and how both the unions and region interact with one another and the nation-states themselves to influence and direct the agendas of the Nordic countries.

2.2: The use of critical theory as a guiding school of thought

The Frankfurt school's conception of critical theory, which expands upon traditional social theory, provides a sufficient epistemological, ethical, and philosophical base to analyse the political emancipation of the Sámi peoples and can aid in contextualising the contemporary situation. Additionally, critical theory could help explain the historical and current actions taken by political actors through the concepts outlined by Raymond Geuss on the conditions of coercion that he claims dictates political development in late capitalist societies.

“[At] the very heart of the critical theory of society is its criticism of ideology. Their ideology is what prevents the agents in the society from correctly perceiving their true situation and real interests”

(Geuss 1981, 2-3)

Additionally, Raymond Geuss continues this line of thought by claiming that “agents may steadfastly refuse to accept the views about freedom embodied in the critical theory or they may recognize that they acquired certain beliefs or traits under conditions of coercion, but maintain that they would have acquired them anyway, even if they had been in circumstances of complete freedom” (Geuss 1981, 89). While here he is arguing that these conditions of coercion apply mainly to the political actors taking part in policy making within the society, it seems appropriate to point out that all people engaging within civil society struggle with the same pressures and conditioning.

Furthermore, Piet Strydom argues that the critical theory is “a standpoint epistemology, which gave priority to the working class viewpoint in the production of social scientific knowledge” (Strydom 2011, 104). Since political emancipation is the focal point of the Frankfurt school’s approach of critical theory it becomes relevant when trying to analyse the political representation of a group. Given that the development of the Sámi peoples’ political representation will be at the core of the thesis, critical theory will help in providing context to the topic and will be vital in understanding the contemporary situation.

2.2.1: Defining the concept of emancipation as a means of analysis

As outlined the concept of emancipation is central for the analysis in this thesis and is based upon the conceptualisation made in the Frankfurt School’s critical theory. The definition made in critical theory is more concerned with the idea of ‘human emancipation’ rather than seeking to achieve liberation from legal or political restrictions (Ott 2001, 42). This is essential in providing an overview that works towards creating “a world which satisfies the needs and powers of [human beings]” (Horkheimer 1972, 246). Therefore, this allows for a more holistic point of view of the Sámi community’s self association, freedom of expression, political influence as well as cultural liberty. However, this is not to say that the outright political emancipation of the Sámi peoples is not relevant in this analysis but rather that it is just a part of the whole picture. Critical theory therefore helps in explaining the power struggle that persists to the present day between the Sámi community and the Nordic countries, as well as in exploring the limitations felt by the indigenous community when it comes to expressing their cultural heritage.

3: The contrast of what was said and what was written about it

As mentioned prior the interviews' purpose is to guide the investigation of this thesis by providing a wider and more inclusive view of the contemporary situation removed from what can be gauged by academic papers. Thereafter, a review of the research within the field juxtaposed against the perceptions presented by the interviewees will offer a wider analysis of the various themes discussed during the interviews. The purpose of this is to either confirm or challenge the claims made in the academic research which in turn provides a more accurate overview of the situation. As stated, the interviewees are various political and cultural actors within the Sámi community. While a specific line of questions was posed to those interviewed the interviewing technique used, as will be discussed further on, allowed them to talk about an issue in an unhindered manner.

There is an abundance of literature on the international community's promotion of indigenous rights that discusses how international law regulates how nation-states acts towards their native population. Since the focus of the thesis will be on the Nordic countries of Europe, the European Union plays an important role when analysing how an intergovernmental actor functions as a trendsetter within a union of member states. Additionally, the United Nations protection and promotion of indigenous rights showcase the affects of critique on national policies and gives insight into how these international efforts aid indigenous communities. From this point of analysis, the interviewees provide a perspective of how political and cultural actors within the Sámi community themselves view these international efforts and whether they consider that it promotes better standards for indigenous groups. Furthermore, when analysing the political struggle of the Sámi peoples contextualising the historical developments affect on the contemporary situation helps guide the exploration. The interviews give insight into how policy makers and artists within the Sámi community fight for advancing indigenous rights and the protection of the Sápmi region. Moreover, the analysis of the academic research showcases the cultural assimilation and policy development within the Nordic countries. These two aspects then help in understanding the establishment of the Sámi parliaments and how the national efforts of political representation transcend borders and connects the Sápmi region.

4: Methodology

The methodology section of the thesis is split into three parts. First an exploration and justification of the chosen interview technique will be outlined to highlight why its methods are fitting for the goals of the interviews. Secondly an overview of choosing and contacting possible interviewees and arguments for why those who were contacted were chosen will be presented. Lastly the third part is a quick presentation of the main questions asked during the interviews. However, it seems crucial to highlight that these questions were merely used to guide the conversation rather than to dictate the discourse of the interviews. The interviews were conducted online via the video chatting software Microsoft Teams due to the ongoing pandemic and cost of transport to the Sápmi region. While this constrained the interaction of the interviews slightly due to not meeting in person it did not limit the conversation or the quality of the answers that were given.

4.1: The use of the focused interview technique

In his 2011 *Social research: issues, methods and process* Tim May argues that “interviews yield rich insights into people’s biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings” (May 2011, 131). Consequently, the use of interviews aims to showcase how political and cultural actors in the Sámi community perceive their own fight for political emancipation and their view on the consequences of the international effort of promoting indigenous and minority rights. The use of the focused interview technique allows the interviewee “to challenge the preconceptions that the researcher may bring to the interaction, but also /.../ for the interviewee simply to talk about an issue in any way they choose” (May 2011, 136). The decision to use the focused interview technique was made as it “provides qualitative depth by allowing interviewees to talk about the subject within their own frames of reference /.../ [and] it thereby provides a greater understanding of the subject’s point of view” (May 2011, 136). As Robert K. Merton puts it in his introduction to *The Focused Interview: A Manual of Problems and Procedures*, “summary generalizations by the interviewee mean that he is presenting, not the raw data for interpretation, but the interpretation itself” (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1990, 4). This is an important distinction as the aim of the focused interview technique is to gauge how the interviewee perceives a certain subject or event themselves. Merton continues by contending that “the aim is to

discover more precisely what "unpleasant" denotes in this context, which concrete feelings were called into play, which personal associations came to mind" (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1990, 4). This point is quite relevant in this thesis since the interviewees often resort to contextualising an issue by their own personal experience.

Furthermore, one of the main advantages of the focused interview technique is that not only does the interviewee have the chance to talk about what aspects of the question they find important, but the researcher can continue the conversation by building on the answers with additional follow up questions (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1990, 5). Merton explains this process by clarifying that "specifying questions should be explicit enough to aid the interviewee in relating his responses to determinate aspects of the stimulus situation and yet general enough to avoid having the interviewer structure it" (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1990, 93). However, Marton warns that "in his search for personal contexts, the interviewer may find himself allowing the focused interview to become diffuse. /.../ [And that] the interest is in those matters which are, or can be, related to the stimulus situation" (Merton, Fiske and Kendall 1990, 134). Additionally May highlights that "the interviewer and interviewee need to establish an intersubjective understanding in terms of the aims of the work, expectations of the participants and also what they may obtain as a result of the work being undertaken" (May 2011, 140) since this offers an accessibility to the research being done. This is to help guide the interviewee's answers without necessarily relying on targeted questions and instead allowing for an open-ended discussion of the topic.

The focused interview technique influenced how the questions for the interviews were written as to allow the interviewee to discuss the topic in an unhindered way. The concerns raised by both May and Merton of specifying questions limiting the answers of the interviewee by guiding their response was recognized and an attempt for the questions to allow for interpretation was made. This was done by having open ended questions on how the interviewee themselves viewed a topic rather than a charged statement. Moreover, to avoid getting lost in the personal contexts of the interviewees, follow up questions relating back to the topic were posed frequently to help connect the personal experience to the bigger context.

4.2: Choosing and contacting potential interviewees

The process of finding possible interviewees started by establishing the two main groups of interests, which are either current or previous political actors and cultural figures within the indigenous community of the Nordic countries of Europe. From this point of departure, the first obvious people to contact were politicians at the three different Sámi parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The politicians that were of significant interest were those who had or were currently working with international relations, human rights, environmental questions, or within the cultural sector. Additionally, the presidents/chairmen of the Sámi parliaments were also contacted as they generally operate as the main voice and contact with the national governments. The cultural actors that were contacted were found through recommendations or by their cultural presence and influence, as in other interviews and debate articles, outlining the connection between their art and the struggles that the Sámi peoples are facing. Furthermore, as established above, Tim May claims that it is essential “to establish an intersubjective understanding in terms of the aims of the work” (May 2011, 140). This was done both in the email template, found in Appendix I, and before starting the interviews by summarizing the research and aims of the thesis and clarifying any questions or concerns that the interviewee may have.

Through two attempts of contacting potential interviewees a total of twenty-seven were contacted and ten replied to the email or website inquiry. Out of these, six were willing to participate however ultimately only three were interviewed due to cancelations. While this is a somewhat underwhelming number of participants it seems important to highlight that the aim of the interviews is not to provide a comprehensive overview of what all members of the diverse groups of the Sámi peoples believe but rather a glimpse into what issues is of pertinent importance to those interviewed. So, although this is only a thin slice of the concerns and sentiment felt throughout the indigenous population; the discussions had with the interviewees will help guide the exploration of the topics that were highlighted during these interviews.

While they will remain anonymous as promised in the email template, found in Appendix I, a quick outline of their work will help contextualize their role, expertise, and perspective.

Interviewee number one is a staff member in Finnish Sámi parliament with a background in law that has been actively working with indigenous rights and international relations. While having been politically active from a young age he has both worked as parliamentarian in the Swedish Sámi parliament, as well as within the staff of the Finnish Sámi parliament and in the United Nations in the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The second interviewee is a politician in the Swedish Sámi parliament that has been politically active since the eighties and been elected as both vice-president and president throughout his career. One of his main areas of expertise is human rights and questions on equality, working for a more inclusive and just political representation of the Sámi peoples in Sweden. Interviewee number three is a Swedish Sámi textile artist that tries to blend Sámi history, mythology, and their political development to create an approachable and subjective look into Sámi life. She is part of the Máze Group, a Sámi art collective, and has delivered powerful imagery of the inequality and struggle of the Sámi peoples through her art.

4.3: Presentation of the main questions for the interviews

The questions for the interviews were developed to explore the research question and the issues that prevail in various Sámi communities. They were built on previous academic articles on the environmental concerns, indigenous rights, political emancipation, and importance of culture for the Sámi peoples. The questions are open ended and avoids yes or no answers to promote a conversation and exploration of the topic. To what degree of success this was done can be debated but as was explained above the focused interview technique allows for additional questions from the researcher to expand upon an answer which helps in exploring the interviewees point of view.

1. How would you describe the current political situation for the Sámi peoples in [country]?
2. Do you see a positive development in the political influence that the Sámi parliament has in [country], and if so, how?

3. Does the political structure in [country] promote issues concerning the Sámi community in a satisfactory way?
 - a. What changes would you like to see to achieve more adequate space for these issues?
4. Do you view the Sápmi region as a whole to be striving for the same goals or does it differ between the Nordic countries?
5. Do you believe that the promotion of indigenous and minority rights that intergovernmental organizations, such as the EU and UN, have helped combat the discrimination and prejudice that exists against Sámi people?
6. Do you believe that the political influence that the Sámi peoples have in [country] has improved because of the criticism that the country received from human rights organizations and intergovernmental organizations?
7. What role do you think that the Sámi parliament in [country] has had in the political development within the nation?
 - a. Has the Sámi parliament had influence on all matters that concerns the national Sámi community?
 - b. Has the [country] government respected and considered the concerns raised by the Sámi parliament fully before committing to a decision?
8. What role do you think culture has played in promoting Sámi life and rights?

Moreover, when interviewing cultural figures three additional questions were posed to explore how culture plays a role in the Sámi Communities and how the artist themselves view their work, its influence and strength.

9. What type of art do you make and how is it linked to your Sámi heritage?
10. How do you think your art has influenced the Sámi community in [country]?
11. What role do you think your art has had in educating the general public on the Sámi lifestyle, culture, and society?

5: Analysis of the interviews and a comparison to the academic literature

Bellow follows the analysis of the different topics that emerged throughout the interviews juxtaposed against the academic research of the same topics. The idea to divide the issues discussed during the interviews into several topics was done to collect the diverse views of the interviewees and blur the line between the specific questions and hence collect the answers according to their shared themes. This was done to aid in examining the research question since the diverging answers given in responses to the questions would ultimately muddle the analysis and instead the chosen analysis approach would allow for a deeper assessment of the key concepts that was raised in the interviews. Furthermore, this arrangement would help with covering the relevant academic research connected to the ideas presented since these larger themes would allow for a pragmatic and explicit analysis.

The three main themes that were covered in the interviews was the Sámi peoples overlooked presence and the disregard of their concerns, the land grabbing and exploitation of the natural resources, and the defence of Sápmi interests and the following hollow promises. The overlooked identity was largely connected to the neglect felt by the Sámi community within the nation-states and how culture has played a vital role in preserving the values and creating a sense of unity throughout the indigenous population. The link between cultural assimilation and the suppression of minorities is also examined, as well as how unequal representation enforces the power dynamic between the indigenous population and the national assemblies. Furthermore, the exploitation of the natural resources is a pressing issue for a lot of Sámi people since not only is their livelihood connected to the land but also a large part of the cultural identity. Additionally, the perceived green colonialism continues the Nordic states history of land grabbing and resource abuse in the region. This situation of the apparent mismanagement of the natural tressure of Sápmi, lacking compensation, and disregard of the concerns raised by the Sámi peoples have created a further rift in relations between the indigenous population and the Nordic states. The final point discussed in this section is connected to the political development seen within the Nordic states and how international organisations have influenced the progress. Moreover, the cooperation between the Sámi parliaments and the Sámi Council is assessed to analyse their divergence of interests yet unified goal of emancipation as well as their aim of regional, social, and cultural recognition.

