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## Global Trends, Local Contradictions – Challenges of Transnational Sámi Politics in 2000s

Today the Sámi have a relatively strong status in all Nordic countries, although the situation in everyday life can be inconsistent in many ways. Active Sámi-related legislation work has resulted in multilevel and fruitful development on local and regional levels especially in 1990s. Special institutions have emerged for the Sámi self-government, such as the Sámi Parliaments in each Nordic country. Sámi culture is a matter of pride for many, because different forms of Sámi art, for example, are internationally renowned. The Sámi also have a significant role in the politics of indigenous peoples of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The success of the Sámi has been due to transnational activities, shuttling from local and national levels to the Nordic Sámi community and to the cooperation of indigenous peoples. From the beginning, Sámi politics in Nordic countries has looked for international parallels and solutions. Already in the beginning of 20th century, the civil activity through Sámi organizations in Nordic countries was strongly influenced by international labor movement and youth association movement.<sup>2</sup> In Finland, efforts for establishing protection areas for Sámi culture in Utsjoki and Skolt Sámi community were argued by “Sámi friends” with parallels from Indian policies in United States and European human rights movement.<sup>3</sup>

In the same way, Nordic Sámi cooperation from 1950s on referred e.g. to European minority policies where the linguistic rights were central.<sup>4</sup> The ethno-political movement of young Sámi activists in 1960s and 1970s, highlighting the land rights and Sámi self-determination, orientated itself more and more to global

<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Veli-Pekka Lehtola – Anni-Siiri Länsman, “Saamelaisliikkeen perintö ja institutionalisoinut saamelaisuus”. *Saamenmaa. Kulttuuritieteellisiä näkökulmia. Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja 91*. Helsinki, Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura 2012; Sanna Valkonen, *Poliittinen saamelaisuus*. Tampere, Vastapaino 2009.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Patrik Lantto, *Tiden börjar på nytt. En analys av samernas etnopolitiska mobilisering i Sverige 1900–1950*. Umeå universitet, Umeå 2000, 32–38; Einar Niemi, ”Isak Saba: Förste same og sosialistisk pionér på Stortinget. Et hundreårsminne.” *Veiviser i det manifoldige Nord. Utvalgte artikler av Einar Niemi*. Red. av Fredrik Fagertum. Orkana, Stamsund 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *Saamelaiset suomalaiset. Kohtaamisia 1896–1953*. Helsinki, Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura 2012, 219–223, 330–346.

<sup>4</sup> Veli-Pekka Lehtola, “Research and Activism in Sámi Politics: The Ideas and Achievements of Karl Nickul towards Securing Governance for the Sámi.” *Acta Borealia* 1, 2005a.

arenas, especially to indigenous discourses in 1970s.<sup>5</sup> During the whole post-war period declarations of United Nations designed the frames to discuss also Sámi issues. To compensate the lack of power in local and national levels, Sámi politicians have already for decades invoked international norms by United Nations and the discourses of (other) indigenous peoples to support their claims.<sup>6</sup>

It is often supposed that the routes of international trends to national and local implementations are straightforward or even unidirectional. On the opposite, there seem to be multiple variables for these processes to succeed or to fail. Besides of local variety, there are different contexts also inside of the Nordic countries, from cultural traditions of different Sámi groups to national Sámi policies in each country. Thus, global trends have always been absorbed and adapted in multiple ways among the Sámi, depending on their usefulness and applicability in local context, including relations to other ethnic groups.<sup>7</sup>

However, when bypassing local and national levels and when implementing Nordic Sámi or indigenous policies, Sámi transnational policies also have intensified

<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Asle Høgmo, "Social and Cultural Change in the Sámi World – Building the Sámi Nation". *The Changing Circumpolar North*. Ed. by Lassi Heininen. Arktinen keskus, Rovaniemi 1994, 21–27; Vigdis Stordahl, *Same i den moderne verden*. Davvi Girji, Karasjok 1996; Vigdis Stordahl, "Sami Generations." *Sami Culture in a New Era. The Norwegian Sami Experience*. Ed. by Harald Gaski. Davvi Girji, Karasjok 1997, 143–154; Lehtola 2005a, 161–166; Harald Eidheim, "Ethno-Political Development among the Sami after World War II." *Sami Culture in a New Era. The Norwegian Sami Experience*. Ed. by Harald Gaski. Davvi Girji, Karasjok 1997, 29–61; Henry Minde, "The Alta case: From the local to the global and back again". *Discourses and Silences: Indigenous Peoples, Risks and Resistance*. Ed. by Garth Cant, Anake Goodall & Justine Inns. University of Canterbury, Christchurch 2005, 13–34; Jukka Nyssönen, "Everybody recognized that we were not white." *Sami Identity Politics in Finland, 1945–1990*. Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor Artium. University of Tromsø, Tromsø 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Henry Minde, "The Destination and the Journey: Indigenous Peoples and the United Nation from the 1970s through 1985". *Indigenous Peoples: Self-determination, Knowledge, Indigeneity*. Ed. by Henry Minde. Eburon Academic Publishers, Delft 2008, 49–86; Henry Minde & Ragnar Nilsen, "Conclusion", *Indigenous Peoples: Resource Management and Global Rights*. Ed. by Svein Jentoft, Henry Minde & Ragnar Nilsen. Eburon Academic Publisher, Delft 2003, 297–309; Erica-Irene Daes, "The United Nations and Indigenous Peoples from 1969 to 1994." *Becoming Visible Indigenous Politics and Self-Government*. Ed. by Terje Brantenberg, Janne Hansen and Henry Minde. Center for samiske studier, Tromsø 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Lehtola 2012, 14–16. Lehtola is the head of the project *Domestication of Indigenous Discourses? Processes of Constructing Political Subjects in Sápmi* launched in 2014 by researchers from the universities of Oulu and Lapland. It examines these transnational processes through certain case studies, recognizing the strong influence of international discourses to Sámi policies, but also emphasizing the choices of Sámi subjects, rising from special contexts and special terms of agency. The project benefits the concept of *domestication* by Alasuutari & Qadir (2014) referring to taming and adopting global trends to the national and local contexts. According to Alasuutari and Qadir, world-wide models are seldom just "copied", but rather instituted at the own will and desire of indigenous and national leaders and decision makers. P. Alasuutari, & A. Qadir, *National Policy-Making. Domestication of global trends*. Routledge, London – New York 2014, 2–5.

