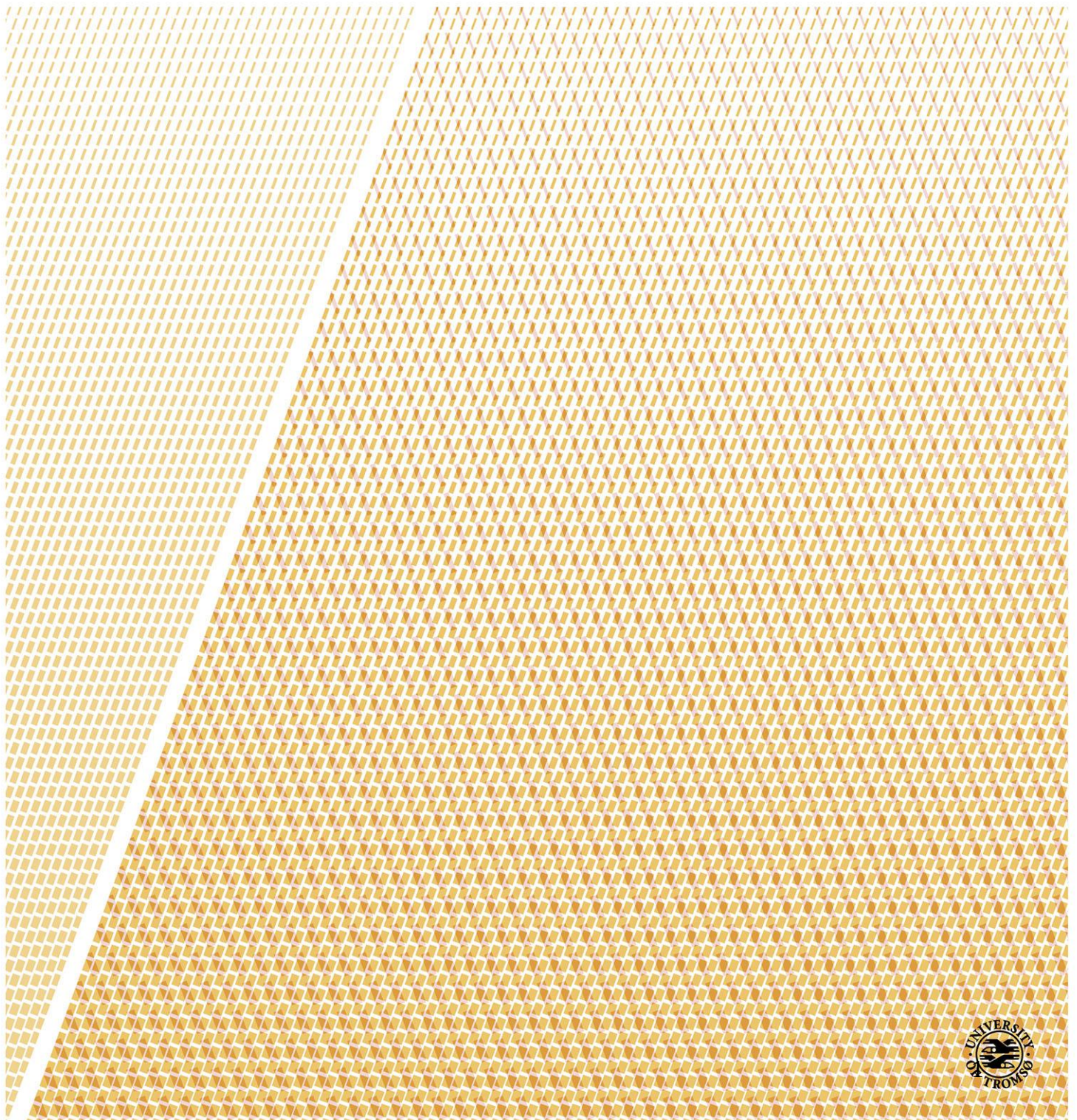Faculty of Humanities, Social Science and Education

Fighting to be Heard – in Russia and in Sápmi

Russian Sámi representation in Russian and pan-Sámi politics, 1992 - 2014

Mikkel Berg-Nordlie
A dissertation for the degree of Philosophiae Doctor – February 2017

Preface

This thesis began with the research project *Russia in pan-Sámi politics* (Russampol, 2009–2012) on the inclusion of the Russian Sámi into border-transcending Sámi politics, and the effects of this on Russian Sámi political life. Russampol was a joint project between my employer NIBR and the institute NUPI, and financed by the Norwegian Research Council's (NFR) Program for Sámi Studies. The project took me back to the roots of my fascination for Russia. I made the decision to learn Russian after a visit to the Kola Peninsula organized by the Norwegian Sámi youth NGO Davvi Nuorra in 2003. I missed being able to communicate directly with the people I met, not least those who were part of my own border-transcending people. My interest was also piqued by the cultural, social, and political differences between the Russian part of Sápmi – the Sámi homeland – and the Nordic part of it. This eventually led to a Bachelor in Russian Studies at the University of Tromsø (UiT), and a Russia-oriented Master in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Oslo. Ïn Oslo, my attention gradually slipped away towards the south: Moscow with its decisive political showdowns, and the Caucasus with its complex ethnic conflicts. The NFR Program for Sámi Studies gave me a way to return to the origin of my academic interest in Russia, and to study the politics of my own people.

In 2012, I entered a PhD program in History at UiT, now UiT Arctic University of Norway. One of the two Russampol articles became part of the thesis, while three more articles and the present document (the thesis' introductory/summary section) were written by utilizing means from diverse sources. Special mention should go to two NIBR projects financed by NFR: *Network governance in Russia* (Netgovru, 2013–2016) provided time to develop the thesis' theoretical basis, and *Russian Sámi politics in the context of pan-Sámi internationalization 1989–2014* (Pansamru, 2014), provided time and means to finish this thesis.[1] A UiT grant financed the thesis' last major field work in Russia, and NIBR allowed me to work on the thesis without funding on several occasions. The thesis articles were published in 2011 (Article I, "AI"), 2013 (AII), and 2015 (AIII & AIV).

The title of this thesis is inspired by an open letter from a Sámi activist and academic which stated that due to the extreme minority position of the Sámi in their home province, "their voice in the common 'choir' of Murmansk Region's inhabitants is difficult to hear" (Kal'te 1995). This thesis examines the continuing struggle of the Russian Sámi to arrange for ways that they can be heard despite their small numbers - not just within the Russian "choir" but also within the

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[1] Netgovru was financed by NFR's Program for the Study of Russia and the High North/Arctic, Pansamru by the NFR Program for Sámi Studies

border-transcending Sámi people, in which they also constitute a minority. The "fight" brought up in the title refers not just to the group's struggle for empowerment in its relations with Russian state-based actors and the Nordic Sámi, but also conflicts within the group over how and by whom they should be represented in Russia and in Sápmi.

I wish to thank my supervisors at UiT, Hallvard Tjelmeland and Jens Petter Nielsen, for good advice and much support along the way. The same goes for Jørn Holm-Hansen, my local supervisor at NIBR. I also wish to thank my father Bård A. Berg, who, with his own insights and experience as an historian, has provided valuable guidance and support. Thanks are also due to Teemu Ryymin for critical reading, and Susan Høivik for language editing, of the introductory/summary section at earlier stages of its production. During work with the thesis, I have received literature tips, constructive criticism and inspiration from many other researchers. In these cases, the principle of "no one named, no one forgotten" applies. Special mention must however go to my institution's excellent university librarian Dag Juvkam, who gave invaluable assistance in obtaining the necessary literature rapidly. Dag passed away in September 2016.

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my wife Ingunn for giving me the time necessary to write it. Since work with the PhD began, our family has grown from two to four. With the completion of this thesis, I look forward to spending more time with Ingunn, Samuel Jovnna, and Lydia Márja.

Mikkel Berg-Nordlie,
Bjølsen, Oslo, February 19, 2017

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1. Introduction

This thesis constitutes a study of Russian Sámi representation in Russian and pan-Sámi politics during the period 1992-2014. Its goal is to contribute to the study of Sámi political history by exploring the systems for Russian Sámi representation that have been established and disestablished during the period under analysis, and the conflicts that have taken place over how to organize Russian Sámi representation. The thesis takes an interest in analysing the degree of representativeness inherent in various models for Russian Sámi representation, and seeks to uncover the effect of pan-Sámi networking on Russian Sámi politics. By addressing this task, the thesis also serves the function of accounting for the background and establishment of the movement for a Russian Sámi Parliament that emerged during the period under analysis, and for conflicts surrounding this movement.

1.1. The Sámi and Sámi Politics

The Sámi are an indigenous people of Northern Europe. Sápmi, the homeland of the Sámi, encompasses areas from central Scandinavia to the eastern tip of Russia's Kola Peninsula. Those who consider themselves as Sámi today constitute a minority in Sápmi. This is due partly to the immigration of other peoples into the area, and partly due to policies and processes of assimilation. After WWII, Norway, Sweden and Finland entered a period of Sámi mobilization and reforms of Sámi policy. Sámi culture and identity experienced a revival, and activists achieved stronger political rights and institutions. During the Perestroika (1985-1991), Russian Sámi activists launched a similar movement for Sámi cultural survival and political empowerment.