5.1: Previous research and source criticism

Before analysing the content of the interviews and discussing how the themes discussed are reflected in the academic literature of the given topic, it seems pertinent to outline what this previous academic research looks like. As stated in the introduction section, one of the main reasons that the thesis is structured around interviews with political and cultural actors is to gauge to what extent the Sámi peoples own view and aspirations are mirrored in the academic research. Since most of the literature within the field is based around the political development and an analysis of larger events, such as protests or the development of relations between the nation-states and the indigenous group, the focus becomes abstract and removed from the Sámi peoples. Most literature is not centered around how the indigenous group react or relate to the development but is rather an analysis of the development itself. This creates a narrative that is more concerned with the large scale political development rather than the activism and perception of the Sámi peoples which in turn adds to the dissonance that can sometimes be felt between the academic literature and the events that are written about. For example, while a lot of researchers write about the Alta conflict the focus is usually on the effects and consequences of the event rather than the resistance and protests that demonstrated the unified uproar of the Norwegian Sámi. Such is the case in Roger Kvist's 1994 *The Racist Legacy in Modern Swedish Saami Policy* where he writes that "the conflict over the damming of the Kautokeino-Alta waterway embarrassed the Norwegian government and the Norwegian people, and led to the creation of a Royal Commission on Saami rights in 1980" (Kvist 1994, 213). Here the focus lies on what the consequences of this demonstration meant for the Sámi political structure. While this approach seems to be the status quo it is not universal with Susanne Normann writing that "remembering Alta became a collective anchoring process, [and how ultimately] wind power development [now] is placed as one more element in the continuing colonial situation" (Normann 2020, 85-86). Additionally, "this mobilisation, in which the use of police force is unparalleled in peace time in Norway, [turned] into one of the most extensive and important civil disobedience events in Norway since the Second World War. /.../ Mobilisation and the spread of the Sámi ethno-political movement occurred largely due to a sharp conflict with the state related to the use of land and resources" (Falch, Selle and Strømsnes 2016, 129). These two excerpts well demonstrate the alternative approach in the academic research that puts emphasis on the Sámi peoples' activism and perception of the events. Thus, the example of the Alta controversy highlights

the two permeating research approaches of either focusing on the indigenous groups' struggle for land and influence or a focus on the general political consequences of these actions.

The vast majority of the academic literature is centered around the assimilation, discrimination and insufficient political representation seen throughout Sápmi. One of the lead academics used in this thesis, that is also referenced in much of the other literature, is Henry Minde. He is a professor of history at The Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø with research interests in assimilation, self determination and human rights from an international perspective. He is a respected academic within the field and have been the editor of two collections of academic research on indigenous peoples published by Eburon. Minde's paper on the *Assimilation of the Sami – Implementation and Consequences* from 2003 is used throughout the analysis to explore the assimilation process as well as the followed attempts at reconciliation. While the paper is focused on the policy of 'Norwegianization' Minde references similar processes of assimilation throughout Sápmi and draws wider deductions of the contemporary situation for the Sámi peoples. Ulf Mörkenstam is a professor in political science at Stockholm University and his main research interests are political theory and analysis with a focus on indigenous rights and Sámi politics. He is a seminal author within the field and has written numerous articles analysing the contemporary conflict within Sámi politics along with how international indigenous rights initiatives have been interpreted in the domestic context. Furthermore, Mörkenstam participates at a research project call "The Territory of Democracy" at Stockholm University that contests the theory of the territorial field of tension by challenging "the presumption that the jurisdiction of the state extends to the territory in its entirety" (Mörkenstam). Rauna Kuokkanen is a professor of Arctic Indigenous Politics at the University of Lapland in Finland as well as an associate professor of Political Science & Indigenous Studies at the University of Toronto in Canada. Her research has a focus on colonialism, indigenous politics, and indigenous feminist theory. Because of this expertise, Kuokkanen's *Self-determination and Indigenous Women – "Whose Voice Is It We Hear in the Sámi Parliament?"* from 2011 is the base of exploration on the role of Sámi women in the analysis. Additionally, Kuokkanen is the lead of the Siida School project, a community driven collaborative project where various scholars, artists and activists seeks to reimagine how siida practices could operate as part of Sámi governance structures today. The siida system is built around nomadic reindeer pasture districts that was common

before the colonialization process started and “the project aims at decolonizing Sámi society through reclaiming and reengaging with the traditional Sámi siida system” (Siidaskuvla 2019).

Only a few of the academic articles used in the analysis present the individuals perception and as stated they rather rely on an examination of the political development and larger social movements that have had an impact on the contemporary situation. Two exceptions to this are the work of Rauna Kuokkanen that examines 15 interviews with Sámi women, from various walks of life, and their perception on the self-determination of the Sámi peoples and Henry Minde’s paper on the *Assimilation of the Sami – Implementation and Consequences* that presents how some Sámi children faced assimilation in school. In this paper Minde relies both on the academic research of his contemporaries and on a collection of interviews he himself conducted in 1990. This is partially the reason why these two works became central for the analysis since this thesis is also based on an examination of how some actors perceive the contemporary situation.

The three examples above show a range of academics not only in a geographical sense but through what fields they focus their research on. The analysis is based on an exploration of a variety of topics that were brought up during the interviews so covering all relevant research was crucial. The topic of this thesis is focused on providing a narrow view of political and cultural actors, yet a broad perspective reflected in the literature. The chosen academics allow various themes to be explored and an extensive cross-examination of the conclusions drawn throughout the literature. As the seminal authors are respected academics within their research field, their viewpoint is of vital importance and while a particular bias could be argued for it is based on a regard for international human rights and respect for the indigenous population and thus seems irrelevant to examine. To what extent the academic research provides a ‘true’ perspective of the contemporary situation is difficult to say but through having a range of researchers and the perspectives presented by the interviewees the hope was to explore the topic extensively.

5.2: An overlooked presence and a disregard of pressing issues

As interviewee number one put it, “the problem has been [that] we were overlooked in the system, we did not exist” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q7a). This is a sentiment felt throughout much of the academic literature on Sámi political representation. The indigenous community feels neglected as they do not represent the main demos of the nation and therefore are not properly represented in the national governments, additionally there is a lack of self-determination and decision-making power (Müller-Wille 1979, 68) (Minde 2003, 141-142). Moreover, when discussing the impact and importance of culture in the Sámi community interviewee number two said that he thinks “it is essential because if you do not have the indigenous culture and values, we would not have a Sámi life and it is so easy to be domesticated and voluntarily assimilated” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q8). This line of thought can be seen in Torvald Falch’s, Per Selle’s and Kristin Strømsnes’s *The Sámi: 25 Years of Indigenous Authority in Norway* where they write that “an attempt was made to assimilate the Sámi into the national state’s majority culture. /.../ Sámi were as a rule excluded, and to the extent that they were discussed, they were seen as a culturally isolated, primitive and alien group” (Falch, Selle and Strømsnes 2016, 127). This trend of losing cultural identity and being absorbed into the other Scandinavian cultures can be seen throughout the Nordic countries since the beginning of the colonial aggression and cultural domination of the Sápmi region in the beginning of the fourteenth century (Rogers and Nelson 2003, 70) (The Sámi Information Centre 2018, 22-28). This agrees with Christer Jönsson’s, Sven Tägil’s and Gunnar Törnqvist conceptualisation of territorial states that inevitably undermine regional identity to unify a sense of nationality (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 21-22 & 26-27).

Additionally, in both the historical context and in the current political structure Sámi policies are being blocked in the national parliament by prejudiced ruling parties (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 40-42). Interviewee number two outlines this by stating that “one of the biggest parties in Finland is the center party and /.../ most of the parliamentarians are from the north /.../ and they are more old style, and they are opposing many of these improvements of the Sámi situation” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q7b). This is done for a variety of reasons but ultimately “the policy of assimilation was, in other words, inseparable

from the emergence of strong nation states” (Minde 2003, 122-123). Moreover, interviewee number one continues this narrative in saying that “you have elections this autumn [in Sweden] and so to do anything in favor of Sámis /.../ you [would] lose votes, that is the reality” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q7b). The discrimination felt by the indigenous community does not only impact what policies are blocked and approved but also the attitude towards Sámi initiatives and concerns. This concurs with Raymond Geuss’ idea that “ideology is what prevents the agents in the society from correctly perceiving their true situation” (Geuss 1981, 2-3). Since these political actors are dependent on being elected by the national demos and protecting Sámi rights does not necessarily align with party politics it becomes a lesser issue. Ultimately, the Sámi “really want to see that people take our questions seriously. We have been living here for thousands of years and people have been suffering a lot” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q3a).

5.2.1: How to undermine the indigenous population

As presented above interviewee number two actively works with questions concerning equal representation and he outlines the issue in Sweden by proclaiming that “80% of the members of the [Sámi community] board[s] are men. /.../ And [within the] 51 Sámi communities [there are only] five with female chairpersons. So, this is a major victory for the Swedish government because they know /.../ [that] if you want to destroy the indigenous community /.../ you should discriminate indigenous women” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). Rauna Kuokkanen elaborates on this point by outlining the historical importance of Sámi women in fighting for indigenous rights and for the respect of the Sápmi region, notably in the Alta conflict (Kuokkanen 2011, 42-43). Though, she also challenges the second interviewee’s claim by stating that “today, Sámi women are increasingly involved in Sámi politics through various organisations and institutions /.../ however, [it] is a fairly recent phenomenon” (Kuokkanen 2011, 43). Henry Minde further highlights the importance of the Alta controversy by exclaiming that “being taken for a Sami in public was [considered] a personal defeat /.../ [and] sustainable counter-images became possible only when the modern Sami movement inspired big, collective actions” (Minde 2003, 142).

Further unequal representation can be observed in “the well-established notion of the ‘true’ Sami identity represented by the nomadic reindeer herder. It explained and justified an exclusion of non-reindeer herders, that is the vast majority of persons of Sami origin” (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 32). Interviewee number two criticized this system by saying that “according to the law /.../ as [an] owner, [if] you own 101 reindeers /.../ then you have two extra votes. So, you are not only allowed to vote because you are a male [but] you are also allowed to vote /.../ with your property, your fortune” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). He continues by elaborating that it is the “law makers in the Swedish parliament [that] has decided that not all the Sámi individuals are allowed to be members of a Sámi village” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). This is done through excluding those who are not involved in the local reindeer herding (Allard and Brännström 2021, 59) (Kvist 1994, 209 & 212) (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 29). The Sámi village structure upholds the local community’s autonomy to operate politically independently from the Sámi parliament on matters that mainly concern reindeer herding in their district or other local matters (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 33 & 39-40). Therefore the exclusion of some individuals means that they lack local representation and influence on matters that still impact their daily life. As Patrik Lantto and Ulf Mörkenstam explains in their 2008 *Sami Rights and Sami Challenges*, the system “institutionalized a homogenous Sami identity /.../, maintaining a hierarchical order, at the same time as it explains and justifies an exclusion of the majority of people of Sami origin” (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 41). This counteracts Horkheimer’s ideal “world which satisfies the needs and powers of [human beings]” (Horkheimer 1972, 246) and instead excludes and undermines the power of some individuals in society to adhere to the social structure. The reindeer husbandry acts that facilitate this system exist in Sweden, Norway, and Finland and have been developing since their implementation (Rennäringslag 1971) (Reindeer Husbandry Act 1990) (Regjeringen 2017). However, it is only the Swedish system that relies on the Sámi village structure to legitimise belonging to the indigenous peoples (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 32). Furthermore even prior to the reindeer husbandry act, the consequences of the systematic assimilation in Sweden “were the loss of ethnicity for a large number of Saami, and a total disregard for the ethnic rights of the majority of Saami that were not reindeer herders” (Kvist 1994, 209).

5.3: Land grabbing and exploitation of the natural tressure

Climate change is a recurring issue that appears to be unambiguous for the struggle of not only respecting the Sápmi region and protecting its natural resources but general Sámi life as well. As interviewee number one states, “for maybe indigenous [peoples] it is the land, it is the resources in the land. If you destroy it [then] you destroy the people itself” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q8). To see the land that is essential for the identity, as well as the livelihood for much of the indigenous population, being abused by short term economically incentivised projects is devastating for many. Interviewee three outlines this when discussing the mining industry in Sápmi: “they say that it is only for ten to twelve years and after that what is left behind then?” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q2). This short term resource gathering does not support further economic development in the region. Interviewee number one explain this by saying that “there is a lot of fly out and fly in [at the mines] and you can see that in Finland but also in Sweden in this new mine in Pajala /.../ [where] the municipality had not grown in number of the population” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q3) since the mine opened. Torvald Falch, Per Selle and Kristin Strømsnes expands this point by discussing the “Minerals Act of 2010 [which] has provisions requiring evaluation and weighting with respect to Sámi culture, commercial activity and social life in respect of mineral activities. These provisions, however, have a territorial limitation; they are restricted to Finnmark county /.../ [and therefore] does not cover all of the traditional Sámi area” (Falch, Selle and Strømsnes 2016, 134). While there are functions in place to protect the region and promote positive economic growth there are loopholes that are used to abuse and disregard the environmental impact and sharing of the wealth that is gained. Interviewee number three continues this line of thought by discussing that “they are planning to start this mining in Gállok outside Jokkmokk. /.../ People think that they got jobs and that we get taxes to our municipalities. That is not true because those who are working at those companies they do come from the other side of the world” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q2). During the early Sámi movement there was a large focus on autonomy for the use of land that was designated as Sámi reindeer herding areas with freedom for them to decide how to use it (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 30). However due to the imbalance between reindeer herders and non-reindeer herding Sámi that was discussed above the movement had difficulty to gain momentum (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 30).

5.3.1: The impact of green colonialism and empty promises

While the colonial past of the Nordic countries has ended and been pushed aside, there is a new form of colonialism that is disrupting the Sápmi region and its nature. As interviewee number two puts it, “the Sámi region is in many parts quite much affected by the green colonialism and it still continues [to today]” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q1). Interviewee one agrees by claiming that “this is a big challenge for the Sámi community about the new green economy because they are talking about green minerals and green colonialism” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q3). Traditional Sámi lifestyle has a special relationship with the territory believing that they should not leave a significant impact on the environment and live in a symbiosis with the surrounding nature and animals (The Sámi Information Centre 2018, 15) (Bauböck, et al. 2018, 2.2). As Susan Norman stresses in her 2020 *Green colonialism in the Nordic context: Exploring Southern Saami representations of wind energy development*, if the “researchers behind the environmental impact assessments and the bureaucrats who interpret their findings are unaware of the shortcomings in the “maps” with which they guide themselves, and the Saami knowledge remains discarded as common sense /.../ the injury from [this] research can continue to produce harm” (Normann 2020, 90).

