





# Indigenous Climate Justice – Insights from Sápmi

An Analysis of Public Presentations and Policy Documents from Sámi sources

A Thesis Submitted by:

**Laila Pellennec**

Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

May 2023

Supervised by:

**Else Grete Broderstad**

Centre for Sámi Studies

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

*The cover page picture consists of some of the documents analysed in this study.*

## Acknowledgements

The seed to this thesis was planted during my bachelor studies at NMBU where I discovered my academic passions through challenging courses offered by wonderful professors, and insightful conversations with my fellow students and friends. I would not have arrived here without those three years.

I sincerely thank my supervisor and professor Else Grete for her enduring support and enthusiasm, for thinking out loud with me, and for pushing me through difficulties.

To my fellow MIS-students, I thank you for the discussions both in and out of the classrooms, as well as the feedback sessions.

Special thanks to Helene, Charlotte, Emilie, Mana, and Martin for proofreading, and help with finalizing of the thesis.



## Abstract

This thesis examines the concept of indigenous climate justice in a Sámi political context. The green transition taking place in Europe and globally requires resources such as minerals and land. Research shows that these green transition projects place a burden on different indigenous groups around the world, and their voices and concerns are seldomly addressed by those making climate policy. Similar examples of such climate injustice are found in Sápmi, the homeland of the indigenous Sámi in northern Europe. In this thesis I look for the main concerns of Sámi politicians when it comes to the green transition and, based on these, discuss what climate justice might imply in a Sámi context of colonialism and indigeneity. The thesis thus contributes to a discussion and development of the concept of indigenous climate justice.

Methods used in this thesis are qualitative textual analysis of policy documents from Sámi institutions, national governments, and the EU, as well as analysis of three seminars. The thesis examines the extent that Sámi concerns are included in climate mitigation policymaking on national and EU levels. Through the analysis it became clear that indigenous climate justice in Sámi contexts means recognition of the impacts of past and present colonialism and taking actions towards respecting and strengthening Sámi self-determination. Without indigenous climate justice, the green transition will remain contested and resisted by the Sámi, and reinforce colonial dynamics.

Keywords: climate justice, colonialism, green colonialism, green transition, indigenous rights, indigenous climate justice, indigenous environmental justice, self-determination



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# 1 Introduction

Surrounded by Arctic fall colours, protestors keep watch over salmon fjord Riehpovuotna, in Finnmark, Northern Norway. The mining company Nussir has received a concession to open a copper mine next to the fjord, and to deposit resulting mining waste into the fjord. The company claims to be ‘mining for a sustainable future’ as copper is one of the key minerals needed in the green shift.<sup>1</sup> A group of environmental and Sámi activists have set up a protest camp at the site to show their resistance, while the Sámi Parliament of Norway opposes the project, and argues that the mine is against Norwegian law due to the burdens it places on Sámi traditional reindeer herding (Sámi Parliament of Norway, 2020).

Meanwhile in Norrbotten, Sweden, one of the world’s largest wind power farms is being constructed in Markbygden by company Svevind.<sup>2</sup> The windfarm will be a significant contribution to Sweden’s transition to renewable energy. Upon completion, parts of the project will negatively impact reindeer herding practiced by nearby reindeer herding communities. The president of the Sámi Parliament of Sweden at the time of project planning expressed opposition because ‘the local Sámi herders will lose about a quarter of their winter grazing land’ due to the project, and the Sámi were never properly consulted (Sullivan, 2010). The pan-Sámi NGO Saami Council also expressed that the project could harm traditional Sámi way of life (Saami Council vs. KfW IPEX-Bank, 2010) and opposed the project.

In Finland a discussion on building an Arctic Railway that would connect the Barents Sea through Northern Norway to the rest of Finland, and Europe, has been going on for several years. The connection would enable faster shipping from China to Europe through the Arctic, as sea ice melts and opens new shipping routes. The main aim of the railway is to transport minerals, salmon, and logging products (Liikenne – ja Viestintäministeriö, 2019). The Ministry of Transportation and Communication has also justified the train project with climate arguments as trains provide greener transportation options compared to trucks or ships (Liikenne – ja Viestintäministeriö, 2019). However, the impacts on local nature are severe. The Sámi officials have from the start opposed the railway project that would run right

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nussir.no/> Accessed 9.5.2023.

<sup>2</sup> More on the project on a website Svevind has created for it <https://markbygden1101.com/>

through the traditional Sámi homeland area in Finland. The Sámi Parliament of Finland has frequently criticised the Finnish government for not negotiating with the Sámi Parliament about the project, as well as having failed to provide information. The Sámi representatives had to learn about the project and its developments from media, rather than from official communication (Lakkala, 2019). Currently, the project is at a halt, yet the whole process demonstrates how the Finnish and European vision for the Arctic as a hub for extracting and transporting resources could look like in practice and how insecure, and excluded the Sámi feel in these processes.

These three cases are just a few in the sea of many developments in Sápmi,<sup>3</sup> today justified by the green transition<sup>4</sup> by companies and policymakers alike. The green transition has become a pervasive discourse and the guidebook for climate policy in Europe as the European Green Deal envisions the EU as carbon neutral in 2050 with a combined goal of increased economic growth (European Commission, 2019). The climate policies of the Nordic countries Norway, Sweden, and Finland are guided by the principles of the European Green Deal. One example of a green transition policy is electrification, which requires a vast amount of different minerals, many of which are found in Sápmi. Simultaneously many areas in Sápmi are considered ideal for wind-power development, as the green transition relies on a large expansion in renewable energy production (Cambou, 2020; Grimsrud et al., 2023). The European Green Deal is considerate of the social impacts of the green transition and states that ‘the green transition has to be fair and just’ (European Commission, 2021). Yet, numerous studies have documented the unfairness the Sámi experience in the green transition (Cambou et al., 2020; Cambou, 2020; Fjellheim, 2023; Kuokkanen, 2022; Lawrence, 2014; Normann, 2020) as Sámi land has been utilized for climate action without Sámi consent. This

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<sup>3</sup> Sápmi is the homeland of the indigenous Sámi people, an area spanning across northern Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula. In different Sámi languages the area is called Sápmi, Sábme/Sámeednam, Sábmie, Saepmie, Säämi, Sää’njânnam, Сā́мь ḗммьне.

<sup>4</sup> In this thesis the concept ‘green transition’ is used to refer to the different set of climate change mitigation measures, such as shift to renewable energy and to the use of green technologies, that is aspired by the three national governments and the EU. The term has become widely used in media as well as academia and by both Sámi and non-Sámi politicians.

thesis examines if, and how the green transition could be made into a just transition from a Sámi perspective, examining indigenous climate justice as a concept and remedy.

Both mines and wind energy projects impose negative impacts on Sámi culture, especially to traditional reindeer herding (Cambou et al., 2022; Kløcker Larsen et al., 2022; Lawrence & Åhren, 2016; Skarin et al., 2015) by limiting the land available for Sámi use. Sámi culture, language, and identity, similarly to other indigenous groups around the world, are tightly connected to ancestral land and natural resources. Loss or fragmentation of land has thus far-reaching consequences to the foundation of Sámi way of life. Additionally, green energy developments are not the first time Sámi land use is forced to give way to other developments. In fact, these new encroachments are seen by many as a continuation of colonialism in a Sámi context, where Sámi land has been taken by different outside actors in what is sometimes referred to as ‘piece by piece politics’ (Fjellheim, 2023; Kuokkanen, 2022; Normann, 2020; Lawrence, 2014). Many Sámi politicians, such as the previous president of the Sámi Parliament of Norway Aili Keskitalo (Schreiber, 2018), the current president of the same Parliament Silje Karine Muotka (Sámi Parliament of Norway, 2022), and the head of the Environmental and Arctic Unit of the Saami Council Gunn-Britt Retter (Retter, 2021), refer to the green transition projects as ‘green colonialism’. The implementation of green transition policies is experienced as a reproduction of colonial power relations that continue to marginalize Sámi ways of life.

To counteract green colonialism, Sámi representatives and activists demand climate justice. Thanks to the advocacy of NGOs and civil movements, climate justice has become a global catchphrase used in climate discussions and has helped ‘to reframe mainstream debates to usher critical attention to social impacts, outcomes, and justice concerns’ (Sultana, 2022, p. 118; Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). The focus of climate justice movements and academic climate justice literature is on ‘equity and fairness in climate governance, and redressing climate-related harms’ by exposing and redressing the root causes of climate change and social inequality (Sultana, 2022, p. 119). According to Sultana (2022), critical climate justice studies can be based on wide range of academic orientations that seek to redress social inequalities. In the field of indigenous studies climate justice has not been widely explored, and especially in Sápmi the concept has not been academically discussed. Exploring the specificities of climate justice in indigenous contexts is vital as indigenous communities remain distinctive from other groups in terms of their experiences of colonialism, their

relationships to their lands, and in their internationally recognised right to self-determination (Åhren, 2016; Whyte, 2019). In this thesis I examine the requirements for climate justice in a Sámi context.

### **1.1 Climate Justice in Sápmi – Brief Literature Review**

No one has yet investigated the concepts of climate justice, or indigenous climate justice in a Sámi context. Climate justice has been explored in other indigenous contexts in for example the US (Kronk Warner & Abate, 2013; Whyte, 2020a), and Canada (Mantyka-Pringle et al., 2015). Coggings et al. (2021) have written a brief article that demonstrates the justice dimensions of climate change in Arctic indigenous contexts but does not go into detail about the requirements for justice for specific indigenous groups, such as the Sámi. The concept of energy justice on the other hand is more used in literature addressing justice issues with energy transformation in Sámi contexts. The scholarship on energy justice aims to integrate considerations of social justice into discussions of the energy transition (Cambou & Poelzer, 2022, p. 186).

Cambou & Poelzer (2022) have researched the levels of participation of indigenous peoples in renewable energy transitions in Arctic states. The authors found that in Norway and Sweden the wind power projects in Fosen and Markbygden threatened traditional Sámi livelihoods and constituted a threat to indigenous rights, and were thus unjust (Cambou, & Poelzer, 2022). In fact, in 2021 the Supreme Court of Norway ruled that the Fosen wind park in the South Sámi area violates Sámi right to culture (HR-2021-1975-S (Fosen)). The situation of the Sámi in the Nordic states is very different from those in Canada, Alaska, and Russia, where indigenous communities are often more isolated from the rest of the society, and not connected to the national electricity grids. In these cases, the communities might even welcome renewable energy projects into their communities, with benefits accruing to the community in the form of renewable energy for everyday use, as well as financial benefits (Cambou, & Poelzer, 2022). Energy justice thus entails entirely different aspects depending on the context, which is also true for climate justice. In another article Cambou (2020) discusses Sámi rights in Sweden in the discourse of a just transition, again drawing from energy justice conceptualizations. Ramasar et al. (2022) also have reviewed energy developments in Sweden through an energy justice lens. Energy justice in these two articles is assessed through conventional environmental justice lenses: including assessing

distributional, procedural, and recognition justice (Benjaminsen & Svarstad, 2020). Both Cambou (2020) and Ramasar et al. (2022) found that the Sámi face energy injustice due to lack of proper consultations, lack of recognition of indigenous rights, as well as disproportionately large impacts of energy developments on Sámi livelihoods. Addressing these injustices by recognizing the rights of Sámi as indigenous people, creating fair procedures, and reconsidering the costs and benefits of projects would be steps towards justice according to these articles.

An article by Mattar et al., (2020) discusses climate justice in the Arctic context more broadly. They advocate for climate-justice informed social research to investigate the complicated impacts of climate change, and climate change action on Arctic, and especially indigenous communities. The authors argue that the study of social challenges in the Arctic is lacking and suggest ‘an Arctic research agenda guided by the principles of climate justice’ (Mattar et al., 2020 p. 2). With climate justice they refer to the traditional environmental justice components of justice, similarly as the energy justice literature: recognition, procedural justice, and distributional justice, as well as compensatory justice (Mattar et al., 2020, p. 7).

The reviewed literature above gives an understanding of justice concerns in the energy transition in Sápmi. However, the literature does not engage with the concept of climate justice, which is frequently used by Sámi politicians and activist in their appeals (Saami Council, 2022, June 21). Nor does the literature engage with environmental justice literature emerging from indigenous authors that specifies the components of justice to fit the situations of indigenous groups. In my thesis I explore the concept of indigenous climate justice, which includes not only energy justice, but explores what climate justice means in a context of colonialism, and indigeneity. In climate justice, as opposed to energy justice, concerns over ‘energy and non-energy sources of injustice’ (Jenkins, 2018, p. 119) are included. At the end of the day, climate change is not only a question of production of energy, but about the quality of living environments, and a global crisis that sheds light on existing inequalities in and between societies (Leichenko & O’Brien, 2019).

The thesis has been guided by the framework of indigenous environmental justice, which enriches conventional environmental justice, or energy justice, by accounting for the distinctiveness of indigenous peoples, and by recognizing the impacts of past and present colonialism (Jarratt-Snyder & Nielsen, 2020). This theoretical standpoint emerging from the

North American indigenous context remains academically unexplored in the Sámi context. This thesis aims to begin filling this gap in the literature, as well as respond to the calls made by Mattar et al. (2020) to conduct justice-oriented climate research in the Arctic.

## **1.2 Problem Statement, Research Aims and Research Questions**

The Sámi are already living with the consequences of climate change to their livelihoods and identity, all areas of Sámi life being impacted (Jaakkola et al., 2018). On top of that, green transition policies pose another great challenge to Sámi ways of life.

In this thesis my aims are:

- a) to map and understand Sámi perceptions and responses to the green transition
- b) to map how Sámi concerns about the green transition are included in national and EU level climate policy strategies
- c) to explore the concept of ‘indigenous climate justice’ in the context of Sámi decision-makers and political institutions
- d) to contribute to the emerging discussion on the concept of ‘indigenous climate justice’ in general, drawing from the reflections of the Sámi representatives and documents

The research has been guided by these research questions:

1. What are the core concerns of the Sámi politicians and activists regarding the green transition?
2. To what extent are Sámi concerns regarding the green transition included in national and EU level climate policy strategies?
3. Based on research questions 1 and 2, what does and/or could indigenous climate justice entail in Sámi contexts?

While I can see how my thesis can contribute to the development of a global indigenous climate justice approach and apply to some extent to other indigenous contexts around the world, the aim is to remain as context sensitive as possible. In indigenous studies, it is important to recognise the uniqueness of the specific community studied, with a specific history and experience. The colonial experience of Sámi people is different from the colonial experiences of indigenous groups in North America. Above all, all indigenous communities,

while sharing aspects of their societies with each other, remain distinctive and unique, and have different ambitions. Therefore, climate justice will also entail somewhat different things in different communities. The specific Sámi context will be explored in the following two chapters.

### **1.3 Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples' Struggles for Land**

The Sámi struggle against 'green' extraction projects reflects the general trend of indigenous people fighting for their land rights globally, against multiple outside forces and colonial powers. The relationships indigenous peoples have with their ancestral environments form the basis of their societies and create the flexibility that enables adaptation to environmental change and the continuance of indigenous ways of life (Kronik & Hays, 2015; Whyte, 2018). Indigeneity cannot be separated from the ancestral lands of the indigenous group in question, (Cobo, 1982; Åhren, 2016) which is why indigenous peoples have collective land rights in international law, such as in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (hereafter UNDRIP) (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007), and International Labour Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention (hereafter ILO 169) (1989). In many indigenous contexts struggles for land represent struggles for survival as a distinctive people, and a struggle for self-determination. Acknowledging these struggles is central to understanding what climate justice means in indigenous contexts.

Unfortunately, climate mitigation measures often place another burden on indigenous communities, as renewable energy and green technologies demand land and resources from indigenous territories, and indigenous rights are breached in the process (Avila, 2018; Cambou, 2020; Sovacool, 2015; Normann, 2021). Sovacool (2015) in his research reviewed 332 case studies of climate change mitigation measures' impacts on local communities from a period of 20 years. The groups identified as most vulnerable to negative impacts were pastoralists, fishers and water resource users, ethnic minorities, and indigenous groups (Sovacool, 2015, p. 7). Some indigenous groups, such as the Mapuche-Williche in Chile faced challenges from multiple mitigation projects. Mining of minerals for green technologies was found having had negative impacts to indigenous livelihoods at least in Bolivia and Colombia (Sovacool, 2015). In terms of wind power, Avila (2018) reviewed 20 large scale wind power conflicts and found that half of the cases took place on indigenous territories around the world. In locations as diverse as Colombia, India, Sweden, Honduras, and Kenya

indigenous communities opposed wind power projects due to their negative impacts on livelihoods, culture, and identity (Avila, 2018).

All indigenous contexts are unique, yet research shows us common trends across continents. Green developments around the world pose additional challenges to indigenous communities who already struggle to maintain access to ancestral land (Avila, 2018; Kronik & Hays, 2015; Lawrence, 2014; Tsuji et al., 2021; Sovacool, 2021). In addition, the changed ecological conditions imposed by climate change complicate these struggles as communities at the same time try to adapt their ways of life.

Adaptation to climate change has long constituted an everyday struggle to many indigenous communities (Berkes, & Jolly, 2001; Kronik, & Hays, 2015; Löf, 2013), who often depend on direct use of natural resources, and thus feel the effects of changing climate conditions first. Climate change that alters ecological systems creates severe pressure on ‘the very conditions necessary for the reproduction of their culture, social structures, and knowledge systems’ (Kronik & Hays, 2015, p. 251). Additionally, long histories of colonialism and marginalization that manifest in societal structures today exacerbate indigenous vulnerability to climate change (Whyte, 2019). Indigenous groups have always managed to adapt to changing environments, facilitated by accumulated environmental knowledge, and governance systems that facilitate flexibility (Berkes & Jolly, 2001; Kronik & Hays, 2015; Löf, 2013). However, researchers argue that the adaptive capacity of indigenous groups is shrinking due to increased competition for land with other actors, and structural constraints that limit indigenous agency (Kronik & Hays, 2015; Löf, 2013). Similarly, in Sápmi, reindeer herders express they are ‘facing the limit of resilience’ (Furberg et al., 2011, p. 1). In some instances, climate mitigation measures contribute to restraining indigenous adaptation efforts.

The literature shows that indigenous peoples are disproportionately impacted by climate change mitigation measures. Examples from around the world support the Sámi perceptions of green developments as green colonialism and show that climate mitigation measures are perceived as ‘external forces enhancing historical patterns of inequality and injustice’ (Avila, 2018, p. 609). Whyte (2019) argues that climate measures will remain colonial until colonialism is consciously addressed in climate decision making, and the colonial legacy of climate change itself is acknowledged. Normann (2021, p. 2) as well writes that the ‘green’ agenda runs the risk of ‘reproducing colonial legacies’ unless colonialism is

intentionally counteracted. Based on these, I find the critical examination of climate policies through a justice lens that considers colonialism highly called for.