local controversies. Compared to the situation in the 1970's and 1980's, the current strong position of the Sámi is illustrated by the fact that there are both tangible and symbolic struggles for their rights. These have been both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic inconveniences which are also due to representations of the Sámi<sup>8</sup>.

Especially in the 2000's, the heritage of the Sámi movement has become challenged in many ways. Previously recognised definitions of the Sámi identity have raised criticism and disputes. Conflicts with other local populations have increased or, at least, become more visible. In our article, we will study these contradictions in connection with the influence of international discourses and conventions which are operationalized and implemented in the contemporary political action of the Sámi in transnational and transcultural contexts.

### **Sámi self-government**

Sámi self-government in different Nordic countries has become stabilized in the 2000's. In Norway, Finland as well as Sweden, the Sámi Parliament constitute a forum for Sámi political discussion, but also an opportunity to influence Sámi issues on different national and international levels. From the 1990's, they have focused, formalised and politicised many themes and considerations important to the Sámi. They have been prominent employers with wide repercussions to the whole Sámi society.<sup>9</sup>

Because statutory political decisions concerning the Sámi have been implemented primarily on the municipal and provincial levels, new local and regional institutions have emerged. The Sámi language law, for example, passed in early 1990's in each Nordic country, brought a significant increase in resources, when Sámi language positions were established in municipal administration, schools and day-care centres, health care and social services as well as in ecclesiastical bodies and the judicial system. In Norway, for example, new institutions included local language centres,

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<sup>8</sup> Representations influencing the politics concerning the Sámi, see e.g. Sari Pietikäinen, *Discourses of differentiation. Ethnic representations in newspaper texts*. Jyväskylän yliopisto, Jyväskylä 2000; Kjell Olsen, "The Touristic Construction of the 'Emblematic' Sámi". *Acta Borealia* 1, 2003, 3–20; Stein R. Mathisen, "Hegemonic Representations of Sámi Culture. From Narratives of Noble Savages to Discourses on Ecological Sámi." *Creating Diversities. Folklore, Religion and the Politics of Heritage*. Ed. by Anna-Leena Siikala, Barbro Klein & Stein R. Mathisen. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki 2004, 17–30; Jarno Valkonen, "Saamelainen luontosuhde: käytännölliset ja kertomukselliset ulottuvuudet." *Kulttuurintutkimus* Vol. 22, 2005 (No 4), 15–26.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Pedersen & Asle Högmo, *Samiske revitaliserings- og moderniseringsprosesser i siste generasjon*. CálliidLágádus, Karasjok 2012, 19–23; Lehtola-Länsman 2012, 23–26.

regional museums and collections as well as national councils, such as the Sámi church council.<sup>10</sup>

The Sámi Parliament elections are arranged every fourth year in each Nordic country. In Norway, 39 members are elected to the Sámi Parliament, 31 in Sweden and 21 in Finland. In Norway and Sweden, candidates are put up by parties, while Finland has a personal election. From the start, the Finnish Sámi Delegation adopted the idea that attending to Sámi issues suffers from competition between parties. Instead, lack of jointly prepared programs and strategies has been a problem.<sup>11</sup>

In Norway, both national political parties and Sámi parties put up candidates for the Sámi Parliament elections. The leading national organisation in Norway is Norgga sámiiid riikkasearvi (NSR, Norwegian Saami Association), which aims to be the organisation for all Sámi, regardless of their domicile, profession or language. New small parties have emerged in all elections and they have either become established or discontinued according to their political support. Norwegian Sámi can register themselves voluntarily in the register of voters (*samemanntall*), which has only been compiled since the Sámi Parliament was established in Norway. In Finland, the Sámi register has been compiled all through the period from WW II. The number of entries in the register of voters has increased steadily in Norway. In Sámi territories, people started to register themselves right from the first Sámi parliament elections, while the most significant growth in the 2000's has taken place in town municipalities and in Southern Norway.<sup>12</sup>

The Sámi Parliament in Norway has gained a strong position based on the Sámi Act. It has been actively involved in legislation work and influenced the management of Sámi issues in different administrative sectors. Some issues that were previously decided and administered by the state or municipalities or other bodies have been moved under the authority of the Sámi Parliament, such as issues related to Sámi school. Additionally, the Norwegian government must regularly consult the Sámi Parliament in issues involving the Sámi. This is not just a formality, but the purpose is to reach a consensus on legislation and other measures involving or influencing the Sámi. There is also a specific minister and state secretary responsible for Sámi issues in the Norwegian state administration.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Pedersen-Högmo 2012, 21–22.