This mismanagement of the natural resources of the Sápmi region can already be seen in the 1919 decision by “the Swedish parliament [to] canceled the natural protection of Stora Sjöfallet national park. It was [made] a national park in 1909 and 10 years later the Swedish parliament decided that it would not be protected” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q8). According to Vattenfall, the Swedish state-owned multinational power giant who was responsible for building the dam, there was no widespread criticism at the time “despite the fact that the dam was to be built in the Stora Sjöfallet national park, which was not permitted” (Vattenfall). However, this was prior to the explosion of environmental activism and ultimately the decision led to “the most precious and most valuable parts of the national park /.../ not [being] protected (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q8). This is one clear example of the smash and grab resource management seen in the Sápmi region and there is a multitude of other instances. Interviewee one shared another “case [that] was up in the supreme court [of Norway] last year and that was about /.../ [a] windmill power plant that was built by a company where even the government was one of the main shareholders” (Appendix II:

Interviewee #1, Q8). It is the economic incentives that drive these ventures forward but when the environmental impact, long term consequences, and the concerns of the Sámi community continues to be ignored this justification of profit becomes insufficient. Interviewee one concludes the story by celebrating that the project was deemed illegal by the supreme court, but it raises a different concern of these decisions often being too little too late. He comments on this by saying that “there was already, I think it was, 30 or 40 [windmills] that was already built. So, it is the question what are we going to do with them?” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q8). Another example of this too little too late issue is the implementation of the law of consultation in Sweden entering into force on March 1st, 2022, which promises further influence on matters that concern the Sámi peoples (Lag om konsultation i frågor som rör det samiska folket 2022). However as pointed out by interviewee number two “just before it was implemented or decide about the Swedish government took a decision about Gállok. So, it would have a better way for cooperation for the government to use this new law and try to test this political system with consultation before the Gállok mining activities were decided” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7b). This raises an unsubstantiated suspicion of it being a strategically timed decision and contributes to the perception of lacking political representation in the Sámi population.

5.4: Fighting tooth and nail to defend Sápmi

The political representation of the Sámi peoples has been an ongoing power struggle between the national assemblies ruling over the entire nation-state and the indigenous community wanting to secure their interests and influence over the Sápmi region (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 41-42). Political scientists and sociologists Rainer Bauböck and Veit Bader argue that any regional population will be dominated by national policy because they only have a miniscule proportion of the national demos and will therefore have little impact in domestic affairs which nonetheless have a direct impact on the group (Bauböck, et al. 2018, 4.1) (Bader 2018, 578). This both aligns with and challenges the idea of the territorial field of tension that claims that “sovereign states [can be] caught between supranational integration /.../ and self-aware regions” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 26). This theory supposes that regional interest will have an impact on various topics such as the right of land. Additionally, the self determination and influence on the decision-making processes of the

region could be supported by supranational agendas. However, while this pressure has been present in the Nordic countries for a long time its affect seems insufficient since the national parliament has ignored the criticism they received from the United Nations and Council of Europe (Civil Right Defenders 2022) (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 27).

When examining the political influence of the Sámi peoples on national agendas it seems pertinent to highlight the importance of the Finnish Sámis unprecedented impact. Despite the fact that “the Finnish side has for a long time been the poorest one /.../ the Sámi parliament has been growing quite fast and they have quite a good way to influence the government policies” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q1). Interviewee number one continues to explain that the “temporary parliament [established in 1973] was some kind of the inspiration because it was an actual elective body representing the Sámi people in Finland and then [after this] we have this establishment of the Sámi parliament in Norway in 1989 and then followed by Sweden in 93” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q1) (Sametinget 2019). The establishment of a provisional Sámi parliament in Finland proved that such an entity could provide a landscape that promotes the concerns of the Sámi peoples. However, this does not mean that the region stopped being dominated by domestic agendas but instead showed a path forward towards better Sámi inclusion and “now [that] the government and the parliament have an accord, they are advised to consult in all matters that are related to the Sámi. So, this means [that] there is [at least] a dialogue and discussion /.../ [even if] they do not need to follow the advice [given] by the Sámi parliament” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q2). This is elaborated on by Laura Junka-Aikio in her 2016 journal article *Can the Sámi Speak Now?* where she writes that “the political power vested in it [the Finnish Sámi Parliament] remains mostly symbolic, and its functions are limited mainly to administration of state funds earmarked to the Sámi, and to releasing public statements” (Junka-Aikio 2016, 214). Although this article outlines the underwhelming influence of the Finnish Sámi Parliament it is nevertheless a more impactful structure then elsewhere.

In contrast to the Finnish development, “in more then 100 years of democracy, Swedish parliamentarism still has this /.../ political system [that] is smashing the indigenous cultures and livelihoods, and [there is still] land grabbing [of] the natural resources and traditional

territories” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q1). This frustration can be heard throughout all of the interviews with the second interviewee stating that “the Sámi parliament do have to argue with the Swedish government, we deliver everything possible, but it is [still] rejected” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q2). As presented by Patrik Lantto and Ulf Mörkenstam, the “Sami attempts to outright challenge the state policy had little success, and as a response the Sami leaders changed their strategy and strived to adapt their demands to the official conception of Samihood in order to reach through” (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 34). Even though progress has been made in Sweden to take the concerns of the national Sámi community into consideration, interviewee number two says that they receive “the same replies every time we have this kind of consultation. That the Swedish government has to look /.../ [at] what interests are the best for the country /.../ and of course [since] the Swedish government are elected by the Swedish citizens, so they are not so eager to protect the rights of the Sámi peoples” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7). This statement aligns with what Rainer Bauböck claims in his lead essay *Democratic inclusion: a pluralist theory of citizenship* from 2018 where he writes that “regional populations would be dominated by national majorities” (Bauböck, et al. 2018, 4.1). He argues that this is because all citizens within the nation have equal control over the national government; and therefore, the regional populations just have a fraction of the control that is proportional to their size of the national demos (Bauböck, et al. 2018, 4.1). Furthermore, when discussing the development of the political representation of the Sámi peoples in Sweden, interviewee number three reasons that artist play a vital role in presenting the issues since “when you are working with art you can face this in another way. This is a visual communication and I think that people can take it [in] more in their own ways” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q3). She continues “that when we [do a] performance, when we have our exhibitions, then I think that more people will be interested, and they really want to know more about us as an ethnic [group]” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q8). Understandably not all people, neither Sámi nor Swedish, are invested in the politics of the Sápmi region but when faced with the issues in an approachable way, for example through art, they will form an opinion nonetheless.

Moreover, the second interviewee says that “in some cases, there was a decision that we would reject the governments proposal and that made them very surprised and also very angry because they did not expect us to be united in our decisions and to reject a government proposal” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7). He continues this line of thought by explaining “that some Sámi villages, or Sámi communities, does not follow the law since every member on the /.../ annual meeting are satisfied with that solution” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). This form of rejection of a government decision shows the beginning a trend that challenges the polity instead of cooperating with it, which as outlined above has had a limited return. This approach mimics a line of thought seen in critical theory philosopher Jürgen Habermas argument that “only those laws may claim legitimacy that can meet with the agreement of all citizens in a discursive lawmaking procedure that is itself legally constituted” (Habermas 1996, 110). Habermas was not alone in this way of thinking with James Bohman presenting a similar idea in his 1996 *Critical theory and democracy*, stating that “a law then would be legitimate only if it could be agreed to in a fair and open deliberative process in which all citizens may freely continue to participate whatever the outcome” (Bohman 1996, 89). Thereas by this line of thought rejecting the governments proposal upholds the political emancipation of the Sámi peoples as they are legitimizing their own policies rather than those that harm them as a community.

5.4.1: Taking legal action against the state and the consequential discrimination

There has been a recent development in how the Sámi peoples can challenge the national governments agenda. As interviewee number two puts it: “in some way we have already seen the beginning of change [that] is coming but it is not [in the] political system it is the system with supreme courts. /.../ The way forward is more court trials /.../ [and] it is not only single Sámi communities, it is more and more the desire [of the whole indigenous population] to sue the Swedish state in order to prevent the current political development” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q3a). Here he argues that to stop the land grabbing of natural resources, better the development of their political representation, and prevent further destruction of the Sápmi region; the way forward is to sue the state and its unsustainable decisions. One relevant case that both interviewee one and two discusses at length is that of the Girjas case where the supreme court sided with the Girjas Sámi district and ruled that the Sámi

“administrative districts have the sole right to decide whether others should be able to hunt and fish in their district” (The “Girjas” case – press release 2020). The second interviewee explains that “we have been facing, without choosing ourselves /.../ verdicts from the supreme courts in the Nordic countries [that] have decided in Sámi court cases and giving the verdicts to support the Sámi culture and livelihoods and rights to use land and water not for extraction of natural resources but for gaining rights to food production and food sovereignty” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q4). This victory is of historical importance and as Christina Allard and Malin Brännström writes “a loss for Girjas would have meant that the Swedish State could continue to decide on the leases of hunting and fishing rights /.../ [and] that it would have remained unclear whether this form of state decision-making limited the recognised property rights of the RHC [reindeer herding community], and Swedish Sami rights more generally” (Allard and Brännström 2021, 71). This has also encouraged other Sámi communities to take legal action against their national governments, for example in Talma Sámi village that is suing the Swedish state to also obtain exclusive hunting and fishing rights (Söderlund 2022).

However, despite the current progress in supreme court cases in the Nordic countries a sense of worry can be observed with interviewee number two saying that “it happened, what we never could believe would happen since we have had so many court cases earlier and many of them were lost” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q4). He elaborates by saying that “since the court case of Girjas was settled by the verdict of the supreme court the government realised that this reindeer husbandry act from 1971 needs to be changed. They would not have a change with it otherwise, they were perfectly satisfied with unequal possibilities for members of the Sámi community and discrimination of Sámi women” (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). So, while there has been a positive development due to the supreme courts siding with the Sámi peoples, he worries that this decision to change the reindeer husbandry act by the Swedish government is not based on an actual want for change but rather to preserve the current hierarchy. Another negative aspect of the supreme court decision on the Girjas case is how it sparked further discrimination and racism towards the Sámi peoples. The Civil Rights Defenders claims to have “received more and more reports of threats, hatred and violence throughout Sápmi. The Sami People has been subjected to death threats and several reindeer have been tormented and killed” (Civil Rights Defenders 2020). This type of hate crime and

destruction of property to bring financial ruin of the Sámi peoples was also elaborated on by interviewee one saying that “when the conflict arise you can see very clearly /.../ that they have some kind of a racial connotation. Also, we have this awful case in Girjas, they did not kill any Sámi, but /.../ some reindeers were killed” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q7b).

5.4.2: Harmonizing policies to deepen cooperation

The cooperation across borders between the indigenous community and their parliamentary representatives in the Nordic countries have been developing for a long time and now “they have agreed on a draft at a convention and the idea was to harmonize the policies in these three countries” (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q4). Torvald Falch, Per Selle and Kristin Strømsnes argues that “Sámi policy is on one side built around the development of a Sámi parliament, which is not territorially based, but on the other side a series of laws, measures and self-governance and cooperation schemes have been developed that to varying extents have a territorial aspect” (Falch, Selle and Strømsnes 2016, 140). This observation highlights that the Sámi parliaments were not developed as a territorial entity but rather as an entity of widespread representation of all national Sámi; and that instead it is the laws that are connected to the regional interests of the varied Sámi communities. Furthermore, Ulf Mörkenstam argues that it is a recent phenomenon of “the conception of Samihood [that] appears to include all who consider themselves part of the group. The Sami are a national minority and an indigenous people /.../ [and this approach] favour[s] the notion of one Sami group” (Mörkenstam 1999, 262). When discussing if the entire Sápmi region is working towards the same goals even across the national borders, interviewee number three stated that “it is not [a] big difference because we are working åt samma håll (*translation: in the same direction*). /.../ Because we have this Nordic Sámi Council also [and there] they are [working] together” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q4). She continues this line of thought in claiming that “we have to work in that way because we are not so many. So, if we do not /.../ håller sams då splittras vi (*translation: stay together then we fall apart*)” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q4). As stated on their website the “main task of the Saami Council is to consolidate the feeling of affinity among the Saami people” (Sámiráđđi). This is done by having a Sámi Conference every 4 years as well as Council meetings biannually with members from the affiliated member organisations. It is relevant to highlight that the

existence of the Sámi Council as well as the national Sámi parliaments are the product of the Nordic Councils' will to create a cross-border entity that could represent the wider perspectives of the Sámi peoples and as Reetta Toivanen puts it; "the Sámi Parliament is rather an invention by the Nordic governments fulfilling a need for a partner for discussion" (Toivanen 2019, 30). Aside from the policies passed within the executive branch of the Sámi Council, the specialised work is carried out by four different subunits: the arctic and environmental unit, the cultural unit, the human rights unit, and the EU unit. Moreover, interviewee number one contends that "there are some disagreements [between the Sámi parliaments], but it is on the way and the idea is [that] /.../ the convention is built on the minimum standards in the world related to indigenous peoples" (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q4). This ultimately led to further cooperation between the Sámi parliaments as well as the Sámi Council and creates a unified political ambition.

5.4.3: Criticism is not enough to change the status quo

When asked about if the international criticism that Sweden has received have improved the Sámi peoples' position within the nation-state, interviewee number three said that she "believe[s] so, and because they have also put up some sanningskommissioner (*translation: truth and reconciliation commissions*) now" (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q6). This new commission essentially function as a tool for handling and forwarding critique from the Sámi peoples to the Swedish government (Sámediggi 2021). While this is a new tool within Sweden the government "have had plenty of criticism [towards them already] /.../ [and] you can see [in] the [Nordic] countries [that] they are sometimes voluntarily doing the things, sometimes they have to do [them] because of these complaints" (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q5). Interviewee number one continues to explain that "the confrontation level has been much higher in Sweden and Norway. /.../ [and] if you go back, the big fights usually was in /.../ Sweden and Norway /.../ [however] because of [the fact that] the Finnish [Sámi] parliament have been much tougher now, this has also had an affect on the government and their policies (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q6).