#### **1.4 Theoretical framework**

I base my exploration of indigenous climate justice in Sápmi on the literature by McGregor et al. (2020), Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen (2020) and others on indigenous environmental justice (IEJ). IEJ can provide a framework for examining all sorts of environmental issues in indigenous contexts, but here I use it as a tool to develop an indigenous *climate* justice framework. Similarly, the conventional environmental justice approach has been applied to issues arising from climate change, resulting in a climate justice discourse (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). The need to think of climate justice as a separate category emerged when environmental advocates started to see climate change ‘as another environmental condition that demonstrates the broader social injustice of poor and minority communities’ (Schlosberg, & Collins, 2014, p. 362) but also that healthy ecosystems and climate systems are ‘necessary conditions for the achievement of social justice’ (Schlosberg, & Collins, 2014, p. 363). In indigenous communities, the importance of healthy ecosystems and interdependent relations to the land have always been known, but been challenged by colonial structures (Whyte, 2018). McGregor et al. (2020) and Whyte (2018) argue that indeed environmental injustices towards indigenous communities have always been a built-in quality of settler colonialism.

Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen (2020) argue that IEJ cases are distinctive in three ways. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, indigenous peoples are recognised as separate and self-determining group entities (as peoples) and have thus distinctive collective rights as opposed to other minorities, or individuals. Secondly, indigenous peoples’ connection to their homelands is the source of their cultural survival and identity (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020, p 10; Whyte, 2018). Thirdly, indigenous groups are still living with the consequences of past and continuing colonization which means that an analysis of environmental justice must be historically informed and seek decolonisation (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020; McGregor et al., 2020). The IEJ framework acknowledges the historical and ongoing experiences of colonialism, as well as ‘the unique historical, political, and legal status of Indigenous peoples’ (McGregor, 2018, p. 287) enriching the conventional environmental justice (EJ) framework. Additionally, McGregor et al., (2020) contend that IEJ must be based on indigenous conceptions of justice. This analytical framework is expanded upon in chapter three.

## **1.5 Indigenous Research Methodologies, Positionality, and Data**

In indigenous studies indigenous methodologies are used to guide research. Indigenous methodology requires specific ethical reflections on the position of the researcher, the needs, and interests of the indigenous community, and thus choosing methods that are appropriate considering that the research should be useful for the indigenous community in question (Porsanger, 2004). Additionally, an underlying goal of indigenous research is to support indigenous peoples in their rights struggles (Kuokkanen, 2000; Olsen, 2016). These ethical starting points have guided my research design in two ways.

Firstly, I have chosen to write about the green transition from a critical viewpoint focusing on the rights of the Sámi, since many vocal Sámi demand climate justice and action against green colonialism. Deliberately choosing to use IEJ conceptualizations as the theoretical foundation, I have attempted to ensure that the results of the study will be meaningful and perhaps even helpful in the Sámi rights struggle. Secondly, I attempted to choose methods that would not contribute to the research fatigue that is widely experienced among Sámi. Initially I intended to interview Sámi politicians. On the way I learnt that Sámi politicians are one of the most research fatigued groups in the Sámi society. This made me shift my methods from interviews to analysis of documents as a necessary step for ensuring that the research would not contribute to more burdens on the Sámi community. These concerns are further elaborated on in chapter four.

### **1.5.1 Positionality**

Another important aspect of indigenous methodologies is being explicit about one's positions and aims as a researcher (Olsen, 2016; Smith, 2021). I am Finnish and not Sámi nor indigenous. My academic background is in environmental and development studies, and I have also been engaged in activism related to climate justice. In the autumn of 2021, I visited a protest camp against the Nussir mine in Kvalsund mentioned in in the beginning of this introduction chapter. Besides that, I have attended countless climate demonstrations, and earlier in my student life engaged in different activist organizations such as Spire and Amnesty. The deep passion for climate change and justice has thus both directed my activities

outside academia, while also shaped the direction of my research. Similarly, I have chosen this thesis topic to investigate issues that I feel need to be better investigated and addressed.

Although my explicit intention has never been to conduct activist research, I do recognise the need to reflect on my positions. Johnson (2014) argues that the critical distance that is required for proper scholarly work is compromised when scholars engage in advocacy. I see there to always be an element of advocacy in research that is done according to indigenous methodologies, meaning that the research should be of benefit for the indigenous communities in question. I consider all research that has to do with minorities, colonisation, inequality, or injustice to be research done from a place of advocacy. In these cases, already by making the active choice to write about the disadvantaged in the society, or about the structures of oppression, the researcher is advocating for recognition, fairness, decolonisation, and justice, and the case is no different for me.

### **1.5.2 Data and Limitations of the Study**

As my data for the thesis, I use three seminars discussing climate justice, in addition documents produced by main Sámi institutions and organizations, and essays written by Sámi politicians. I do realize that my data is not representative of the large variety of opinions and identities inside Sámi communities but reflect the opinions of those currently holding positions of power at different Sámi institutions (Olsen, 2016). Considering that the three Sámi Parliaments are established as the official representative institutions for the Sámi in the three countries, however, I find it to be important to study documents produced by them, in addition to studying other writings by prominent politicians. Similarly, the Saami Council, whose documents are also studied, is the main organization representing Sámi interests in international arenas, compiled of national Sámi organizations from the four countries. For these reasons, the Sámi Parliaments and the Saami Council can be said to represent the majority of Sámi people. Nevertheless, I never aim to silence those in the Sámi communities who do not share the views of these institutions or politicians. Any misrepresentation that might occur in this thesis is unintentional, and I carry full responsibility for it.

## **1.6 Thesis overview**

The thesis consists of seven chapters. The first is this introduction chapter where I have introduced the research topic, the research questions, and a literature review. In the next chapter I present background information on the three Sámi Parliaments, and the Saami Council, who are the main sources of data for this study. In the third chapter I present the theoretical framework of indigenous environmental justice and argue for its usefulness in a Sámi context. The theoretical framework will guide the discussion in chapter six. The fourth chapter concerns chosen methods. In that chapter I explain in detail the data gathering process, ethical considerations, and explain how I have conducted the analysis of the data. In the fifth chapter I present the empirical data and answer the empirical research questions one and two. Chapter six is a discussion chapter, where I focus on analysing research question three based on the findings as well as the theoretical framework. The final chapter is the conclusion of the thesis, with suggestions for further research.

## 2 Sámi Institutions and Organizations Behind the Data

The documents gathered as data for this thesis are produced by the three Sámi Parliaments, the Sámi Parliamentary Council, the Saami Council, and individual politicians representing these institutions and organizations. For a well-informed analysis of these documents, it is important to understand the history and role of these institutions and understand what they represent. In this brief chapter I present a summary of the Sámi Parliaments, their legal bases, as well as explain the Sámi Parliamentary Council that consists of the three Parliaments, and then present the Saami Council.

### 2.1 Sámi Parliaments and Sámi Parliamentary Council

As is further described in the following chapter, UNDRIP article three states that indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007). This right is commonly interpreted to refer to only internal self-governance as opposed to secession into independent states (Josefsen et al. 2016). In the three Nordic countries the established Sámi Parliaments<sup>5</sup> ‘represent unique institutional arrangements to enhance and safeguard indigenous peoples’ right to self-determination’ (Josefsen et al., 2016, p. 6) in a non-territorial manner. The Parliaments work as representative bodies to which the Sámi themselves elect representatives, and work to safeguard Sámi interests in issues concerning them. However, the mandates, legal bases, and formal positions in the state systems differ in all three countries (Josefsen et al., 2016). The states’ duty to consult the Sámi Parliaments (and other Sámi actors) also differs (Allard, 2018).

Firstly, the Sámi enjoy different levels of recognition in the constitutions of the three countries. While the Sámi are recognised to have a distinctive status in the constitutions of all the three countries, only the Finnish constitution recognises the Sámi as an indigenous people (Josefsen et al., 2016). However, at the time of writing of this thesis, Norway is about to change the Sámi provision in its constitution to include recognition of the Sámi as an

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<sup>5</sup> The Sámi names for the Parliaments in different Sámi languages are Sámediggi, Sämítigge, Sää’mte’gǧǧ, Sámedigge, Saemiedigkie, and Sámiediggie. The English translation ‘Sámi Parliament’ can be misleading since the Parliaments do not have any legislative power. In lack of a better word the translation is however used in this thesis.

indigenous people (Stortinget, 2023). Additionally, Norway refers to indigenous people in other legislation, like in the Nature Diversity Act (2009), no doubt referring to the Sámi. The Swedish government has also officially recognised the Sámi as a people, although not as an indigenous people (Lawrence, & Mörkenstam, 2016, p. 113).

Secondly, the legal bases for the Sámi Parliaments differ. The mandates of the Sámi Parliament of Norway and Finland, stated in the Norwegian Sámi Act and Finnish Act on the Sámi Parliament, are to protect and develop Sámi way of life and ensure linguistic and cultural autonomy. Meanwhile, the Swedish Act establishes Sámi Parliament of Sweden as a government agency whose task is to monitor Sámi issues, and thus enjoys a much less independent position compared to the other two (Josefsen et al., 2016). Based on the Sámi Parliaments' legal bases, the Finnish Act grants the Sámi the strongest statutory rights while Norway is the only country that has ratified ILO 169 which recognises indigenous rights to land, water, and other natural resources (Josefsen et al., 2016, p. 15-16). Sámi land and water rights are not similarly recognised in Sweden or Finland. After the ILO 169 ratification in 1990, the Sámi Parliament of Norway has been strengthened, by allocating it co-management status on the lands and waters of the Finnmark County through the Finnmark Act<sup>6</sup> and by a formal consultation agreement with the state (Josefsen et al., 2016). The consultation agreement was made statutory through an amendment to the Sámi Act in 2021. (Act on Amendments to the Sámi Act, 2021). The Sámi Parliament of Norway is currently the most powerful Sámi Parliament having considerable autonomy and influence, and the biggest budget of the three Parliaments (Josefsen et al., 2016, p. 20). Notwithstanding strong legal base and mandate, a low budget restricts the political capacity of the Sámi Parliament of Finland, while the autonomy of the Sámi Parliament of Sweden is greatly restricted due to its position as a government agency (Josefsen et al., 2016; Lawrence & Mörkenstam, 2016).

The legal premises for Sámi consultation also differ in the three states. In Norway, as mentioned, consultations are made between the Sámi Parliament and the state after ILO169 ratification. The consultation arrangement supposedly grants the Sámi wide-ranging power to impact policies and decision-making processes on any topics of concern to the Sámi, and consultations must be conducted not only with the Sámi Parliament, but also other relevant

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<sup>6</sup> See more on the Finnmark Act in Ravna (2015)

Sámi groups (Allard, 2018). In Finland the state has a duty to consult the Sámi Parliament in matters concerning the Sámi in the Sámi homeland area based on the Act on the Sámi Parliament (1995). The Act also grants the Sámi Parliament the opportunity to comment on legislative proposals (Allard, 2016). The Sámi Parliament of Sweden has a similar right as a body of public administration (Allard, 2016), and in 2022 a consultation act that requires consultation of Sámi representatives in all matters concerning them was established (Consultation Act, 2022).

Despite the legal and institutional procedures however, the power of the Sámi Parliaments is limited, and scholars question whether they secure indigenous self-determination (Kuokkanen, 2011; Kuokkanen, 2009; Lawrence & Mörkenstam, 2016). Ultimately the states hold the upper hand and can side-line Sámi interests in their decisions, as Josefsen et al., (2016, p. 24) for example state about the strongest Sámi Parliament in Norway: ‘Norwegian authorities may choose to unilaterally disregard any dialogue with the Sámediggi [Sámi Parliament] representatives and any systematically gathered knowledge on Sámi rights.’ In the following chapter, I discuss how despite the existence of the Sámi Parliaments and consultation agreements, state Sámi relations remain colonial.

While the shortcomings of the Sámi Parliaments’ are acknowledged, for the purposes of this thesis, it is sufficient to think of the three Parliaments as official representatives of Sámi interests in the three states. Together the three Parliaments form a Sámi Parliamentary Council that meets to discuss common Sámi issues every three years (Sámi Parliament of Finland, n.d.). The purpose of the Council is to assert that the Sámi are one nation in four countries. The Russian Sámi do not have a representative parliament, but Russian Sámi organizations are permanent participants of the Parliamentary Council. The three Parliaments also have youth delegations that together meet every second year for a Nordic Sámi Youth Conference under the Sámi Parliamentary Council (Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2021).

## 2.2 Saami Council

The Saami Council<sup>7</sup> on the other hand is a pan-Sámi NGO representing Sámi member organizations from Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Russia. Established in 1956, Saami Council is the first pan-Sámi institution and ‘one of the oldest, still operating, indigenous peoples’ organizations in the world’ (Saami Council, 2022, p. 2). As the Saami Council writes on their web page: ‘The primary aim of the Saami Council is the promotion of Saami rights and interests in the four countries where the Saami are living’ (Saami Council, n.d.). The Saami Council has represented the Sámi at international negotiations as it is part of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFC), as well as regionally in the Arctic Council, being a permanent participant there. Additionally, the Saami Council has been engaged at the EU since Finland and Sweden joined in 1995 (Saami Council, n.d. b). Thanks to Saami Council advocacy, Protocol No 3 of the European Union recognises the dependence of Sámi culture on traditional Sámi lands (Protocol No 3 On the Sami People, 1994). Building upon this legacy of advocacy at the EU, the Saami Council organized an EU Sámi week in June 2022 in Brussels, with the aim of building a stronger Sápmi EU collaboration. One event from this week has also worked as data for this thesis.

In summary, the Sámi Parliaments and the Saami Council represent the most important and most influential Sámi institutions and organizations in Sápmi, having both national and international influence. Studying the documents produced by these as well as representatives of them is a valuable way to shed light on Sámi demands and ideas.

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<sup>7</sup> Sámiráđđi, Sámeráde, Saemienraerie, Sámirääđi, Sää’msuávtōs; Сәмь Соббар, Sámerárre in different Sámi languages.

### 3 Indigenous Environmental Justice

In this chapter I present the theoretical framework of indigenous environmental justice that has both guided the data collection, as well as been used for analysing and interpreting the data, as explored in the upcoming chapters. Traditional environmental justice (EJ) has roots in the resistance towards dumping of toxic waste near poor African American communities in the US in the 80s<sup>8</sup> (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014). Environmental justice means ‘fairness in environmental decision-making’ (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020, p. 4), consisting of fair distribution of environmental risks, procedural justice, recognition of communities, and assessment of individuals’ and communities’ capabilities (Schlosberg & Collins, 2014, p. 361). Environmental justice in indigenous contexts is however more complicated due to the distinctive nature of indigenous groups. The literature argues that ‘while all indigenous environmental justice (IEJ) issues are EJ issues, not all EJ issues are IEJ issues’ (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020, p. 9) but rather ‘indigenous environmental justice claims are embedded in broader struggles to preserve identity, community, and traditional ways of life’ (Schlosberg & Carruthers, 2010, p. 13). Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen (2020), alongside McGregor et al. (2020) argue for a distinctive indigenous environmental justice approach which I use as the analytical framework for this thesis alongside contributions from other authors. The approach consists of three elements.

Indigenous people are distinctive from other groups in three ways, each distinction informing an aspect of the IEJ approach. Firstly, indigenous people are political entities with collective rights unlike other ethnic or racial minorities (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020; Åhren, 2016) which makes questions of self-determination central to IEJ. Secondly, indigenous peoples’ identities and cultures are interdependent with their traditional homelands, and -waters, thus access to them is vital for cultural survival (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020; Whyte, 2018). Loss of land in this understanding has wide-reaching consequences on culture and identity. Lastly, indigenous peoples live with the continuing

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<sup>8</sup> According to Schlosberg & Collins (2014, p. 360-361) also indigenous land rights movements were part of the early environmental justice movement in the United States, alongside various environmental, health, and social justice movements. Indigenous conceptions of nature-human relations informed the principles of the EJ movement.

effects of colonisation, which means that ‘failure to apply an analysis of historical and on-going colonialism to understand the depth and scope of environmental injustices that are affecting Indigenous communities means remedies will continue to fail’ (McGregor et al., 2020, p. 37; Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020; Whyte, 2020a, 2018).

The presented three aspects inform a separate IEJ approach to the study of environmental justice. At the same time McGregor et al. (2020) recognise that what indigenous environmental justice entails is contextual and dependent on the specific indigenous community’s experience and perception of justice. The current IEJ literature has emerged from a North American settler colonial context, and more research awaits doing on what indigenous environmental justice approaches could entail in different indigenous contexts. This thesis contributes to the formulation of the theory by employing IEJ to the study of climate justice in a Sámi context. In the following I go through the three aspects of IEJ as they relate to Sápmi.

### **3.1 Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination**

As a result of an organized global indigenous movement, the Sámi, alongside other indigenous peoples’ today have distinctive collective rights recognised in international law (Dahl, 2012; Åhren, 2016) and in national legislations, as presented in the previous chapter. This means that alongside other human rights that are attached to all individuals, indigenous groups have rights as collective entities. Indigenous groups are recognised as peoples and thus have the right to self-determination like all other peoples, recognised in UNDRIP (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007). The right to self-determination has always been seen as the fundamental principle of indigenous rights by indigenous representatives (Anaya, 2009, p. 184). In UNDRIP the right entails a right to self-government or autonomy in matters relating to indigenous peoples’ internal and local affairs (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007).

In legal circles, the right to self-determination has been interpreted by some to always require the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of the concerned indigenous group in matters concerning them, while others have interpreted self-determination to be fully relational and implemented by consultation of indigenous peoples (Åhren, 2016). The latter can be said to apply to the Nordic context where the Sámi are not regarded to have veto powers over decisions concerning traditional Sámi lands, but consultation requirements are

implemented. Yet there are other understandings of self-determination that are of importance in environmental decision-making.

Whyte (2018) views indigenous self-determination in environmental matters as the ability of a community to maintain social resilience through interdependent and reciprocal relations to the surrounding environment, according to their customs. The web of relations to other species facilitates adaptation to environmental shocks, thus ensuring ‘collective continuance’ of indigenous societies (Whyte, 2018). The quality of relationships to other societal actors such as governments or corporations is also of importance. Whyte (2020a, p. 2) suggests that consent among other relational qualities such as trust, accountability, and reciprocity are ‘critical for a justice-oriented coordination across societal institutions on any urgent matter’. Consent would entail the ability of the indigenous groups to either approve or not approve projects that would impact them. Whyte (2020a) alongside Reibold (2022) suggests that self-determination for indigenous peoples in the matter of climate change is not about ‘cutting relations’ (Reibold, 2020, p. 12) but about being considered as equal partners at all levels of decision-making. Without the relational qualities, consent being the most applicable to the data of this study, climate solutions will continue to harm indigenous self-determination, and worsen the relations between indigenous peoples and states (Whyte, 2020a).