<sup>11</sup> Veli-Pekka Lehtola, *Saamelainen parlamentti. Saamelaisvaltuuskunta 1973–1995 ja Saamelaiskäräjät 1996-*. Sámediggi, Inari 2005b, 67.

<sup>12</sup> About Norwegian Sámi Parliament see B. Bjerkli & P. Selle (eds.), *Samer, makt og demokrati. Sametinget og den nye samiske offentligheten*. Oslo, Gyldendahl Akademisk 2003; E. Josefsen – J. Saglie (eds.), *Sametingsvalg. Velgere, partier, medie*. Abstrakt forlag, Oslo 2011.

<sup>13</sup> P. Selle, A. J. Semb and K. Strømsnes, “Citizenship Identity among Norwegian Sami in Core Sámi Areas.” *Citizenship Studies* Vol. 17, No. 6–7, 2013, 712–727; Hugo Stokke, “Rethinking social citizenship: the case of the Finnmark Act.” *Judification and Social Citizenship in the Welfare State*. Ed. by H. S. Aasen, S. Gloppen, A.-M. Magnussen and E. Nilssen. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham 2012, 241–260.

One of the most prominent but also controversial examples of the success of Norwegian Sámi policy in recent decades is the Finnmark Act (*Finnmarksloven*), which was fully implemented in 2007. It was a result of a struggle for territory and water rights, which escalated in connection with the Alta controversy. The work started by the Sámi rights committee, instituted in 1980, led to a favourable development, which was also partly influenced by the decision of the Norwegian state to ratify the ILO 169 agreement in 1990 as the first country in the world.<sup>14</sup>

The Finnmark Act legislation process itself was unique. Apart from the Storting judiciary committee, representatives of the Sámi Parliament and Finnmark County Council (Finnmark fylkesting) participated the process, i.e. the representative body of the Norwegian people negotiated with representatives of ethnic self-government and regional self-government about passing the law. This deviated from the normal hearing and commenting procedure, because bodies outside the Storting had never been involved in legislation in this extent. Along with the Finnmark Act, the management of wide territories in Northern Norway changed, when a new administrative body, Finnmarkseiendommen, took control of ca. 95 percent of the Finnmark territory, 45,000 square kilometres in all. Finnmarkseiendom is a private landowner with its main office in Lakselv, in the Porsanger municipality.<sup>15</sup>

The Sámi have an important role in administration, because three out of the six members in the new administrative body are elected by the Sámi Parliament. The other three members are elected by the Finnmark County Council. Thus, the Finnmark Act is based on regional administration without any ethnic group in dominant position. The people or groups, who have been deprived of their rights, are not solely from Sámi background. Although the Finnmark Act has been decreed on the basis of a debate and conventions of the territorial rights of indigenous peoples, the Sámi have not received any exclusive rights over other groups, although it is probable that a sizable part of the people claiming territorial rights will be Sámi. All Norwegian citizens have the right to have their case processed, if they can document territorial rights based on long-term use.<sup>16</sup>

The new arrangement marked the end of over two hundred years of state ownership in Sámiland. The decision is arguably the most significant achievement of the Sámi struggle for their rights so far. The Finnmark Act is an interesting novelty from the viewpoint of jurisprudence and indigenous peoples' rights. In 2008, a special Finnmark commission (Finnmarkskommisjonen) was established to clarify

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<sup>14</sup> Else Grete Broderstad, "Implementing Indigenous Self-Determination. The Case of the Sámi in Norway." *Edited Collection – Restoring Indigenous Self Determination*. E-International Relations, May 3 2014 (assessed October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014). <http://www.e-ir.info/2014/05/30/implementing-indigenous-self-determination-the-case-of-the-sami-in-norway/>.

<sup>15</sup> Øyvind Ravna, "Finnmarkskommisjonens bevisvurderinger og rettsanvendelse – drøftet ut fra dens to første rapporter." *Lov og rett*, vol. 52, 8, 2013a, 555–558.

<sup>16</sup> Ravna 2013a, 556–557.

land usage and ownership rights, which the Sámi and other groups have acquired through permanent use, but which have not been legally validated. The clarification does not apply to privately owned land, only former state territories.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the Finnmark Commission is the most important instrument for carrying out the obligation of the Norwegian state to identify Sámi rights to lands and waters according to ILO Convention. However, according to professor Øyvind Ravna, first reports of the Finnmark Commission suggest that Sámi customary law, traditions, legal opinions etc. are not emphasized as proposed by the legislators: “So far, there has not been identified a square meter of ‘Sámi land’ – both in relation to property and exclusive use rights.” This seems to be nullifying the presumption in Finnmark Act that the Sámi “through prolonged use of lands and waters - - have collectively and individually acquired rights to land in Finnmark”. Ravna states: “Due to all respect for the application of law, it must nevertheless be allowed to question if the FC investigation meets ILO–169 requirements for thorough examination.<sup>18</sup>

The Sámi have always had their own customary law and judicial culture, as well as immemorial rights to the use of territories and waters.<sup>19</sup> With the clarification and recognition of the Sámi rights, the Sámi have claimed that the traditional Sámi customary law should be increasingly considered as a judicial source. However, recent reports and clarifications still continue to emphasize the role of written historical sources instead of oral testimonies which diminishes the significance of the Sámi customary law.<sup>20</sup>

The Sámi Parliaments in Sweden and Finland have not gained a similar position and leverage as the Norwegian Sámi Parliament. In Finland, for example, the state is in principle obligated to negotiate with the Sámi Parliament over matters related to such issues as community planning or exploiting minerals, but the views of the Sámi Parliament are not necessarily considered. The leverage of the Sámi Parliament is quite minimal because of limited economic resources.<sup>21</sup>

This reflects also the Sámi rights in general. To take linguistic rights in Finland for an example, North Sámi has a relatively strong official status compared to smaller

<sup>17</sup> Ravna 2013a, 557–558.