When discussing what effect the various intergovernmental organisations' promotion of indigenous rights have had, interviewee number two said that he believes it has had a positive influence "but I believe it is only the United Nations system. /.../ The influence of the member states are [a] priority for the European Union and /.../ of course 500 million Europeans cannot do what the indigenous peoples of the arctic wants" (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q5). This is supported in Kirsten Shoraka's *Human Rights and Minority Rights in the European Union*, where she claims that "there has been much criticism that minority rights are not part of the EU's *acquis*, as there is no legal basis in the treaties and no discernable EU minority policy, except in the context of enlargement; however, it is submitted that minority rights are a sub-category of human rights" (Shoraka 2010, 3-4). Furthermore, interviewee two adds that "the Sámi representatives have been fundamental when it comes to development of international law in the UN system since the Sámi people have [the] experience and the willingness to use accurate description and also cooperation with other indigenous peoples. /.../ Unfortunately, we are not so skilled when it comes to /.../ domestic cases but [we are] being successful in the international arena" (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q5). Additionally, the international representatives in the Sámi parliaments have gotten "used to this special behaviour and language or the rules of these UN agencies and can use them in defending our culture rights" (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q8). Interviewee two ultimately believes that the United Nations promotion and protection of indigenous rights has helped the Sámi peoples create a united international agenda that eventually led to an improvement of their rights and influence within the Nordic countries. Furthermore, as mentioned above the Sámi Council functions as an entity separate from the Sámi parliaments that reflects the interests of their member organisations. Their EU unit works towards monitoring and influencing EU policy by informing and involving Sámi interests in various networks and in the EU decision-making process (*Sámiráđđi*). Therefore, there is process underway to improve the Sámi peoples influence within the EU but since the Sámi Councils EU unit was established in 2019 the impact has been limited thus far. However, the developments described highlights the trend that Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist outlined in their book *Organizing European Space* about how regional identity and supranational integration often interact and ultimately reinforce one another (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 26).

5.5: Reflecting on the implications of the analysis

The goal of the analysis above was to create a concrete picture of the different topics that were discussed during the interviews juxtaposed with the academic literature. While there were varying views presented throughout the interviews the hope was to examine the interviewees' perspectives and to create a narrative that could be compared with what scholars have been writing about the subject. There seems to be an alignment between the interviewees' viewpoint and the academic research into the topics with the writers often presenting the inadequate political representation and negligence towards protecting the Sápmi region (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 40-41) (Normann 2020, 91). Furthermore, by evoking this sentiment of displeasure the academic literature builds a picture of the struggle the Sámi face to have their voices heard.

When analysing the discrimination and cultural assimilation of the Sámi peoples it becomes evident that it is a systemic issue that was established to suppress the indigenous population. It seems pressing to highlight that both the academic literature and the interviewees' concur that the Sámi village structure and the general privileged position of reindeer herders was founded in an unapologetically discriminatory manner as to create a power imbalance within the indigenous group to aid in dividing the Sámi peoples and create an unsustainable internal strife (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 29-30) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). By doing so the national assemblies of the Nordic countries guaranteed that the issue of unequal representation was perceived as an institutional problem in the internal systems of Sámi representation rather than on a national level. By furthermore creating a gendered imbalance within these systems the nation-states can ensure that internal disputes will occupy much of the discussion (Kuokkanen 2011, 42-43) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q7a). Moreover, the smash and grab resource management seen throughout Sápmi continues the colonial tendencies of the Nordic countries by ignoring the concerns of the indigenous community until it is either too late or becomes a legal issue (Normann 2020, 90). As outlined through the interviews and in the academic literature the land plays a vital role in the continued economic prosperity as well as in the cultural and spiritual connection to Sápmi region itself (Bauböck, et al. 2018, 2.2) (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q8). This situation seems to be a central issue as all of the interviewees discussed it actively and a lot of the research on the

Sámi situation considered this green colonialism. Furthermore, when exploring the political representation of the Sámi peoples it becomes clear that there is a current movement to reject the nation-states agendas and challenge their policies rather than comply and try to negotiate for influence and matters that concern the indigenous group (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 34) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q3a & Q7). This strategy aligns with the concept of political legitimacy outlined by critical theory philosophers Jürgen Habermas and James Bohman that showcases why this new movement has had widespread success since “a law then would be legitimate only if it could be agreed to in a fair and open deliberative process” (Bohman 1996, 89). And as explored above attempts made by the Sámi parliament to challenge decisions made by the national assemblies and gain influence on matters that affect the Sámi peoples have been largely unsuccessful (Junka-Aikio 2016, 214). It has therefore become clear that a more useful strategy is to confront the nation-states on a legal level and rely on various international organisations’ criticism to improve the situation (Shoraka 2010, 3-4) (Sámiráđđi).

6: Conclusion

The following conclusion aims to give an overview of the research that has been conducted throughout the thesis and cement how the interviews played a vital role in portraying an intersubjective perspective on the contemporary situation. Moreover, further research into the topic and a synopsis of the research question will be explored.

“Just to let people know that we are still here, and we are working for our sake, and we belong to the future” (Appendix II: Interviewee #3, Q9). This sentiment encapsulates much of what was discussed during the interviews and the academic literature on the topics that was explored throughout the analysis. It becomes more and more clear that this is an unraveling situation that has entered a new phase of actions taken to promote indigenous rights within the Nordic countries. By challenging the policy passed by the national assemblies and suing the state for mistreatment of the land and Sámi peoples, activists and Sámi politicians have faced larger success than through the deliberation process and compromise (Junka-Aikio 2016, 214) (Shoraka 2010, 3-4) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q3a). The first pivotal step in this new phase is the Swedish supreme courts’ decision on the Girjas case that established

exclusive rights for the Girjas Sámi village on hunting and fishing within their district (Allard and Brännström 2021, 57-58) (The “Girjas” case – press release 2020). This has sparked a movement of challenging other policies and trying to set new precedents for indigenous rights and jurisdiction in the Nordic states (Allard and Brännström 2021, 71) (Söderlund 2022) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q4). Furthermore, the deepening cross-border cooperation between the Sámi parliaments, along with the Sámi council, and the support of the United Nations promotion of indigenous rights have been strengthening unity amongst the indigenous group and ensuring a unified purpose of their political agendas (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 27) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q5 & Q8). These two points demonstrate that “sovereign states [can be] caught between supranational integration /.../ and self-aware regions” (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, 26) and highlights the hypothesis in the territorial field of tension that regional interests and international agendas can cooperate to strengthen each other.

Relating back to the research question formulated in the introduction: How does political and cultural Sámi representatives perceive the national and intergovernmental promotion of indigenous rights, and does it reflect the reality of their political emancipation? It is evident that those interviewed are frustrated with how the national assemblies of the Nordic countries operate and regards Sámi interests as non-issues (Appendix II: Interviewee #1, Q2 & Q7b) (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q2 & Q7). However, on the intergovernmental stage the interviewees reflect a glimpse of hope that through the Sámi peoples continued fight to promote indigenous rights globally there will be a resurgence of criticism towards the Northern European countries’ disregard of Sámi rights (Appendix II: Interviewee #2, Q5). As has been established above this is further reflected in the academic literature that showcases the insufficient political representation on the national level, the continued disregard of Sámi issues and better chances of influence on the international scene either through supranational entities or cooperation throughout the Sápmi region. As Rauna Kuokkanen states “the legitimacy of Sámi self-determination is rooted in and derived from the international legal framework and human rights norm whereas the fundamental authority or historical foundations of Sámi self-determination - the inherent right to self-determination - are rarely discussed, if at all” (Kuokkanen 2011, 40). This imbalance between the international framework and historical foundations, that is the Nordic states national policies on Sámi

rights, is the foundation of the research question and through the analysis above it becomes apparent that this discrepancy is intentional to adhere to the hieratical structure (Lantto and Mörkenstam 2008, 41). It is crucial to highlight that the three interviewees do not reflect the views of the varied Sámi peoples' perspectives on these matters but rather provide a point of view that helped in the analysis to create the different themes and contest the academic research. The purpose of the interviews was never to provide a comprehensive overview of what the average Sámi political or cultural actor believes but was rather a tool to create a red thread and narrative that the analysis could be guided by. That being said, further research into the perspectives of the individuals involved in the contemporary situation would allow for a valuable base for other research since their perspectives on the current events would certainly provide a unique view.

As mentioned in section 5.1: Previous research and source criticism, most academic research in the field relies on examination of the consequences of larger political movements and activism rather than on the individual Sámis' influence and perspective. Alas this creates a sense of dissonance between the literature and reality as the people involved in these large political movements and acts of activism become irrelevant in the larger scheme of things. Therefore, the conservation of their perspectives becomes significant as their motivation and strife tells the story of the progress.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Email template

Hello [blank],

My name is Elmer Bogarve, I am a student at Malmö University studying my third year of the European Studies bachelor program. I am currently in the process of writing my thesis on the political representation of the Sámi people and how international initiatives have impacted the political development.

In addition, I am hoping to be able to provide insights into how various political representatives and cultural figures view the progress that has been made, as well as the ongoing struggle for the respect and autonomy of the Sápmi region.

Given your work as an [blank] in the Sámi community, I believe that your involvement would give an interesting insight into the topic and widen the dialogue and analysis that I want to focus on in my thesis. Therefore, I am asking you if you would be interested in participating in an interview?

The interview would allow you to discuss the political development and contemporary situation with consideration of how the international agendas that have criticized the Nordic countries' continued disrespect of the Sámi people have changed the political environment. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, anonymity will be respected in the final thesis product and the interviews would be used to support the exploration of the academic literature on indigenous rights. The interview is expected to take around 45-60 minutes and all the questions would be provided beforehand to allow you to prepare what aspects you would like to discuss.

I am looking forward to your response and I hope you would be willing to participate in an interview as I believe your insights would be valuable to my exploration of the topic. Please do not hesitate to get back to me if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Elmer Bogarve

Appendix II: Interview transcript

[unintelligible] = difficult to comprehend what was said

/.../ = filler words, or irrelevant remarks, that were removed for the sake of flow

... = pauses, stammers, or repetition that were removed for the sake of flow

(*italics*) = translation or additional information

Interviewee #1 (17/5 2022):

Q1: How would you describe the current political situation for the Sámi people in Finland?

A: /.../ Finland is a, even if you compare with Sweden and Finland, Finland is a little bit of an exception in many ways. /.../ They had a Sámi, it was not a Sámi parliament, but already in 72' it was some kind of a... what do you call it... It was not a permanent, but it was some kind of a testing system. So, we have an elective body already in 73' and then there was a new legislation in 96' where the Sámi parliament had a new starting ground [where] they had been put in a legal context.

So, in Finland you also have to bear in mind that in the Finnish territories [there] are much fewer Sámis in the Sápmi territory and now the Sámi territories are defined as the four northern most municipalities. Enontekiö, Utsjoki, Inari and half of Sodankylä municipalities and that is defined as the Sámi homeland but in reality, the Sámi territory has been much

wider. So, if you look at the public maps in Finland then the Sámi territory is quite small compared with the territory on the Swedish and Norwegian side.

Legally the Sámi parliament differs, as I said, if you compare with the Norwegian and Swedish one. Especially the Swedish one because the Swedish one is quite a strange creature [as] it is both [unintelligible] and that means it is under the instruction of the government and then you have an elective body, and it is some kind of a hybrid. There is a, because of this hybrid function, there is some problems about what can the Sámi parliament do. /.../ It is a, some kind of unicorn in the Swedish legislation concerning elective bodies because of that.

But so far, because if they want to make a change, and that may be a big change, if they want to accept the Sámi parliament as a part of the rule of people as mentioned in the constitution. Then they have to include the Sámi parliament in the rule of people in the constitution but that has also consequences this means that the Sámi parliament has the right to tax and so on. So, it is the same authority that usually municipalities have the termination [over].

And in Norway there is a, of course this is the Norwegian system, it is an elective body with some government functions. But the thing is the Sámi population is the largest on the Norwegian side and also the budget for the Sámi parliament is quite wide and they have also much wider responsibilities than the Sámi parliament on the Swedish and Finnish side.

The Finnish side has for a long time been the poorest one, but now [in] northern Finland the Sámi parliament has been growing quite fast and they have quite a good way to influence the government policies. And this, the government [and] also the parliament have a responsibility that they agreed on that they have to concern all matters that has to do with the Sámis. There are also consultation solutions on Swedish and Norwegian side but they are less... they do not cover all the situations.

Q: So, you would say that there has been a positive development of the political situation for the Sámi people in Finland since the 70s with this temporary parliament to what the current situation is today when they are getting more and more influence?

A: Yeah, and you can also say that this temporary parliament was some kind of the inspiration because it was an actual elective body representing the Sámi people in Finland

and then we have this establishment of the Sámi parliament in Norway in 1989 and then followed by Sweden in 93'. And then in 96' then there was the change in the Finnish constitution of the Sámi parliament [where] what is today was established.

Q2: Do you see a positive development in the political influence that the Sámi parliament has in Finland, and if so, how?

A: Because they have an influence today and also that they are... now [that] the government and the parliament have an accord, they are advised to consult in all matters that are related to the Sámi. So, this means [that] there is a dialogue and discussion, and often... of course normally the government does not, [or rather] they do not need to follow the advice by the Sámi parliament, but we have also examples where this legal system with the discussion with the parliament does not function.

We have just newly had a court case where some Sámis were fishing illegally in their homeland and then they went to the police and then they ended up in the court. Now this has been up in the supreme court, it was a judgement now in April, where the Sámis were... where [it was] accepted that the Sámis had fishing rights. /.../ So now that is the general tendency in Norway and Sweden but if the political system does not handle these issues, then the Sámi are forced to go to the judiciary. /.../ In Finland this is the first time that happened because in Norway and Sweden that has been the quite usual way. We have had tremendous many legal matters with the court, with the country or the government itself but also with other entities, with companies or whatever. /.../ In Finland it is a new situation where the judiciary corrects the governments policies about fishing rights, and they have not still... because now they have these things with NATO and Ukraine so they have not... we have not seen what the government will do. And we have the same process if you have heard about the Girjas case, it is a big case about hunting and fishing rights where the Swedish [unintelligible], it was about who is going to administrate the fishing rights belonging to a village up in Kiruna. The supreme court decided that they have the right if they are at home, over the fishing rights because they have to decide over their own property. So, it is a...