In addition to the right to self-determination, indigenous peoples have distinctive land rights as collective entities which other minorities do not have (Åhren, 2016). Through these rights the close relationship of indigenous people to their traditional lands is recognised and protected as formulated in UNDRIP Article 25:

‘Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters, and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard’ (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007).

ILO169 (1989) recognises that indigenous people have ownership rights over lands which they have traditionally used for their subsistence activities. UNDRIP as well recognises indigenous rights to land and states that ‘indigenous people have the right to determine and

develop priorities and strategies for the development of their lands or territories and other resources' (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007, Article 32). UNDRIP also establishes FPIC as necessary for any projects affecting indigenous lands. Furthermore, UNDRIP formulates a right of indigenous peoples to restitution, or when this is impossible, compensation, for lands and territories that have been taken or degraded without their consent (United Nations (General Assembly), 2007). This appears as an issue of accountability, another relational quality presented by Whyte (2020a) to be integral to an indigenous climate justice approach. When consent has been violated in the past, efforts to reconstitute and compensate are possible paths to ensuring accountability and healing broken relations. Yet it is the relations to other species in the lands and waters that are the backbone of indigenous social resilience, so the quality of the lands restituted is crucial (Reibold, 2022; Whyte, 2018).

Based on the international indigenous rights framework, as well as the ideas of Whyte (2020a) and Reibold (2022) on indigenous self-determination in environmental matters, the later discussion chapter will address how Sámi representatives understand self-determination in the context of climate change. What is the role of consent, or other relational qualities in climate conversations in Sápmi? How is the role of consent recognised by the states?

### **3.2 Distinctive Connection to Lands and Waters**

The second element of a distinctive IEJ approach concerns the close relationship indigenous people have to their traditional lands and waters, which is also recognised in international law as presented in the above section. Indigenous cultures are of course diverse, but what characterizes indigenous groups around the world is how 'the living world is understood, not as a collection of exploitable resources, but as a set of relationships and responsibilities' (Whyte, 2020b, p. 269). The interdependent relationships to traditional lands and species on them facilitate social resilience of indigenous communities and define indigenous cultural identity (Jarratt-Snyder & Nielsen, 2020; Whyte, 2018). Thus Jarratt-Snyder & Nielsen (2020, p. 204) state that 'connections to their homelands mean, in turn, that any issues affecting those lands have a disproportionate impact on the group of Indigenous people'. If the vital relations that indigenous peoples have to their lands get disrupted, it threatens the cultural survival, or collective continuance of the group (Whyte, 2018, p. 131).

Traditionally, the Sámi people have used their traditional lands for hunting, gathering, fishing, and reindeer herding, and the land has been 'central to their lives' (Joks et al., 2020,

p. 306). The traditional lands and waters have been and are a source of Sámi knowing, language, and livelihood (Joks et al., 2020; Holmberg, 2018). Due to long processes of colonialism, Sámi land relations have been disturbed and marginalized, resulting in many Sámi to grow up without learning traditional land-use practices or land-based knowledge or vocabulary (Joks et al., 2020), or even be regarded as criminals when practicing traditional subsistence activities (Holmberg, 2018). The reindeer herding that remains has also become heavily state regulated (Björklund, 2004). Nevertheless, reindeer herding practice still constitutes an important part of Sámi culture alongside other land use practice such as berry picking, fishing, and duodji [handicrafts] made of materials gathered from the land (Löf, 2013). While the minority of Sámi are reindeer herders, the importance of reindeer herding to Sámi culture and identity is visibly emphasized in the data gathered for this thesis. In Sámi reindeer herding indigenous knowledge of the environment, gathered through generations, is utilized to manage the herd in ways that cares for the reindeer, and are flexible to environmental changes (Björklund, 2004).

Joks et al. (2020, p. 307) explain in their work how, similarly to other indigenous traditions, Sámi words describe how the environment is understood as a set of possibly ‘productive relations’, as ‘unfolding encounters with other more or less powerful actors’ such as snowstorms or mountains, and how humans have moral responsibilities towards all beings. Their work also outlines how Sámi understandings of land have not reached environmental decision-making tables due to colonial mistranslations (Joks et al., 2020, p. 310). In the Nordic environmental decision-making, nature is seen as a bounded space outside of society, which is incompatible with the Sámi understanding of nature as a set of relations and encounters, and a source of wisdom (Joks et al., 2020). Oftentimes this mismatch is a source of environmental injustice, like in the case of fishing rights in the Deatnu river (Holmberg, 2018). Based on Whyte’s (2018) argument, injustices like these that disrupt indigenous relations to land, or water, are a threat to the social resilience of indigenous societies.

One aspect of indigenous environmental justice thus is a requirement to recognise the distinct relationships indigenous peoples have to their lands. Reibold (2022, p. 7) argues that a decolonial climate agenda ‘must include a process in which Indigenous ontologies of land are recognised as equal within the legal frameworks used to decide about land rights.’ She suggests recognition of indigenous land ontologies and acceptance of cultural and identity-related grounds for collective land rights as starting points (Reibold, 2022, p. 7). Based on

these theoretical reflections, I examine to what extent the distinctive understanding of land in Sámi ontology not only as a source of income, but as a source of knowing, relationships, and sustenance is a topic in climate policy.

### **3.3 Colonization**

The third element that makes indigenous environmental justice distinctive is ‘the continuing effects of colonization’ (Jarratt-Snider, & Nielsen, 2020, p. 10) on indigenous communities. This includes dispossession from previously accessible land areas, loss of land rights, and impacts of policies that disregard or devalue indigenous concerns in environmental decision-making (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020). McGregor et al. (2020, p. 36) argue that ‘we need to understand the current ecological crisis as an ‘intensification of colonialism’, and thus decolonisation is required if any viable and sustainable path forward is to be envisioned’. Whyte (2018) argues that settler colonialism itself is an environmental injustice on indigenous people, through the disruption of indigenous relationships to their lands it facilitates. In settler colonialism a settler society seeks to establish its society on the lands of a previously self-determining indigenous people, who then become subjects to the settlers’ laws, policies, and ideologies (Whyte, 2018; Wolfe, 2006). Ultimately the aim of settler colonialism is to erase indigenous society so that the land becomes more readily available to the settlers (Wolfe, 2006). Settler colonial invasion is built gradually over time, thus it ‘is a structure not an event’ (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). The colonial structures in Sápmi have been built over centuries through degradation of land rights (Kuokkanen, 2020; Lantto, 2010; Lawrence, 2012; Lawrence & Åhren, 2016; Össbo, 2018) alongside strict assimilation policies (Minde, 2003), segregation and racialization (Lantto, 2010; Össbo, 2022). The colonial structures still manifest in state Sámi relations today.

In addition to the statements of previous and current Sámi presidents, the dispossession and fragmentation of Sámi land due to green transition policies has been theorized as colonialism by multiple scholars (Fjellheim, 2023; Kuokkanen, 2022; Normann, 2020). These scholars argue that colonial relations are reproduced in green energy developments when ‘Saami reindeer herding is sacrificed to meet renewable energy goals’ (Fjellheim, 2023, p. 20). A wide range of previous literature theorizes state Sámi relations as colonialism as well, manifested most clearly in the skewed power relations where the state has the last say about resource extraction on Sámi lands, notwithstanding Sámi protest

(Junka-Aikio, 2020; Kuokkanen 2020; Lawrence, 2012; Lawrence & Åhren, 2016; Össbo, 2022; Össbo 2018). The Sámi do not have the same ownership rights over their lands that they once used to (Lawrence, 2012), and too easily the procedures that are supposed to safeguard Sámi concerns fail, demonstrating ongoing colonial structures still present in the Nordic states.

This aspect of the IEJ framework applied to the green transition requires addressing colonial pasts and presents in the making of climate policy, including recognizing the accumulative impacts of previous policies and decisions. According to McGregor (2019) this starts from a recognition of the colonial past and present by state actors, and then moves to climate policy that is informed by ideas of reconciliation. In McGregor's (2019, p. 143-145) work, reconciliation in environmental decision-making means restructuring and repairing relationships between indigenous people and other societal groups and repairing relationships to the natural world according to indigenous understandings. Recalling Whyte's (2020a) idea of the importance of relational qualities, reconciliation becomes a question of re-establishing trust in the relations between indigenous people and state actors.

With the help of these conceptual ideas, in the discussion I examine to what extent past and present colonialism is recognised or addressed in the making of climate policy in the Nordic countries.

### **3.4 Summary**

In this chapter I have presented the indigenous environmental justice framework based on Jarratt-Snyder & Nielsen (2020), McGregor et al., (2020), and others as the analytical frame of this thesis. Jarratt-Snyder (2020) argue for a distinct environmental justice approach to indigenous context based on three distinct ways in which indigenous groups differ from non-indigenous groups: indigenous status as self-determining peoples, distinctive connection to traditional lands, as well as the past and ongoing experiences of colonialism impacting indigenous communities. The current IEJ literature has mostly emerged from a North American settler colonial context. In this chapter I have showed the relevance of the framework to the study of climate justice in Sápmi, where the history is different. In the next chapter I present the methods employed in this study, after which I proceed to presenting the findings.

## 4 Methods

In this chapter I present the methods I used to gather and analyse the data. Qualitative methods for analysing data have been employed since the aim of the thesis is deep understanding of the concept indigenous climate justice and understanding concerns instead of measuring them (Järvinen, & Mik-Meyer, 2020). A thematic analysis of identified core documents, and public presentations is used. In textual analysis, texts must always be studied with an understanding of the context in which they emerge, as well as examining for what purposes the documents have been produced, and with which audience in mind (Bryman, 2016, p. 561). It is vital to understand that the documents included in this study have not emerged in a vacuum, but as responses to climate politics locally, nationally, and regionally, if not globally, and as responses to other documents within climate policy. The specific context in which the data documents and presentations have taken place is explored in the previous chapters. In this chapter I reflect upon the choice of the data documents, and their quality, as well as their producers and to some extent the recipients. Reflections are written in a detailed manner to ensure transparency, and to make my errors and biases visible.

First, I start this chapter by discussing research fatigue in Sápmi, which has greatly impacted my thesis research. I argue for document analysis as a highly relevant method in the field of indigenous studies, especially in the Sámi context.

### **4.1 Document Analysis as a Method to Prevent Research Fatigue**

In indigenous studies special considerations regarding research ethics are necessary. For centuries indigenous people have been the object of Western research, often in very disrespectful and hurtful ways (Virtanen et al., 2021). In the words of Smith (2021, p. 8), research has been ‘one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized’, making indigenous populations ‘the other’ to be researched and exoticized, seen less than human. The story is similar in the Sámi context, where researchers from around Europe came to Sápmi to conduct Lappological research ‘tainted by racists and stereotype ideologies’ (Virtanen et al., 2021, p. 9) during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Evjen, 1997). Methods included measuring of skulls, taking pictures, and genetic research to establish negative racial

ideas of the Sámi and the Kven<sup>9</sup> (Evjen, 1997). Acknowledging the traumatic history of research in Sápmi is a necessary step for conducting appropriate and ethical research in Sápmi today.

More recently, Sámi institutions and organizations have established ethical guidelines for specific research areas. For example, the Sámi Parliament in Norway has established guidelines for health research involving Sámi, and in the Swedish side the Parliament has guidelines for projects involving collection of indigenous knowledge. The Swedish Sámi Association [Svenska Samernas Riksförbund] also provides a policy that researchers can follow when seeking to involve the organization in their research (Swedish Sámi Association, 2019). However, the Sámi community has called for transnational guidelines for ethical Sámi research, to minimize the harm that research can cause (Saami Council, 2021, p. 1). The Saami Council is thus currently working on developing general ethical guidelines for research involving the Sámi (Saami Council, 2021). Avoiding research fatigue in Sámi communities that for centuries have been at the centre of research endeavours is one aspect to be considered.

While research fatigue had been shortly discussed in the methods course in my Indigenous Studies master program, I had not realized the extent of this issue until encountering difficulties in my data gathering. Initially I thought to interview Sámi political representatives and activists but early on encountered challenges in getting responses to my interview request emails. Those who answered declined due to extremely busy schedules, and not being able to or wanting to prioritize this research. Many did not answer at all. In this process I learnt that many Sámi, especially but not limited to Sámi reindeer herders, academics, and politicians, experience research fatigue from the multitudes of research participation requests they receive, especially in topics related to climate change and reindeer herding. From the Finnish side of Sápmi, Helga West has written a blog post about the Sámi as one of the most researched nations in the world and asks whether data for research on the Sámi could be collected in other ways than interviews to avoid burdening the community (West, 2021).

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<sup>9</sup> The Kvens are a national minority group in Norway. They are descendants of Finnish immigrants that arrived in Northern Norway in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. <https://kvener.no/kv/kvensk-hovedside/>

Furthermore, I attended an international conference Arctic Frontiers in Tromsø in January/February 2023, where a side event panel discussion was held on the topic of ethics in indigenous research.<sup>10</sup> Research fatigue was a point brought forward by PhD student Eva Maria Fjellheim who underscored the need for creative solutions in getting close to the topics of interest while at the same time not burdening local communities with additional requests. She expressed some fatigue herself, saying that Sámi academics are often asked to participate in research projects, but there is simply not enough time or resources for everything. During the discussion that followed the panel presentations, I learnt that it is not unusual for a Sámi academic or activist to receive 1-2 participation requests every day. This shocked me and made me regret having contributed to these request flows. As Fjellheim stated, already receiving such amounts of requests, and having to consider each one can create a burden to the receiver.

I came to understand that in the case of this thesis, textual methods are the most ethical choice when wanting to conduct this research according to indigenous methodologies. Relying on textual methods prevents further research fatigue of Sámi representatives which aligns with the main goal of indigenous methodologies: wellbeing of indigenous communities, or at least not imposing harm on them when conducting research (Porsanger, 2004). Since my research could be performed without imposing additional demands on already overworked sections of the Sámi people, it became my moral obligation to do so. Overall, I consider textual analysis a less explored method in indigenous studies that are often based on ethnographic work and interviews. In a Sámi context document analysis can be especially rewarding since the Sámi Parliaments, which have been created with the aim of securing Sámi self-determination, constantly produce documents that can tell us much about Sámi politics and standpoints, but also offer us opportunities to critically evaluate the discourses put forward. The case is the same for critically evaluating ideas and narratives brought forward by Sámi representatives in newspapers, blogs, and podcasts, or social media.

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<sup>10</sup> Arctic Frontiers is an annual global scientific conference taking place in Tromsø, Norway.

<https://www.arcticfrontiers.com/>

## 4.2 Selection of Documents

Sampling of documents for the study has been done by purposefully selecting documents that provide relevant data for the research purposes. Since my research aims and questions are centred around Sámi politicians' perceptions of climate justice, most selected documents are from public sources, and most of them are institutional in nature. All material, including the video discussions in the data, is openly available to anyone that has access to internet. I ended up being able to find documents, blog posts, and presentations from nearly all the politicians that I had wished to interview initially, which further confirmed that the study could be conducted without interviews, and still serve the same purposes. The selected documents are divided into two categories: first consisting of documents from Sámi sources, and the second category including documents from the EU and Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

For the first category I have tried to identify documents that can in any way answer my main research question: What does, or/and could indigenous climate justice entail in Sámi contexts? For this category I have tried to find any public material where Sámi institutions, politicians, or activists mention Sámi rights in the context of climate change. This includes mention of indigenous rights, climate change impacts, consultations, indigenous knowledge, mal-adaptations, critiques of the green transition, green colonialism, as well as suggestions of what to do differently. I have used these key words in Google search engine and encountered video recordings of public presentations, and public writings. As my primary data I have included three videos of three different seminars where Sámi representatives have participated to discuss climate justice. The first one, and the most recent one, is a seminar that took place in the EU Sámi week in Brussels June 2022 with the title 'Climate Justice, the pathway to a sustainable future, for all' (The Saami Council, 2022, June 21). Speakers in the seminar constitute of high-level Sámi politicians, and activists as well as EU representatives. The second one is an online seminar found on YouTube hosted by NGO<sup>11</sup> Julie's Bicycle in March 2022 with the title 'Creative Climate Leadership Chats: Justice' (Julie's Bicycle, 2022, April 12). Five climate activists from around the world participate in the discussion on what climate justice means in different contexts, the current vice president of Saami Council Åsa Larsson Blind as one of them. The third and last seminar took place as a COP26<sup>12</sup> side-event

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<sup>11</sup>A non-governmental organization

<sup>12</sup> The 26th UN Climate Change Conference that was organized in Glasgow in 2021. <https://ukcop26.org/>

in Glasgow in November 2021 with the title ‘Sami perspective on climate justice – the consequences, the costs, the change’ (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9). There also three Sámi representatives discuss climate justice. All three seminars include discussions that are helpful for answering research questions one and three. The speakers in the videos hold official positions in different important Sámi institutions or organizations and therefore I consider them representative of those institutions.

Additionally, as my secondary data, this thesis examines the content of documents produced by Sámi political institutions and politicians about the topic of the green transition/climate justice during the period of the last decade. The time period has not been strictly determined, but nearly all documents are from the past couple of years. The oldest document included is from 2009, from before the Paris Agreement was reached, and climate change was truly acknowledged as an issue that needed urgent action by world states. Even if climate change has been recognised as an issue for some decades, the discourse on the green transition that permeates most climate change discussion today, is new. I have searched for documents from data banks in Finnish, English, and some from the Sámi Parliament of Norway with my limited Norwegian skills, and in my limited Swedish skills from the Swedish side. In addition, I have searched through documents from the Saami Council, as well as from youth organizations. All documents have been obtained from document banks on their webpages. Two documents from the Sámi Parliamentary Council (SPC) ‘Climate policy strategy of the Saami Parliamentary Council’ (2010) and ‘Statement of the Sámi Parliamentary Council on wind power projects in Sámi areas’ (2021) are part of my data. In addition to these institutional public documents from Sámi Parliaments, the Saami Council, and SPC, I have included three opinion pieces published on three different websites, all written by two different Saami Council representatives. These three pieces are also publicly available and can be considered as personal sources. However, in two of the writings the authors are clearly presented as representatives of the Saami Council. Gunn Britt-Retter, the head of the Arctic and Environmental Unit of the Saami Council has written the first one titled ‘Indigenous Cultures must not be forced to bear the brunt of global climate adaptation’ (Retter, 2021). The other two are authored by researcher and recent Saami Council employee Eva Maria Fjellheim, the earlier piece however published before Fjellheim got the position at the Saami Council. That text cannot thus be interpreted to represent Saami Council standpoints directly.