The Sámi consist of several traditional cultural-linguistic subgroups, communities that transcend the borders imposed by the Nordic states and Russia. These are often grouped into an Eastern and a Western set to emphasize the main linguistic differences. The status of the Sámi languages currently range from endangered (North Sámi), to severely endangered (marked "!" in the table), to critically endangered (marked "‡") and extinct (marked "†") (UNESCO 2010).

	Eastern		Western	
	Peninsular	*Mainland*	*Northwestern*	*Southwestern*
Russia	Ter ‡, Kildin !	Akkala †, Skolt !		
Finland		Skolt !, Inari !, Kemi †	North	
Norway		Skolt !	North, Lule !, Pite ‡	South !
Sweden			North, Lule !, Pite ‡	Ume‡, South !

The Sámi may also be subdivided according to citizenship. The state and majority cultures to which different Sámi communities have had to relate, have left lasting cultural effects on them. When writing about politics, citizenship-based communities may even be considered as the primary subgroups within the Sámi ethnic collective: even though Sámi politics have a notable border-transcending aspect, they still predominantly take place within the boundaries of four separate states with different indigenous policies and other significant differences that affect political life.

Politics is, for the purposes of this thesis, defined as actions aimed at influencing how decisions should be made, what decisions should be made, and how decisions should be implemented – by both state-based and non-state actors. As for the related term *policy* – the course of political action decided on by an actor – this should both in the present text and in the thesis articles be understood as shorthand for "state policy" unless it s made obvious by the

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[2] Like all maps depicting Sápmi, this map is by necessity approximate, since Sápmi has no formally set borders. Southern borders are based on Norway's South Sápmi Electoral Constituency; Sweden's Älvdalen Municipality, Jämtland and Västernorrland Provinces; Finland's Lapland Province and Kuusamo Municipality; Russia's Murmansk Province. Base map: Wikimedia Commons. Language data: Kotus 2008; Sammallahti 1998a: 45–52; 1998b: 5; Scheller 2013: 394.

context that the policy in question is that of a non-state actor. This thesis specifically concerns Sámi politics, which may be considered a subcategory of ethno-politics, or more specifically indigenous politics. Ethno-politics here refers generally to politics that are centered on the perceived interests of a population delimited by ethnicity (as opposed to f. ex. citizenship, class, gender, etc),[3] while "indigenous politics" denotes ethno-politics where the ethnos in question is discussed as an indigenous people. Definitions of, and the analytical applicability of, the concept "indigenous peoples" is discussed later in this thesis (see 4.2.1). It is far from irrelevant for the nature of ethno-politics if the *ethnos* in question is mainly discussed as an "ethnic minority" or as an "indigenous people". The recognition of a people as indigenous connects local ethno-politics to a global discourse on indigenous rights, and to international indigenous rights' declarations and conventions, which may impact the nature of state policy towards the group. Nevertheless, while globalization has been crucial for the historical development of modern indigenous politics (Minde 2008: 49-86; Niezen 2003: 29-52), there are substantial differences from country to country, since indigenous politics "on the ground" are primarily shaped by the specifics of concrete indigenous peoples and the states they inhabit.

Since the Sámi inhabit four different states, Sámi politics does not constitute one case of indigenous politics, but four. Several comparative studies have highlighted Sámi political variation across states, mainly comparing Nordic countries (deCosta 2015: 39-42; Josefsen, Mørkenstam & Saglie 2014; Nyyssönen 2015: 359-87; Robbins 2015: 70-5), but also Nordic states and Russia (Berg-Nordlie 2015a: 388-418; Bones et al 2015; Myklebost & Niemi 2014, 2015a,b). While all these states have their differences, the divergence between the contexts that shape Sámi politics is most obvious between Russia and the Nordic countries. Through the course of this thesis and its constituent articles, aspects of Russian politics that are relevant to explain Russian Sámi politics are highlighted when appropriate. For the reader's sake, some key differences between Russia and the Nordic countries will be presented also in this introduction.

1.2. The Russian Sámi and Russian Sámi Politics

In 1826, a land border was made between Russia and Norway. The Skolt Sámi lands were divided between these two countries, and were further divided in 1920, when part of them came under Finland. The lands of the Akkala, Kildin and Ter Sámi came to lie entirely within Russia. A very small group of Western Sámi ended up on the Russian side of the border: the Filman Sámi, Lutherans (unlike the Orthodox Skolt, Akkala, Kildin, and Ter Sámi) whose languages were

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[3] Please note that this thesis does not operate with the distinction between "ethnopolitics" and "minority politics" (Norwegian: *etnopolitikk og minoritetspolitikk*) in which the first refers to non-state actors' political action, and the other to states' minority policies.

North Sámi and the *kaksprek* pidgin also used on the coast of North Norway (Andresen 1989; 2005; Leinonen 2008: 53, 55–6; Repnevskij & Nielsen 2014: 179–87). After the Stalinist repressions, the Filmans did not exist as a group anymore. Following WW2, a large part of the Skolt territory was transferred from Finland to the USSR, but many of the Skolts resettled in Finland (Andresen 2005; Leinonen 2007: 66–70). For the Sámi that remained in Russia, massive forced resettlement into larger villages and towns, and language death under conditions of *de facto* Russification in these new localities, made traditional cultural-linguistic differences less relevant (Afanasyeva 2013; Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 34–38). The current Russian Sámi revival movement focuses on cultivating the Kildin Sámi language. Scheller (2013: 396) estimates that approximately 700 individuals have some knowledge of the language, but only 100 are "active speakers" and 200 are "potential speakers." The 2010 census operates with 279 speakers of *saamskij jazyk*, the Russian blanket term for all Sámi languages.[4]

It is difficult to speak with confidence about Sámi population numbers since the three Nordic countries have abolished censuses where citizens get the opportunity to register ethnic identity or home language. Still, Russia is conventionally considered to have the smallest number of Sámi citizens. During the last two hundred years, nearly all estimates of the Russian Sámi population have put their numbers between 1,600 and 2,000 (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 113–15, 121–22; Utvik 1985: 67), with the two most recent Russian censuses, from 2002 and 2010, giving populations of 1,991 and 1,771 respectively. It was noted already in 1925 that assimilation was the main reason for this demographic stagnation (Alymov 2006c). It should be kept in mind that in the Russian Federation's censuses one may list oneself as belonging to only one ethnicity (Gorenburg 2006: 156; Stepanov 2012), so participants must choose between *saami* (ethnic Sámi) and *russkij* (ethnic Russian). This is problematic, since many Sámi identify with both the indigenous ethnos and the state's majority ethnos. Thus, the Russian census data only say something about how many people in Russia have a strong enough Sámi identity that they feel comfortable giving this as their only ethnicity, and who are willing to indicate this in an official census.

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[4] The Cyrillic-to-Latin transcription system applied in this thesis is found in the Appendix
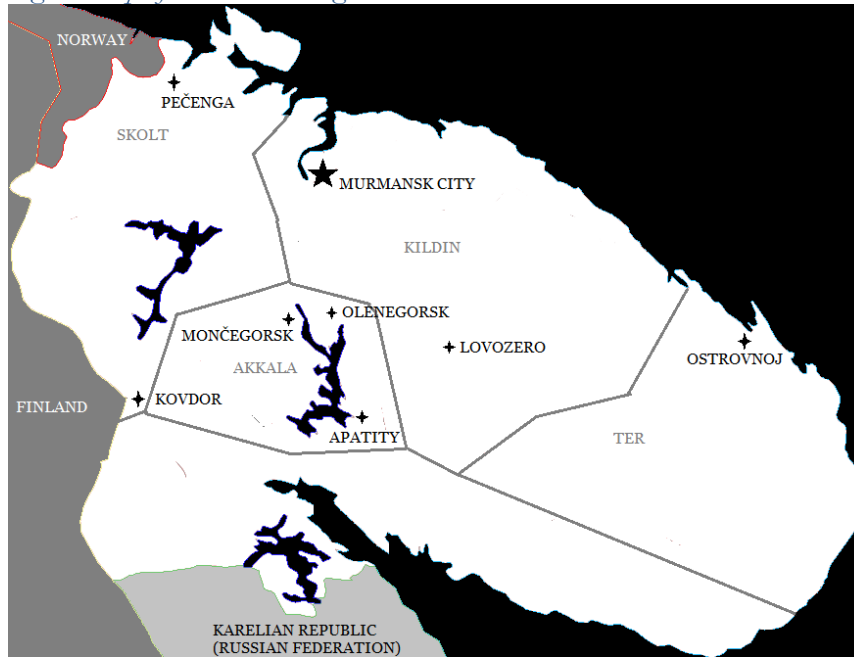
Most Russian Sámi live in Murmansk Region,[6] a province[7] of the Russian Federation that includes the entire territory usually considered part of Russian Sápmi. According to the 2010 census, Murmansk Region had 795,409 inhabitants, the large majority of whom were *russkie* – ethnic Russians (642,310).[8] The province is divided into five municipal districts and twelve urban areas. A locality that will appear often in this thesis is Murmansk City, the provincial capital, which his home to 307,257 people (2010 Census). Another is the municipal district where 55% of the Russian Sámi live,[9] Lovozero (Kildin Sámi: Lujavv'r). The municipality is named after a town (*selo*) on the Kola Peninsula's eastern inland, which is home to many of Sámi background after large numbers of Sámi were moved there during the Soviet era.