Q: So what you are saying is that the positive development that has happened in Finland has been more that there is an open dialogue now between the Finnish government and the Sámi parliament, and that the Sámi parliament is more engaging in bringing legal representation /.../ [and] are presenting more the law to the Finnish government instead and that is the positive development that has been going on?

A: It has been a political change not only [in] the legislation but also it is a question of attitude and policies. So, it has been a shift because earlier if you go back maybe 30 years or 20 years ago, Finland was vague, and Norway had already for a long time been the leading country in Sámi affairs and even had a very high profile internationally. So now Finland is quite a, yeah... there have been a quite a change in Finland over the 20 last years

Q3: Does the political structure in Finland promote issues concerning the Sámi community in a satisfactory way?

A: In one sense it does because there is another story, and that has to do with the war with the Russians, you know, during the Second World War you had the Winter War and then you have the follow up war (*aka. The Continuation War or the Second Soviet-Finnish War*). And then Finland lost quite a bit of land... when one pits someone against the icy... but also some areas on the Russian side. And then this [unintelligible] is what did... Finnish citizens they had a choice either stay in Russia or move to Finland and ah...

So, all the Sámis moved to Finland, and I have talked to one of the guys since way back [and asked] why? Because in the 1930s, end of 1930s, there was, you know, Joseph Stalin and his habit to fighting those who are opposing the system [and] they were executed or put in the Gulag and at that time there were quite many at least 120 Sámi were accused and about 112 had a bullet in their neck and the rest went to Gulag. So, many of the Sámis on the Finnish side heard these stories because that was their relatives. So, they knew they could not trust on Joseph Stalin, so they went to Finland and then they [the state] had to relocate these Sámis and then at the same time when they relocated these Sámis they created some kind of legal

framework and a special law concerning the Suenjel-Skolt Sámi, and they are also the organisation that opened some kind of a Skolt village board and a system with how to handle political matters. And they were also representing themselves through this [which was] fully accepted by the legislation or based by this legislation. So, in that sense it was maybe not so difficult when the Sámi parliament was established in 73', it was already a bit of the same model as this Skolt Sámi [unintelligible] organisation.

Q: So, do you think that Finland is driving for the same issues that the Sámi people want because there has been this cooperation for a long time, that you have been working together in that sense?

A: Yeah, there is that cooperation but at the same time, there is now... we have a big challenge because we have this green leap to climate change because now the Sámi areas [are] actually today, you know, we talk about minerals. Sweden is the green produces or minerals and especially the biggest iron mine in Sweden and the biggest copper mine is also in the Sámi area. Most of the gold is also coming from the county of Västerbotten... and they also have copper and gold. And if you go to Russia there is a huge mines on the Russian side so... And this green economy means that the Iron is maybe not a strategic thing but if you go over to copper, you need that when making batteries, and there is also other rare metals in the area. So, then you need a fucking lot of energy if you want to produce both batteries but also now if you have heard about this big issue about green steal because when they produce it they use oxygen in this new process and it is possible but then you need very much energy process iron in that sense. /.../ and you know there was an idea by the Finnish government to build a railroad through the Sámi area to a harbour in Norway [called] Krikenes. It was a big fuss, and this would be going through the Sámi area and Sámi grazing ground but now the project has stopped, so probably they are using the [unintelligible] instead so.

But it is going to be a big challenge and as you know now Finland is also if you look on tourism, they are really big on tourism mainly in both Summer and Winter tourism, so it is a big industry. In one way more advanced than similar industry... Maybe Kiruna is the only place maybe that is... Have you heard about Levi? /.../ It is a big ski resort, huge, huge resort, I do not know how many beds are in this hotel or in this area, so it is a... You can

imagine going there, during the season winter there is a direct flight from Stockholm to Kittila so it is a very trendy and expensive place.

Q: Do you think that Finland and the Sámi parliament are working together but that there are still issues for example [with] climate change /.../ [where] the dialogue is not working?

A: It is working but we have not [yet] seen the finer consequences but there is sort of an explanation looking upon mines and possibilities and we have the same in Sweden, because now there is big plans to invest enormous amounts of money but also meaning that is... You have heard about this huge battery factory in Skellefteå, it is a huge industry, and they need 3000 people, workers and so... Skellefteå is quite a big municipality but still it is quite a gigantic project in the municipality context and then if you want to build houses for 3000 people, you need a municipality that has plenty of money. Or at least it is a big investment so...

We can also see that in other places, we have in Luleå they are already building a factory where they are making part to the factory in Skellefteå, I think it is graphite [that they are producing] /.../ and they are now building a factory in Luleå and probably soon starting to exploit this mineral that is commonly essential in batteries. Now it is a really big issue, and it is almost a little bit crazy because then the problem is we need a lot of people, workers, and it is not so easy to force people who are living in Malmö or Stockholm to move up to the north. So, it is a big challenge, and we have the same problem in Finland because if you want to expand into whatever you need people and you need people who are prepared to move voluntarily. We can also see in wages. It is crazy if you look at wages in Kiruna in the mines, they are much higher because of the... they said they would pass expansion, and to attract people you need to pay a lot of money to the wages. So, it means today in the mines for instance in Kiruna, most of those who are driving huge trucks in these mines they are mainly women. And I heard once during a meeting that one reason that they are women driving these enormous cars, it is pure business because they are driving safe, and they are not using so much diesel. And this means also that the problem is to find teachers to the kindergartens and all. Instead of having a village of maybe 25 they have a village about close to 50 000 so it is a quite crazy situation.

And also, today we have other mines where there is a lot of fly out and fly in and you can see that in Finland but also in Sweden in this new mine in Pajala and actually they have some statistics because the municipality had not grown in number of the population, and this has to do with the fly out and fly in. People work 10 days and then go home, and they are probably going to keep the 10 days in Luleå especially in the mining industry. /.../ So this is a big challenge for the Sámi community about the new green economy because they are talking about green minerals and green colonialism but there are also some who feel worried that we are now out from the Corona pandemic and now worry about the green pandemic.

Q: I mean there has been a lot of protesting with new mines opening up, I have read about that, so I understand that it is an issue that a lot of people are involved with.

A: But you know it is also if you compare it with if we say Canada, of course their colonialism made them maybe one of the biggest diamond producing countries in the world and if you look at the indigenous areas, they are quite different in what the indigenous rally against. Then there are also the mines where indigenous are partners there, and partly owning the mine, and will have various agreements about how to... and they are paid for /.../ trading land to this type of activity. So, it differs in that situation. Now for the Sámis, even for an ordinary Swede, if a mine opens you have... earlier you had all of the compensation for the whole but now adays you also can have compensation for the damages around but that is not a big sum of money.

Q4: Do you view the Sápmi region as a whole to be striving for the same goals or does it differ between the Nordic countries?

A: Actually, it has been a... because now adays there has been a discussion... for a long time you have had this Nordic cooperation and now there has been a discussion and actually they have agreed on a draft at a convention and the idea was to harmonize the policies in these three countries. In a convention... Now this convention is now under this negotiation. There are

some disagreements, but it is on the way and the idea is [that] /.../ the convention is built on the minimum standards in the world related to indigenous peoples. But you know there has been a cooperation over the borders for a long time, for instance in... you have... I do not know if you have seen Sámi news, I think it is on TV1 or TV2, it is a program that is jointly produced by SVT in Sweden, Yle in Finland and NRK in Norway, and this news is sent 15 minutes every day. And they have also that in education so there are a lot of cooperation over the borders and that has been for a long time. And this convention is more... But the problematic things are when it comes to resources and all that. Then it is more vague and during the negotiations this matter was the most problematic one about the rights, and there is a lot of differences between the countries.

Q5: Do you believe that the promotion of indigenous and minority rights that intergovernmental organizations, such as the EU and UN, have helped combat the discrimination and prejudice that exists against Sámi people?

A: Yea for us it has been important, and you can also see that for... because when we are following what is happening in Europe for instance. You can look at Scotland, you can look on the Basque area, or in Corsica, and even in Spain it is a very hot issue about the regional developments, and you remember Catalonia when they wanted to make it their own place. And even today with this... and even there is some discussion now in the Welsh in Great Britain about that the Welsh people could have a bigger independence. And you have this motion in Scotland, which is going to be raised again, we have that action soon. And with the... when the British with England left the European Union the Scottish parliament was in favor, they wanted to stay. So overall... But then we have also tragic [unintelligible] about minorities as... In these old eastern countries, the situation for Roma people, going to Hungary, that is quite an issue. /.../

It has been a use for us, you can see very clearly that that type of influence, you can very clearly see that from Sweden and also some in Finland and Norway, so can also see that in... we have had some matters that has gone up to these different types of /.../ conventions

against racism and convention of discrimination, you have the convention of political rights, so there has been several claims from the Sámi side and our hope with this was [that] when the commission saw that those legal bodies have decided that there has been... that Sweden have had plenty of criticism and also Finland about... So in that sense you can see the countries they are sometimes voluntarily doing the things, sometimes they have to do because of these complaints and this use of these types of UN bodies that are yeah... /.../ So, this means also in one way that, as I said, policies generally the countries can then accept and include that in the system. There is also example where the country are more or less forced by the international [unintelligible] to change their policies.

Q: Okay, so it is more as in a /.../ mediator, as in you are observing what is happening and then criticizing issues, you think that is the role that the EU has taken?

A: Yeah. And then there are of course... we had a... now there is a... we have not had the indigenous convention yet but there is an indigenous declaration from 2007 and when it was adopted there was only four countries against it. That means also that it was such a type of legislation, or convention, or declaration that was adopted [and] if there is a big opposition against then it is weaker. When you have quite a great majority, where everybody almost are in favor, then the status of the document, or the declaration, is bigger. In the biggening the four who did not join, it was the US, Canada, New Zealand /.../, but now, you know, when they changed government, now they have joined the declaration. So now there is nobody opposing the declaration but, for instance, during the process some countries did not vote. They were, what do you call it in English, they did not vote in favor, they abstained. One of the countries who abstained was Russia plus, I am not sure, maybe China. Yeah no, it was China because China claims they have no indigenous peoples but there was some of the more [unintelligible] countries. /.../

Q6: Do you believe that the political influence that the Sámi people have in Finland has improved because of the criticism that the country received from human rights organizations and intergovernmental organizations? /.../

A: Mainly, I think, in Finland they have followed the tracks of Sweden and Norway. /.../ There has been criticism but if you compare with Norway and Sweden they have had much more [and] Finland have been a little bit smarter. /.../ There is a Finnish pragmatism, you know, they have learned the hard way, you know, their relation to Russia. So, they have always been pragmatic and even in the way back in the UN system instead of saying... walking with high boots they have been much more clear forward to expose their... So, in that sense there is a... So, Finns are, they have even been pragmatic in these matters, so it is [unintelligible].

Q: So, it is a different story if I would have asked the question about Sweden and Norway, you would say it has been more active like the influence?

A: The confrontation level has been much higher in Sweden and Norway. /.../ Lately even the conflict has been higher in /.../ Finland also but usually, if you go back, the big fights usually was in /.../ Sweden and Norway, and less in Finland. But now the temperature has also risen in Finland, but I think also that because of [the fact that] the Finnish parliament have been much tougher now, this has also had an affect on the government and their policies, and they have /.../ succeeded to convince the Finnish government to make changes. But I think if you go back, there is also another reality because if you look on the countries, you know, Finland after the second world war was quite a poor country. You know the war efforts and all that and you can also see now there has been quite a dramatic economic development in these countries, so now Finland /.../ are not anymore, the poor country that they once was. So now there is much more financial resources and that also means that the Sámis and Sámi parliament has gained on that. And also now with the European Union, the Finns have been quite scared to use the /.../ European money. For instance, when the Sámi parliament building was being built in Inari this was maybe /.../ 7-8 years ago and even if it

was not possible, at least this is what was said on the Swedish side, you could not use [the] money for that type of projects but it was totally okay in Finland. And this was also [unintelligible] with the /.../ famous museum in Inari, it was also partly financed, 50%, from the European money. /.../ But this was some years back when they had big programs for... This is also part of the Finnish pragmatism they are not so... because in Sweden its more... there have been more that we want to fill all roles, we want to be the best one in the class, and sometimes there are more... even having more strict regulations then the European Union have itself but the [unintelligible] have been quite pragmatic in that sense and by some odd reason the commission have not complained.

Q: I guess it has to do with the attitude that the different countries can take towards their indigenous population, right? /.../ If in Finland it has been a more of a dynamic cooperation and in Sweden it has been more /.../ Sámi people fighting for their rights through these criticisms, right? I would imagine that maybe the attitude from the EU would be a bit different as well in that. It is very interesting to hear about, because these are things that I have kind of gained, /.../ like I understand that this has kind of been going on, that there is a different situation in Finland, but to hear it from you, that actually knows the situation [firsthand], it is great.

A: Yeah, because there are similarities, but during my lifetime /.../ if you look on the countries the biggest change has been in Finland, but that is maybe not with Sámi affairs, but it has been a tremendous economic development during my lifetime since the 70s. Because you can imagine in the 70s, you know, over 500 000 Finns immigrated to Sweden for employment /.../ Now the Finns have the same problem as the Swedes they need to have more skills [then the] work force from eastern Europe because they have [unintelligible].

Q7: What role do you think that the Sámi parliament in Finland has had in the political development within the nation?

A: Yeah, they have been because the cooperation between the Sámi parliaments, /.../ they have tried to work /.../ as one united group, so there have been some kind of share[ing]. /.../ Earlier if you go back, it has been mainly Sweden and Norway because this has also to do with the parliament and the structures of the people with necessary skills. But now there is actually, today you can say it is [unintelligible], but that has maybe more to do with that you have a person in the political leadership that are interesting and that has skills in that, so it is a... but it has been a cooperation. Then we have had earlier, before the Sámi parliaments, and even today the Sámi Council have been a disarranged group. /.../ Earlier they were more active in the United Nations but now they are more focused on the arctic cooperation and the European Union. Because now in /.../ July they are going to be a /.../ Sámi week in Brussels. So that is also one of the aims to get... Because the problem is to find... It is possible to open an office in Brussels, but the plan had to be to somewhere get included in the European system. So, you can sneak into the institution and the easiest intuition to be brought in is the European parliament because there is usually, you know, interparliamentary groups /.../. Earlier before Sweden was a member there was a commission from the parliament that had a joint Swedish European [cooperation] /.../ and that has been a discussion, perhaps such a [entity could exist for the Sámi community]... this means also then you can sneak in, then you are part of the European Union system. Because the parliament is easier, to get inside the commission that may be more difficult, then you have to be... have some kind of a... But we have Denmark as an example. You know Greenland they are not members of the European Union /.../ but they are often in the Danish delegation in Brussels. There is also a representative from Greenland's self-government, so they are in the system in that sense through the country. But we have not that tradition in Sweden and Finland.