My intention in the document sampling has been to find relevant documents from all three countries, to make the data as diverse as possible. Still, my search was in no way exhaustive, as a wide range of documents surely exists when it comes to climate change. However, since the main intention of qualitative research is analysis of meanings and deep understanding of concepts and ideas instead of gathering a large amount of evidence (Järvinen & Mik-Meyer, 2020, p. 3), I am confident that the gathered data has served the aims of the thesis.

Due to practical considerations, I have made the choice of not looking for documents from the Russian side of Sápmi. The reason for this is the language barrier. I do not speak Russian, nor any of the Sámi languages. The Russian Sámi are however also a part of the Saami Council through their own representative organizations, so they are represented in the data through the documents selected from the Council.

For the second category of data, I have searched for documents from all three concerned states as well as the EU. This category of data connects to the second research question examining the inclusion of Sámi interest in national and EU level climate policy. For these purposes I have tried to identify the most central or important documents directing climate policy, to review how Sámi concerns are included in them. This set of data consists of the climate acts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the EU, as well as the most recent climate policy documents of the three states and the EU. Due to limited time, I have only chosen two documents from each country, and the EU; the climate acts and one climate policy document. The climate acts of the three countries state the states' legal commitments to specific climate emission reduction targets. All the climate policy documents are based on the climate laws. From Norway and Finland, I have selected the most recent Climate Change Policy Plan documents that directly inform climate policy in the two countries. From the Swedish side the equivalent document was not available in English, but via email I got recommended by the ministry of environment another document that is practically the same, and in English. For the EU the second document is the most recent Arctic Strategy document.

### **4.3 The Producers and Receivers of the Documents**

In this section I briefly discuss the producers and recipients of the seminars and the documents. Understanding who has produced the documents and for which audiences helps situate the documents in the contexts from which they must be analysed from. I start with the

first category of documents, the Sámi documents. The roles of the Sámi Parliaments as well as the Saami Council have already been discussed in chapter two. These represent the most important Sámi institutions and organization. The documents written by the Sámi Parliaments are directed both towards Sámi communities, policymakers, and activists, but also the wider society and officials and politicians at national governments, to inform the world about Sámi concerns and opinions, and to assert self-determination. Each Sámi Parliament's main mandate is to represent Sámi concerns and interests within their respective states (Josefsen et al., 2016). The documents used from the Sámi Parliament of Finland for example are the Sámi Parliament's official consultation statements about the national government's proposal for a new Climate Act, as in Finland, as well as in Norway and Sweden the state is obliged to consult the Sámi Parliament in all matters concerning the Sámi.

Saami Council documents are directed at a wide audience both nationally, and internationally, with an ambition to create common guidelines for green energy projects in Sámi lands, as well as advocate for respect for international indigenous rights. Some of the documents are also directed towards private actors as well such as 'Renewable Energy Projects on Sámi Territory' (2022), but the main audience of the documents is official institutions both nationally and around Europe. After all, it is the national governments who have made commitments to follow and protect international human rights, such as indigenous rights. All the included video seminars have representatives of the Saami Council in them. In the EU seminar, the audience is all the politicians and representatives present at the seminar, and the focus is on the EU level, while at the same time speaking to national governments and those in the public who are interested in these matters. The case is the same for the COP seminar, but there the audience is even wider, as the climate conference has a global presence. In the NGO-hosted seminar, the audience is climate activists and scholars around the world, anyone interested in climate justice from the perspective of the marginalized. Interestingly, the content of the seminars is remains very similar no matter the audience in question.

Other producers of documents in the first category include the Sámi Parliamentary Council, which was also presented in chapter two. The documents produced at the Parliamentary Council meetings are directed to similar audiences as the individual parliaments. The Sámi youth's declaration on climate change was written by the youth councils of the three Parliaments, representing Sámi youth. Additionally, the three opinion pieces included are written with aims to reach perhaps an even wider audience than official

documents manage to do. They are published in internet newspapers, one of them even in the global Al Jazeera reaching a worldwide audience.

The second category of documents are produced by the respective governments of Sweden, Norway, and Finland, as well as the European Parliament and the European Commission for the EU documents. The documents produced by them inform the whole European society on legislation, requirements, and guidelines. These include all sectors providing public services, private companies, officials at lower levels such as municipalities and so forth. They also inform the world outside the respective states or outside of EU on what kind of climate goals and climate policy European countries are committed to, and in that way can serve as a role model for other states and unions.

#### **4.4 Credibility, Authenticity, Representativeness, and Meaning of the Documents**

Analysing the quality of selected documents is a key feature of document analysis as a method (Bryman, 2016). Earlier in this chapter the selection of the documents as well as their producers, and receivers have been discussed. Next the four commonly used criteria for assessing the quality of documents are discussed – the authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning of the different documents.

Authenticity is a measure of the origin of the documents, answering the question ‘is the document of genuine and of unquestionable origin’ (Bryman, 2016, p. 546). The data of this thesis consists of a set of very different documents and texts, but the creators of all of them are politicians or activists with high levels of knowledge of the topics they are expressing opinions about. All the individual authors are well known in their respective communities, and many of them have been democratically elected to be in their positions. Especially when it comes to the institutional sources from the Sámi Parliaments, the national governments, and the EU, as well as the indigenous NGOs like the Saami Council, the origins are unquestionable. Being political documents, however, they should not be interpreted as descriptive facts about the world, but as normative claims about how things ought to be (Lindberg, 2017). I consider all the documents included in this study to be normative, with small sections of description in some of the documents. Thus, studying them reveals different perceptions of how things ought to be, rather than facts about how things are.

For evaluating the content of the documents, the concept of credibility is used. Credibility asks whether the content of the document is honest and free from error (Bryman,

2016, p. 546). The set of political documents dealt with in this thesis are surely honestly depicting the authors' viewpoints and normative claims, without making them universally true. Factual errors might exist in these texts, yet it would have little impacts on the outcome of the study which seeks to analyse the common themes in the documents. Furthermore, these documents are not without biases, as their authors, especially when it comes to the private sources authored by individuals in the seminars, and newspapers, advocate for their points of view. The documents must be understood and analysed in context, and by being in conversation with one another (Järvinen & Milk-Meyer, 2020).

Representativeness asks whether the document represents the 'typical' for its kind (Bryman, 2016, p. 546). All the selected documents are unique in their own sense, many of them specifically produced for the specific intention of voicing opinions about climate justice. The three climate laws and climate strategies of the three countries are very representative in comparison to one another, but unique in a sense that all policy documents are unique since they might be about a new topic that has not been written about before. Similarly, the documents from private sources are unique, but follow common structures for opinion pieces and blog posts. In terms of their contents, all the data is very representative as there are no clear outliers which would include very different meanings and ideas than the other documents. Content-wise each of the documents are typical.

Lastly, meaning of the documents deals with how clear and comprehensible the document texts are (Bryman, 2016). All the documents in this sample are written with very understandable and clear language that says what it means, devoid of metaphors or parables as common for the textual style of official documents. The case is the same for the spoken presentations, which are very understandable for all viewers.

#### **4.5 Thematic Analysis**

For the data to become research, it must be reflected on, interpreted, theorized, and connected to the research questions (Bryman, 2016, p. 584; Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 67). Thus, after data collection, I conducted a thematic analysis of the content of the data. Thematic analysis is 'a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set' (Braun, & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). The research questions guide the decision on which themes are important for the topic in question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method has perfectly suited the needs of my research questions, which were to

identify core concerns of Sámi representatives, in addition to identifying what is said about climate justice in the data. Instead of analysing for example the ideological content or discourses in the documents, in this thesis the purpose is to find patterns *across* data and analyse what those commonalities tell us about Sámi concerns, and climate justice (Braun, & Clarke, 2012, p. 69).

Thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2012) consists of a 6-step process of familiarizing oneself with the data, generating codes, searching for themes based on codes, and the last steps involving working with the generated themes such as checking them against the data, and naming them. In my process I first read through the documents and took unstructured notes, then started generating codes both inductively and deductively. This means, I identified codes from the data, but my coding was also influenced by theoretical readings I had done prior to the analysis, as is common in coding (Braun, & Clarke, 2012). It is worth noting here that I used this procedure for all the documents in the first category, the Sámi documents, which are relatively short in length. For the state and EU documents, some of which are over 200 pages long, I did not follow these procedures, as I found it more useful and feasible to search for key words in the lengthy documents to identify to what extent the Sámi concerns identified from the other documents are included in these documents.

For the seminars the coding procedure was similar to the category one documents. After watching the seminars, I transcribed and coded the conversations. I chose to treat the content of the seminars as text for two reasons. Firstly, as I was not present in the room as the seminars happened, I could not have interpreted the situation and the room through observation. The videos give a limited view into the room where the event took place. Secondly, I found that the video-material itself in addition to the content of the speech did not add to the research questions I was working with. I found it important to analyse the content of the seminars with understanding of the specific context in which it took place and reflect on how the seminar was organized, as I have done in the following data chapter.

After working with the codes, I started identifying themes. A theme ‘captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of *patterned* response or meaning withing data set’ (Braun, & Clarke, 2012, p. 63). Themes can be seen as bundles of overlapping codes, which ‘reflect and describe a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data’ (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 63). Themes do not just appear but are actively constructed by the researcher during this process. Through reviewing the

codes and reflecting on them I could construct four themes: green colonialism, recognition, self-determination, and biodiversity. These themes are opened and explored in the following two chapters. In the next stage, I reviewed and more clearly defined the different themes and lastly found better names for them. In this part I also had to filter out parts of data that were not relevant for the research questions. (Braun & Clarke, 2012 p. 65).

#### **4.6 Summary**

In this chapter I have presented the methods with which I have selected and analysed the data set. Afterwards I have discussed the different properties of the documents to show that the documents are appropriate for the purposes of this thesis, as well as of credible origins. In the next chapter I describe the three seminars in more detail and present the findings that make up the foundations for the analysis that follows.

## 5 Data and Findings

‘The largest immediate threat to Sámi cultures and to reindeer husbandry in particular might not be climate change per se, but the authorities’ mitigating measures intended to reduce carbon emissions.’ (Retter, 2021)

In this chapter I present the data in greater detail and discuss the seminars and their structures. When watching the seminars and reading the documents I have looked for aspects of climate justice informed by my theoretical framework on indigenous environmental justice (IEJ) as presented in the third chapter of this thesis. Distinctive rights as a people, namely the right to self-determination, the distinctive connection to land, and the past and ongoing experiences of colonialism are unique aspects of indigenous peoples that necessitate a distinctive justice approach (Jarrat-Snider & Nielsen, 2020). All the above-mentioned aspects were identified across data.

I start the chapter by describing the three seminars, and main findings from them guided by the four identified themes of green colonialism, recognition, self-determination, and biodiversity. Then I proceed to present the rest of the category one documents and main findings from them, which support the findings from the seminars. In the last part I present the findings from the state documents as well as the EU documents in terms of how the identified Sámi concerns are included in them. The findings presented in this chapter are further analysed and theorised in the next chapter.

### 5.1 Primary Data Seminars

I start this chapter off by presenting the organization and content of the three primary data seminars that I have selected to include: The EU Sámi Week Seminar, an NGO-hosted online seminar, and a seminar that ran as a COP26 side event. All seminars have been organized under different circumstances with a variety of experts present, and perhaps with different audiences in mind, yet their contents are very similar. From these seminars I have only analysed the content of the Sámi speakers’ statements, as I consider this data relevant for the research questions one and three that analyse Sámi concerns and Sámi conceptions of climate justice. Research question two about the extent that Sámi concerns are included in EU and

state policies is investigated by reviewing relevant documents, which I present later in this chapter.

### **5.1.1 EU Sámi Week Seminar**

As the first of three primary data sources for this thesis, I have included a video recording of a discussion event that ran in the EU Sámi week 20-22.6.2022 (Saami Council, 2022, June 21). The EU Sámi week (ESW2022) was organized as part of the Saami Council's and Suoma Sámi Nuorat's project 'Filling the EU-Sápmi knowledge gaps' funded by the EU Interreg Nord program alongside regional funding from Finland, Norway, and Sweden.<sup>13</sup> The goal of the project is to 'strengthen the relationship between Sápmi and the EU' (Saami Council, n.d. c). Under ESW2022 different events were hosted both for networking and socialising but also for discussing Sámi concerns at the EU. The Saami Council describes ESW2022 as follows: 'ESW2022 should create an arena where Sámi experts and EU policymakers meet to be taking the first steps for the development of a strategic and coherent European Indigenous Affairs' (Saami Council, n.d. c). The target group of the event included bureaucrats at various European institutions, members of national parliaments, as well as Sámi civil society. The goal of ESW2022 was to become an annual one and increase understanding of the Sámi amongst EU policymakers. Out of the many panel discussions hosted during the week, the one most relevant for this thesis was titled 'Climate Justice, the pathway to a sustainable future, for all', and it can be found as a video recording on Youtube (Saami Council, 2021, June 21). The seminar lasted for nearly two and a half hours, so it provided a great deal of data to be analysed. Next, I present the speakers at the seminar, and describe the course of events.

First in the event four short presentations are heard. Mikael Kuhmunen, a reindeer herder, and activist from the Swedish side of Sápmi starts the presentations with a grim metaphorical story about how the green transition is viewed as a black transition from the Sámi reindeer herder point of view. In his statements, it is apparent that he has very little trust in the policymakers behind the green transition and is afraid that the green transition will further fragment reindeer grazing areas. He refers to the Gállok iron mine in Sweden that was

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<sup>13</sup> More information on Saami Council's work on the EU: <https://www.saamicouncil.net/en/eu-capacity#staff>

largely protested by Sámi and human rights organizations yet approved by the Swedish government (Reuters, 2022). Kuhmunen seems rather pessimistic, which is understandable as reindeer herders face accumulative impacts of climate change in addition to competition from different industries (Löf, 2013). After him the chair of the Sámi Parliament of Finland's Youth Council Anni-Sofia Niittyvuopio voices demands of the Sámi youth for a just future. They make a connection between the wellbeing of Sámi youth and the wellbeing of Sámi land, stating that losing access to traditional land means loss of livelihood, culture, and language. They worry that Sámi lands are now demanded to facilitate green energy such as wind for the green transition, against the consent of the Sámi, referring to this as green colonialism. Lastly, they demand climate justice. In their words climate justice means the Sámi being included in institutions at all levels; nationally, on EU, and UN levels, as well as increased self-determination for the Sámi through their own institutions. Reference is also made to indigenous rights recognised in international law, and EU is called to regulate laws to ensure the realization of them. After Niittyvuopio the EU Special Envoy for Arctic Matters Michael Mann discusses EU's new Arctic Policy and how to move from ambitious words to real life action, before Jesus Maria Alquezar-Sabadie, a scholar working for the EU Commission department responsible for environmental policy, holds a short presentation on EU's climate policy, especially the Green New Deal, and its shortcomings when it comes to indigenous rights.

After the presentations and a short coffee break a panel discussion moderated by Gunn-Britt Retter, the head of the Arctic and Environment Unit of the Saami Council, begins. Panellists include Åsa Larsson Blind, the Vice-President of the Saami Council, Erik Bergkvist a member of the European Parliament from Northern Sweden, Michael Mann again, and Eirik Larsen, a lawyer representing the Sámi Parliament of Norway. The moderator Gunn-Britt Retter, who is also an author of an essay on green colonialism included in the data as well as a participant in another included seminar, asks the panellists questions like 'what are the key elements for a just transition for the EU and Sápmi' and whether the panellists have examples of unsustainable development patterns in Sápmi due to the green transition. Åsa Larsson-Blind suggests that recognition of Sámi as an equal partner in the dialogues regarding the green transition is the first step in a just transition. Furthermore, she defines a just transition as one that is also 'sustainable for the Sámi community, and for the Sámi society' and calls for inclusion in land decision processes (Saami Council, 2022, June 21). This refers to the

point made earlier by Niittyvuopio about the Sámi having to have a seat in the decision-making tables, so that the transition is designed in a way that also suits the Sámi society. Additionally, Larsson-Blind argues for recognition of indigenous contributions to protecting biodiversity and finding climate solutions. Eirik Larsen on the other hand considers the indigenous peoples' right to self-determination the most important starting point and defines that self-determination means being able to say no to projects that are not wanted by the Sámi. He also refers to green colonialism that will result if the green transition is just 'an extraction of resources in indigenous peoples' territories' (Saami Council, 2022, June 21). Climate change does not justify land grabbing of indigenous land, states Larsen. He therefore calls for a strong legal framework that protects Sámi rights holders.

Next, I describe the organization and contents of the other two seminars. After that I return to describing the findings from the three seminars.

### **5.1.2 NGO-Hosted Seminar**

The second seminar video included in the data is the digital 'Creative Climate Leadership Chats: Justice' published by NGO Julie's Bicycle. The video, originally a Zoom seminar, is freely available on YouTube (Julie's Bicycle, 2022, April 12), and a first in a series of talks which explore 'the way in which the cultural and creative sector is raising up to the challenges of sustainability transformations' leading up to Stockholm+50 high level meeting of 2022,<sup>14</sup> written in the description of the video. The talk series is hosted by Julie's Bicycle, and their programme Creative Climate Leadership, which is 'an international training and transformation programme to empower artists and cultural professionals to take action on the climate and ecological crises with impact, creativity, and resilience' (Julie's Bicycle, n.d.). Julie's Bicycle is a non-profit NGO concerned with arts and culture and climate change, that has also had a presence in international climate negotiations such as COP27<sup>15</sup> by organizing side events. Essentially the NGO is both an educator and discussion creator, but also a lobbying power at international meetings. Main interests of the NGO include justice, fairness,

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<sup>14</sup> Stockholm+50 is an international high-level meeting for environmental action, 2030 Agenda, as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals <https://www.stockholm50.global/>

<sup>15</sup> 27<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Summit organized in 2022 in Egypt. <https://cop27.eg/#/>

decarbonization, nature, and circularity and regenerative economy. The video was chosen as data due to the participation of Åsa Larsson Blind from the Saami Council in the panel.

In the video five different climate activists from around the world present themselves and the specific contexts from which they come from. Åsa Larsson Blind who also participated in the panel EU Sámi week is given the floor first. In her first presentation she explains how Sámi livelihoods and culture are directly connected to access to traditional land, access which is now being endangered by both climate change and ‘unproportionally large burden on the Sámi areas to contribute to the so-called green transition’ (Julie’s Bicycle, 2022, April 12). Similarly to Eirik Larsen in the EU Sámi week seminar, Larsson Blind also conceptualizes the extraction of resources from Sámi areas without indigenous consent as green colonialism and calls for a justice approach. She calls for respect for indigenous rights, especially the right to self-determination, for increased Sámi power to influence policy decisions, and meaningful participation. She also notes the contribution of indigenous knowledges in finding sustainable solutions for the future. When asked by the moderator about what good bottom-up solutions to climate change look like, Larsson Blind explains how the Sámi society still lives with the consequences of colonialism and is invisible in national systems. As a remedy she calls for strengthening Sámi institutions and thus Sámi self-determination and influence.