<sup>18</sup> Øyvind Ravna, “The Governance of Indigenous Sámi land. The Case of the Finnmark Act: A suitable way to complete Norway’s obligation to identify and recognize Sámi Land Rights.” Power point presentation in the ICCAS VIII, Arctic Governance and Law, UNBC 22–26 May 2014; Øyvind Ravna, “The First Investigation Report of the Norwegian Finnmark Commission.” *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 20, 2013b, 443–457. See also Camilla Brattland, “Mapping Rights in Coastal Sami Seascapes”. *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, vol. 1, 1, 2010, 28–53.

<sup>19</sup> Elina Helander, “Land and Saami traditional rights.” *On Customary Law and the Saami Rights Process in Norway*. Conference Proceedings edited by Tom G. Svensson. Centre for Sami studies, Tromsø 1999.

<sup>20</sup> Ravna 2013b, 454.

<sup>21</sup> Lehtola 2005b, 160–161.

Sámi languages, and the language act from 1992 was renewed in 2004. However, studies show that it has not resulted relevant changes in the language skills or attitudes of authorities. The obligations dictated by the language act can be unclear to many authorities. There are demands to make Sámi language skills a mandatory requirement or at least a special merit for offices and positions. Implementing the language act would require changes also in the linguistic behaviour of the Sámi themselves.<sup>22</sup>

### Organisations across borders

The Sámi Parliaments are among the most influential bodies in the public sector in each Nordic country, but the official service system cannot provide special groups enough service. This is why civil activity through organisations (NGO or non-governmental organisations) is lively also in the Sámi society. As in the Nordic countries in general, the field of Sámi civil organisations has become differentiated and more international. Many general Sámi organisations have become special organisations, such as student or sports organisations, or health care and social services associations. The organisations often belong to national or Nordic umbrella organisations.

The Sámi Council (Sámiráddi) is the international cooperative body of Sámi civil activity communities. It is the cooperative body of Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Russian Sámi, which distributes and manages cultural subsidies to organisations and promotes cultural-political visions. The Sámi Council has also pursued to develop the competence of indigenous peoples in Russia. One of the most important roles of the Sámi Council today is wider international activity. Through the council, the Sámi are represented in the Barents region cooperation, Arctic Council and UN organisations, for example.<sup>23</sup>

The Arctic Council is a cooperative body between the governments of Nordic countries, Canada, the United States and Russia. It is an important forum for discussing resource management and environmental protection issues in circumpolar regions. The Sámi Council is one of the six permanent NGO members, which represent Arctic indigenous peoples. As permanent members, these organisations are fully entitled to negotiate in the decision making process of the Arctic Council. The Arctic Council is a new mechanism in the cooperation between governments and indigenous peoples, because indigenous peoples' issues are regularly pushed into the agenda of the

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<sup>22</sup> Klemetti Näkkäläjärvä, *Saamen kielilain toteutuminen vuosina 2004–2006. Saamen kielineuvoston kertomus Saamelaiskäräjille saamen kielilain toteutumisesta*. Saamelaiskäräjät, Inari 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Sámiráddi - Saami Council official home page <http://www.saamicouncil.net/?deptid=1113> (assessed in October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

minister conference.<sup>24</sup> It is noteworthy that the Sámi are represented by third sector parties in the Arctic Council, not by the Sámi Parliament.

In 1994, the UN General Assembly named the next ten year period the Decade of Indigenous Peoples. The purpose was to give international visibility to the issue of indigenous peoples. During that period, the UN founded two of the currently active three indigenous peoples mechanisms. In 2001, the UN established the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples with responsibility to report to the UN Human Rights Council. Mandate holder James Anaya, for example, composed a report on the situation of the Sámi in Nordic countries.<sup>25</sup>

The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues was established in 2002. It convenes annually to discuss agreed themes and gives recommendations to different UN bodies and member countries. Half of the 16 forum members represent governments and half represent indigenous peoples' organisations. The Arctic region is represented by the Sámi and Inuits, who elect their representatives in turns. The first chairman of the Permanent Forum was Ole Henrik Magga from Sámiland. Indigenous peoples originally claimed an equal status with governments, but because only sovereign states are represented in the UN decision making bodies, the Permanent Forum merely became an expert body. It nevertheless holds a significant position in the UN system, because it is an advisory board for Economic and Social Council.<sup>26</sup>

The third reform was the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), an organisation under the Human Rights Council, with a mandate to produce clarifications and proposals concerning indigenous peoples. The Human Rights Council elects five members for a tenure of three years at a time. The first chairman of the body was John Bernhard Henriksen from Sámiland. It has not had enough resources to make sufficiently comprehensive clarifications, however.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, the UN has three bodies addressing indigenous peoples' issues, and the Sámi Council is actively involved in all of them. They can influence national legislation through international law. International influence through the UN, which is further channelled to national levels, is indeed a special priority to the Sámi Council. This is why the Sámi Council has occasionally had disagreements or even conflicts

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<sup>24</sup> See "Permanent Participant Article Series: Saami Council" in Arctic Council official web page <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/environment-and-people/arctic-peoples/indigenous-peoples-today/589-permanent-participant-article-series-saami-council>.