Q7a: Has the Sámi parliament had influence on all matters that concerns the national Sámi community? I know you touched upon that before but if you wanted to add something extra to it.

A: The problem there, of course they have been involved, but you can not say that been influencing so much but over the years it has been better and better. But one thing has been the health issue. Earlier there was [unintelligible] we had some, you know, the UN and the

World Health Organization, they used to check the... they have interpreters who checked each country and in what way they are following their recommendations and the health situation of the Sámi people. /.../ Maybe 20 years ago there was an interpreter who came to Sweden, and Sweden was criticized quite heavily because they had no statistics data and then they compared that with Norway and at least they found some. Now there have been a change with the, you know, we have the landsting in Sweden who are in charge of the health issues and now there is a better coordination, there are projects. There are also now cross-border project in health, because we have certain specialists that does not exist on the Swedish side and then you get one from Norway and so on. So, it has been... Health has been a problematic one but now it has been improved in all these three countries, even in Sweden. But in one way that is not a formal responsibility of the government it is a... But that is an [area] that has improved a lot and that there is also cooperation, of course, in schools. But schools are a little bit problematic because they are based on the national [curriculum]. /.../ Even if there are some cooperation in the teacher's education, we have a /.../ university collage in Kautokeino on the Norwegian side and there we have quite many Sámis from the Swedish side and the Finnish side who are getting education as teachers or other types of jobs.

Q: So, you think that the Sámi parliaments has been more /.../ working for these goals that have been good for the Sámi community rather than maybe looking at national efforts completely? Of course, sometimes they overlap but it is more always the focus on the Sámi community rather than maybe the region?

A: /.../ The problem has been [that] we were overlooked in the system, we did not exist, so there has been a... [unintelligible] came in and they were talking about hell. Because there was no knowledge, even if they had made some research and you could not use the Sámi language. So it has been a lot of that but it has improved slowly and we have the same in all these three countries, Finland, Sweden and Norway, and...

Q7b: Has the Finnish government respected and considered the concerns raised by the Sámi parliament fully before committing to a decision? As I mean, does the Finnish government work in a proactive way with the Sámi parliament, like to take their concerns into consideration?

A: Yeah, the government of course but then, you know, all the parties does not agree because one of the biggest parties in Finland is the center party and /.../ most of the parliamentarians are from the north /.../ and they are more old style, and they are opposing many of these improvements of the Sámi situation, especially when it comes to language, landlines and all of that. /.../ Now they are working with the revision of the Sámi parliament bill, and they are still working with that /.../ because now the center party they are in opposition. And if they [the government] want to have this bill accepted they have to have a majority in the parliament and they have to in some other way also try to convince this party. And that is the general problem in Sweden and Finland because in the county of Norrbotten we have no problems with parliamentarians from Blekinge or Göteborg but our parliamentarians from the north are more tricky and usually they have quite a big influence in the... governmental structure and we have the same in Finland. And that has been the classical problem when we have these big fights on the Norwegian side. You know, in most areas labour party was the main pulse and even labour in Oslo had big problems with these guys in the north. I think also the center party in Helsinki they had problems with their member up in the north.

We have the same in Sweden because a good example of this /.../ [are] the Christian democrats and this was during the old leadership and at that time they were quite good, and they were supporting many of the Sámi and they were interested in Sámi affairs. But then the Christian democrats grow, and they had member from the north. They expanded their mandates and there were parliamentarians from the county of Västerbotten and Norrbotten [and] then they change totally. So now the Christian democrats are quite a tricky party concerning Sámi affairs in Sweden... So it is a problem and we have still when we have this, we have now a new commission that is working with to revise the Sámi herding reindeer act /.../ and now there is quite a hot issue concerning hunting rights, and now there is all these parliamentarians from the north they are now really... One reason is of course the matter itself but then you have elections this autumn and so to do anything in favor of Sámis /.../

you [would] loose votes, that is the reality. And we can see that also in Finland you have to be, especially before the elections, if you want to make some kind of an adjustment in policies and all that. It is not a winning game so to speak, even if it has changed a lot so... But in the early days it was very clear and today /.../, at least in Sweden, the municipality of Kiruna and many of these northern municipalities /.../ if you want to at least have some odds then you have to be more outspoken and taking some business against Sámis and about hunting, fishing, and all of that. So, especially in Kiruna, Kiruna is quite a big municipality and a quite important one. So, there is still underlying values and when the conflict arise you can see very clearly /.../ that they have some kind of a racial connotation. Also, we have this awful case in Girjas, they did not kill any Sámi, but /.../ some reindeers were killed by... And also, out in the bush you have snowmobiles that they killed reindeer with. Yeah, so there is tensions. /.../

Q: You think that the government structure is promoting a conversation with an consideration for the Sámi parliament but it has more to do with the politicians that are unwilling to do this for whatever reason, either if it is there ideology or if it is that they are scared to loose peoples votes, [and] that the reason why concerns for the Sápmi region and Sámi population is overlooked is more for it being a bad political move?

A: At least locally, even if it has changed... You know [in] my home municipality when I was young, I began quite early in politics and in our region, in our municipality, it was no problem to be a visible Sámi. But then I was in a meeting in Kiruna /.../ and then we went to a dance hall, a restaurant, and you know I had been in Kiruna with traditional clothes but when I came in this was almost like the provocation when you appeared in the traditional and you can imagine if you have a [unintelligible] luhkka, beaska and all of that. So, after a while I had some Swedish friends also say that /.../ for your own sake and we can not guarantee to we can protect you if it is 11 o'clock 12. So, I had to go to the car and change clothes and after that I had no problem. But that was Kiruna and then when I was in politics maybe 15 years ago, I ended up very late some kind of a restaurant along with other people and I came with traditional cloths and then there was a big guy that came to me and said to me "if you have any problems I am there". And after all I had no problem but, you know, it has changed

here and among the young ones and then during the evening the man came and passed by and whispered, “no problems?” and I said, “no no, no problems”. So, there is a change in attitude because earlier up in Kiruna it was really a tough situation in the 60s, 70s.

But there is still /.../ some conflicts that sometimes occur, depending on if there is some matters that... now there is a big issue about the rights to drive snowmobiles and, you know, now they have some restrictions in the spring related to the nature because now there is a lot of reindeers out there, they are [unintelligible] and there are also a lot of other things that is going on in nature and they are a little bit [unintelligible] over the restrictions. Due to the law, it is possible to restrict the use of snowmobile in some areas but all over. And then this is a big issue, a conflict that is [unintelligible], but the freedom to move everywhere. But you can see that if you compare with Canada, you can see cities that have grown up in an indigenous area with a large population that has the same problems. And you can see Kiruna is high up and it was established 100 years ago, if you look on the other villages, they are a little bit older. /.../ Kiruna is actually high up in the mountains so if you want to go on a snowmobile, you do not need to drive from the coast up to the mountains, you are actually in the middle of the mountains. /.../

Q: Well, I think that answered that question very well. It is interesting to hear about the development, how you went from being asked to change clothing to someone telling you they would, you know, help you if something were to happen. But I understand that obviously /.../ there is still constant discrimination and racism faced towards to you as well, so I understand that it is a difficult situation, but it is nice to hear that it is developing in the right direction at least.

A: /.../ During my lifetime there has been a big change but still there are still [unintelligible] of problems. /.../ You have a lot of similarities with the countries such as Canada, and maybe New Zealand, maybe not Australia... is maybe a different thing but there is similarities. And we can also see now, earlier you know... maybe we are not so discriminated [against] in Sweden but we have in some areas of Finland (*probably meant to say Norway*). For instance, in Tromsø, it is a big city, and that is very close to the Sámi area, and there are a lot of Sámis in the area, and there is actually a lot of public, you can say racism. If you go with traditional

cloths, you can be approach especially in the evenings and during the weekend. /.../ And in Tromsø, their Sámis are quite visible if you compare with... I think there /.../ been okay in Jokkmokk [and] small places where Sámis are visible. In most other places in Sweden, in Kiruna, where they are a small part of the population. /.../

Q8: What role do you think culture has played in promoting Sámi life and rights?

A: Yeah, if you look on legal you know... There has been some matters in the [unintelligible] system about that the... legal matter about what is the foundation of a peoples country. For maybe indigenous [peoples] it is the land, it is the resources in the land. If you destroy it [then] you destroy the people itself but if you upset their economic /.../ resources or so and so, then it can be critical [as well]. /.../ We so often end up in the court, the UN system... There is article 27 it the convention of political rights from 66' /.../ [that states that] if you undermine the economic convention of the people concerned that is actually a violation against the UN. /.../ If you undermine or destroy their livelihood, [or] the resource base, then... And this matter has been raised several times against Finland [but] mainly against Norway. /.../ One case was up in the supreme court last year and that was about /.../ [a] windmill power plant that was built by a company where even the government was one of the main shareholders. And then it went up to the supreme court and the supreme court found that this and this project was illegal, it was not legal, because they had not followed either the Norwegian law or the convention and article 27. And we do not know because the windmills /.../ there was already, I think it was, 30 or 40 that was already built. So, it is the question what are we going to do with them? Should we... If they are there on an illegal base, because if you [follow] that interpretation they have to be taken away. And this is not still clear and the new government in Norway, because this was done under the former government, they had the election last autumn and now there is a new government who has entered so it is a... So that has been used many times about indigenous rights... If you destroy their economic or livelihood base then it is a threat against the survival of the people and that in line with article 27.

Q: Do you have any questions for me or anything you want to bring up before we wrap up here?

A: I have talked too much or enough.

Q: No, no it has been fantastic! It has been really interesting hearing what you had to say and I am very happy that we were able to figure out a time that actually worked for the both of us because reading about you /.../, it seemed like you were working exactly with the same questions that is what I am writing about since you are working with international relations which is kind of the focus of it. So, I am very happy that I got to interview you and get your perspective.

A: /.../ We have also this European court of the European council and they have this convention, so they have also been a part [that has been] especially important in matters related to language. Because they have this reporting system about lesser used languages and the legislation related to that so in that sense...

Q: Yeah, I mean I know that the council of Europe is the one that established /.../ the institution against discrimination... and something else... it is basically the EUs, or the councils, its tool to give criticism to a country for not respecting a minority. And I know that the council has taken /.../ a big part in promoting indigenous rights, more so maybe then the EU in itself since the council keep creating these institutions that keep promoting [rights] and fighting against prejudice.

A: Yeah, that is true.

Q: But yeah, I think that is all that I had to ask and again thank you very much for the interview.

Interviewee #2 (13/6 2022):

Q1: How would you describe the current political situation for the Sámi people in Sweden?

A: It can be described in a certain way, like, smash and grab. /.../ The dominating political system of Sweden, the Swedish government and Swedish parliament, with no Sámi representation and no concern of the Sámi legal rights according to international law. [This] shows us that there is still... and in more than 100 years of democracy, Swedish parliamentarism still has this /.../ political system [that] is smashing the indigenous cultures and livelihoods, and [there is still] land grabbing [of] the natural resources and traditional territories. And the decision of Gállok mining permits are one of those cases.

Q: I saw that was even a lot of political activists not only Sámi people but a lot of environmental activists that have been around the Gállok mine. So, I understand that it is an ongoing /.../ struggle to keep the Sápmi region closer to nature and not to put too many mines and to steal too many of the resources.

A: This is close to one of the few world and culture heritage and the only [one] in Sweden. So, the Sámi region is in many parts quite much affected by the green colonialism and it still continues [to today] and the Swedish government are informed that it could affect the world and culture heritage but they do not care about since it is... They say: “we will give some reimbursement to the Sámi villages” and then the world and culture heritage does not belong to the Sámi villages instead it is [a heritage of] mankind. So, positive enrichment and diversity for mankind, so [it is for] all of us and all of the Sámi people who own a part of this, and we should all be compensated if it is destroyed. But then of course compensation is not a system that I am in favor for.

Q2: /.../ Do you see a positive development in the political influence that the Sámi parliament has in Sweden, and if so, how?

A: No, I do not see that because we just recently got a decision from the Swedish government about mining permits for Gállok outside the /.../ borders of the world and culture heritage. And the nomadic reindeer husbandry, we have moving reindeers, [and] herds of reindeers are impacted severely by this kind of green colonialism. And of course, when they/if they have problems of surviving outside the world and culture heritage it will affect the content of the reindeer husbandry also inside the world and culture heritage. So, I do not see any positive development. That the Sámi parliament do have to argue with the Swedish government, we deliver everything possible, but it is [still] rejected.

Q3: I think you have already answered this question, but I think I will ask anyways. Does the political structure in Sweden promote issues concerning the Sámi community in a satisfactory way?

A: No.

Q3a: /.../ What changes would you like to see to achieve more adequate space for these issues?

A: In some way we have already seen the beginning of change [that] is coming but it is not [in the] political system it is the system with supreme courts. And it has... it is not one year; it is 10 years or maybe older. Already in 1991, the supreme court decided that the reindeer husbandry rights are certain rights to property rights. And we do not have any written permits for individuals to have this as property rights but own it together in community. And now we have Norrlands domen (*translation: Norrland's court*) and we also have this [unintelligible] supreme court and it is improving, and development and it is not [unintelligible] and standing still, the international law, it is developing, and the members of the supreme court do see this and do watch it and they do use it in the verdicts. It is very rewarding.

Q: So, you think that the way forwards is to have the supreme court promoting Sámi rights in a more direct way?

A: In other words, the way forward is more court trials. /.../ And we have already seen that Talma Sámi village, or Sámi community, has sued the Swedish state in court and requesting the same decision that happened in the Girjas court case and now [unintelligible] Sámi village, Sámi community, has plans, they made it public, that they also will sue the Swedish state. So, we see a pattern coming up and /.../ it is not only single Sámi communities, it is more and more the desire to sue the Swedish state in order to prevent the current political development.