After Larsson Blind, three other frontline climate activists, Eric Njuguna from Kenya, Farzana Faruk Jhumu from Bangladesh, and Nyombi Morris from Uganda, talk about their lived experiences of climate change in their respective countries, and how injustices manifest in these contexts. Finally, the last speaker Vasna Ramasar, a scholar of human geography at Lund university gives notes on her research on activism.

### **5.1.3 COP26 Side Event**

The last video is titled ‘Sami perspective on climate justice – the consequences, the costs, the change’ and was organised as a side event in the COP26 organized in Glasgow 2021 to include indigenous voices in the climate summit (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9). The host of the discussion is member of European parliament from Sweden, Alice Bah Kuhnke, representing the Greens. I was able to access the video through the Facebook event page where it was originally streamed. In the description, the questions addressed in the discussion are presented as: What is climate justice? What space exists for indigenous people in the

climate talks? What solutions and perspectives can we come up with in talks together?

Speakers consist of Åsa Össbo, a historian from the University of Uppsala, Gunn-Britt Retter, the head of the Arctic and Environmental Unit at the Saami Council, and lastly Lasse Eriksen Bjørn who also at the time was employed at the Environmental Unit of the Saami Council.

Össbo starts off the discussion by calling for better inclusion of indigenous rights in the processes leading up to wind energy concessions, and full implementation of free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) into consultation agreements between the Sámi and the Swedish government. She also remarks that past hydropower developments in Sweden impact Sámi reindeer herding to this day, yet the views of the reindeer herders are still not being considered in policymaking. Around 80% of Swedish hydropower plants are located on Sámi land (Saami Council, 2022). She wants the consequences of historical industrial exploitations on Sámi lands to be investigated and dealt with as part of the truth and reconciliation process taking place in Sweden.<sup>16</sup> Eriksen Bjørn states that the main challenge is to ‘make sure we have climate policies that save the climate but do not ruin our culture’ and considers indigenous rights to have an important part to play in reaching climate justice (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9). He also expresses frustration for the fact that indigenous people are in ‘a small pavilion in the corner’ in the COP meeting, while for example private companies have a lot of space and influence. Gunn Britt-Retter wishes that so much time would not need to be used arguing for indigenous rights on which states have already agreed upon when drafting UNDRIP. Her main concern is how to make the Sámi issues be considered important enough by those in power. All three call for strengthening and financing of Sámi institutions and organizations to enlarge Sámi capacity to participate in decision making at all levels.

## **5.2 Main Findings from the Three Seminars**

After having presented the organization and the brief contents of each seminar, I move to presenting the main findings from them as they relate to my research questions. Through the analysis of the data, I was able to construct green colonialism as an overarching theme of the main concerns of the Sámi representatives towards the green transition. When it comes to what indigenous climate justice entails in a Sámi context recognition, self-determination, and

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<sup>16</sup> The Commission is expected to give results in 2025. <https://www.sametinget.se/truth-commission>

biodiversity were the main themes found across the seminars. These themes will guide the presentation of the findings, and in the next chapter guide the analysis of the findings.

### **5.2.1 Green Colonialism**

Green colonialism as a concept is used in two of the seminars, while in the third one the participants discuss elements of it without referring to the concept explicitly. For examples of explicit usage of the concept, Eirik Larsen states: ‘The green shift cannot be an extraction of resources in indigenous people’s territories, such an approach will be considered from our side as green colonization’ (Saami Council, 2022, June 21). Åsa Larsson Blind describes green colonization as follows:

‘The system that we are living in the society allows for an unproportionately large burden on the Sámi areas to contribute to the so-called green transition and this is done in the name of climate change. This is merely a continuation of the colonization of Sámi and our areas with yet more industrialization and resource extraction. And it is carried out without consideration of its own indigenous rights.’ (Julie’s Bicycle, 2022, April 12).

Rather than the concept green colonization being only an explicitly expressed notion in the seminars, it also become a theme in the analysis. Based on the seminars, the concept and theme green colonialism encapsulates the main concerns of Sámi representatives in the green transition. This includes concern over disproportionate negative impacts on Sámi lands and livelihoods of renewable energy projects or mines connected to the green transition, and neglect of Sámi people’s indigenous rights in the processes leading to the projects. These are seen to take place because of the structures of colonial dominance so familiar from history getting reproduced in the green transition politics.

Additionally, core concerns expressed include exclusion from decision making at all levels and lack of meaningful participation, greatly due to colonial structures that are still in place. In the speeches and comments presented in the seminars the issue of injustice in the green transition is seen as a structural, political, and historical issue that is not all that different from experiences of colonization in the past. Åsa Larsson Blind explains it as such:

‘We are forced to cope with the surrounding society dealing with climate change and them not considering how their actions inflict pain on the Sámi society. And even when the effects of these actions are known, the needs of the Sámi society and reindeer herding is not prioritized and weighted as important to sway decisions. So, from a Sámi perspective we talk about this as green colonialism because the structures of dominance and power are the same and those are the same structures in play what we have seen through history, but now in the name of the green transition’ (Julie’s Bicycle, 2022, April 12).

Åsa Össbo makes a similar point with regards to past hydropower developments in Sweden, conceptualizing them as ‘industrial colonization’ that have changed the lives of those reindeer herders who either lost their land, or must deal with the changed environment everyday (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9). She makes the point that these historical violations must be recognised and dealt with to avoid making the same mistakes again in the green transition.

The notion of green colonization is also widely used in the secondary data documents, as I show later in this chapter.

## **5.2.2 Recognition**

Recognition is another theme identified from the seminar material, and the first theme identified in relation to the research question three on what indigenous climate justice entails. Speakers in all seminars appeal for recognition of indigenous status based on existing indigenous rights such as the right to self-determination, understood through FPIC. What shines through in the speeches is that recognition and thereafter implementation of already established indigenous rights would create a good base for climate justice, yet respect for these rights is lacking. For example, Gunn Britt-Retter expresses some frustration at COP26 over the lack of recognition for indigenous rights that are already in place:

‘It is strange to realize how much time they spend discussing human rights and indigenous rights in the climate convention. They are already there! You don’t need to negotiate them anymore, just have them in there. So, I don’t understand why they spend so much time discussing things which already exist.’ (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9).

In the next sentence Retter also asks the question of how to make politicians view indigenous issues, Sámi issues, as important enough to be considered and dealt with, when something else is always being prioritized as more important. This in my view is also a matter of recognizing the status of indigenous people and giving matters concerning them the appropriate attention at the right levels of decision-making. Eirik Larssen also considers recognition of indigenous rights as a starting point of climate justice:

‘I always have the same starting point speaking about indigenous people’s rights, and that’s the right to self-determination. So it’s important with dialogue, but we need something more. We have to respect the right to a free prior and informed consent which sometimes means no.’ (Saami Council, 2022, June 21)

Recognition is called for also recognizing indigenous people as equal partners in decision-making discussions, for recognizing how colonialism still impacts Sámi communities, for recognizing how communities live with the consequences of historical injustices every day, and for recognizing the possible contributions of indigenous knowledge and values in finding climate solutions.

Inclusion was identified as a sub-theme under recognition. In all three seminars speakers express the need to be included better in decision-making nationally, at the EU level, as well as on the international arenas. For example, Anni-Sofia Niittyvuopio states:

‘It [A just future for the Sámi youth] is us being in the EU, UN, in the parliaments of our countries, but most importantly it means our own parliaments, our own institutions, our own decisions.’ (Saami Council, 2022, June 21).

This statement foreshadows the next theme of self-determination explored in the following section. The need to be included is in some cases expressed through frustration over being excluded. As presented earlier in the COP26 seminar description, for example, Lasse Eriksen Bjørn questions why big business is given so much space in the climate meeting, while

indigenous people have only ‘a small pavilion in the corner’ (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9). Åsa Larsson Blind expresses similar thoughts, and expands on the importance of recognising the value of indigenous knowledge:

‘There is such a valuable knowledge base in withing the Sámi-indigenous knowledge. It is knowledge that could inform decisions and contribute to finding sustainable solutions for the future, for our areas and the world. This is something indigenous knowledge holders of indigenous peoples all over the world could contribute with. But up until now we are being kept from contributing by the exclusion from decision making for us, and this is not just. And it does not make up for a good foundation to take the necessary decisions towards the sustainable future where every voice is included. Not until the Sámi and other indigenous peoples have the real and meaningful participation, not until then will it be possible to make use of the extensive knowledge that indigenous peoples have about their own lands. [...]. Participation is truly a question of justice in all sectors.’ (Julie’s Bicycle, 2022, April 12).

Next, I present the theme of self-determination, which tightly connects to recognition of indigenous rights, as well as inclusion.

### **5.2.3 Self-determination**

The right to self-determination is considered the most important one in the three seminars when it comes to recognizing indigenous rights, as has already been demonstrated in some of the presented quotations. Calls for self-determination include demands for strengthening Sámi institutions, redistributing power to Sámi instances, and better consultation mechanism that respect FPIC, and supporting Sámi knowledge institutions. In most statements the right to self-determination is seen as the most fundamental aspect of climate justice. For example, Åsa Larsson Blind states:

‘We the Sámi people have also the right to self-determination as many other peoples in the world. In my opinion we will not get a real change to this situation until the Sámi right to self-determination is implemented. This is

because it is a matter of the power to define what is important and it's a matter of being able to influence priorities and the outcomes of crucial decisions on land use. Without being part in the real decision-making processes it's not possible to have the necessary influence over decisions.' (Julie's Bicycle, 2022, April 12).

And later in the discussion she continues:

'We still have these injustices of being invisible in the state and national systems, so when we talk about participating the Sámi as the people need to have our own voice parallel. We need to have our own internal societal processes of developing our positions on things that we can then influence and give input to others. But since we are always a minority when we're talking about on a national level, our voices are not heard as long as we do not have our own voice parallel, and that's the self-determination.' (Julie's Bicycle, 2022, April 12).

Self-determination requires strengthening of Sámi institutions by for example financing and thus increasing the capacity to have internal discussions and participate in external discussions. Gunn-Britt Retter explains:

'We need to be facilitated so we can be at the decision-making tables at national level, regional level, and local level, and also international level. Financing, if we have to take on all these roles that we are calling for, being part of, having our knowledge holders at the table, and having participation in these positions and decision-making tables, we need to strengthen our institutions, we need to strengthen the Sámi parliaments in Sweden, Norway, Finland, so they can take on these role on behalf of their people. We need to strengthen our knowledge institutions so we can contribute with knowledge holders into IPCC reports, into Arctic Council reports.' (Bah Kuhnke, 2021, November 9).

In many ways the aspect of self-determination that is about being heard at decision-making tables at multiple levels is also tightly connected to inclusion, which I touched upon under recognition. I found it difficult to decide whether inclusion would be a subtheme under recognition, or self-determination, as it is integral to both.

#### **5.2.4 Biodiversity**

The last identified theme concerns biodiversity. In statements made by Sámi representatives in all three seminars, the green transition should not only be considered a matter of energy, but a matter of ecosystems' quality. It is healthy and well-functioning ecosystems that ultimately sustain Sámi way of life. Thus, climate justice in a Sámi context would require considerations of biodiversity in addition to the changing climate. Åsa Larsson-Blind explains:

‘I would say that healthy ecosystems are the basis of our Sámi culture, and that’s because they give us the possibility to sustain ourselves through our traditional livelihoods. In my family’s case it’s reindeer herding.’ (Julie’s Bicycle, 2022, April 12).

Anni-Sofia Niittyvuopio also appeals for biodiversity at the EU seminar: ‘Just future means also fully protecting the 80% of the world’s biodiversity protected by indigenous peoples.’ (Saami Council 2022, June 21). References are made to the fact that biodiversity is declining at much slower rates at areas of indigenous control (IPBES, 2019). Protecting Sámi livelihoods is thus presented as a great way to protect biodiversity, and thus a way for the Sámi to contribute to the green transition by using their own environmental management practices.

### **5.3 Secondary Data Documents – Category One**

After having presented the findings from the three seminars, I move to the secondary data documents for category one – the documents from Sámi sources. A comprehensive list of the included documents, as well as their producers, and dates of publication are provided for in

table 1. The same themes that were identified from the three seminars are reoccurring in the documents as well.

<b>Title of the document</b>	<b>Producer/Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Sámi youths' declaration on climate change</b>	Nordic Sámi Youth Conference by the youth councils of the three Sámi Parliaments	2021, August 23
<b>Fact sheet: Renewable Energy Projects on Sámi Territory</b>	Saami Council	2020, September 3
<b>Saami Council Position Paper</b>	Saami Council	2015, October 11
<b>Statement of the Sámi Parliamentary Council on wind power projects in Sámi areas</b>	Sámi Parliamentary Council	2021, January 25
<b>Climate policy strategy of the Saami Parliamentary Council</b>	Sámi Parliamentary Council	2010, April 14
<b>Klimaendringer og rettferdig utvikling – Sak 032/19 [Climate change and just development – Case 032/19]</b>	Sámi Parliament of Norway	2019, January 29
<b>Sametingets syn på VINDKRAFT I SÁPMI – 090219§12 [The Sámi Parliament's view on wind energy]</b>	Sámi Parliament of Sweden	2009, February 19
<b>Saamelaiskäräjien asiantuntijalausunto maa- ja metsätalousvaliokunnalle hallituksen esityksestä</b>	Sámi Parliament of Norway	2022, March 16

<b>ilmastolaiksi HE 27/2022 vp [Expert opinion of the Sámi Parliament to the agriculture and forestry committee on the government’s climate law proposal]</b>		
<b>Indigenous Cultures must not be forced to bear the brunt of global climate adaptation – Arctic Today website newspaper opinion</b>	Gunn Britt-Retter	2021, November 25
<b>‘Green’ colonialism is ruining Indigenous lives in Norway – Al Jazeera Opinion</b>	Eva Maria Fjellheim, & Florian Carl	2020, August 1
<b>Green colonialism, wind energy and climate justice in Sápmi – IWGIA news</b>	Eva Maria Fjellheim	2022, November 12

Table 1. Category one documents from the Sámi sources.

### 5.3.1 Green Colonialism

Out of the 11 documents five explicitly use the term green colonialism, the three articles written by individual representatives, the Youth Declaration, and the document from the Sámi Parliament of Norway. Some quotations from the documents defining green colonialism include:

‘The green shift is nothing more than a continued extraction of resources in Sámi areas, as has been the tradition since the earliest encounters between cultures. The difference is that resource utilization has been given a nice colour, green; we call it ‘green colonization.’ (Retter, 2021).

‘It means that climate action must be built upon the right measures and climate justice. Indigenous people can for example not approve that their lands are unilaterally reduced by industry whose goal is to produce renewable energy, and more industry. These kind of green energy projects can take place when the indigenous people consent to them, and when they justly receive their share of the benefits of the project. If not, this will result in a type of green colonialism for the indigenous people. Extraction of non-renewable resources such as minerals can be a part of the so-called green shift. Therefore a green shift can be used as an argument for establishing new industry that leads to displacement of indigenous business practice. It could paradoxically become a major threat to indigenous peoples’ material cultural basis.’ (Sámi Parliament of Norway, 2019; own translation from Norwegian)

Worries that are mentioned in the documents in relation to the green transition reflect the concept of green colonialism as explained in these two quotes. The worry is that actions to mitigate climate change will have negative impacts on Sámi people due to lack of consideration for indigenous rights, and failure to include indigenous voices in policymaking at national and international levels. For example, the Saami Council Fact sheet on renewable energy projects in Sápmi (Saami Council, 2020) explains how reindeer herding, one of the cornerstones of Sámi culture, is threatened by multiple competing land use, wind energy being one of them. The paper explains:

‘The demand for renewable energy is rapidly increasing and placing an expanding pressure on land use in Sápmi. Research shows that wind farms established on Sámi land add to the impact of already on-going human activities such as roads, forestry, hydropower, and mining. Together such activities fragment the landscape creating a complex pattern of cumulative impacts’ (Saami Council, 2020, p. 1).

FPIC is presented as the appropriate way of dealing with wind energy on Sámi land. The Sámi Parliamentary Council in their statement on wind power projects follows similar line with the Saami Council. The parliamentary council states that

‘Projects in Sámi areas must not disrupt the Sámi culture. Land use by others and in competing form constantly grow in the Sámi areas, and the needs of traditional Sámi livelihoods and other types of land use are often interested in the same areas of land so clashed and conflicts have been inevitable. Many of the Sámi Reindeer Herding Cooperatives think that traditional land use is already squeezed between competing forms and its further fragmentation must be stopped.’ (Sámi Parliamentary Council, 2021, p. 2).

They also refer to FPIC and better negotiations as a remedy for the issue. Importantly, they also demand ‘a comprehensive assessment of the cumulative effects of all the forms of land use in the planning phase of the wind power project development’ (Sámi Parliamentary Council, 2021, p. 3). The Sámi Parliament of Sweden in their paper on wind energy also states that the concern that wind power expansion can only be acceptable if it does not harm Sámi culture:

‘We the Sámi must be able to continue living in Sápmi and develop our culture. A prerequisite for that is a good living environment with continued access to land and water. The Sámi Parliament's view on environmental issues is reflected in a specially developed environmental program. In order for us to have access to land and water, our view that the whole picture is important, and our landscape perspective must be taken into account in community planning. A possible expansion of wind power must take place in a way that does not limit or contravene our opportunity to live and develop within Sápmi.’ (Sámi Parliament of Sweden, 2009, p. 5, own translation from Swedish).