<sup>25</sup> S. James Anaya, *The situation of the Sami people in the Sápmi region of Norway, Sweden and Finland*. A report of the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. UN Human Rights Council, New York 2011. [jamesanaya.org/country-reports/the-situation-of-the-sami-people-in-the-sapmi-region-of-norway-sweden-and-finland-2011](http://www.jamesanaya.org/country-reports/the-situation-of-the-sami-people-in-the-sapmi-region-of-norway-sweden-and-finland-2011).

<sup>26</sup> "Permanent Forum: Origin and Development" in <http://undesadspd.org/IndigenousPeoples/AboutUsMembers.aspx>.

<sup>27</sup> S. James Anaya, *Indigenous Peoples in International Law*. Oxford University Press, Oxford – New York 1996, 83–85.



with the Sámi Parliaments, whose official cooperation in the Nordic countries mainly takes place in joint forums of parliament presidents.<sup>28</sup>

This development has also been criticized by asking, if the unbalanced power distribution between majorities and indigenous Sámi minorities can be governed by the international norms, or do they actually reproduce it as some researchers suggest. Some researchers have talked about the "illusion of inclusion", when indigenous peoples cannot influence UN resolutions in the way governments can. According to critics, the time and space arrangements of the UN Permanent Forum sessions, for example, reflect how indigenous peoples have to operate within the position, status and conditions imposed by the dominant societies. However, indigenous peoples have disrupted and disturbed the official framework by bringing their own cultural rituals to the UN arena.<sup>29</sup>

Indigenous peoples' organisations themselves consider the Permanent Forum an important meeting place between indigenous peoples as well as in relation to government representatives. There indigenous peoples can meet each other as well as governments and UN representatives on an equal footing. Participating the Forum strengthens the sense of solidarity between indigenous peoples, but it also provides an opportunity to influence opinions, because one of the tools of indigenous peoples is lobbying government representatives.<sup>30</sup>

### Conflicts on different levels

The expansion of Sámi administration partly due to international influences in Sámi politics has produced two kinds of effects: unifying and controversial. The earlier antagonism the Sámi felt towards the governments has changed into constructive dialogue, although critical voices say that it has led even to excessive understanding towards the state and dominant populations.<sup>31</sup> The improvement in the official status of the Sámi language and the related debate has also increased awareness about the Sámi among dominant populations.

<sup>28</sup> "Outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly known as the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples." Draft resolution submitted by the President of the General Assembly in September 15th 2014. *United Nations General Assembly documents A/69/L.1*, paragraphs 31–33.

<sup>29</sup> See e.g. Rauna Kuokkanen, "Achievements of Indigenous Self-Determination. The Case of the Sami Parliaments in Finland and Norway." *Indigenous Diplomacies*. Ed. J. Marshall Beier. Palgrave, New York 2009. 97–114; Sanna Valkonen – Marjo Lindroth, "Performatiivisia näkökulmia alkuperäiskansojen poliittiseen toimijuuteen ja osallistumiseen YK:n alkuperäiskansojen pysyvissä foorumissa." [Performative Approaches to the Political Agency and Participation of Indigenous Peoples in UN Permanent Forum]. *Politiikka* 55:4, 2013, 256–270.

<sup>30</sup> Valkonen–Lindroth 2013, 268.

<sup>31</sup> Lehtola 2005b, 141–142.

On the other hand, implementing such reforms as the language law, for example, has caused problems between the Sámi and local authorities. The local dominant population may have had an averse or even negative attitude towards the implementation of Sámi-related legislation, and there have also been competing views among the Sámi themselves. In public arenas, all this arouses debates and decisions that involve people as citizens, service users and members of society.<sup>32</sup>

International law and values are closely involved in the relationships between the Sámi and states, but they have influence also on the local level when the international conventions are domesticated and adapted to national and local contexts. International Labour Organization ILO's general convention no. 169 on promoting the rights of indigenous and tribal peoples has been an important benchmark when discussing the rights of the Sámi, but it has also created many local conflicts.

The ILO convention has been ratified in Norway<sup>33</sup>, where one of its most important results was the Finnmark Act. It created a new administrative system in Northern Norway and expanded democratic opportunities to participate and influence, but the extensive role of the Sámi Parliament in the new administrative body has created controversy. Kvens, for example, feel that they have been discriminated. The new administration has been criticised from various directions in public debate, and some people have even demanded that the Finnmark Act should be rescinded. The demands are specifically about securing the opportunities of all (minority) groups to democratic influence and participation. As elsewhere in the Nordic countries, extreme views suggest that the Sámi should not be given any special rights.<sup>34</sup>

Finland and Sweden have not ratified the ILO convention, although many governments in both countries have been sympathetic to it in principle. In 1990 in Finland, the ILO convention was accompanied by a Sámi Act proposal, which aimed at rearranging the land ownership conditions and administration in the Sámi territory. The local population feared that the proposal was not in their best interest. Local people against the new Sámi rights started a countermovement and started to call themselves "Lapps". The discussions have heated in public and especially in social media.<sup>35</sup>

It has also been an identity struggle, because there has been Finnish population living in Lapland for centuries and they have mixed blood lines with the Sámi. Sámi

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<sup>32</sup> Pedersen-Högmo 2012, 24–26.