Q4: Do you view the Sápmi region as a whole to be striving for the same goals or does it differ between the Nordic countries?

A: Well, we have been facing, without choosing ourselves, but we have been facing that the verdicts from the supreme courts in the Nordic countries have decided in Sámi court cases and giving the verdicts to support the Sámi culture and livelihoods and rights to use land and water not for extraction of natural resources but for gaining rights to food production and food sovereignty. So, this is very rewarding and then the Fosen court case on the Norwegian side and we have this Utsjoki court case in Finland. /.../ It happened, what we never could believe would happened since we have had so many court cases earlier and many of them were lost but now, as I told you earlier, the development of international law, and I also believe that the Sámi parliament has been engaged in attaching the international law development through many years. So, this is rewarding and gives hope for a future with indigenous culture also in the public /.../ [in] the Nordic states and Russian federation.

Q5: Do you believe that the promotion of indigenous and minority rights that intergovernmental organizations, such as the EU and UN, have helped combat the discrimination and prejudice that exists against Sámi people?

A: Yes, I do believe so but I believe it is only the United Nations system. /.../ The influence of the member states are [a] priority for the European Union and we get this [in] clear wordings from officials in the European Union that, of course 500 million Europeans cannot do what the indigenous peoples of the Arctic want to. They are so many, and they have so much, and so big needs, so it has to go in advance, and it is their priority. And Harvard professor Nissen, he stated in public service news, some time ago, that the Sámi people or the Sámi representatives have been fundamental when it comes to development of international law in the UN system since the Sámi people have experience and the willingness to use accurate description and also cooperation with other indigenous peoples. So, he said that the value of indigenous peoples, of the Sámi indigenous peoples, taking part of this... Unfortunately, we are not so skilled when it comes to /.../ domestic cases but being successful in the international arena for so many years and for [such] a long time, it is a... if you could have chosen something we would probably not have chosen international success but when it came to us and seeing it in the rearview mirror we experienced that as a good possibility and a good ending.

Q6: /.../ Do you believe that the political influence that the Sámi people have in Sweden has improved because of the criticism that the country received from human rights organizations and intergovernmental organizations?

A: /.../ International criticism is a soft spot for Sweden, but Sweden has been very slow in implementing human rights instruments affecting indigenous people, the Sámi people in Sweden and the Sámi individuals. So, the criticism has affected the Swedish government if it is brought forward on the international arena, so in that case I believe [the answer to be] yes.

Q7: What role do you think that the Sámi parliament in Sweden has had in the political development within the nation?

A: /.../ We have had some consultation possibilities, but we receive the same, almost the same replies every time we have this kind of consultation. That the Swedish government has to look /.../ what interests are the best for the country and then put down their foot and make a decision and of course the Swedish government are elected by the Swedish citizens, so they are not so eager to protect the rights of the Sámi peoples. But we have had a role and we have made some very good decisions and maybe it is political statements that we have decided about. In some cases, there was a decision that we would reject the governments proposal and that made them very surprised and also very angry because they did not expect us to be united in our decisions and to reject a government proposal. And the recent, most recent, governmental proposals that were rejected is the Nordic Sámi convention, obviously it will not be any decision in summer. Before the summer vacation or maybe not even before the election to the Swedish parliament in September.

Q7a: /.../ Has the Sámi parliament had influence on all matters that concerns the national Sámi community?

A: Yes, we have had some influence, but it is not so much in the fields, in the forests, in the tundra, in the traditional waters but they have had some influence and we also are looked upon as a stronger /.../ representative for the Sámi people. We are one of the few... Sámi parliament is one of the few opportunities for many of the indigenous peoples in community. To be part of this in community, we can submit our names to the local list of Sámi parliament, and we can go to election, every fourth year, [for] the Sámi parliament. But we do not have the same rights or possibilities when it comes to membership in the Sámi villages. Law makers in the Swedish parliament has decided that not all the Sámi individuals are allowed to be members of a Sámi village. Even those who are allowed to be members of a Sámi village are, according to the law, /.../ they do not have the same rights to make or take decision at the annual meeting of the Sámi village, Sámi community. Since we have two

categories of members. We have the reindeer herding members and we then have [normal] members. And reindeer herding members votes in all issues. And most often it is men who is a reindeer herding members. So, we have now, according to numbers available on public service, we have 51 Sámi villages, Sámi communities, in Sweden and 80% of the members of the board are men. /.../ And [within the] 51 Sámi communities [there are only] five with female chairpersons. So, this is a major victory for the Swedish government because they know, and they are aware about, if you want to destroy the indigenous community /.../ you should discriminate indigenous women. So, this has been going on for 41 years, since 1971, and even if they changed the law today, these 41 years are still in our heads and affecting us and are affecting our ways of thinking and behaving. But I also have to say that some Sámi villages, or Sámi communities, does not follow the law since every member on the /.../ annual meeting are satisfied with that solution. So, there is not any ideas /.../ to hire authority to change the verdict, change the decision of the yearly meeting. But I am talking more about how the law is constructed because it shows very clearly the view of the Swedish parliament, and also the Swedish government, upon equality within the Sámi society.

Q: It is very interesting; I did not know about /.../ how in these annual meetings the balance between how men and women are represented. /.../ Do you think that there is a possibility for a positive development within these meetings, as in /.../ a more equal political representation?

A: /.../ Since the court case of Girjas was settled by the verdict of the supreme court the government realised that this reindeer husbandry act from 1971 needs to be changed. They would not have a change with it otherwise, they were perfectly satisfied with unequal possibilities for members of the Sámi community and discrimination of Sámi women. They were very satisfied with that. That the supreme court made a decision that affects the value and importance of the law. So, now there is an overlook taking place over the reindeer husbandry act, no one knows the outcome but of course any other solution then the member of these Sámi communities, Sámi by systemet (*translation: The Sámi village system*), that then /.../ not will be the equal rights for men and women to take decision at the Sámi village yearly meeting. And also, to have the same strength in their votes. Today we, according to the

law /.../ as [an] owner, [if] you own 101 reindeers and it shows /.../ in the documents of the Sámi community, then you have two extra votes. So, you are not only allowed to vote because you are a male [but] you are also allowed to vote /.../ with your property, your fortune, and you do not vote according to how big your part is of the community. /.../ This is the law and the Swedish parliament who has decided about that. In 1981 the supreme court decided that the reindeer husbandry property rights are owned by the Sámi people. So, there is what we have in [unintelligible] together. And that... Everyone of us have a certain percentage of this and no one has anything more then others and no one has anything less then others. So, we should be voting in accordance with our percentage of this property rights and instead of counting the reindeers and using them as a tool of getting extra votes at the yearly meeting.

Q7b: /.../ Has the Swedish government respected and considered the concerns raised by the Sámi parliament fully before committing to a decision?

A: We just had a new law established, the law of consultation, and just before it was implemented or decide about the Swedish government took a decision about Gállok. So, it would have a better way for cooperation for the government to use this new law and try to test this political system with consultation before the Gállok mining activities were decided.

Q8: /.../ What role do you think culture has played in promoting Sámi life and rights?

A: I do think it is essential because if you do not have the indigenous culture and values, we would not have a Sámi life and it is so easy to be domesticated and voluntarily assimilated. Because we see with our Swedish neighbors, how much money they make, and the Sámi people does not want to be differing in that sense and having less of income and less possibilities to have a decent home and also a good car and snowmobile etcetera. What keeps us back as indigenous peoples is our culture and life views.

Q: Okay, that is all the questions I had for you today, is there anything you would like to add? Any other comments that you think is important for me to talk about in my essay? /.../

A: We share this hate with indigenous peoples in circle polar arctic and we can see in Canada, who has of course [a] much worse situation for indigenous peoples, but when it comes to extraction of natural resources, we can see the creation of desert looking areas like tar sands extraction in Alberta. And when it comes to [the] Russian Federation, we can see the extraction of cheap gas for the needs of Europe in Yamal and this /.../ scientific investigation of Professor Bruce Forbes from [unintelligible], he stated that gas extraction in Yamal would be the final countdown for reindeer and Russian tundra because it is so big, and it is giving no space for the indigenous culture to survive. So, we share this and the Sámi situation in the arctic countries, circle polar scene, and /.../ if we look above the Lule river, and in this area the Gállok mining are located, the longest dry riverbed in Europe it is in the Lule river 17 kilometers and I believe it was 14 water plants and 14 dams and it is still not enough. /.../ We can see that 1919 the Swedish parliament canceled the natural protection of Stora Sjöfallet national park. It was a national park in 1909 and 10 years later the Swedish parliament decided that it would not be protected. The most precious and most valuable parts of the national park were not protected. So, we have this experience from the Swedish parliamentarism, or European parliamentarism. But still I also have to say it is a lot of complaining from my side, but we have never had better opportunities than we have now to defend our culture, livelihood, language, and history.

Q: I am very happy to hear that there is at least a positive development in that sense but of course there is more to be done. /.../ Talking about the indigenous rights of the indigenous people in Canada, do you feel like there is a strong correlation between the different indigenous communities and does /.../ the UN help different indigenous communities to cooperate for better rights?

A: I believe that is the case, and we also apply for funding from national sources and in many cases, we receive that so we can take part in United Nations permanent forum or the expert

committees or other valuable forum for indigenous peoples in the UN system. And we also get used to this special behaviour and language or the rules of these UN agencies and can use them in defending our culture rights. So now we have article 27 of the civil and political rights convention that /.../ [makes it so that] national minorities can request to have /.../ access to [a] community with other indigenous [peoples], or national minority members, in the state. And it has been used in at least two of the supreme court cases in Norwegian side and Swedish side. And this is already a law [in] the two conventions from 1966 and they can be used today and tomorrow, and they have been used. We do not need a special implementation of the United Nations declarations of the rights of the indigenous peoples or an implementation of the [unintelligible]. Even though that would be very beneficiary and also a sign showing other indigenous peoples in [for example] South America that the Nordic states and Russian Federation takes responsibility.

Q: /.../ Thank you very much for the interview I really appreciate you taking the time and hearing your perspective. Especially since you are an active politician still to this day, it is interesting to hear what you think about the development that has been going on since the establishment of the Sámi parliament.

Interviewee #3 (27/6 2022):

Q1: How would you describe the current political situation for the Sámi people in Sweden?

A: /.../ Of course, we do have a lot of things happening around us, so we have to fight against the big companies, those who are searching for more minerals. And then we also do have a lot of other things happening here because there are also this [struggle] with the climate change. /.../ A lot of my images take all this stuff, cause /.../ I am thinking of all these things and then I am working with my images just to put in these things who are happening. And then we also have this big... they are building up vindparker (*translation: windmill power plants*) /.../ so we have to fight a lot against everything today. So, it is not so easy to belong to the Sámi people and instantly working with reindeer herding, because my family do work

with reindeer herding and we are /.../ väldigt beroende (*translation: very dependent*) /.../
[on] this with water and wind and...

Q: /.../ I know that through a lot of your art you are showing a lot of nature, right? A lot of reindeers and a lot of beautiful forestry, so I understand that...

A: Of course, I was born in one reindeer herding family and my husband and my son is also working with reindeer herding. So, in that case I... it is really important for me to take up such stuff in my, in my art. /.../

Q2: Do you see a positive development in the political influence that the Sámi parliament has in Sweden, and if so, how?

A: /.../ They are also struggling about different things inside the Sámi parliament, but I think that we do have other organizations also and private persons are also a thing so /.../ we have to see positive things. And it is very natural for human beings to see things in natural way and positive ways. If you lose this positive thinking then I think that we will go under as an ethnic group, I think. /.../ It is not so easy to work with political things today, you know that, because the Swedish government if you see what is happening with the mining /.../ they are planning to start this mining in Gállok outside Jokkmokk. And we know how this will end. So, in that case it is very... I am often asking: why are they selling our land to foreign companies? We did not get anything. People think that they got jobs and that we get taxes to our municipalities. That is not true because those who are working at those companies they do come from the other side of the world, so they are flying in and flying out. And there is not so many people in our area who gets [the] jobs.

Q: Yeah, it is a British company, right? That is opening the mine?

A: Yeah, I think it is British company and then also /.../ fifty kilometer /.../ fågelvägen (*Swedish idiom translated as: as the crow flies*) they are starting to dig grafit (*translation: graphite*) for what we need in our green /.../ electric cars. So I ask often, is it so green to buy electric cars? And it is not. And what shall we do after that? So, this mining outside here, they say that it is only for ten to twelve years and after that what is left behind then? A lot of pollution and water who is flowing in polluted /.../ So, there is a lot of questions I am taking in [to] my art. So, I think it is very important to work with these narrative images [and that is] what I am doing, so just to tell people around that /.../ in the past we did have it like this. /.../ For me it was it was very important when I started to work with my images, to tell people about the Sámi life and culture. So, I worked with daily life happenings and then I also started to switch over to the Sámi mythology, because there is a lot of things that I can learn (*probably meant to say teach*) to those who are a good audience when looking for my art and that Sámi mythology it is a lot of klokskap (*translation: wisdom*). /.../

So, for me it is very important to work with these images because I grew up in my family where telling stories was so central. So, in that case I got all this with Sámi mythology, I have not read it /.../ because I have got it from my elders. And nowadays it is very important for me to work with political images. There I also take this with what mining companies are doing and also this with what is happening with our environment now because we /.../ never have had thirty degrees here in this area before. And also, that the leaves was not coming up before midsummer. So, everything has changed now. So, it is still a bit scary.

Q: So, you think [of it as] that you have three phases, like three different parts to your art? First there was capturing Sámi life, and then it was Sámi mythology and now it is more political, about the Sápmi region?