Many of the documents also mention the so-called double burden of climate change that the Sámi people are facing. The Sámi face difficulties from the physical changes caused by climate change itself, in addition to the policies designed to mitigate to climate change:

‘Recently, Saami reindeer herders have suffered from frozen and inaccessible winter pastures, as well as instable and unsafe ice to cross during migrations. At the same time, further encroachments on reindeer herding lands from the so-called ‘green’ industries reduce the flexibility on which sustainable reindeer herding depends. As such, Saami reindeer herders face a double burden from climate change *and* its mitigation measures, while Saami knowledge, practices, and stewardship are disregarded and ignored in climate change mitigation efforts.’ (Fjellheim, 2022)

The point about reduced flexibility of reindeer herding (and other traditional Sámi livelihoods such as fishing) because of competing land use is reoccurring in the data. Traditional Sámi reindeer herding relies on flexible use of resources and land to adapt to everchanging environmental conditions (Björklund, 2004; Löf, 2013). For reindeer herding to be able to adapt to the challenging conditions imposed by climate change, even more flexibility in a diversity of available land areas is required (Löf, 2013). Retter explains rationale behind this:

‘If the culture stands strong, and one is able to control one’s own adaptation measures, and if other external stressors and pressures are kept at the minimum – then the people of that culture possess an ability to adapt to the prevailing conditions at any given time. Gal mii birget – we will cope – we often say. [...]. Reindeer husbandry and small-scale fisheries need more flexibility to adapt to their activities, not less flexibility, which are the consequences of the green shift.’ (Retter, 2021)

In many of the documents it is recognised that renewable energy, and green transition related mining projects have already caused harms on Sámi communities by way of further fragmenting land needed for reindeer herding. In fact, many of the included documents have been written for the specific purpose of responding to these harms and call for a rights based-approach to the green transition.

### 5.3.2 Recognition

Recognition is a theme found in the documents similarly to the seminars. As in the seminars, also here recognition is called for a diverse variety of issues. Firstly, some documents call for the general recognition that renewable energy projects could have and have had negative impacts on the Sámi people. For example, Fjellheim and Carl write:

‘Some 98 percent of Norway’s electricity production today comes from renewable energy sources. But in most public debates or political decisions, the detrimental impact this has had on Saami livelihoods is readily overlooked.’ (2020, p. 3)

In this comment the authors refer to the impacts of past hydropower developments that reduced reindeer pastures in Southern Sámi areas. This is in line with Åsa Össbo’s point in the COP26 seminar, where she called for recognition of the impacts hydropower developments have had on the Sámi at the Swedish side. Recognition for the accumulated impacts from multiple industries was also called for:

‘In such a project as we are talking about here [referring to wind power projects in Norway and Arctic Railway in Finland], it is crucial that the rights holders and Sami interests have the capacity and competence to be heard and that their rights can be safeguarded through capacity building and full equal participation. In such cases, it is crucial that the accumulated consequences for reindeer husbandry are included in the assessments when it comes to sums of the many land interventions.’ (Sámi Parliament of Norway, 2019; own translation from Norwegian).

Many documents included the need to recognise climate change as a human rights issue, and hence how measures to combat climate change affecting indigenous people should be informed by indigenous peoples’ rights. The documents called for recognising Sámi as an indigenous people that international indigenous rights apply to. This includes recognition for the fact that Sámi must be included in the processes that will affect them, as well as ensuring

that indigenous institutions have the capacity to participate. These sentiments shone through in for example these statements in the texts:

‘The Saami Parliamentary Council (SPC) praises the UN’s Human Rights Council for its decision and its action to underscore the connection between climate change and universal human rights and for the consideration given to the vulnerable situation of the indigenous peoples in this context. SPC considers that the initiation of various activities in connection to climate change impacts in many ways on the human rights of indigenous peoples. The voice of indigenous peoples needs to be clearly heard in connection of global climate negotiations.’ (Sámi Parliamentary Council, 2010, p. 1)

‘Therefore, it is crucial that basic human rights and indigenous rights are strengthened and form the basis for an absolutely necessary and binding follow-up of the prerequisites for the Paris Agreement.’ (Sámi Parliament of Norway, 2019, own translation from Norwegian).

‘The Saami Parliaments must be able to participate equally in the decision-making process regarding climate change at national and international level. The Saami parliaments are to be given broader rights to decide on administration and governance in their own areas.’ (Sámi Parliamentary Council, 2010, p. 1)

‘The Sámi people’s status as Indigenous People must be acknowledged in the decision-making concerning land and water use in Sámi homeland, and the rights attributed to them and laid down in law in national level and in international human-rights conventions. Any wind power projects planned for the Sámi areas must have free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) from the Sámi Parliament and the representatives and right-holders of local, traditional livelihoods in the area [...].’ (Sámi Parliamentary Council, 2021, p. 3).

In the referred statements the subtheme of inclusion is also visible. Demands are made to ensure indigenous inclusion and participation in climate decision making at all levels, as is their right as indigenous people. This is seen as a prerequisite for climate justice. The Sámi youth make this point in their declaration as well:

‘We demand that we are equally involved in conversations regarding climate change at a national and international level as expert speakers and knowledge holders.’ (Nordic Sámi Youth Conference, 2021)

Questions of indigenous rights and participation naturally overlap with the next theme, self-determination.

### **5.3.3 Self-determination**

As already visible in some of the citations of the previous section, strengthening of Sámi self-determination is demanded, and seen as a fundamental step in climate justice. Especially FPIC is referred to within this context and seen as an important tool to implement self-determination when it comes to industrial projects on Sámi lands. These sentiments are demonstrated in the following quotations:

‘Based on their right to self-determination, the Sámi have the rights, as people, to make decisions on their political circumstances, promote their financial, social, and cultural development and to make decisions on their natural resources and their occurrences, and they must under no circumstances be deprived of their right to the national resources that are fundamental to their existence [...].’ (Sámi Parliamentary Council, 2021, p. 1)

‘Sami self-determination means that the Sami's position must be decisive in matters that affect them as Sami.’ (Sámi Parliament of Sweden, 2009, p. 11; own translation from Swedish)

‘As our culture lives through nature and the environment, we demand that the mining and energy companies restore nature to its original state. We demand

stricter laws to control these companies' actions and to truly implement self-governance. We do not accept that these companies merely inform us about their plans. We demand equal negotiations and the right to decline these projects.' (Nordic Sámi Youth Conference, 2021).

'Interventions should not take place in indigenous people's areas without the affected indigenous people having given their free and informed consent.'  
(Sámi Parliament of Norway, 2019; own translation from Norwegian).

What is called for in these statements and by using FPIC is ensuring that issues that concern the Sámi will be decided upon by the Sámi, and not by outside actors. This includes all types of resource extraction that would impact Sámi reindeer herding or other livelihoods, or cultural pursuits in any way. In the statement of the Sámi Parliamentary Council, it is also stated that the Sámi should control the natural resources that are fundamental to their existence, for example the reindeer herding pastures necessary for a viable reindeer herding practice, or the waters needed for fishing practices.

#### **5.3.4 Biodiversity**

The theme of biodiversity is very consistent in the secondary documents as well. Almost all the documents in some form or another refer to the importance of viable ecosystems for a thriving Sámi culture. The following quotation demonstrates this sentiment:

'An ecological long-term perspective and stewardship of natural resources is a central part of the development of Sami culture, and an ecologically and economically viable society is the best guarantee for preserving the high environmental and cultural values found within Sápmi.' (Sámi Parliament of Sweden, 2009, p. 9; own translation from Swedish)

From the documents it becomes apparent that the green transition should not just be a matter of green energy, but also a matter of ecological quality. This makes protection of biodiversity a key requirement for indigenous climate justice. This is stated for example by the Sámi Parliament of Finland:

‘Therefore, striving for carbon neutrality, strengthening carbon sinks, curbing global warming and preventing the impoverishment of biodiversity are necessary measures for the future of the Sámi people.’ (Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2022, p.1; own translation from Finnish).

#### 5.4 Secondary Data Documents – Category Two

In this section I move to presenting the findings from the category two documents: the state and EU level documents. First, I present the findings from the three states, and then from the EU. A comprehensive list of all analysed documents is found in table 2.

<b>Title of the document</b>	<b>Producer</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Act relating to Norway’s climate targets (Climate Change Act)</b>	Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment	2017, June
<b>Norway’s Climate Action Plan for 2021-2030 – Report to the Storting (white paper)</b>	Norwegian Ministry of Climate and Environment	2021, January 8
<b>Ilmastolaki 423/2022 [Climate Act]</b>	Finnish Ministry of the Environment	2022, June 14
<b>Medium-term Climate Change Policy Plan: Towards a carbon-neutral society in 2035</b>	Finnish Ministry of the Environment	2022, July 11
<b>Klimatlag (2017:720) [Climate Act]</b>	Swedish Ministry of Climate and Business	2017, June 22
<b>Sweden’s long-term strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions</b>	Swedish Ministry of the Environment	2020, December

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>REGULATION (EU) 2021/119 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 (‘European Climate Law’)</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The European Parliament, &amp; the Council of the European Union</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021, June 30</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A stronger EU engagement for a peaceful, sustainable and prosperous Arctic.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">European Commission High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2021, October 13</p>

Table 2. Category two documents from the Norwegian, Finnish, and Swedish states, and the EU.

#### **5.4.1 Findings from Documents of the Three States**

Already in the climate acts differences are seen between the three Nordic states. The acts of Norway and Sweden are both much shorter in length than the Finnish one. The Norwegian and Swedish acts have no mention of Sámi, or social justice in general, but focus on just stating the specific climate emission reduction targets of the two states, and how often the targets should be renewed. The Swedish act does contain some sentiments of protecting the ecosystems, for example in clause 2, by stating that environments should be preserved so they can counteract climate change, probably referring to carbon sinks (Klimatlag, 2017, § 2).

Clause 2 also states that climate policy to reach the emission reduction targets should be informed by science but also relevant technical, social, economic, and environmental considerations (Klimatlag, 2017, § 2). The Norwegian climate act does not mention such considerations.

Unlike the climate acts of Norway and Sweden, the climate act of Finland is also meant to be a tool to strengthen public participation in climate policymaking and ensure justice in climate policy (Ilmastolaki, 2022, p. 1-2). Furthermore, ensuring that the Sámi have the prerequisites to maintain and develop their culture and language is a specific goal of the law (Ilmastolaki, 2022, § 2). In the act that was renewed in 2022, Sámi rights are the main point of two clauses. First in § 14 the rights of the Sámi to develop their language and culture is stated (Ilmastolaki, 2022). To protect this right, the clause repeats the obligation of authorities to negotiate with the Sámi about any climate change related issues concerning the Sámi homeland area. This obligation stems from Act on the Sámi Parliament (1995) and would be valid even if it is not stated here, yet stating it here is a way to recognise that climate policy specifically can have impacts on Sámi rights. Another clause fully dedicated to Sámi interests is clause 21 where it is stated that a Sámi climate panel should be formed out of Sámi knowledge holders who could make statements of the national policy plans, as well as produce information on issues of climate change and Sámi rights and culture (Ilmastolaki, 2022, § 21). It is further established that statements must always be acquired from the Sámi Parliament and the Skolt Sámi Siida Council<sup>17</sup> when preparing climate policy plans. Regarding biodiversity, clause 8 states that the impact of climate policies on biodiversity must be considered, as well as social impacts (Ilmastolaki, 2022, § 8).

The climate policy strategies also show considerable differences between the three states in terms of how Sámi concerns are included. Most important differences already stem from different levels of recognition of the fact that the Sámi people might be negatively impacted by the policies. For example, in the Norwegian climate action plan (Meld. St. 13

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<sup>17</sup> The Skolt Sámi have traditionally inhabited the northeaster parts of Northern Norway and Finnish Lapland, as well as the Kola peninsula. In Finland the Skolt Sámi have a siida [Sámi village] council that is based on customary decision making and recognised in Finnish law as the actor deciding upon matters concerning Skolt livelihoods. The council gathers for decision-making at least once a year.

<https://www.kolttasaamelaiset.fi/kolttien-kylakokous/yleista/>

(2020–2021)) the Sámi are not mentioned at all, while in the Swedish one (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020) the Sámi are mentioned once in relation to climate adaptation. In stark contrast, in the Finnish one (Finnish Ministry of the Environment, 2022) the Sámi are mentioned 32 times, as the policy plan, similarly to the Climate Act, has been crafted in negotiation with the Sámi Parliament and the Skolt Sámi Siida Council. The policy recognises that climate actions can have an impact on the Sámi (and other groups in society) and therefore has extensively consulted them, as well as the public in general when crafting this policy. At points the concerns brought forward by the Sámi in these negotiations are mentioned in the documents, such as the need to compensate if any negative impacts on traditional livelihoods would occur, or how increased interest in mineral mining is seen ‘as a challenge to Sámi livelihoods’ (Finnish Ministry of the Environment, 2022, p. 176). There is no mention on impacts on the Sámi by renewable energy projects.

Overall, the Finnish policy differs from the other two with its focus on a human rights conscious approach to climate policy. In the beginning of the document, general human rights commitments to equality and non-discrimination are stated, as well as stating that the transition should be ‘as fair as possible’ (Finnish Ministry of the Environment, 2022, p. 14). Furthermore, when evaluating the costs of the transition, there is a section on social impacts, which is something that is absent from the Norwegian and Swedish ones. Social acceptance of different climate measures such as electrification, tax reforms, or changes in transportation is also discussed from data gathered from citizens surveys done prior to crafting the document. Sámi are not specifically mentioned in this section, but at many points it is emphasized that climate measures need to rest on ideas of equality and non-discrimination.

In the Norwegian plan, social considerations of the policies are scarce. One of the only references to social justice is made when referring to the principles of the European Green Deal which states that ‘it is essential to the success of the green deal that it is both fair and inclusive’ (Meld. St. 13 (2020–2021), p. 42). Renewable energy is a big focus of the paper. On page 19 it is stated that ‘the aim is that in 2030, Norway will be a major producer of renewable energy’ (Meld. St. 13 (2020–2021)). It is stated later in the paper under a section titled ‘Renewable energy is making the green transition possible’ that the development of renewable energy should not result in ‘unacceptable consequences for communities or for environmental and other important public interests’ (Meld. St. 13 (2020–2021), p. 217) and

evaluation of the disadvantages and advantages to the society must be made beforehand. Yet on the next page it is stated that:

‘It is not possible to avoid negative impacts on the environment or other interests completely when developing renewable energy production and expanding the electricity grid. It is important to safeguard Norway’s valuable and varied landscapes, ecosystems, habitats and species. Environmental impacts are therefore always weighed against public interests in all development projects.’ (Meld. St. 13 (2020–2021), p. 218)

When discussing appropriate locations for energy production, environmental value and biodiversity are considered. Negative impacts of both wind power and hydropower mentioned in the document are impacts on biodiversity, landscapes, the cultural environment, and ‘people’s enjoyment of the outdoors’ (Meld. St. 13 (2020–2021), p. 218). It is also admitted that wind farms require large land areas and cause habitat fragmentation for mammals and birds. No mention is given to how Sámi rights and interests are impacted, or considered in these processes where the interests of the society are to be considered. Reindeer herding is not mentioned specifically in the document, only in relation to new technologies in food production.

The Swedish plan is in many ways like the Norwegian (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020). When discussing previous hydropower establishments and their positive contributions to Swedish climate targets nothing is mentioned of the negative impacts of them to the Sámi, or the fact that most of them are in Sápmi. Sweden alongside Norway is ambitious about expanding its renewable energy production with wind power among other things. The policy paper describes there to be 300 areas in Sweden suitable for wind energy. Nothing is mentioned of the possible negative impacts or costs of wind power expansion. When evaluating the costs of the transition, focus is on monetary value, and synergies between some climate measures and other goals. For example, electrification of cars is presented to improve air quality in urban environments, but nothing is mentioned for example of the greater need for minerals that electric cars necessitate (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020, p. 81). Societal concerns expressed in the document are encapsulated in these quotes:

‘The climate transition needs to be made in such a way that everyone has an opportunity to be part of the solution’ (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020, p. 8).

‘In the transition, it is also important to take into account distributional and regional effects, as different households have different opportunities to adapt to new instruments’ (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020, p. 81).

Furthermore, a Climate Policy Council that began its work 2018 has the mandate to ‘shed light on the impacts of decided and proposed policy instruments from a broad societal perspective’ (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020, p. 13). Members of this council are scientific experts.

What all the policy documents share is concerns over biodiversity, which is one of the identified concerns of the Sámi representatives. The Norwegian plan, for example, states that biodiversity must be protected in renewable energy developments. Overall biodiversity is mentioned 55 times in the Norwegian document (Meld. St. 13 (2020–2021)). High biodiversity is seen as helpful in climate mitigation. In the Finnish document, biodiversity is mentioned 8 times, and there is a section evaluating the negative impacts of climate policies on biodiversity and quality of nature. It is recognised that mitigating climate change will be beneficial for the environment, but simultaneously the document recognises that constructing renewable energy and production of electric vehicles ‘consumes natural resources, which will partly mitigate the environmental benefits’ (Finnish Ministry of the Environment, 2022, p. 186). The Swedish document states that one aspect of Swedish climate goals is ‘an overarching environmental quality objective linked to reducing the average global temperature increase’ (Swedish Ministry of the Environment, 2020, p. 9). Biodiversity is mentioned 4 times, mostly in relation to forest management and rewetting drained wetlands.

In summary, the Sámi and their rights are recognised to a very low degree, with the Finnish documents being the exception. None of the documents explicitly mention Sámi self-determination, or how previous projects have already caused harm on Sámi people. In the Finnish policy there has been made the greatest effort to include Sámi in the policy crafting, and a Sámi climate panel will be created to ensure the inclusion of Sámi knowledge in climate

policymaking. The Finnish policy is also the only one that has been crafted with the intention of making the transition more socially acceptable. Based on the documents included here, it is unclear how the Sámi are going to be included in the crafting of climate policy in Sweden and Norway.

#### **5.4.2 Findings from Documents of the EU**

The European Climate Law formulates the official emission reduction commitments of the EU (European Climate Law, 2021). By 2050 the European Union will be carbon neutral. The Sámi are not mentioned in the document. However, the law does rest upon the principles of a socially fair and inclusive transition of the European Green Deal. This is stated for example in the following quote: ‘The Union’s and Member states’ actions [...] should also take into account the ‘do not harm’ principle of the European Green Deal’ (European Climate Law, p. 3). The inclusivity part is ensured by encouraging public engagement in climate policymaking. This is demonstrated in the following two quotes:

‘As citizens and communities have a powerful role to play in driving the transformation towards climate neutrality forward, strong public and social engagement on climate action should be both encouraged and facilitated at all levels, including at national, regional and local level in an inclusive and accessible process. The Commission should therefore engage with all parts of society, including stakeholders representing different sectors of the economy, to enable and empower them to take action towards a climate-neutral and climate-resilient society, including through the European Climate Pact.’ (European Climate Law, 2021, p. 8).

‘Each Member State shall establish a multilevel climate and energy dialogue pursuant to national rules, in which local authorities, civil society organisations, business community, investors and other relevant stakeholders and the general public are able actively to engage and discuss the achievement of the Union’s climate-neutrality objective set out in Article 2(1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 and the different scenarios envisaged for energy and climate policies, including for the long term, and review progress,

unless it already has a structure which serves the same purpose. Integrated national energy and climate plans may be discussed within the framework of such a dialogue.’ (European Climate Law, 2021, p. 16).