The task of this thesis is not to compare Russian Sámi politics to Nordic Sámi politics, but some major differences of importance to the development of indigenous politics and policy (Berg-Nordlie et al 2015: 2-11), should be pointed out for the benefit of the reader. Firstly, while the Sámi are not a large population in any country, their demographic position is particularly weak in Russia. The smallest Sámi community inhabits a state more than seven times as populous as Norway, Sweden, and Finland combined. Demographic weakness makes it more difficult for

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[5] Borders between traditional cultural-linguistic subgroups simplified from map in Scheller 2013: 395.

[6] 1,769 of 1,991 in the 2002 Census; 1,599 of 1,771 in the 2010 Census.

[7] The constituent parts of the Russian Federation are in this thesis referred to as "provinces" or "federal subjects." Different types of provinces are translated as follows: *oblast'* – region; *respublika* – republic; *kraj* – territory; *okrug* – area; *gorod federal'nogo značenija* – city of federal significance.

[8] This figure includes individuals belonging to two groups that were considered Russian sub-ethnoses in that census: Pomors (235) and Cossacks (71).

[9] Gov-murman.ru: *Demografičeskaja situacija* (http://gov-murman.ru/region/saami/general_info/demo/index.php).

an indigenous group to put itself forcefully on the political agenda. As noted above, the Sámi are a small minority even within Russian Sápmi. Secondly, whereas the Nordic states only recognize the Sámi as indigenous, the Russian Federation has a multitude of indigenous peoples (Skogvang 2009: 43). In Norway, Sweden, and Finland indigenous policy and Sámi policy are identical – whereas Russia does not have a separate Sámi policy, but a more general indigenous policy that differs substantially from the Nordic states' Sámi policies.[10] Thirdly, the economic instability of Russia after the collapse of the USSR stands in stark contrast to the situation of particularly Norway, but also Sweden and Finland. Economic concerns have affected the Russian state's approach to its northern areas, and the resources set aside for indigenous policy. Fourthly, when considering responses to ethno-political demands for indigenous empowerment, one must keep in mind that the Russian state has experienced ethnic and provincial centrifugal forces as posing a genuine threat to the survival of the state, and that the targeted recentralization of Russia during Vladimir V. Putin's reign constitutes a reaction to these tendencies. Fifthly, there is the impact of international relations on Sámi politics: Sápmi is the Arctic contact point between Russia and the West, and its militarization and securitization has been felt acutely by the Russian Sámi. Finally, it must be underscored that contemporary Russia and the Nordic states have very different ways of relating to internal political pressure groups. The Nordic states are demonstrably more tolerant of open dissent than Russia, where criticism is tolerated until a certain point, after which activists run the risk of being branded as disloyal and disruptive, and face harsher reactions than what is common in the Nordic countries.[11]

The main task of this thesis is to explore if and how the Russian Sámi have achieved, or not achieved, representation on arenas where decisions relevant for their continued existence as a people are being made. All the aspects of Russian politics mentioned above can be considered as obstacles to Russian Sámi political empowerment.

1.3. The Russian Sámi and Pan-Sámi Politics

The history of Sámi border-transcendence goes as far back as the establishment of state borders through Sápmi. When the Nordic states and Russia expanded northward, they divided the indigenous population and its lands between them, often paying scant heed to the cultural, social,

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[10] AIV's theoretical discussion defines a policy field as robust when the following are present: state institutions established to deal with the object of policy, actors that (are claimed to) represent expertise and/or special interests relative to the object, and state decisions primarily targeted towards the object. A necessary precondition is a dominant discourse among decision-makers that constructs an object as suitable for a separate and targeted policy with its own institutions, expertise, and policy-making. The indigenous policy field has, throughout Russian history, not been stably "robust", as defined above (AIV; 6.1).

[11] Relevant specifics of Russian politics are further discussed particularly in subchapters 3.2.3-5, 6.1, 6.3-4, 8, and in AIV.

and economic geography of the earliest inhabitants. The political map of Northern Europe was drawn up in a way that not only split up the Sámi people, but also many of its internal subgroups, and even micro-level Sámi communities. This made it rather likely that when the time came for a Sámi national[12] revival, that movement would have a border-transcending aspect aimed at facilitating unity between the Sámi populations of different states. This is referred to here as the modern Sámi movement's *pan-Sámi* aspect: the ideas, discourses, symbols, practices, networks, organizations, and institutions aimed at preserving and cultivating commonalities, and at improving contacts and coordination between the Sámi of different states (see AII: 437-8, 6.2). The modern Sámi movement was border-transcending from the beginning, but it became "truly" pan-Sámi only rather recently. The first international Sámi congress was held in 1917, but substantial Nordic-Soviet Sámi contact was not allowed until the Perestroika. With the collapse of the USSR, potential appeared for improved representation of the Russian Sámi in border-transcending networks (AI; III; 6.2, 7.1). Even so, the Russian Sámi faced several challenges when it came to their participation in pan-Sámi activism.

Firstly, Russian Sámi are an internal minority who differ culturally from the Sámi majority in significant ways. Traditionally, the groups are different as regards religion (Orthodox Christianity) and language (Eastern Sámi). Granted, there are small Eastern Sámi communities in Nordic Sápmi, which are closer to the Russian Sámi in terms of traditional culture, but the vast majority of the Nordic Sámi are Western Sámi. In any case, the cultural challenges for cooperation lie not so much in differences of traditional culture as in differences between the majority cultures that have influenced, and still influence, the Nordic and the Russian Sámi. Furthermore, border-transcending communication in Nordic Sápmi is facilitated by North Sámi (not a traditional language in Russian Sápmi), by the mutual intelligibility of Norwegian and Swedish (not widely spoken in Russia), and the high English proficiency of Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish citizens (the proficiency of Russian citizens is comparatively low).[13] Secondly, the Russian Sámi have to deal with pan-Sámi political structures that were made to fit Nordic and not Russian realities, structures that to some extent continue to evolve in ways tailored to Nordic conditions (AII). Thirdly, there is the fact that while the Sámi of Finland, Norway and Sweden can reap the benefits of friendly relations and political integration between their states, the

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[12] The word "nation" may refer to a state, to a community formed around common citizenship in a state, or to a community formed around common ethnicity (Zachariassen 2012: 18). In this thesis, the term "nation" for the Sámi is employed with a basis in the third type of usage. Note that when "international relations" is used in the thesis, it nevertheless carries the specific meaning "relations between states".

[13] Source: EF English proficiency index (www.ef.no/epi).

relationship between Russia and the West remains far more securitized and turbulent (AII; IV). The Cold War may be over, but Sápmi still spans a geopolitical divide.

One of the main tasks of this thesis has been to explore the degree of inclusion or exclusion that the Russian Sámi are subjected to in pan-Sámi contexts, primarily at the level of political structures, but analysis has also been performed of how the Russian Sámi are included in the national collective through discourse.

1.4. Research Questions

This thesis is, in its essence, about indigenous empowerment and disempowerment. Like all indigenous politics, Russian Sámi politics is fundamentally characterized by the fact that the ethnic group in question has been incorporated into a state dominated by another ethnos, placing the group in a chronic minority position despite still living in its own homeland. The Russian Sámi additionally constitute a minority within their own border-transcending nation, so that even within their own nation's politics they encounter a political system dominated and shaped by others. For these reasons, the issue of empowerment has, since the beginning of modern Russian Sámi politics been a recurring one: Russian Sámi activists have sought the demarginalization of their group, both in pan-Sámi politics and in domestic indigenous politics. In this thesis, the notion of a people's empowerment is tied to the concept of its democratic representation on arenas where decision-making of consequences for their group is discussed, performed, or implemented. Out from this interest in Russian Sámi empowerment, and taking into account the lacunae observed in existing literature (2.3), research tasks were developed for the individual articles, and for the thesis as a whole. The concretized research questions for this thesis are as follows:

RQ1 (AII, 7.1-2, 8): *Which mechanisms for Russian Sámi representation on pan-Sámi arenas were established and discontinued 1992-2014, and how representative can these be considered as having been*? Analysis of democratic representativeness is in this thesis performed by utilization of a model inspired by network governance literature, further presented in the theory chapter (3.2.2 Fig. 4; cf. AIII: 214-18). RQ2 (AIII, AIV, 7.2, 8): *Which mechanisms for Russian Sámi representation in Russia were established and discontinued 1992-2014, and how representative can these be considered as having been*? When it comes to Sámi representation in Russia, this thesis focuses specifically on Murmansk Region. Obviously, decision-making of crucial importance for the Russian Sámi also occurs at the Federal level of Russian politics, but the status of specifically Sámi representation at the Federal level is very easy to account for: it does not exist. As established in AIV, there also does not exist a Federal-level Sámi policy. Instead, general indigenous policy (and other policies of consequence) is chiseled out in Moscow and subsequently implemented at the provincial level

(AIII; AIV.). As Malakhov & Osipov (2006: 505) note for ethnic policy in general ("nationalities policy"), such policy "appears primarily at the regional level". In the provinces, general policy is concretized, and concrete indigenous communities attempt to influence decision-makers. It is on the provincial level of Russian politics that Russian Sámi political actors have chosen to focus. Nevertheless, decisions at the Federal level can and have been of crucial consequence for the Russian Sámi, and the Sámi have attempted to influence the Federal center through the indigenous umbrella organization RAIPON (AIII; AIV; 6.3-4, 8.3). The Federal level will be brought into the account when relevant to explain the development of Russian Sámi representation mechanisms in Murmansk and pan-Sámi politics. RQ3 (AI-IV, 7-9): *What were the main changes and continuities in Russian Sámi representation 1992-2014 and how can these be explained?* RQ3 furthermore takes a special interest in shedding light on one subquestion: *How were developments in Russian Sámi representation in Russia affected by Russian Sámi participation in pan-Sámi networks?*

1.5. The Structure of the Thesis

The document at hand is the introductory/summary section of the thesis. The four articles that constitute the centerpiece of the thesis are summarized here, but not reproduced in full, as the articles form an integral part of the thesis. The present document is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 has sought to introduce some basic categories and concepts, to provide readers unfamiliar with the Sámi and Russia with some immediately necessary context, and to clarify research questions. Chapter 2 constitutes the thesis' historiography, which places the thesis in the tradition of literature on Russian Sámi political history, a subcategory of Sámi political history. The second chapter contains a brief discussion on national history writing, and an overview of academic literature touching on Russian Sámi politics, which comments more in-depth on three selected works on the subject. Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical basis of the thesis. A large part of the third chapter will address network governance theory. It defines key concepts and, building on network governance literature, constructs some ideal types for evaluating Russian Sámi political representation and participation. The third chapter also discusses possible ways of interpreting observed actor behavior, and presents the thesis' application of discourse analysis. Chapter 4, on methodology and sources, discusses these subjects in relation to research on indigenous groups, and researchers' positioning *vis-à-vis* their research object. Chapter 5 is a brief introduction to the thesis articles. The subsequent chapters summarize and analyze key findings from the thesis articles, and expand the thesis with data not included in the articles. Chapter 6 gives context information necessary to understand Russian Sámi representation in the period 1992-2014. It begins by giving some historical background to the post-Soviet period, before it accounts for key developments in Nordic Sámi discourse and general Russian indigenous policy

during the period under analysis. Chapter 6 draws upon AII & IV, but also contains data not published in the articles. Chapter 7 and 8 present the most vital findings from AI-IV in the form of a chronological narrative, and analyses the degree of representativeness observed in various mechanisms for representation established 1992-2014. These two chapters address the periods 1992-2006 and 2006-2014, respectively. These chapters also contain relevant findings not published in the thesis articles. Finally, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by summing up changes and continuities 1992-2014, and discussing the effect of pan-Sámi networking on Russian Sámi politics. The content of Chapters 6-9 are presented more in detail below (5.5).

2. Historiography: Academic Narratives about Russian Sámi Politics

2.1. History-Writing and the Portrayal of Nations

A narrative is here defined as a linear, chronological account of events that establishes causal relationships between these. To present the past in the form of narrative is to articulate discourse,[14] since narration includes the construction of categories and interrelationships between them: from the raw matter of constantly unfolding history, certain events and entities are drawn out, delimited, given descriptive attributes, organized in relation to one another, and an opinion is stated about the nature of their relationship. Historical events are connected by objective causation independently of discourse articulation, but people's understanding of history is nevertheless shaped through discursive construction of meaning – and strongly influenced by narratives. From childhood, we are trained to understand the world through narratives. We are told the history of our families, our communities, our ethnic or religious groups. Later on, educational institutions may teach us schoolbook history in the form of stories centered on a communal "Us". Throughout our adult lives, actors such as political and religious leaders will use narratives to convince us that their discourse on events is the correct one, and that the group given focus through the narrative is the important one. Social groups such as nations, religions and political movements all tend to have chronological narratives which supply a set of events, places and persons that are identified as important, and give these negative or positive value; they divide mankind into groups, one of which is identical to or associated with "Us"; they portray defeats and victories that "We" are to remember and learn from. These narratives can be about limited periods in "Our history", or they can be overarching accounts that emplot the grand narrative of the group (Lorents 2011: 68-73; White 1975: 7-11). Such narratives both contribute decisively to, and reflect, the fundamental idea that the group exists, and that it is positioned in

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[14] See 3.1.1 for discussion of this concept.

certain relationships to significant other groups. As society constantly repeats the articulation of the discourse on grouphood, it effectively creates the group as a subjective collectivity. Through discourse, a group's existence, its importance, and its relation to other groups is contested, defended, and reinterpreted (Gaski 2008a: 6; Kaufman 2001: 15–17, 28, 30–1, 52–4, 78–9, 90–7, 133–8, 167–77; Lorenz 2011: 24–41; Thijs 2011: 60-71; Zachariassen 2012: 19-21, also AI: 21-3, 31-4).

Historians are also spinners of narratives, and when they write about ethnic groups, they necessarily take part in the discursive power struggle about how the key stories of those groups should be told. In academic history, writers must base their accounts on sourced data, be open about their criteria for analysis, the analysis must be logically coherent, and they must relate their work to that of previous research (Fulsås 2005). Nevertheless, historians' narratives are affected by their choices of questions to address, and their ideas about what constitutes relevant sources. The act of narration includes the promotion of certain events or entities (here meaning f. ex. forces, groups, individuals) as the most relevant ones, thus implicitly (or explicitly) marginalizing others (Fulsås 2005; Sejersted 1995; White 1975: 7-11, 4.2.2-4, and AI). Through such aspects of historical narration, historians can affect, and have affected, the way groups view themselves and others. Of course, the discursive power held by academic historians over groups they describe, have limits. Firstly, there are discourses about "Us and the Others" predating academic history production that modern narrative articulators, historians and others, will find it hard to ignore entirely. Secondly, academic historians have competition from social scientists of other disciplines, politicians, "popular historians," authors of loosely history-based fiction, public-oriented museums and many, many others (Aronsson et al. 2011: 265; Leerssen 2011: 87). Furthermore, not all historians who have influenced a group's foundational narratives have been given this opportunity solely through their position as academics – politics and connections may influence academics' position to promote their conclusions (Aronsson et al. 2011: 272). Nevertheless, academic history writing does contribute, sometimes substantially, to how a group views itself and how it views others (Aronsson et al 2011: 256-82; Leerssen 2011: 75-103; Wendland 2011: 405-41). Historians, in short, have a certain potential for power over the groups they describe, and the type of narrative they create will not be without consequences.

Narratives about ethnic minorities written by outsiders have a history of downplaying or overlooking minority members' political agency,[15] implicitly or explicitly exaggerating its dependency on other groups (Zachariassen 2012: 19-23; 4). Downplaying of minority members' agency may even occur when "nation-building" (4.2.2) history writers (including in-group writers)

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[15] Here defined as their active attempts at influencing politics.

attempt to explain a perceived lack of ethno-political activism or successes in the past. For example, such a case has been made against previous academic narratives about Norwegian Sámi politics during the 20th Century interbellum (Ryymin & Nyyssönen 2012: 548-61; Zachariassen 2012: 10-15, 307-331; cf. also Nyyssönen 2007: 73). It can be a difficult balancing act to showcase the agency of members of oppressed groups in periods where assimilation or marginalization took place, while simultaneously not under-communicating the destructive processes that occurred and the power imbalances that caused them (Ryymin & Nyyssönen 2012: 557). This challenge is relevant for the task of writing about Russian Sámi politics. What are the stories told about the Russian Sámi by academics? How has their agency, and their relations to the Russian state and the Nordic Sámi, been constructed? This question is too broad to answer exhaustively here, since the catalogue of academic literature on the group is huge and includes input from researchers of many different disciplines with a broad range of interests. As the focus of this thesis is on Russian Sámi empowerment and disempowerment, I limit my review of the academic literature to publications that have dealt with, or at least touched upon, Russian Sámi political participation and self-government. With this in mind, I offer a brief introduction of authors and works relevant for the study of Russian Sámi politics – some fully focused on the subject of politics, others concentrating on other subjects but touching upon politics. The full production of these authors on the Russian Sámi is *not* listed here, only the works most relevant for the research object of this thesis.[16] While most works will only be listed in passing, a few of them will be subject to more scrutiny as regards their discursive treatment of the Russian Sámi.