<sup>33</sup> "ILO-konvensjonen om urfolks rettigheter" see [http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kmd/tema/samepolitikk/internasjonalt\\_urfolksarbeid/ilo-konvensjonen-om-urfolks-rettigheter-.html?id=487963](http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kmd/tema/samepolitikk/internasjonalt_urfolksarbeid/ilo-konvensjonen-om-urfolks-rettigheter-.html?id=487963).

<sup>34</sup> Pedersen-Högmo 2012, 31.

<sup>35</sup> About "Lapp struggles" see e.g. Seija Tuulentie, *Meidän vähemmistömmä. Valtaväestön retoriikat saamelaisen oikeuksista käydyissä keskusteluissa*. SKS, Helsinki 2001; Pääkkönen, Erkki, *Saamelainen etnisyyys ja pohjoinen paikallisuus. Saamelaisten etninen mobilisaatio ja paikallis-perustainen vastaliike*. Lapin yliopistokustannus, Rovaniemi 2008.

families have also become finnicised. The genetic offspring of both groups feel discriminated in the question of Sámi rights. "Neo-Lapps" have founded associations and opposed the Sámi Parliament in particular, while they have also applied for its membership to receive possible benefits. The Sámi Parliament view is that descent or genetic kinship alone is not a sufficient basis for Sámi status. The person or the family should have a live connection to the Sámi community. According to the parliament, a person is Sámi if the native language of both or either of the grandparents was Sámi or if the person has been admitted as a member of the Sámi Parliament earlier. The self-identification of the person is considered important, but the Sámi community has to consider the person Sámi, as well.<sup>36</sup>

Ratifying the ILO convention has been deemed important also in Sweden, because the Sámi feel powerless in the resource management of their own territories. The interest in mineral resources in Sámi territories and also in enhancing electric power production is a threat to the possibility to continue productive reindeer husbandry in Sámi villages. They are also competing forms of land use to hunting and fishing, for example. One of the biggest conflicts in the 2000's has been the confrontation in Gállak in the Jokkmokk area, caused by the exploratory drillings made by the British Beowulf Mining Company and its Swedish subsidiary. Environmentalists, the Sámi Parliament, reindeer herders and other locals who opposed the enterprise have demonstrated against the planned mine prominently. They have put up their own camp in the drilling area. There are also locals who see that founding the mine is important for employment.<sup>37</sup>

Sámi villages in Sweden have also opposed wind power plants in major reindeer herding areas. They fear that the plants disturb the reindeer grazing cycle and migration routes. There is insufficient information about their effect on reindeer behaviour and reindeer husbandry in general. In 2014, there were already 400 wind power plants in the three northernmost provinces in Sweden, and several thousands were in planning stage.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Pääkkönen 2008, 291–295; Pekka Sammallahti, *Muistio saamelaismääritelmästä*. Asiantuntijalausunto Opetusministeriölle 23. 2. 2013 (accessed October 8th, 2014). See [http://www.samediggi.fi/index.php?option=com\\_docman&task=cat\\_view&gid=224&Itemid=10&mosmsg=Yrit%E4t+p%E4%E4st%E4+sis%E4n+ei+hyv%E4ksytyst%E4+verkko-osoitteesta.+%28www.google.fi%29](http://www.samediggi.fi/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=224&Itemid=10&mosmsg=Yrit%E4t+p%E4%E4st%E4+sis%E4n+ei+hyv%E4ksytyst%E4+verkko-osoitteesta.+%28www.google.fi%29).

<sup>37</sup> See "Indigenous Saami communities claim Beowulf Mining is not respecting their human rights to participate in negotiations over mining activities that affect their customary lands." A news by Business & Human Rights Resource Centre September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2013. <http://business-humanrights.org/en/indigenous-saami-communities-claim-beowulf-mining-is-not-respecting-their-human-rights-to-participate-in-negotiations-over-mining-activities-that-affect-their-customary-lands> (accessed in October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2014).

<sup>38</sup> Eivind Torp, "The legal basis of Sami reindeer herding rights in Sweden." *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, vol. 4:1, 2013, 43–61.

Also conflicts between reindeer herders and private landowners have caused problems in Sweden. In the so-called Nordmaling trial, three Sámi villages from the Västerbotten region were in litigation about their right to graze reindeer on private land, which they considered their historical grazing grounds. In 2011, the Swedish Supreme Court ruled that the North Sámi have the right to use private land as winter pastures for reindeer. The ruling has been considered a precedent for other grazing ground disputes, where the Sámi invoke their traditional territories.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to inter-ethnic difficulties, there have also been controversies among the Sámi themselves. In Sweden, after the Sámi Parliament was founded, political disputes between different Sámi groups have been copiously discussed in public, when they have started their own political parties, for example. The greatest controversial question in Sweden is about who can be a member of a reindeer herding Sámi village or *sameby* and who can fish and hunt in the fjell region.<sup>40</sup>

The dispute derives from Swedish Sámi politics, which divided the Sámi into two groups from the end of the 19th century: reindeer herders and “others”. Reindeer husbandry legislation guaranteed the North Sámi or *sameby* members exclusive right to reindeer husbandry in traditional territories. Forest Sámi, Sea Sámi, Peasant Sámi and other Sámi groups, on the other hand, were left without rights. The division was based on stereotypical images of Sámi culture when the diversity of the Sámi community was neither recognised or acknowledged.<sup>41</sup>