A: I really did start with this political images from the early beginning because in Sámi mythology you put in different birds and animals in a political context. And in that case, I made this with crows because /.../ I heard this story when I was child that my mother always told about crows they are like authority. If you throw out some food, you can be sure that it is very clean where the crows has been. And in that case, I also saw [this] when I was

demonstrating up in the Alta in 81'. That the Norwegian police when they came up to Alta, there were 600 policemen [and] after a while, the camp was just cleaned. /.../

Q3: Does the political structure in Sweden promote issues concerning the Sámi community in a satisfactory way? /.../

A: I could say that not so much as in Norway because in Norway /.../ they are just many, many steps before us in Sweden, and also [the] Swedish government. But I can mention that it is a little bit better now. /.../ It is going with small steps forward but of course we do have a lot /.../ job to do to face all this stuff for the government and Swedish people. But it is much better now than it was for ten years ago. /.../ I think that the we artists it is very important [for us]. I think that we are very important in /.../ att kunna liksom lägga fram det här för människor (*translation: being able to present this for people*). /.../ I think that when you are working with art you can face this in another way. This is a visual communication and I think that people can take it [in] more in their own ways. Because I mean that when I made this 24 meter embroidery, [titled] a Norway Historjá, there was one Norwegian politician who said: "Just now I really know what this is about, this with Sámi culture, because I have read this Historjá for a bit." So, I was so glad when I heard that because that is why I am working with my art, because I really want to face this for people. not only for Sámi people but other people also. /.../ When I exhibited at the Documenta, there was an international audience who saw my art. And in that case, I also got a name in Sweden. Is it not a pity /.../ [that] we Sámi artists have to go international to get place in our own community?

Q: When was this then?

A: It was in May 2017. Yeah, it was /.../ Documenta 14 and now they open Documenta 15. And also /.../ in Venecia, there is some Sámi artists showing now [at] Sámipaviljongen. They do not have my art at the main exhibition. /.../

Q3a: What changes would you like to see to achieve more adequate space for these issues?

A: I really want to see that people take our questions seriously. We have been living here for thousands of years and people have been suffering a lot. You know that in the forties when the government, Swedish and Norwegian government, forced Sámi people from north part of Sweden to [relocate]. And that is a big trauma because [even though] it is more than seventy years ago but it is still a big trauma for those who were forced to [the] south.

Q: My entire, lets say, reason for writing about this is that I have realized how little I knew about Sámi culture and the political development and what your people have gone through. So, when I started reading about it and hearing about how the church /.../ forced children to only speak Swedish and split up families...

A: The church is really a big part of this. /.../

Q: It is very heartbreaking to read about cause /.../ it seems so disrespectful towards the indigenous people living on the land, to not respect their rights.

A: And now the church has asked to forgiveness. /.../ They are still saying “you cannot come into the church and jojk”. /.../ Two weeks ago, there was one... because they are going to have a big church, Gudstjänst (*translation: church service*) /.../ and they said: “No, we do not want to have any jojk in that”. What is that? They have not taken our culture seriously. It is just /.../ [a] beautiful facade out, but it is so crazy. /.../ They sent me invitation to come to Luleå domkyrka (*translation: Luleå cathedral*) in two weeks [and] I am not going there. /.../

Q: It is not a question that I have written down, but it is interesting, like, /.../ do you want the forgiveness from the church, just like you as an individual?

A: No, what is that? Because I wrote to this artist that we have our own churches, our own sacred places out in the nature, so you can be there and jojk. Why must you go into the four squared building, this church? /.../ For me it is not so important, but I have been working with church textiles because I know that there are many elderly people who are sitting in the church and /.../ there is nothing that reminds [them] about the Sámi culture. So they asked me, so I have made some church textiles to Luleå Domkyrka (*translation: Luleå cathedral*) for example. /.../

Q4: Do you view the Sápmi region as a whole to be striving for the same goals or does it differ between the Nordic countries? /.../

A: It is not big difference because we are working åt samma håll (*translation: in the same direction*). We are working that we can get more Sámi at the schools, more literature, and books for pupil and then also... nah we are working for same sake. Because we have this Nordic Sámi Council also [and there] they are [working] together. And also, that our parliaments are working together. /.../ My Sámi village /.../ where I belong to now, we did have a court, rättegång (*translation: court case*), against the Norwegian government about this that we can be with our reindeer all round the year and we did win this. /.../ But then there was a lot of Sámis from Norway started to call me and said: “Yes! That was the greatest thing because now I think that we can win against these, all these mining companies” and [unintelligible] they are going to start to build these vindparker (*translation: windmill power plants*). /.../ Because when we did win this /.../ så har vi gjort bättre för de norska (*translation: we improved things for the Norwegians*). /.../

Q: So, the development in one country helps the other, there is a lot of [sense of] community in the Sámi people.

A: And we have to work in that way because we are not so many. So, if we do not /.../ håller sams då splittras vi (*translation: stay together then we fall apart*). It is better that we are working for the same sake. /.../

Q5: Do you believe that the promotion of indigenous and minority rights that intergovernmental organizations, such as the EU and UN, have helped combat the discrimination and prejudice that exists against Sámi people?

A: /.../ I heard that Sweden as country they get a lot of... FN [the UN] they are always there and say: “You do not take the Sámi question seriously, you are not following the rules” So in that case it is really good that we do have this FN, because they are always there. /.../

Q: I know that it has helped a lot in Finland specifically when the UN has done this. That they have taken it seriously, but I know that Sweden has kind of gotten complaint after complaint after complaint.

A: Sverige har inte ratificerat (*translation: Sweden has not ratified*) [these issues]. That is a big question and why do they not do that? /.../ What are they scared for? /.../

Q6: Do you believe that the political influence that the Sámi people have in Sweden has improved because of the criticism that the country received from human rights organizations and intergovernmental organizations?

A: /.../ I believe so, and because they have also put up some sanningskommissioner (*translation: truth and reconciliation commission*) now /.../ and they asked me to sit in that

commission but I could not because I have a lot of work to do with my art and for me it is very important if I sit in such [a] group I have to read a lot... of papers and /.../ I do not think that I am the right person to belong in that sanningskommissions (*translation: truth and reconciliation commission*) group. So, it is better that someone else can take my place. But it is really good that they have upprättat (*translation: established*) this sanningskommission (*translation: truth and reconciliation commission*) now. /.../

Q7: What role do you think that the Sámi parliament in Sweden has had in the political development within the nation?

A: I do not know because the Sámi parliament does not have the bestämmanderätt (*translation: right of decision*). Because of course some questions maybe has gone forward because we got the Sámi parliament but I am not so sure that they have done so much to do better for us. I do not know but it depends on also who is sitting there, vem som styr parlamentet (*translation: who rules the parliament*), because now there are so many [different groups], this is for reindeer herding-people, this is for Sámi who are fishing, and this is for culture. And you know if there is one sitting in the /.../ ledande rollen (*translation: leading role*), and [if] this persons they do not know anything about the Sámi reindeer herding, so of course they do not talk about that. At least it is much more better that we have this Svenska Samernas Riksförbund (*translation: The National Confederation of Swedish Sami*) because they are working a lot about reindeer herding. But with this I will not say that they... Of course, if I look at the culture, they have done a lot for us who are working with different culture, art and music and other things. /.../

Q: In what way have they helped a lot?

A: Yeah, because when we did have this pandemic [the] Sámi parliament was very clever to /.../ [assist] the people who are working with culture [so] that we could get this pandemic

money. So, in that case they really did do a good job, but they did not do anything for people who are working with reindeer herding. Some... Because those who are feeding reindeers, they can get some money for this /.../ but not every family are not feeding [them]. My family we are not feeding reindeer even if it is bad winters. So, we just pray and hopefully that they will get kulls (*translation: litters*) and [that] they survive, the reindeer. /.../

Q7a: Has the Sámi parliament had influence on all matters that concerns the national Sámi community? /.../

A: No, not really, I do not think so. /.../ Not really in every question. /.../

Q: Could you elaborate on why you believe that the Sámi parliament has had a lack of influence on matters concerning the indigenous populace?

A: /.../ I am maybe not the right person to say that they have had... of course they have tried to do a lot of things, but it is not so easy. I think it would be much more better if we did have Sámis who were sitting in the Swedish parliament or government. I think that it would be much more questions done and questions who was getting through. I can see that all this immigrants /.../ they have not been living so long in this country and nowadays they do have people in the parliament. And we have /.../ always been living here, and we do not have any Sámi in the parliament. You can ask: "Why not?". So, in that case, /.../ it would be nice if we got some Sámi politicians into the Swedish parliament. /.../ Cause for the Sámi parliament, när man inte har bestämmanderätt (*translation: when you do not have the right to decide*) /.../ it is not so easy. They can work, work, work and they just think that I am driving my head into the wall. It is not so easy; I think that they [try to] do their best. /.../

In Norway they do also have young people who are working... there are four young people who are working and telling about the Sámi culture and so on. So that is... we do lack this. So, we do have a lot to work [on]. /.../ And try to work that they get this person inside of [the] Swedish parliament who help can take up these issues about Sámi culture /.../ and that

this person do have knowledge about our people. And work to get a little more knowledge in the Swedish parliament. /.../

Q7b: Has the Swedish government respected and considered the concerns raised by the Sámi parliament fully before committing to a decision?

A: Somehow not but in a little way, yes. So, I said that we do have a lot of things to do. That the Swedish government take our questions seriously and not only talk about this [but] that they do this also. /.../

Q8: What role do you think culture has played in promoting Sámi life and rights? /.../

A: I think that the culture and exceptionally, I think if I say it, [that] Sámi artists they have been working a lot and I think that we have put this on the trailer in a different way. And it is easier to read, as I was in this with visual communication, that everyone can read it in their own way. I think that it is really important to have these different jojk musicians, theater, art, dancing. I think that when we [do a] performance, when we have our exhibitions, then I think that more people will be interested, and they really want to know more about us as an ethnic [group]. I think so. I think that we have done a lot, and there was one politiker (*translation: politician*) in Norway /.../ Ole Henrik Magga [and] he said that those who have been working and done a good job for Sámi culture is [the] artists. /.../ We are a very important group and when I am working with my narrative items, I think that [once] I started /.../ to make these items, that I really wanted to tell about our people. Just so that people could see in the past we did have in this way and now we do have in this way and in [the] future we do not know /.../

Q9: What type of art do you make and how is it linked to your Sámi heritage?

A: [When] I started I did have the items inside my head, but I really did not in which way I wanted to make this art. So, it took me very long time to found out that embroidery was my way to make this art. So, why I choose to work with embroidery and textiles is because it is my Sámi heritage, and it is /.../ about Sámi handicraft. Because in my home everybody was making something with their hands so for me it was naturally no choose textile art. And as I said before, I work with these items just to let people know that we are still here, and we are working for our sake, and we belong to the future. /.../ So, we have to take and look for a positive side. /.../ That is my heritage to tell about, for the audience, about my people and my culture and all this what I got from my childhood and my youth. But of course, I am educated through HDK in Gothenburg, so it was not so easy for me as Sámi student. I was the first Sámi student there so nobody knows... did not know anything about my culture so I started to tell to them. /.../ I started from the middle, and they said they had never been up north from Uppsala so for them it was /.../ another world.

Q: Yeah, I think that is what I realized as well just reading more and more about the culture. /.../ I saw one of your exhibitions in Lund Konsthallen in 2018 maybe it was? /.../

A: It was maybe four years ago maybe five. You know time passes very quickly... For me it has been very important also to make these narratives because I want to that... this with the fördomar, prejudice [unintelligible]. I think that I can help to /.../ i alla fall att stävja fördomar (*translation: at least curb prejudices*). If you do not know about one group of people, or culture, then maybe you have a lot of prejudice against [it]. Because I am not better [my] self because I had a lot of prejudice against romer (*translation: Roma people*) and still have. But, you know, in that way maybe they also should have one artist who was telling about their culture. Because there is a lot of fina saker bland romerna också (*translation: nice things among the Roma too*) /.../

Q: Yeah, of course, I feel like that is an unfortunate part of being human to have prejudice about people, right? Like you have an expectation of who they are. /.../

Q10: How do you think your art has influenced the Sámi community in Sweden?

A: /.../ When I listen to people who talk to me, that they say: “Ah! You have done a lot of good things for the Sámi people and our community”. So, I think that many are very positive. Of course, there are people who are not. /.../ But I am living here in this small village and then [people] often say: “Oh! We do have you here in Övre Soppero and /.../ you have put Övre Soppero on the map”. Yeah, it is very positive. /.../ I have got some also writers and other artist, /.../ that say: “Oh, you have inspired me to write”. Linnea Axelsson, she said: “You have inspired me to write this *Aednan*”. /.../ So, I have inspired other to work with... writers and filmmakers. And I feel so happy /.../ that I have done this for them. /.../

Q11: What role do you think your art has had in educating the general public on the Sámi lifestyle, culture, and society?

A: I think that I can see that, but now I am just looking for my colleagues. /.../ When I started to work [with] my items I often had these creatures with this horn shaped hat and I can see that [in] many photographs and [that] they have been working with that. And those who are working with typical handcraft, they have started to remake this hat. And I have also been teaching at the Sámi university college. /.../ When I work there I often, I worked of course with this with how to use the print colors in our traditional [unintelligible]. And you know that it was very important what kind of color you used and then you did have sorrow in the funerals and so on. So, in that case I think that I have taught a lot of young people. And I can see now that they have listened to me about this, how to use colors and /.../ when you use your threads in a coat and how to use this with hats and other things. /.../ Some groups, of course I have... har jag väl lärt någonting (*translation: I guess I have taught something*) but not everyone. I have also been taught (*probably meant to say taught*) by my elders, so it goes like this and from generation to generation.

Q: /.../ Do you think your art has helped in educating like Swedish people on Sámi culture?

A: Yeah, I think so because I have held a lot of workshops and I have also held a lot about lectures /.../ about Sámi mythology and how to use it in art. /.../ What I see today [is] that all Swedish people, Swedish artist they have started to use my words in different things, you know? So, I think that I have taught some groups. And also that many Swedish artists they have also... their eyes has opened and they are looking for /.../ Swedish mythology or other sorts of mythology. /.../ I think that I have done something but not so much. But you start from the little beginning and then it will be rings on the water and in that case you will learn (*probably meant to say teach*) other people and those who learned from me, they [can] learn (*probably meant to say teach*) other.

Q: /.../ That was the last question I had for you but of course if you have anything you want to add or anything you want to say?

A: Yeah, okay that was the last one, okey.

Q: /.../ But it has been very interesting to hear your perspective and hear you talk about your art. /.../ I think it is very interesting to hear [about] how your art has developed to become more political or more directly political, I guess.

A: Yea but I am not working like this with directly agitatorisk (*translation: agitational*) art. It is not my way to work with my art. I work with my art politically through my Sámi mythology and it is softer, but maybe you have to know something about the Sámi mythology to understand what I am meaning. But in the crows, you can see this very [clearly], when policemen went to /.../ clean up the Sámi camp.