The reader should note that what follows is not exclusively a historiography of works touching on Rusian Sámi politics during the period under analysis (1992-2014), it also presents works that deal with the Late Imperial (1822-1917) and Soviet (1917-1991) periods. To understand discourses on the contemporary Russian Sámi, both in Russia and in the Nordic countries, it is important to understand the narratives produced about the Russian Sámi of the past. Discourses on contemporary history and the current day do not exist in isolation from discourses on the more distant past. On the contrary, these inform and color each other – both in academic history writing, and in popular discourse. The account of academic production touching on Russian Sámi politics 1822-1991 is also relevant because this thesis contains a chapter of context information (6, largely drawn from AII & IV) that presents key developments during this exact period, in order for the reader to better understand the point of departure for developments in the period 1992-2014.

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[16] Interested readers are encouraged to consult the overviews in Kal'te (2003: 6-12), Kiseljov & Kiseljova (1987: 8–10), Javorskaja (2010: 70-9); Myklebost (2010: 94–115, 189–97, 262–70, 274–7), Overland 1999 (31–4), Rantala (2006: 141–56), and Sergejeva (2000b).

2.2. Academic Literature Touching on Russian Sámi Politics

In academic works of the late imperial era, the Russian Sámi are presented as a disempowered ethnic group living on the edge of the realm, increasingly marginalized economically and socially. According to Javorskaja (2010: 75-6), Russian authors of the time were divided between those that perceived the Sámi as to blame for their own situation due to lack of initiative and innovation, and those who attributed their problems to Russian bureaucrats and traders. Mainly, late-imperial Russian research on the Sámi was not oriented towards the study of politics, but there were some that focused more on the political, socio-economical, and legal aspects of the situation of the Russian Sámi. An early venture into Russian Sámi legal systems and customs was made by historian Aleksandra Ja. Jefimenko (1878: 55–9) from the Kola Peninsula village of Varzuga. Jefimenko 1878 describes legal customs among three of Russia's indigenous peoples: the Sámi (referred to as *lopari*, analogous to the Western term "Lapp"),[17] the Karelians[18] further south, and the "Samoyeds."[19] Another valuable account from the late imperial era is ethnographer Nikolaj N. Kharuzin's *Russkie lopari* ("The Russian Lapps," 1890: 125–34, 246–7, 330–7) which also comments on colonial power relations. Similar data were presented by Vladimir N. L'vov (1903:54–6). An early Western academic incursion into Russian Sápmi was that of archaeologist Gustaf Hallström who commented in passing on the vulnerable situation of the Russian Sámi, believing them to be in danger of cultural "extinction" due to colonization (1911, quoted in Johansson 2013: 13). The portrayal of the Russian Sámi as a group on the verge of collapse and with no agency of their own has proven resilient, and is to a certain extent retained in our times (AI).

During the interwar period, Finnish-Swedish geographer Väinö Tanner wrote on the Skolt Sámi of Pečenga (1929: 331–86). While focused on a part of Sápmi which was (temporarily, as it proved) part of Finland and not Russia, Tanner also provides accounts of relations between Russian authorities and the Sámi in pre-Revolutionary times. Simultaneously, on the Soviet side of the border, there was a burst of academic interest in Sámi society, culture and their political situation. The Soviet authorities employed ethnographer Vasilij K. Alymov to gather information and implement Soviet indigenous policy on the Kola Peninsula. Alymov contributed substantially to research on the conditions of the Russian Sámi (Alymov 1927; 1930: 57–60; 2003; 2006a, b & c: 19–29, 41–45). While noting the group's vulnerable position, Alymov believed it could rise and

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[17] Old exonym for the Sámi, now generally considered pejorative when used by outsiders.
[18] While not currently defined as indigenous (*maločislennyj korennoj narod*) by the Russian state, the Karelians fulfil more general definitions of indigenousness (4.2.1).
[19] Old exonym for certain indigenous groups whose traditional lands lie east of the White Sea, stretching to beyond the Ural Mountains. The Samoyedic group of languages includes Ènec, Nenec, Nganasan and Sel'kup. Samoyedic and Finno-Ugric languages are collectively known as Uralic languages.

survive with the assistance of the Soviet authorities. During this period, research into Sámi issues was also conducted by ethnographers and linguistic scholars David A. Zolotarjov (1928, 2003), Zakharij Je. Černjakov (1998), Aleksandr G. Èndjukovskij (2006), Vladimir V. Čarnoluskij (1972) and Nikolaj N. Volkov (et al., 1996). This period of intensive research was cut short by Stalinism. Alymov was executed in 1938, on trumped-up charges of leading a Sámi separatist conspiracy (AIV: 47–50; 6.1). Èndjukovskij shared his fate the same year. Zolotarjov had already disappeared in the camps a few years earlier, on unrelated accusations. Volkov was arrested after WW2 and died in the camps. Čarnoluskij was sentenced to the camps, but survived them. Černjakov was also investigated, but was not prosecuted (AIV: 49; 6.1.2; Dasjtsjinskij 2006: 67–76; Kiseljov 2003; Kuznetsova 2006: 127–8; Vladimirova 2006: 334; Rantala 2006: 77–127; Sorokazjerdjev 2006: 29–40, 61–7). A period of little research on Sámi–state relations followed. After WW2, philologist Georgij M. Kert (1961, 1968: 143–7, 1971) spearheaded new research in Sámi linguistics. This literature was not focused on politics, but from the linguist *milieu* sprang a group of intellectual activists who were to be of great importance to Russian Sámi politics, including Nina Je. Afanas'jeva, Rimma D. Kuruč and Aleksandra A. Antonova (AIII: 222, 239-40; 6.3; Kert 1961: 7–12; Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 59, 63–68). During the 1970s and 1980s, anthropologist Tat'jana V. Luk'jančenko (1971: 20–5; Lukjantschenko 1985: 239–7 & 1987: 266) took up various aspects of Sámi traditional and contemporary life, and the historian Ivan F. Ušakov wrote on the Kola Peninsula, including the history of the Russian Sámi during Imperial-Era colonization (Ušakov 1997: 305–33, 353–75). The father/daughter historian team Aleksej A. Kiseljov and Tat'jana A. Kiseljova also worked on the field, contributing the monograph *The Soviet Sámi: History, Economy, Culture*, an abridged translation of which was published in Sweden (Kiseljov & Kiseljova 1981: 26, 38–46, 51–4; Kiseljov & Kiseljova 1987; Kiseljov 2003).

  The Soviet Sámi toes the line of "correct" Soviet discourse on ethnic minorities. The Russian Sámi are portrayed as having earlier been a weak and exploited group, but also divided among themselves between exploited commoners and the exploiting well-to-dos (Kiseljov & Kiseljova 1987: 21, 47, 70-1). Having been helped by the Soviet authorities into a brighter future, they were now "building their new life in a friendly multinational family" (198). The Russian Sámi are not devoid of agency in this narrative, as the authors do take care to mention Sámi who participated in Soviet politics and worked for economic progress (61, 68, 81-3, 122-3, 129-30, 181-4), became part of the Soviet-educated Sámi *intelligentsia* (86, 89-94, 160-3), or contributed to the military defence of the North (108-20). Nevertheless, the Sámi are essentially portrayed as a supporting character in their own story. The actor put front-and-center is the benevolent Soviet state, as the instigator of development, educator of the uneducated, and protector of the weak.

The discourse on the Sámi is colored by *paternalism*, by which is here meant articulations framing the target groups of policy not as owed something by the empowered, but as benefitting from their benevolence. *The Soviet Sámi* also touched on the border-transcending aspect of the Sámi nation. It denounced the Western states' treatment of the Sámi, claiming that the Western Sámi "socio-economically exist at the bare minimum", were uneducated and disinterested in politics, in contrast to the Soviet Sámi, and longed for the good life of their Soviet kin (185–6, 192–3). The elder Kiseljov would later characterize the book's discourse as resulting from Soviet censorship (Larsson-Kalvemo 1995: 29). Immediately after the fall of the USSR, he contributed research on Stalin-Era repression of the Sámi (1992, reprinted Kiseljov 2003).