There are 51 samebys in Sweden today, and only about a tenth of the Swedish Sámi are members of a sameby. Because of the exclusive right to reindeer husbandry, the partners of a sameby do not necessarily want new members from the outside to share grazing grounds and other resources, such as hunting and fishing. Sameby is a strong Sámi symbol, because its members adopt the traditions and values of the community from their childhood, also its most important cultural characteristics, such as the Sámi language, knowledge of the territories and clans, as well as the skills needed in reindeer husbandry. The dispute about the controversy among the Sámi broke into wider publicity through the Swedish Sámi Parliament’s activities. The party of hunter and fishing Sámi has emphasised that all Sámi, not only North Sámi, must have the right to use the local waters and land. The party became the largest party in the Swedish Sámi parliament in 2013 and won almost a third of the 31 seats.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Christina Allard, “The Swedish Nordmaling case.” *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* 2011, 2, 225–228.

<sup>40</sup> Eivind Torp, ”Riksintresset rennärning – vad representerar det och vem företräder det?” *Förvaltningsrättslig Tidskrift*, vol. 63, 2000, 5–6, 167–195

<sup>41</sup> See Lantto 2000, 40; Christina Åhren, *Är jag en riktig same? En etnologisk studie av unga samers identitetsarbete*. Umeå University, Umeå 2008, 45–51.

<sup>42</sup> Åhren 2008, 52–69; Christina Allard, “The Nordic countries’ law on Sámi territorial rights.” *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* 2011, 2, 159–183.

The premises of Sámi politics and participation have also changed, because an increasing number of Sámi have migrated out of Sámi territories in different countries. In Finland, for example, more than half of the Sámi live outside the Sámi territories, which the legislation on the Sámi language and Sámi-speaking day-care and teaching mainly applies to. It is a question of how to ensure the rights of the Sámi outside the Sámi territories.<sup>43</sup>

### Revivers of small languages and cultures

The ethno-political Sámi movement in the 1970's and 1980's emphasised Sámi unity ("we are one people"), diminishing local and Sámi-internal differences to emphasize common demands. This way of speaking of the Sámi identity was quite widely accepted at the time as a defensive strategy, when it was used to justify demands to the dominant population. The importance of North Sámi in the Sámi movement was essential, and in a sense it became the "official language of the *Sápmi*".<sup>44</sup>

When the Sámi movement gained more power, its official discourse started to provoke also criticism from 1990s on. This has manifested itself in the revitalisation and revival of small Sámi languages and cultures. The issue was whether the Sámi movement, in its quest for common identity, was making too tight definitions, which were largely based on North Sámi culture. The Sea Sámi, South Sámi or Inari Sámi, for example, felt that their experiences of the Sámi identity were not sufficiently included. They could not identify with the prevailing Sámi image, neither with the dominant population.<sup>45</sup>

This way, the official symbolism and goals of the Sámi movement may have remained distant and difficult to identify with to the other Sámi groups. Emphasising reindeer husbandry or the yoik tradition as Sámi characteristics can feel extraneous to the Inari Sámi, for example, because their livelihood and musical culture have followed different traditions. Already in the 1990's, such observations gave rise to the revitalisation of small Sámi groups by means of reviving the language, traditions

<sup>43</sup> Anna-Riitta Lindgren, *Helsingin saamelaiset ja oma kieli*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran toimituksia 801. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki 2000, 245.

<sup>44</sup> Olsen 2003, 3–20; Mathisen 2004, 17–30.

<sup>45</sup> There were certain remarkable studies revealing these kinds of categories, e.g. A. Hovland, *Moderne urfolk. Samisk ungdom i bevegelse*. Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, Oslo 1994; Britt Kramvik, "I kategoriens vold." *Samer og nordmenn. Temaer i jus, historie og sosialantropologi*. Red. av Harald Eidheim. Cappelen Akademiske forlag. Oslo 1999, 117–141; Lina Gaski, "Hundre prosent lapp?" *Lokale diskurser om etnisitet i markebygdene i Evenes og Skånland*. Diedut 5. Sámi Instutuhtta, Kautokeino 2000; Kaisu Nikula, *Muistelevat inarinsaamelaiset: empiirisen etnisyyden ja identiteettien kirjon tarkastelua elämänkerronnan kautta*. Filosofian, historian, kulttuurin ja taiteiden tutkimuksen laitoksen pro gradu -tutkielma. Helsinki, Helsingin Yliopisto 2003 (unpublished).

and values in danger of extinction. Scandinavian South and Sea Sámi, as well as Finnish Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi, founded language nests, where children were raised into the language and culture in everyday activities and under the guidance of older generations.<sup>46</sup>

In the 1990's, Inari Sámi was categorised as a severely endangered language, which meant that children no longer learned it from their parents, and the speakers of the language belonged to the older generation. The number of speakers was calculated at about 350, and in the age group under 30 years there were only four school-aged children and no children under school age speaking Sámi.