Regarding adaptation the climate law, document states that focus should be on the most vulnerable and impacted populations, and that shortcomings in adaptation efforts should be identified ‘in consultation with the civil society’ (European Climate Law, Article 5). The law does not mention shortcomings of climate mitigation measures such as renewable energy projects.

Scientific advisory boards are called for to advise authorities. The European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change consists of scientific experts, while nothing is mentioned of the role of indigenous knowledge in these processes. Biodiversity concerns on the other hand are included in the document, as the documents state that biodiversity and the integrity of ecosystems should be protected against climate change.

The second EU document, the Arctic strategy, explains EU’s vision for its engagement in the Arctic ‘for a peaceful, sustainable, and prosperous Arctic’ (European Commission, 2021). Here, as opposed to the Climate Law, indigenous people are already mentioned in the first paragraph:

‘Being a major economic player, it [European Union] shares the responsibility for global sustainable development including in the Arctic regions, and for the livelihoods of inhabitants, including Indigenous Peoples. The EU exerts a significant impact on the Arctic through its environmental footprint and demand for resources and products originating there.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 1).

In the quotation, the EU recognises its impact on the Arctic and its indigenous peoples, which explains the wide inclusion of indigenous concerns in the Arctic strategy document. The document recognises the legal framework of indigenous rights, including FPIC, as the guiding principles when dealing with indigenous peoples’, also in the context of the green transition:

‘The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is integral to the EU’s human rights policy. The EU will promote Indigenous Peoples’ rights and freedoms in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No 169, and encourage full consultation and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples, bearing in mind the principle of free, prior and informed consent, before adopting and implementing measures that may affect them directly.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 14).

Especially the inclusion of indigenous communities in the green transition decision-making is emphasized like outlined in the Climate Law, as demonstrated in the following quotations:

‘The EU will invest in the future of people living in the Arctic, stimulating better education, sustainable growth and jobs, including more involvement of young people, women and Indigenous Peoples in Arctic decision-making, on issues such as innovation and research, job creation, digital skills and education.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 13).

‘People are the key to sustainable development and resilient societies. The Arctic regions are diverse in terms of ethnicities, governance, economies, demographics, migration patterns and social realities. A sustainable way forward requires inclusive dialogue, diversity and meaningful participation in decision-making at all levels.’ (European Commission, 2021, p.13).

Arctic Stakeholders’ Forum and Indigenous Peoples Dialogue are presented as the forums to achieve these objectives. The document also states that the EU holds close contact with the Saami Council, which the EU Sápmi week discussed earlier in this chapter demonstrates. The event would not have happened without EU funding through the Interreg Nord programme, which is also mentioned in the Arctic strategy. The EU offers financial support programs for Sámi and Inuit communities and entrepreneurs in the Arctic (European Commission, 2021, p. 13).

The Arctic Strategy alongside the national documents from Sweden, Norway, and Finland recognises the interdependency of climate change and biodiversity (European

Commission, 2021, p. 7), and promises action towards environmentally harmful resource extraction, as well as environmental pollution:

‘The EU will act against major sources of pollution affecting the Arctic regions in the air, on land and at sea, such as plastics/marine litter, black carbon, chemicals, and transport emissions as well as unsustainable exploitation of natural resources.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 7).

Based on the Sámi documents reviewed, the point about combatting unsustainable resource exploitation is most important for the Sámi, as numerous mines and wind energy plants have been built or are being planned across Sápmi to supply minerals and energy for the green transition. The Arctic strategy is however very positive towards growth of resource extraction in the Arctic.

The Arctic Policy recognises that the Arctic has a large potential to supply renewable energy, which is in the EUs interest. In addition, the Arctic is seen as a critical supplier of minerals:

‘The eight Arctic States are potentially significant suppliers of critical and other raw materials, and there are already important mineral extraction activities in the European Arctic: Sweden plans to produce iron ore in a carbon neutral way by 2035 for instance.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 9).

The document states however that these mineral extractions will be done according to human rights standards, and in an environmentally sustainable way:

‘The EU Action Plan on Critical Raw Minerals aims to ensure a sustainable and secure supply of critical minerals for EU industry, with full respect for and involvement of local and indigenous communities. The EU principles for sustainable raw materials underline the importance of sound environmental management and biodiversity protection, promote efficient energy use, support climate change mitigation and adaptation, and contribute to the resilience of

indigenous people in the face of climate change effects.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 10).

In the quotation, the EU claims that mineral extraction could be done in a way that not only respects indigenous rights, but also increases the resilience of indigenous peoples. The Arctic Strategy also recognises the importance of indigenous knowledge in the transition: ‘The EU will invest in Arctic research under Horizon Europe, including cooperation with indigenous knowledge holders.’ (European Commission, 2021, p. 15)

## **5.5 Summary of Findings**

In this chapter I have presented findings from the Sámi sources under four themes: green colonialism, recognition, self-determination, and biodiversity. These four themes capture the core findings from the Sámi documents, describing Sámi concerns regarding the green transition, as well as aspects of climate justice specific to a Sámi context. I have shown how the green transition taking place in Sápmi today is experienced and referred to as green colonialism by Sámi representatives. By presenting the data I have answered the first empirical research question of this thesis. As a response to the concerns, the data shows that the conceptions of climate justice of Sámi representatives ultimately rest on respect for indigenous rights, especially Sámi self-determination. Recognition for past and current colonial structures is necessary to prevent reproduction of colonial relations in climate decision making. Additionally, reaching justice requires respect for FPIC, as well as protection of well-functioning and diverse ecosystems that are vital for Sámi culture. All these findings are in line with the indigenous environmental justice (IEJ) framework presented in chapter three and are discussed in the next chapter.

In the second part of the chapter, I presented findings from the state and EU documents, showing that the identified Sámi concerns are included in them to a limited degree, answering the second research question. According to my interpretations, the Finnish and EU documents were most inclusive of Sámi concerns, while the Swedish and Norwegian ones left a lot to be wished for. Concerns of biodiversity were included in all documents, while only half of the documents referred to indigenous rights. No document showed recognition for how past energy or mining developments have had long-lasting impacts on the Sámi, recognition of colonialism, or Sámi nature relations.

In the next chapter I continue the analysis by discussing the findings guided by the theoretical framework presented in chapter three.

## 6 Discussion

‘No policy, either climate-based or otherwise, is going to be successful in the long run if it does not result in genuine restructuring and transformation of contemporary relationships between the state and Indigenous peoples.’

(McGregor, 2019, p. 140).

### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on discussing the third and main research question of this thesis, what indigenous climate justice entails in a Sámi context, based on the answers to the empirically based research questions one and two presented in the previous chapter. Research question one asked about the core concerns of Sámi representatives in the green transition, while research question two investigated to what extent these concerns are represented in the chosen state policy documents. As presented in the findings, core Sámi concerns can be summarized into the theme and concept of green colonialism, entailing the continuation of imbalanced power structures that limit Sámi self-determination in the face of competing land use. The negative impacts on reindeer herding and fear of further loss of culture due to fragmentation or loss of land as a result of the green transition is concerning to the Sámi representatives. Accumulative impacts of previous developments are felt and found unjust, and respect for indigenous rights is found to be lacking. This finding is in line with previous literature on green colonialism that was presented in chapter three (Fjellheim, 2023; Kuokkanen, 2022; Normann, 2021). Analyses of the EU and state documents suggested that the identified Sámi concerns are included to a very limited degree, if at all, in the most important climate policy documents<sup>18</sup>. This sentiment was in line with the Sámi representatives’ experience of exclusion in climate policymaking at international and national levels. The findings of this study were also in line with what the academic literature suggests is needed for justice in indigenous environmental situations, as outlined in chapter three.

Based on the findings and informed by the theoretical framework of indigenous environmental justice (IEJ) and additional ideas by Whyte (2020a) and Reibold (2022), in this

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<sup>18</sup> Here I must note that I have only looked at a very limited number of policy-documents due to having to limit the amount of data to fit the constraints of a master thesis. Further studies could shed light on the wider set of policies and laws that are used in climate-policymaking and how Sámi interests are included in those.

chapter I emphasize discussing research question three, the elements of indigenous climate justice in a Sámi context. Since the main concern of Sámi representatives in the face of the green transition is reproduction of colonial relations, it is only logical that a fundament of climate justice is a recognition and reconciliation of colonialism and strengthened indigenous self-determination. The next two sections discuss these two points. In the final section I discuss the theme of biodiversity and how that relates to the IEJ framework.

## **6.2 Recognition of Colonial Pasts and Presents**

The sentiments of Sámi representatives and citations from the documents fall in line with the IEJ framework which argues that environmental injustices, such as perceived injustice of the green transition, are ‘inevitably tied to, and symptomatic of, ongoing processes of colonialism [...]’ (McGregor et al., 2020, p. 36). The green transition in a Sámi context is experienced as a continuation of past colonial structures and is tightly connected to concerns over self-determination and continuation of Sámi way of life. According to McGregor (2019) only climate policy that acknowledges and recognises the past and present structures of colonialism and seeks to reconcile relations between the state and concerned indigenous people can succeed in avoiding further injustices. Lawrence & Åhren (2016) similarly argue that a recognition of historical injustices is the first step towards restorative justice. The Nordic states of Finland, Sweden, and Norway have a long way to go in this regard, as colonialism is not recognised to exist in these contexts today, nor is there agreement of the past as colonial. I argue that the lack of recognising past and present colonialism can stand in the way of implementing self-determination in the way that the Sámi understand it, as discussed in a later section of this chapter.

This section discusses the recognition of Sámi interest in the state and EU documents, as recognition<sup>19</sup> was identified as a core element of a climate justice approach in the understanding of the Sámi representatives, in addition to recognition of colonialism forming a vital part of the IEJ approach. In the data, recognition was called for the negative accumulated impacts of projects on the Sámi people, for the of structures of dominance, indigenous self-

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<sup>19</sup> I use recognition as an empirical theme describing patters in the gathered data. I will not go into the complex theoretical debates on recognition as a theoretical framework and as an analytical term in this thesis.

determination, and for the value of indigenous knowledge. On the other hand, the findings from the state documents demonstrate a lack of recognition of most of these concerns and are especially lacking in recognizing colonialism or Sámi self-determination. Even in the strongest documents from Finland and the EU, the Sámi are regarded as a stakeholder group whose livelihoods might be negatively impacted by green transition policies, not as rights-holders as indigenous people who should be able to self-determine their destinies, or who have experienced and continue to experience colonialism. Reconciliation as a goal of climate policy seems distant in the Nordic context in which recognition of past and present colonialism is still not a given. Time will show whether the reports of current truth and reconciliation commissions will change the understandings of colonialism in the three countries.<sup>20</sup>

### **6.2.1 Structures of Ignorance in Sweden and Norway**

As demonstrated in the findings, EU and national documents include the identified Sámi concerns to a very limited extent. The Norwegian documents do not mention the Sámi nor Sámi concerns at all apart from biodiversity, not in their climate acts nor in their climate policy plans, while the Swedish policies only mention the Sámi once in relation to climate adaptation. Both documents state that the transition should be fair and inclusive, yet do not propose how this is measured, or achieved, nor do they address the distinctive rights the Sámi should have in these processes. This is a concerning finding, especially when juxtaposed with the findings from Sámi institutions and representatives, and the fact that Sámi representatives and institutions have persistently communicated the costs of green transition projects on Sámi communities. Importantly, the majority of the contested green development projects are situated on the Norwegian and Swedish sides of Sápmi, such as the examples presented in the introduction chapter. Based on the studied climate policy documents, it is no wonder that

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<sup>20</sup> The Norwegian Commission is expected to give a report 2023 [https://uit.no/kommisjonen/mandat\\_en](https://uit.no/kommisjonen/mandat_en)  
The Swedish Commission will be completing its work in 2025 <https://www.sametinget.se/truth-commission>  
The Finnish Commission was appointed 2021 and is expected to finish its work in 2023 <https://sdtsk.fi/en/mandate/>

green transition policies end up reproducing colonial patterns, when the interests of the Sámi are absent.

Of course, the consultation legislations in Norway and Sweden still apply on an individual project level. In Sweden the consultation obligation is however brand new, and how it will change processes remains to be seen. In Norway the consultation arrangement has existed for a while, yet consultations have not succeeded in preventing conflicts between reindeer herders and companies. Consultations have even been criticized to perpetuate colonial patterns in wind licensing processes (Fjellheim, 2023). The findings of this study suggest that consultation and dialogue are not enough for securing indigenous rights in these processes. In the words of Eirik Larssen from the Saami Council: ‘It’s important with dialogue, but we need something more’ (Saami Council, 2022, June 21). He calls for an approach to self-determination that is consent-based and includes the right of the Sámi to also say no to unwanted projects. This aspect will be discussed in the next section.

Documents such as the studied are meant to communicate national strategies and values in climate policy and thus carry responsibility to set standards for the rest of society. The findings from the Sámi sources indicate that Sámi representatives do not experience being involved in designing climate policy at national or international levels, which is reflected in the final documents and local conflicts over green projects. Even when Sámi concerns are known, they are not weighted important enough to determine outcomes. Meaningful participation requires involvement from the very start of policy design, and a meaningful influence in the end results. The exclusion of the Sámi from the designing of these documents can to some extent explain the absence of Sámi concerns in them, but above all the exclusion and ignorance is built into the structures.

I suggest there to be elements of structural ignorance as theorized by Lawrence & O’Faircheallaigh (2022, p. 2) as something ‘people do not want to know’, and as something strategically cultivated around particular issues to ‘uphold particular social and environmental injustices.’ in the studied documents. Sweden and Norway’s climate policies are ultimately centred around becoming important suppliers of renewable energy, and the contestation to wind power projects by Sámi reindeer herding communities is a great inconvenience in that project. Furthermore, ‘green’ is often considered synonymous with morally justified or good, and ‘the common good’ argument is easily mobilized and accepted as a justification to devalue Sámi concerns or even neglect Sámi rights in renewable energy projects (Össbo,

2018, p. 74; Fjellheim, 2023; Lawrence, 2014). Ignorance in this context is convenience, a continuation of business-as-usual policymaking that does not require rethinking structures of power, or reconciliation of a colonial past and present. Here, ignorance becomes a manifestation of colonialism, as ignorance serves the interests of the settler and ‘maintains social inequalities’ (Lawrence & O’Faircheallaigh, 2022, p. 2) and status quo by placing the burdens of the green transition on the shoulders of the Sámi. This finding is in line with findings from previous studies. Fjellheim (2023) writes that ‘Norway’s green transition agenda devalues and renders Saami existence invisible’ and suggests that Sámi knowledge was strategically ignored in a wind power licensing project in Southern Sápmi. Normann (2019, p. 90) similarly has shed light on how colonial institutional relations in Norway ‘create institutional neglect and societal ignorance regarding Saami issues’ especially in wind energy projects. Based on the results of this study, as well as earlier studies, it seems that green projects in Sweden and Norway do not exist outside the structures of dominance and ignorance that have been historically constructed, but right in the heart of them. Any efforts to mitigate climate change in a just way must consciously recognise and address colonial dynamics.

Further studies need to be conducted to gain a fuller overview of Sámi possibilities to impact climate policy in the Nordic countries. The findings of this thesis, alongside previous studies, however, suggest that notwithstanding the institutions and procedures that have been put in place to secure Sámi self-determination, Sámi concerns can still be disregarded when making climate policy due to structural ignorance. Until these structural failures are acknowledged and addressed the processes will continue to fail the Sámi people. A climate justice approach in a Sámi context thus requires a recognition and reconciliation of a colonial past and present that manifests in the structures of governance. In addition, climate justice requires strengthening of Sámi self-determination. Self-determination understood as consultation and dialogue in a system where the state has the final say is not real self-determination.

### **6.2.2 Steps in the Right Direction in Finland and EU**

In the Finnish documents, Sámi are recognised as important stakeholders whose concerns have influenced the formulation of the policy, and Sámi rights to develop their culture are recognised. However, the Sámi are not referred to as right-holders but as stakeholders among

other citizens. Recognising Sámi as a stakeholder group who may be negatively impacted by green transition politics is an important first step, something that the Norwegian and Swedish policies have failed to do. Yet it is only a first step; as informed by the IEJ approach, and suggested by the data, recognition must be granted to colonialism as something that has negatively impacted indigenous groups, and as something that in many ways lives on in the structures of today, until addressed. McGregor formulates the importance of recognizing colonialism eloquently: ‘If environmental and/or climate policy does not address the fact that the interests and concerns of Indigenous peoples are rooted in a colonial history, they risk further entrenching an ongoing colonial legacy that alienates Indigenous peoples from their land and livelihood’ (McGregor, 2019, p. 143).

The Finnish documents do not mention colonialism. Even if the Finnish law and policy-document include Sámi concerns well compared to the other two states, it still does not recognise the Sámi as an *equal* partner in climate-decision making, nor is there any mention of indigenous self-determination, FPIC, or Sámi ontology of land. The Sámi are not These all are requirements of a decolonial climate justice approach identified in the data from the Sámi representatives, as well theorized by Jarratt-Snyder & Nielsen, (2020), McGregor (2019), Whyte (2022b), and Reibold (2022).

Thus, while the Finnish climate policy recognises to some extent the distinctive rights of the Sámi people, the impacts that climate policy can have on them, and recognises the need to consult Sámi institutions and Sámi knowledge-holders, it remains to be seen to what extent the Sámi concerns will sway decisions with regards to for example green mining in Finnish Sápmi, which there is a large interest for (Lassila, 2018). In other words, it remains to be seen to what extent words will translate to substantial changes. In this regard, questions arise as to whether consultations will include the ability of the Sámi to say no to projects or if the premises are set by the state or private actors. The Arctic Railway, for example, was for a long time to be built notwithstanding Sámi Parliament not giving consent to it due to large consequences for the Sámi culture. Finland has tended to grant extensive rights to the Sámi on paper yet lag behind for example Norway in the actual realization of them. The Sámi Parliament of Finland has been restricted in its work due to very low budgets granted to them, and therefore the formally extensive rights in the legislation have had limited impact (Josefsen et al., 2016). My hypothesis based on the IEJ literature is that as long as past and

present colonialism remains unaddressed, problems will continue arising in climate policymaking in Finland.