Western researchers' access to data on the Russian Sámi was limited during the Soviet period. Ethnologist Kerstin E. Kuoljok (1979, 1987) wrote several works on the Russian Sámi and other indigenous groups, addressing both the Imperial and Soviet era. Unni Utvik (1985) wrote a master's thesis in Russian studies about the group's historical and contemporary situation. Historian Astri Andresen (1989) compiled a thorough account of the problems endured by the Skolt Sámi because of the 1826 Norwegian–Russian land border (see also Andresen 2005). As the Soviet era ended, there was a renewal of Western access and interest. Discourses prevalent on the Russian Sámi in 1990s' academia (and media, see AI: 26–29, 6.5) turned the Soviet image on its head: the Russian Sámi were described as particularly downtrodden and vulnerable, whereas the Nordic Sámi were identified as the more fortunate siblings. As for the portrayal of agency, this period did see an increased focus on Russian Sámi activists and activism.[20] Anthropologist Hugh Beach (1992) undertook an early fieldwork-based venture, assisted by Luk'jančenko, which focused on reindeer herding. Anthropologist Astrid Larsson-Kalvemo (1995) was the first Westerner and first Nordic Sámi to write about the subject of this thesis, post-Soviet Russian Sámi politics. Aleksej A. Kiseljov aided her efforts to perform fieldwork in Russia. Her master's thesis deals with Sámi self-organizing in a new and rapidly changing political and social context. During the 1990s, Copenhagen-based IWGIA (International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs) began delving deeper into the situation of Russia's indigenous peoples. Their annual reports and yearbooks (*The Indigenous World*) are highly valuable for research on indigenous politics in general, including those of Russia. Linguist Leif Rantala began his publishing on Russian Sámi issues, which includes a volume of translated texts from the early Soviet academic pioneers (Rantala 1994, 2006, 2011), and anthropologist Yulian Konstantinov

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[20] Western academia's focus on Russian Sámi agency was *not* reflected in Nordic media discourse, where this was generally overlooked. Here, the Nordic Sámi came to be presented in ways reminiscent of the role previously given to the Soviet authorities: a stronger brother, helping the weak group towards a better future (AI).

began his research on reindeer herding on the Kola Peninsula.[21] The decade was capped by two longer works: *Sámi Potatoes: Living with Reindeer and Perestroika,* a fieldwork-based travelogue of Michael S. Robinson and Karim-Aly S. Kassam (1998), and *Politics and Culture among the Russian Sámi: Leadership, Representation and Legitimacy*, an anthropology thesis written by Indra N. Overland (1999). The latter was the first major academic work to be focused entirely on Russian Sámi politics.

Politics and Culture among the Russian Sámi must be understood in light of its interdiscursivity with Robinson & Kassam 1998, which contained a type of discourse that Overland 1999 intended to counterweigh (Overland 1999: 187, 236–9). Robinson & Kassam 1998 explicitly supported the Russian Sámi NGO AKS. The authors underscored that the book was published "with the permission and blessing" (5) of the organization. Conversely, Overland 1999 criticized actions of this organization's leaders from the perspective of democratic values and legitimate governance of economic assets. *Politics and Culture* presented a narrative of ethnic revival betrayed by leaders' internal struggles and self-interest, but ended the thesis on a positive note as it gave support to OOSMO, a rival NGO recently started by Russian Sámi activists (190–4, 253, 7.3). Overland 1999's treatment of the post-Soviet Russian Sámi political *milieu* up to a certain point resembles Kiseljov & Kiseljova 1981's portrayal of in-group dynamics before Sovietization: exploitative Sámi entrepreneurs vs. an exploited mass of ordinary and more "authentic" Sámi. The Russian Sámi are, however, not presented by Overland as needing outsiders to rise up against their internal enemy – quite the contrary, Nordic Sámi actors are portrayed as often unsuccessful in helping the Russian Sámi revival, instead unwittingly feeding internal ethno-political elite networks with assets (134–56, 164, 253–7). While Overland 1999 went into depth on Russian Sámi civil society, there was no focus on how the interrelationship between Sámi representatives and the authorities was organized.[22]

In the current millennium, journalist Aleksandr M. Stepanenko (2003) issued a book on the brutalities endured by the Russian Sámi during the Soviet era, featuring oral testaments, documents and older academic writings. The same year saw the publication of the new

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[21] Kola reindeer herding has not been exclusive to the Sámi since the immigration of the Ižma Komi during the late 1800s (6.1), but literature on the trade is of high interest for researchers of Russian Sámi affairs. Mention should be made of the works of Konstantinov (1996, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2007, 2008, 2011) and anthropologist Vladislava Vladimirova (2006; 2011; Konstantinov & 2006). Another research area of interest is the language situation, see in particular E. Scheller (2011, 2013) and M. Riessler (2013). Western interest in Russian Sámi language is nothing new: the first dictionary of any Sámi language was made by an English explorer of the Kola Peninsula's coast in 1599 (Hakluyt 2006). In the post-Soviet period, religion historian Jelena Porsanger also began to publish on her own people (Sergejeva 2002, Porsanger 2004b, 2007 & 2011). These three fields of research – reindeer herding, language and religion/folkloristics – are oriented towards other matters than Russian Sámi politics, but the works often contain data and analyses of value for those interested in politics.
[22] This also holds true for the updated and edited version of Overland's thesis, a book published in collaboration with the author of this thesis (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012).

millennium's first major work on Russian Sámi politics, the political science dissertation of Zinaida M. Kal'te (2003), the first major academic work on Russian Sámi politics written by an insider.[23] Kal'te 2003 is critical both to certain aspects of Russian Sámi civil society life, and to Russian policy towards the Sámi. The dissertation furthermore contains a review of the system for Sámi representation in the Nordic countries, the *Sámediggi*s or "Sámi Parliaments",[24] which it discusses favorably. Under the Sámediggi model, state-created organs responsible for Sámi interest representation and limited self-government are governed by an assembly of representatives elected by and among the country's registered Sámi voters (AII: 442; AIII: 218-224). Some years later, another Russian Sámi, museum director Nadežda P. Bol'šakova, published a book about her people which also contains a section on Sámi self-organizing (2006: 218–29). A general encyclopedia of Sámi affairs that came out in Finland in 2005 should also be mentioned here for its coverage of Russian Sámi history (Kulonen et al 2005). Another researcher active on the Kola Peninsula during the '00s was Norwegian-Sámi ethnographer and museum curator Johan A. Kalstad. His dissemination mainly occurred through lectures and shorter texts (see Kalstad 2003), but notes posthumously left behind were edited by economist Igor' B. Cirkunov into the book *The Road of Hopes* (Kalstad 2009).

    The Road of Hopes took a broad sweep through Russian Sámi history, focusing on interrelations between the authorities and the Sámi. Kalstad's narrative deviated from Soviet and mainstream Western academic discourse on Russian Sámi history by describing the late imperial era in relatively positive tones. Kalstad gave considerable focus to an institution of local self-government known in Sámi as the Kola Sobbar or Kuèllnègknjarrk Sobbar. He referred to this as the first-ever "Sámi Parliament" (*saamskij parlament*), and described it as an elected Sámi self-government organ which "possessed great autonomy to make effective decisions", unlike the merely "consultative" Sámediggis of today (Kalstad 2009: 20–8). Kalstad made it a point that the assembly met annually on February 6, which is a symbolically important date for contemporary

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[23] Z. M. Kal'te was active in AKS during the 1990s, working for a pan-Sámi rights' convention and a Russian Sámi Parliament (see AII: 377–78; AIII: 221; 6.3, 7.1).

[24] The thesis articles referred to the Sámediggis as "Sámi Parliaments". It is becoming more common to utilize the North Sámi term for the institutions, also in English-language literature. In this introductory/summary section, the choice has been made to use "Sámediggi", for two reasons: Firstly, utilizing an in-group term for the institution is seen by the author as having a value of its own. Secondly, this avoids the discussion particularly common to Russia about how one should define a "parliament" and whether or not "parliament" is a fitting term for the Sámediggis (AIII; Berg-Nordlie 2011b: 55). Even so, the movement that appeared in Russia in 2007 will be referred to as the "Sámi Parliament movement" and not the "Sámediggi movement". This is simply because the movement did not utilize the North Sámi term "Sámediggi". Although the movement's desire was indeed for a representation organ that was based on the Sámediggi model and accepted as a peer by the Nordic Sámediggis, it discussed its desired organ as a *saamskij parlament* ("Sámi Parliament") in Russian and as a *sobbar* in Kildin Sámi (more on this term under 6.1 and 8.2). "Sobbar movement" is not used, because structures utilizing the name "Sobbar" appeared only later, in 2010 and 2014, and the latter of the two Sobbars is furthermore not aligned with what will here be called "the Sámi Parliament movement".

Sámi as it (for unrelated reasons) is the Sámi national day.[25] In its discussion of Soviet-era Sámi–state relations, Kalstad 2009 conformed to what has become a common emplotment in post-Soviet academic narratives on the Russian Sámi: the initial period is presented as hopeful, the narrative then turns to the disaster of Stalinism, followed by a critical discussion of the post-war period's forced resettlement and Russification. As regards appraisals of the post-Soviet period, there exist different academic narratives: On the one end of the scale, there is Overland 1999 that problematized the effects of border-transcending networking, was fundamentally critical to NGO-based elites, and focused on the cultural revitalization project's shortcomings. On the other end of that scale, we find Kalstad 2009 where the Russian Sámi activism is presented as successful, and the Nordic Sámi referred to as "good and healthy allies" in the group's work to protect and revitalize their culture (52–55). The book's emplotment conforms to a pattern not uncommon in national history narratives, where history moves from a golden past to a dark age with a subsequent chance for rebirth (Aronsson et al 2011: 260, 263-64; Gaski 2008b: 225; Thijs 2011: 71 – see discussion in AI: 32). As we shall see in this thesis, Kalstad's narrative had an impact on developments in Russian Sámi politics (8.1). As in much of the literature, details of post-Soviet Russian authorities' policy towards the Sámi were scarce in Kalstad 2009. It must, however, be noted that *The Road of Hopes* is an unfinished product, as the author passed away prior to its completion.