Following the language nest method, adopted from New Zealand Maoris already in the 1990's, older speakers of the language were engaged in the activities and teaching of children in day-care centres. Parents were encouraged to speak Inari Sámi to their children. Inari Sámi became a teaching language in schools in 2001. The revival began to show even in the rising youth culture, when the Inari Sámi rapper Amoc became famous and Petteri Morottaja published his poems. In the 2000's, the revitalisation of Inari Sámi also applied to adults, people in working age. The master-apprentice method, a variation of language immersion, was applied with adults in both roles. They speak Inari Sámi in ordinary everyday chores, so that the structures and vocabulary of the language become familiar through activity and doing.<sup>47</sup>

The revitalisation of the Inari Sámi has turned out an extraordinary success, when it has been applied to different age groups. It has also been applied to popular culture (e.g. vocal group Koškepuško, put together in an adult language course) and it has helped in uncovering forgotten traditions, such as forms of livde music. By 2009, about 50 children have presumably acquired native language level skills in Inari Sámi, and the latest estimate of Inari Sámi speakers is ca. 400. Three language nests operate in the Inari municipality. Some have boldly assessed that Inari Sámi does no longer seem to be severely endangered, although the number of speakers is still low, and many children still do not learn it from their parents.<sup>48</sup>

A similar development seems to have taken place also with some other small Sámi languages. As recently as the middle of the 1990's, Luleå Sámi was considered a language on the brink of extinction, the same way as South Sámi was assumed the next related language to die out. The intentional revitalisation of South Sámi has,

<sup>46</sup> Mikael Svonni, "Sámi languages in the Nordic countries and Russia." Extra G. & Gorter, D. (eds.), *Multilingual Europe: Facts and Policies*. Mouton de Gruyter 2008, 233–252."

<sup>47</sup> About the Aanaar Sámi revitalization project, see Marja-Liisa Olthuis, Suvi Kivelä and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, *Revitalising Indigenous Languages. How to Recreate a Lost Generation*. Bristol, Multilingual Matters 2013; Annika Pasanen, "Will language nests change the direction of language shifts? On the language nests of Inari Saamis and Karelians". *Planning a new standard language: Finnic minority languages meet the new millenium*. Ed. by H. Sulkala & H. Mantila. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki 2010, 45–61.

<sup>48</sup> Olthuis–Kivelä–Skutnabb-Kangas 2013, 211–215.

however, considerably raised the status of the language. In 2002–2006, a language revival project funded by the Norwegian Sámi Parliament was implemented in Elgå. The goal was to get South Sámi into everyday use in day-care and primary school. Teaching was given in South Sámi in as many subjects as possible with the language immersion method. The project succeeded quite well; the children could discuss in South Sámi and use the language in everyday life at the end of the project. However, the talk easily changed into Norwegian, particularly with the most difficult words. Later, also South Sámi has been transferred from old speakers to younger ones with the master-apprentice method. The language has been established in Norwegian schools to the extent that in 2001–2005 a total of 123 students received South Sámi teaching in Norwegian primary schools. In Sweden, the South Sámi language courses arranged by the university of Umeå have been popular in the 2000's.<sup>49</sup>

Revitalisation means increasing the vitality of a weakened language, so that it receives new, also non-Sámi speakers as well as new areas of use. The goal is living bilingualism, where the native language and dominant language could exist in equal status. This is why it is not reproachable in language nests to speak the dominant language; the child is encouraged to use the minority language in addition to the dominant language.<sup>50</sup>

Revitalisation is not only related to the language itself, but involves wide re-evaluation and appreciation of the speaker's own cultural heritage. The earlier repressed status of the language entails shame of the whole identity. Learning the language can help in processing traumatic experiences and heightening self-esteem.<sup>51</sup> The result is an ethnic awakening, which can be intense when the special character of the language and cultural heritage is emphasised by contrasting it with others, especially with North Sámi culture.

## Conclusions

Transnational shuttling between international, national and local spheres has been the essential nature of Sámi politics already for a century. When seeking for support for their demands, as well as their indigenous identity, they have tried to overtake the local and even national contexts to find parallels from the global circles, especially

<sup>49</sup> Jan Todal, *Samisk språk i Svahken Sijte: Sørsamisk vitalisering gjennom barnehage og skole*. Diedut 1. Kautokeino, Sámi instituhtta 2007.

<sup>50</sup> See Leena Huss, "Revitalization through Indigenous Education: a Forlorn Hope?" Hornberger, N. H. (Ed.). *Can Schools Save Indigenous Languages: Policy and Practice on Four Continents*. Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities. Basingstoke, Palgrave 2008, 125–135; Sari Pietikäinen, "Sami language mobility: scales and discourses of multilingualism in a polycentric environment." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 202, 2010, 79–101.

<sup>51</sup> Olthuis–Kivelä–Skutnabb-Kangas 2013, 79–91.

from indigenous peoples' political struggle. Thus, it's also important to discuss Sámi politics in the frames of global histories that have influenced Sámi society already for longer time than is usually considered.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the concepts and representations of the Sámi movement has been challenged in many ways. This has been due to the growing power of the Sámi in their own home areas, reflected in the institutionalization of Sámi society. This could be interpreted as the legacy of Sámi movement falling apart or being freezed. In Finland, for example, the public discussion especially concerning the ratification of ILO Convention has resulted even extreme attitudes in the discussion on Sámi issues.

However, the rise of political power usually generates counter effects, especially in the political arenas. Besides of increasing contradictions, the inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic debates can also be interpreted to reflect the Sámi society becoming more multiform and multi-voiced than before. While the Sámi movement of the 1970's and 1980's to some extent overemphasised Sámi unity, today the diversity and local idiosyncrasies of the Sámi are open for discussion. This has manifested itself in the revitalisation of small Sámi groups or revival of small Sámi languages.