The EU documents demonstrate a large degree of recognition of indigenous rights, including FPIC, the importance of participation in decision-making, and the value of indigenous knowledge, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Here, especially in the recognition of FPIC, the EU is more progressive than the individual states, which has been a trend for the EU in also other areas of policy, such as climate ambitions. The EU seems to have a broader focus on the indigenous peoples in the Arctic and have for example made efforts to open an office in Nuuk, Greenland. This makes the EU seem like a hopeful avenue for change. However, the EU documents fail to include any statements of recognition of past and present colonialism and do not include much that would indicate an aim to reform the power relations between indigenous peoples and the states. At the end of the day the EU is still made up of individual states, some of which have structures that benefit from ignoring past and present colonialism. The documents also do make it very clear that the EU envisions the Arctic as a source of renewable resources and minerals. While the documents promise that the extraction of these will be done in a way that is even positive to indigenous communities, it does not outline any new concrete measures to achieve these. Importantly however, the documents do recognise the importance of FPIC, which is identified as an important aspect of self-determination in climate change policy identified from the Sámi documents. The importance of self-determination understood as consent will be discussed in the next section.

While Sámi representatives experience the green transition as green colonialism in the present, understood as a continuation of past colonial structures and accumulative pressures on Sámi land use, reference to colonialism is absent in both EU and state documents. In the past, environmental injustices have taken place in hydropower developments in Norwegian and Swedish sides of Sápmi (Össbo, 2018, 2022; Broderstad, 2014) justified by a ‘common good’ ideology that ignored the needs of Sámi reindeer herders (Össbo, 2018, p. 74; Lawrence, 2014). Today, projects linked to the green transition follow this colonial legacy, which remains unaddressed and ignored in climate policymaking, as shown in the data, and in the literature (Fjellheim, 2023, Kuokkanen, 2020; Lawrence, 2014; Normann, 2020). In the green transition project Sámi needs are sacrificed without sensitivity to the fact that the Sámi have already been subjected to loss of land and culture through centuries, and are today required to make serious efforts to adapt their cultural practices to climate change as well.

Recognition of the continuing effects of colonialism, and of the accumulated impacts on Sámi communities over time is a fundamental first step of a climate justice approach in a Sámi context found in the empirical data of this thesis and supported by the IEJ literature presented in chapter three. In line with McGregor's (2019) argument, climate policy in the Nordic contexts will remain unjust as long as colonialism is not recognised and reconciled. Only by first recognizing colonialism can the path to reconciliation be started. And only by a policymaking that is informed by the principles of reconciliation can climate policy be considered just.

### **6.3 Relational Self-Determination for Reconciliation and Climate Justice**

‘Properly understood, self-determination is an animating force for efforts toward reconciliation—or, perhaps more accurately, conciliation—with peoples that have suffered oppression at the hands of others’ (Anaya, 2009, p. 196)

As explored in the previous section, the data as well as McGregor (2019) understand recognition and reconciliation of colonial relations as fundamental pieces of indigenous climate justice. The way I see it, recognition can be seen as the principle of a climate justice approach, while reconciliation entails the implementation of the approach. In this section we move to the reconciliation part of that equation. Reconciliation means building quality relations between the indigenous group and other societal actors that are based on consent and respect for indigenous self-determination (McGregor, 2019). Reconciliation cannot take place without indigenous self-determination. I move to discussing how self-determination was understood in the data.

Self-determination was identified as a main foundation upon which climate justice should be built upon, corresponding to the theoretical framework. The findings of this study suggest there to be a need to rethink what self-determination entails in order to secure a justice-oriented climate policy for the Sámi people. The Sámi representatives and documents advocate for an understanding of self-determination that is based on consent, and the ability of the Sámi institutions to say no to projects that are not wanted, or ‘the power to define what is important’ (Åsa Larsson Blind, Julie's Bicycle, 2022, April 12). As explored in chapter three, in the literature self-determination in environmental matters is seen to require quality relationships to the surrounding environment as well as to other societal actors (Whyte, 2018;

Whyte, 2020a; 2020b). On one hand, self-determination means a community's ability to maintain social resilience through webs of relations to the environment, and on the other, consent, accountability, and reciprocity are qualities that need to exist between indigenous peoples and other societal actors for just policymaking. The data reflects the importance of quality relations very well, especially the role of consent. Accountability is also called for when the Sámi representatives ask for the states to recognise the accumulative impacts that different sets of policies have had on the Sámi people. In all three Nordic countries truth and reconciliation commissions have been formed to investigate the policies of the past and their impacts on Sámi communities and individuals. This could be a step towards accountability.

Until now, self-determination has not been understood to include the right to veto projects in the Nordic context. In Finland mining companies have been granted licenses to search for minerals in Sámi homeland areas notwithstanding the Sámi Parliament's opposition (Sámi Parliament of Finland, 2021b), and at the border of Norway and Finland, a large wind farm that is opposed by the Sámi Parliaments of Norway and Finland is planned, (Muotka, 2020; Salonen, 2021) just to name some of the planned projects being added to the many projects having already taken place without Sámi consent. Indigenous self-determination has been interpreted to mean consultation and dialogue, but at the premises of states and corporations (Fjellheim, 2023). The very recent civil disobedience acts against the government in Norway (Klesty, & Fouche, 2023) are an example of the inflamed relationship between the Sámi and other societal actors in which the Sámi cannot trust the governments to have their backs. When the Sámi representatives refer to green colonialism, they indicate mistrust in the governments. Reaching conditions for climate justice in this context requires a rethinking of self-determination as consent and a genuine will to build good relations between different parties.

Shifting to an understanding of self-determination as consent, as enabling Sámi communities to have veto rights over developments in Sápmi would require a large redistribution of power away from state authorities and corporations to Sámi institutions and communities, and reconciliation, and compensation for the harms that have already been imposed on the Sámi due to lack of respect for consent in the past (Lawrence & Åhren, 2016). Rethinking self-determination in the Nordic context to be in line with the understanding in the data of this thesis would require first coming to terms with past and present colonialism as discussed in the previous section. Lawrence & Åhren (2016, p. 152) have presented a similar

argument for the Swedish context, stating ‘in order for restitution to take place, Sweden must first acknowledge, and critically engage with, both its colonial history and ongoing role in the colonisation of Sami lands’. Only by recognizing colonialism can first steps toward reconciliation be taken. Based on my study, I argue that reconciliation requires respect for consent, the right of the Sámi to say yes or no to be the fundament of indigenous self-determination, upon which better relations can be built, and solutions found together. Without consent-based self-determination, climate policy will continue to impose harm on Sámi people, and to the relations between the Sámi and others (Whyte, 2020a).

Self-determination for the Sámi in the context of climate change does not however mean ‘cutting relations’ (Reibold, 2020, p. 12) to the other sectors of society. Based on the data, the Sámi representatives strongly advocate for a relational understanding of self-determination, similar to Broderstad (2014) who theorizes self-determination in a Sámi context to entail both integration of Sámi concerns and rights to national systems, as well as strong independent institutions, the Sámi Parliaments. In the data, the Sámi representatives advocated for greater inclusion and participation of the Sámi at decision-making tables at all levels, while at the same time wishing for more power and financing to Sámi institutions such as the Sámi Parliaments. This is exactly what Reibold (2020) means about self-determination for indigenous peoples not being about becoming disconnected from the rest of the society, but about fostering good quality relations between all societal actors and being included at all levels of decision-making as equal partners. The Sámi representatives recognise that they cannot tackle the threats of climate change only through internal decision-making, and action, but that decisions made at national and international levels will have impacts on Sámi people. Thus, self-determination requires the Sámi to be meaningfully involved in these processes. Exclusion of the Sámi, or other indigenous peoples, from national or international climate negotiations can be seen as a violation of their right to self-determination (Reibold, 2022).

Strong indigenous institutions and meaningful integration in already existing systems with principles of consent, accountability, and reciprocity, together create the foundations to indigenous self-determination in climate change decision-making, thus constituting the second fundament of indigenous climate justice in a Sámi context. Simultaneously, respect for relational qualities like consent is also about repairing relationships that have been challenged or broken down by colonialism (McGregor, 2019). According to McGregor

(2019), climate policymaking will only be considered just and successful when it results in a restructuring of the relations between states and indigenous peoples.

#### **6.4 Protecting Biodiversity for Climate Justice**

Based on the IEJ framework, a third element that makes indigenous environmental justice cases unique is the distinctive connection to and understanding of land that indigenous peoples have (Jarratt-Snyder, & Nielsen, 2020). Typically, land is viewed as a source of knowledge, relationships, and sustenance in indigenous cultures (Whyte, 2018). This perspective was not as widely explored across data as the previous two points, although there were mention of a caretaking-relationship to nature in some documents and statements. A reoccurring theme across documents was biodiversity, which was of main importance to a thriving Sámi culture, always linked to calls to widen the climate discussion beyond a focus on energy to a more holistic understanding of ecosystems and their quality. Essentially, accepting green energy projects that degrade local biodiversity was seen as counterintuitive from a Sámi perspective. Many traditional Sámi livelihoods like reindeer herding or fishing can only be practiced in a viable environment, and in that sense access to quality land is a necessity for cultural survival, the collective continuance of the Sámi (Reibold, 2022; Whyte, 2018). This also means that loss of land due to green energy projects can most often not be compensated with money, as what is at stake is not only a livelihood of an individual family, but questions of cultural identity and continuity (Fjellheim, 2023). Protecting biodiversity in areas of cultural importance to Sámi people is a critical third aspect of an indigenous climate justice approach in the Nordic context. In addition, as climate change intensifies and changes the ecosystems of the Arctic, efforts must be put into securing Sámi access to land that secures cultural practices (Reibold, 2022).

As explored in chapter three, Sámi ontologies see land as something alive and with its own will. Discussion on the differences of that understanding with the mainstream understandings of land as a resource were less reoccurring in the data. Some Sámi representatives did refer to a responsibility to take care of the land, echoing what Whyte (2020a; 2020b) writes about the environment understood as a set of relationships and responsibilities in indigenous cultures. Many of the Sámi representatives were critical of continuous economic growth, and rather advocated for a necessity-based use of resources. There was no discussion on recognizing indigenous ontologies of land as equal in decision-

making, or how this might be an issue. Further research should be conducted to explore this element of climate justice in a Sámi context. Previous studies have found Sámi epistemologies being disregarded in situations of epistemological conflict in wind power licensing processes (Fjellheim, 2023) as well as in the management of salmon stocks in the Deatnu river (Holmberg, 2018; Joks & Law, 2017). More studies need to be conducted to understand the impact of philosophical differences in climate policymaking, and the justice dimensions of them.

## 7 Conclusion

As a response to global climate change agreements, the green transition is taking place in the Nordic countries at an increasing pace. The EU and the Nordic states view the Arctic regions as a provider of renewable energy and minerals needed for electrification. The multiple projects already established or envisioned to be commenced in the traditional Sámi lands have local impacts on Sámi livelihoods, culture, and identity, in addition to making visible structural injustices that persist in the Nordic states. (Reibold, 2022). Despite the states expressing commitment to a ‘just transition’ and stating that ‘no one should be left behind’ (European Commission, 2021), so far, the green transition has been experienced as unjust by Sámi representatives who claim that the green transition is green colonialism. As a response, the Sámi call climate policy that is based on the principles of climate justice. In this thesis I have examined what climate justice requires in an indigenous Sámi context based on qualitative analysis of three seminars and of documents from Sámi institutions and organizations. Textual methods were chosen to avoid research fatigue among Sámi, especially in the topics of climate change and reindeer herding. Indigenous methodologies require the needs of the indigenous group in question to be at centre of research.

The research was guided by three research questions, two empirical ones, and a final analytical question based on the two first ones. The first question asked what the core concerns of Sámi representatives are in the green transition. The core concerns of the Sámi representatives were captured under the theme green colonialism. Both the term itself was used widely in the studied seminars and documents, and elements of it were referred to in other documents. Green colonialism was understood as the disproportionately large impacts of green transition projects on Sámi communities and culture, especially on traditional Sámi reindeer herding. In the processes, Sámi concerns and rights have been neglected or ignored,

the Sámi feel excluded in decision making processes. The green projects add on a large accumulative burden of numerous different industries competing for land use, which is not recognised by policymakers. These dynamics are familiar from the colonial past, as Retter (2021) expresses ‘the green shift is nothing more than a continued extraction of resources in Sámi areas.’ The injustices of the green transition makes visible colonial structures in the present.

The second research question asked to what extent the Sámi concerns are reflected in national and EU climate policy documents. Findings of this study demonstrate that the reviewed EU and state documents lack statements recognizing Sámi concerns. While the Swedish and Norwegian documents barely mention Sámi concerns, the EU and Finnish documents recognised Sámi rights and concerns to some extent. Nevertheless, they also lack statements recognizing Sámi self-determination, and colonialism. In the discussion I analysed and underlined the importance of recognising past and present colonialism as the first step of climate justice in a Sámi context. This notion was found in the data through the first research question and supported the analytical ideas from Jarratt-Snyder & Nielsen (2020), McGregor et al., (2020), and McGregor (2019) on indigenous climate justice.

The last and main question asked, based on answers to one and two, what climate justice could entail in a Sámi context. This main research question guided the discussion in chapter six, based on the theoretical framework of indigenous environmental justice (IEJ) literature presented in chapter three. An indigenous climate justice approach in a Sámi context consists of three components. Firstly, past, and present colonialism must be recognised and reconciled in climate policymaking to secure successful and just climate policy. Secondly, as a step towards reconciliation and climate justice, Sámi self-determination must be understood as consent-based and relational. This means that power must be redistributed to Sámi institutions for the Sámi to have a final say on projects that have impacts on land areas which are considered important for Sámi culture. It also means that Sámi must be included as equal partners in terms of mutual trust, accountability, and reciprocity in climate decision-making at all levels. Finally, biodiversity must be safeguarded in areas that are of cultural importance to the Sámi people. Traditional Sámi livelihoods are derived from ecologically viable ecosystems.

Through the employment of an IEJ framework, in this thesis I have explored its relevance for a Sámi context. While the three factors that make indigenous environmental

justice distinctive from mainstream environmental justice (Jarratt-Snider & Nielsen, 2020) have held true in this case study as well, every indigenous case is different and must be studied from an understanding of context specificities. What this case demonstrates, is that IEJ framework is applicable to different indigenous colonial contexts, even to those in which colonialism has not been widely recognised, as in the Nordic setting. The findings of this study support the claim made in the IEJ literature that climate change policymaking needs to result in a transformation of the relationships between indigenous people and other societal actors for climate justice to take place (Jarratt-Snider, & Nielsen, 2020; McGregor et al., 2020; Whyte, 2020a, 2018). Understanding of specific colonial contexts will shed light on what this means in practice in those contexts. Based on the findings of this study, in a Sámi context it means redistribution of power to the Sámi Parliaments, as well as a full involvement of the Sámi in climate decision-making as equal partners.

Further research should consider looking into other indigenous cases from around the world to test the premises of the IEJ framework in a variety of contexts. The findings of this study support, however, the claim of the IEJ literature that climate justice has specific implications in indigenous contexts due to the distinctiveness of indigenous groups. Additionally, the findings suggest that self-determination must be understood as consent-based, but relational in the sense that indigenous people must also be involved at decision-making at all levels as equal and self-determining groups. The challenges of climate change require cooperation and mutual respect. This is something that should be implemented at UN climate negotiations and other high-level meetings, as well as in national policymaking processes.

This thesis has begun the work of filling the research gap of examining the concept of climate justice in a Sámi context, and its theoretical and practical implications. As climate change, and climate change mitigation measures intensify in the Arctic context, so does the need for justice-based research. To secure the collective continuance of Sámi, and other indigenous peoples, the justice and human rights implications of climate policies must be considered.

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## Appendix

Translated citations in their original languages.

Citation on page 50 from the Sámi Parliament of Norway in Norwegian:

‘Det innebærer at klimatiltak må være bygget på de riktigste tiltakene og klimarettferdighet. Urfolk kan for eksempel ikke godta at landområder ensidig bygges ned med industri som har til formål å skaffe fornybar energi og mer industri. Slike utbygninger til grønn energi kan først skje når urfolket samtykker til det, og når de får en rettmessig del av versikapingen. Hvis ikke, så vil dette fungere som en form for grønn kolonialisme overfor urfolk. Pågang for å utvinne ikke-fornybare resusser som for eksempel mineraler kan være en del av det man kaller ‘det grønne skiftet’. Også et grønt skifte kan dermed brukes som et argument for etablering av ny industri som fører til fortrensel av urfolks næringsutøvelse. Det kan paradoksalt nok bli en stor trussel mot urfolks materielle kulturgrunnlag.’

Citation on pages 51 from the Sámi Parliament of Sweden in Swedish:

‘Vi samer ska kunna fortsätta att leva i Sápmi och utveckla vår kultur. En förutsättning för det är en god livsmiljö med fortsatt tillgång till land och vatten. Sametingets syn på miljöfrågor framgår av ett särskilt framtaget miljöprogram. För att vi ska ha tillgång till land och vatten måste vår syn att helheten är viktig och vårt landskapperspektiv beaktas i samhällsplanering. En eventuell utbyggnad av vindkraften måste ske så att vår möjlighet att leva och utvecklas inom Sápmi inte begränsas eller omintetgörs.’

Citation on page 53 from the Sámi Parliament of Norway in Norwegian:

‘I et slikt prosjekt som det her er snakk om, er det avgjørende at rettighetshavere og samiske interesser har kapasitet og kompetanse til å bli hørt og at deres rettigheter kan ivaretas gjennom kapasitetsbygging og full likeverdig deltakelse. I slike saker er det avgjørende at de akkumulerte konsekvensene for reindrifta tas inn i vurderingene når det gjelder summen av de mange arealingrepene.’

Citation on page 54 from the Sámi Parliament of Norway in Norwegian:

‘Det er derfor avgjørende at grunnleggende menneskerettigheter og urfolksrettigheter styrkes og danner grunnlag for en høyst nødvendig og forpliktende oppfølging av forutsetningene for Parisavtalen.’

Citation on page 55 from the Sámi Parliament of Sweden in Swedish:

‘Samiskt självbestämmande innebär att samernas ståndpunkt ska vara avgörande i frågor som berör dem som samer’

Citation on page 56 from the Sámi Parliament of Norway in Norwegian:

‘Inngrep bør ikke skje i urfolks områder uten at det berørte urfolket har gitt sitt frie og informerte forhåndssamtykke.’

Citation on page 56 from the Sámi Parliament of Sweden in Swedish:

‘En ekologisk långsiktighet och hushållning med naturresurser är en central del i den samiska kulturens utveckling och ett ekologiskt och ekonomiskt bärkraftigt samhälle är den bästa garantin för att bevara de höga miljö- och kulturvärden som finns inom Sápmi.’

Citation on page 57 from the Sámi Parliament of Finland in Finnish:

‘Näin ollen hiilineutraaliuden tavoittelemisen, hiilinielujen vahvistaminen, ilmaston lämpenemisen hillitseminen sekä luonnon monimuotoisuuden köyhtymisen estäminen ovat saamelaisten tulevaisuuden kannalta välttämättömiä toimenpiteitä.’