Since the turn of the Millennium, researchers connected to the Kola Science Centre – Natalija N. Gucol, Svetlana N. Vinogradova and Larisa A. Rjabova – have written about relations between the state and the Sámi, historical and contemporary (Gutsol & Riabova 2002; Gucol, Rjabova & Vinogradova 2002; Gucol, Vinogradova & Samorukova 2007; Vinogradova 2005 & 2010; Wheelersburg & Gutsol 2009). Anthropologist Vladislava Vladimirova's dissertation *Just Labor* (2006), primarily focused on reindeer herding (see footnote 21), should be noted for its coverage of relations between *obščina*s (6.4, 7-8.), reindeer herding companies, and NGOs. Other recent contributions to the study of contemporary politics include Paul Fryer's (2011) book chapter on Russian Sámi attempts to achieve political empowerment; historian Maksim G. Kučinskij's (2011) general overview of the group's political situation; historian Anna Afanas'jeva's (2013) master's thesis about the forced relocation of her people during Soviet times; and Lukas Allemann's (2013) living-condition focused master thesis. Most recently, we have UiT Arctic University of Norway-based historians Stian Bones, Kari A. Myklebost, and Einar Niemi's contributions to a two-volume work on comparative Norwegian and Russian history with

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[25] The 1992 Sámi Conference chose February 6 as the national day of the Sámi to commemorate the first international Sámi meeting in 1917 (AIII; 1.3, 6.2-3, 7.1).

chapters that deal with Norwegian Sámi politics, and Russian Sámi and Nenec politics from the late Imperial era to the Federal Era (Bones et al 2015; Myklebost & Niemi 2014 & 2015a,b).[26]

2.3. Tendencies and Lacunae

As is usual when it comes to academic narratives about indigenous peoples, the majority of narrators do not belong to the group being described. Whether my contribution is a deviation from this pattern since I am a Sámi, or perpetuates it because I am not a *Russian* Sámi, is discussed later in the thesis (4.2.3.-4.2.4). In any case, the articles written for this thesis constituted an attempt at adding something of value by focusing on aspects of Russian Sámi politics that were not satisfactorily covered in the literature at the time that work on the thesis began (2009). Firstly, while there were discussions of relations between the Nordic and Russian Sámi, the structures for their political interaction were not covered in detail. Secondly, while some thick, critical accounts of post-Soviet Russian Sámi political developments had been produced, these were somewhat outdated by 2009. They were also mainly focused on civil society, while there was a dearth of detailed descriptions of Russian state policy on Sámi representation and participation. Thirdly, one phenomenon was not yet covered: the emerging movement for a Russian "Sámi Parliament". Finally, there was also little critical analysis of externally produced discourses on the Russian Sámi, i.e. discourses on the Russian Sámi produced by group outsiders. I sought to contribute to the first point with Article II, to the second point with Articles III and IV, to the third point with article III, and to the final point with Article I.

In addition, some other ambitions for this thesis emerged from the reading of previous academic works on the Russian Sámi, and from considering aspects of discursive treatment of minorities that are outlined in 2.1 and 4.2. Firstly, this thesis has aimed to maintain the balance between on the one hand keeping in focus Russian Sámi actors and their attempts to empower their people, whilst on the other shedding lights at forces that work against such empowerment. Secondly, the thesis whishes to avoid something that many previous works on the group have done: "picking sides" in internal conflicts (see 2.2, 4.1.2). During work with the thesis, care has been taken to try and not utilize descriptive statements about actors that could be considered as "denouncing" or "lauding" them, and to gather sources that reflect the standpoints of both camps, and present these.

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[26] This historiography does not list the five articles and three book chapters on the subject of Russian Sámi politics published by the author between 2011 and 2015, half of which form part of this thesis. These products are listed in the literature list as Articles I–IV; Berg-Nordlie 2011; and Berg-Nordlie 2015a,b,c.

3. Theory Discussion

3.1. Discourses, Actors, and Structures

3.1.1. Defining Discourse

This thesis is predominantly preoccupied with describing and analyzing developments in systems for indigenous political representation and it leans most heavily on network governance theory. The concept of discourse nevertheless needs to be treated in this theory chapter, as it appears as an explanatory factor for actor's desires and behavior, and is brought up in discussions about historiography, network governance theory, and ethics (2, 3.3, 4). The concept also appears in the thesis articles, particularly AI and AIV. Discourse analysis has been described as a "broad church of approaches whose core component is a focus on language and meaning", based on the insight that representations of reality are not "reflections of reality" but reflect discourse (Barnard-Wills (2012: 61-2) – our repertoire of concepts, the content of those concepts, and the relationship between them, is socially constructed through semiotic practices. It is fitting that the meaning of the concept "discourse" is, in itself, contested. Barnard-Wills (2012: 63, 66-71) presents a basic antagonism among theorists regarding where to put the dividing line between "discursive" and "non-discursive" by contrasting Lilie Chouliaraki's and Norman Fairclough's position that the analytical category of "discourse" should refer concretely to processes of communication, with Ernesto Laclau's and Chantal Mouffe's position that no social practice or even physical event should be seen as "non-discursive" because nothing has meaning without discourse (Barnard-Wills 2012: 63, 66-71). There is no room in this thesis to present the theoretical debate on discourse at length, and neither is this necessary to address the concrete task of the thesis. Discourse is here pragmatically defined as identifiable patterns of "speaking about and understanding the world (or a part of it)" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2006: 9, 37–8, 60–2, 69, 150), and discourse analysis as the study of "semiotic elements of social practices" – language, nonverbal communication, images and other created objects (Choularaki & Fairclough 2002: 38; Fairclough 2003: 54). For the purposes of this thesis it is speech, most often as manifested through text, that has been the object of discourse analysis. For the further operationalization of "discourse" in the articles, see 5.1, 5.2 and 5.4.

Whenever a phenomenon, for example an historical event or a social group, is discussed, one may analytically distinguish within the debate different antagonistic positions vying with each other for dominance. Actors who articulate similar positions on the matter under discussion are in this context said to represent the same discourse on the phenomenon. The difference between a debate encompassing two discourses and a discourse with some internal variance is not

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inherent in the data but a matter of where researchers place their analytical focus. Let us say that we are investigating a debate on how best to fulfill the indigenous rights of the Sámi people to natural resources. We may hypothetically identify two antagonistic discourses: an individual-oriented discourse positing that Sámi individuals should have more rights to natural resources than other citizens, and a community-oriented discourse positing that all members of communities currently or traditionally associated with the Sámi, regardless of individual ethnic identity, should benefit collectively from indigenous rights. However, moving our focus one level up, we may find that both these discourses can be seen as different versions of a "discourse of approval" within a larger debate on indigenous rights that also includes an antagonistic "discourse of rejection" fundamentally hostile to the very idea of indigenous rights (cf. Jørgensen & Philips 2006: 148–50).

Another relevant question as regards discourse analysis is why one should use terms and concepts so far removed from everyday speech. When describing conflicting positions on issues and the groups who give voice to them, would it not be better to apply more familiar terms like "ideologies" or "parties"? Firstly, "parties" and "ideologies" most often describe groups that are *institutionalized* in some way, or at least recognized as existing by both its members and the general public; whereas discourses are complexes of meaning that need simply to be observable – they do not need to be recognized by those who think and talk through them. Granted, the term "ideology" has indeed been applied to indicate internalized discourses that the individual is not conscious about or has not reflected critically on – note the classical Marxist concept of ideology as false consciousness:

> Ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, indeed, but with a false consciousness. The real motives impelling him remain unknown to him, otherwise it would not be an ideological process at all (Engels 1893)

Gramsci and other Marxist or Marxist-inspired thinkers have further refined the concept of ideological hegemony in ways that have been important for the development of modern discourse theory (Laclau & Mouffe 2001: 6–42, 65–71; Lorenz 2011: 49-50). Nevertheless, in common contemporary usage "ideology" refers mainly to sets of political beliefs and ideals that are explicitly discussed as such by adherents and critics alike. The term "discourse," on the other hand, also includes sets of ideas that are not generally recognized as constituting an ideological system. Secondly, a discourse is more than a set of ideas. The term specifically refers to communication and the spread of ideas through such. A discourse-theoretical approach to the analysis of politics hence implies a focus on the impact of intersubjective, communicative processes.

To consciously articulate discourse is to attempt to change or preserve what is accepted as "good", or even what is accepted as "reality". Discourse articulation is, whether consciously or not from the articulators' side, a power struggle. In any given forum where debate takes place, a successful discourse may marginalize its antagonists (the alternative discourses) to the extent that it achieves not only dominance, but *hegemony* – i.e. is accepted to the extent that its portrayal of reality is never, or very rarely, questioned. Forums can hence become "echo chambers:" participants may disagree in ways that appear significant when seen from the inside, but still share certain near-unshakably stable positions. If anyone were to enter the forum and begin promoting radically different articulations regarding these fundamental "truths," they would find it difficult to convince those already present. Most likely they would be drowned out by a chorus of unified opposition, or rejected because their very ways of reasoning are alien to the audience (Figenschou & Beyer 2014: 431, 436; Kushin & Kitchener 2009).[27] Davies (2011: iii, 64) addresses the same phenomenon, using the term "orthodoxy":

> an orthodoxy may not eliminate its rivals, but its influence means they lack intellectual leverage, and can be caricatured, recuperated, censored or ignored by its protagonists.

Ultimately, all forums can be said to have "echo chamber" aspects: no debates are entirely devoid of implicit or explicit consensuses, and there are always certain limits to what can be said without risking censorship or ostracizing. AI (26–30) argues that the Nordic Sámi media debate has had an echo chamber aspect through a hegemonic discourse on the need for Nordic Sámi aid and assistance to the Russian Sámi. Discursive hegemony is also highly relevant for how governance networks function: actors that choose to enter governance networks run the risk of being ensnared by a pre-set discourse's definitions of the problems and the options (Davies 2011: III, 62–4),). Røiseland & Vabo (2012: 62, 80) and Sørensen & Torfing (2009: 246) also adress the power aspect of discourse articulation when describing how authorities can attempt to control governance networks by discursively "framing" the network, articulating ideas about the network's common identity and mission, attempting to "determine [its] political goals (…) and discursive story-line." In subchapter 3.2.3, strategic usage of discourse articulation will be discussed as a technique of *metagovernance*, the steering of governance networks. Even so, hegemony, orthodoxy, echo chamber effect – whatever you decide to call it – is always somewhat unstable. It can be successfully challenged and deconstructed, losing ground to a new dominant discourse, or being forced to evolve and expand by incorporating new "truths" (Barnard-Wills

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[27] Kushin & Kitchener (2009), having analyzed political debates in social media, argue that that even though online discussion fora possess great potential for exposing discussants to people who oppose their points of view, people still tend to gravitate towards groups of likeminded individuals, which limits their exposure to points of view that are highly different from their own.

2012: 67-8, 71-3; Choularaki & Fairclough 2002: 37-8; Jørgensen & Phillips 2006: 86–8, cf. Solberg 2014 on the rise and fall of paradigms in science).

3.1.2. Actors and Structures

In the remaining parts of 3.1, and 3.2, views on the relationship between actors and structures are clarified. It is impossible to understand actors' intentions and behavior without knowledge of their social context, such as the dominant discourses that they are shaped by, and must relate to. Simultaneously, the behavior of these actors changes or preserves said social context. This interaction between discursive structures and actors is akin to Giddens' statement that "structures are both medium or condition for, and result or product of, action" (in Guneriussen 1999: 346), a view he again relates to Marx' comment that

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. (Marx 1852)

In this thesis, "structures" refers not only to discursive structures (constructions of the world created through articulation, e.g. textual or oral communication) but also to formal political structures, here defined as the formalized frameworks for interaction between various state and non-state actors with an interest in Russian Sámi and pan-Sámi politics. The actors are on the one hand limited by and shaped by the discursive and formal political structures (the latter henceforth referred to by shorthand as "political structures") that have developed historically independently of their efforts but, under certain conditions, they are also capable of changing these structures. Structures are created and upheld, but also made unstable, by actors.

If we want to explain social change and continuity, we cannot overlook the interaction between concrete groups or in some cases even concrete individuals. That is why this thesis not only accounts for discursive and political structures, but also for how actors have attempted to change or uphold these. Article III and IV describe such an organized attempt to alter dominant discursive structures and political structures – in this case, those governing Russian Sámi political representation – and how actors attempt to retain or adapt the existing, dominant structures (see Chapter 7-9). Another issue is why actors behave in the ways we observe them as doing. That may seem more a matter of empirical investigation than theory-based discussion, but our interpretation of actors' behavior is rooted in our own assumptions about them – assumptions that will ultimately color the narrative we produce. For transparency, these assumptions need to be made clear. The following part of the thesis clarifies my views on what can be assumed about actors' reasons for their behavior. The different behavioural modes introduced below are revisited elsewhere in the thesis when discussing possible reasons for actors' behavior.

3.1.3. Strategically Rational Behavior

Can we simply assume that the actors we observe are behaving rationally, and explain events that unfold from that point of departure? That depends on what is meant by "rationality." According to Fearon & Wendt (2002: 59) there are two main types of rationality-based explanatory models: "thick" and "thin." The "thick" models make assumptions about the kinds of desires actors have, often assuming self-interested material-benefit-maximizing to be the operative desire. This type of rationalism has led some social scientists to shun rational behavior-based explanations, on the grounds that such explanations unrealistically expect all actors to be primarily selfish (Donahoe 2009:4). Its most narrow incarnations have been brushed off as "confusion between rationality and egoism" (Elster 2008: 193), and it has been remarked that the kind of actor assumed by some economists belong to a "different species" – they are "econs," not humans (Kahneman 2011: 270).[28] By contrast, "thin" rationalism does not assume anything about the nature of actors' desires, but holds that it should be assumed that actors will go about attempting to fulfill those desires in a certain way. The simplest way of explaining that "certain way" would be the formula "Desire+Belief=Action" (Fearon & Wendt 2002: 59). Based on such a thinly-rational point of departure, Elster (1989: 24–6; 2008: 191–3) gives a procedural definition of rationality, centered on how beliefs are formed: a rational action is one which is

> optimal, given the beliefs; the beliefs must be as well supported as possible, given the evidence; and the evidence must result from an optimal investment in information gathering.[29]

This definition of rationality makes it possible to assume rational actors while simultaneously utilizing insights from discourse theory. The basic desires of the actors can be considered as resulting from internalized discourse. Furthermore, in gathering information about what would be the optimal action, the actors may take into consideration dominant discourses as a limitation on their space for action, or consider how to utilize the discursive landscape to their advantage. Furthermore, the actor's search for an optimal strategy will happen through language (reading, talking, thinking), which is in the final analysis bound by discursive patterns. Certain courses of action will even be "unthinkable" due to internalized discourses on the part of the actor. According to Elster's definition, rationality hinges on good and efficient research aimed at determining the most strategic action towards reaching a goal. This type of behavior is in line with what is referred to as *instrumental* or *strategic* rationality: the actor places their focus on a set of goals, and considers the external world of things and people as constraints or possibilities relative to the desired goal (Eriksen & Weigård 1999: 35, 37; Varshney 2005: 7; Weber 1968: 24–6). In

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[28] The name of this "species" was coined by the behavioral economist Richard Thaler (see Kahneman 2011: 270).
[29] To clarify the term "optimal investment": Elster does not consider it "rational" behavior if evidence is gathered so thoroughly that the chance to act disappears.

this thesis, strategic-rational behavior is considered an operative behavioral mode in political interaction, but not the only one. Other alternative modes of behavior can be brought up when, for example, we observe that actors do not alter their strategy in spite of failure to achieve their stated goals.

3.1.4. Non-Rational Behavior

There are several other types of behavior that fall outside our definition of rationality. Strategically rational behavior requires the gathering and evaluation of data. In politics, important decisions sometimes need to be taken quickly – leaving little time for investigations into truth or best strategic options. What mechanisms can we assume are active in such cases? Weber (1968: 24–6; see also Eriksen & Weigård 1999: 35; Varshney 2005: 7-8) lists value-rational, affectual and traditional behavior as alternatives. Value-rational behavior, here called *directly value-oriented* behavior since it falls outside the definition of rationality applied above, includes behaving in certain ways because the behavior in itself is normatively seen as desirable. Directly value-oriented behavior is relevant for explaining aspects of the movement for a Russian Sámi Parliament, as will be discussed below (8-9). This is not to be confused with acting in *emotional affect*, which is a response that considers neither strategy nor moral impetuses. Neither does traditional or *habitual* behavior, which Weber (1968: 25) refers to as containing "the great bulk of all everyday action to which people have become habitually accustomed." Habitual responses are akin to what Kahneman (2011: 20–1, 25) calls the psychological 'System 1," which deals with immediate reactions and responses and is generally in charge whenever one is not presented with a challenge that takes some special effort; while 'System 2' takes care of "effortful mental activities." What is interesting about Kahneman's division is that he claims System 2 trains System 1 to mimic responses which the actor has earlier used to solve similar situations, responses that were at the time based on mentally more effortful action (Kahneman 2011: 22–3). Donahoe (2007: 7–8) refers to something similar with his "simple heuristics," going by tried-and-true methods that are not necessarily founded in logic and theory but in experience and practice. Hence, quick, habitual action may not be classifiable as "rational", but it may still be "smart". There is an obvious implication of this for politics: experienced political actors may have internalized good responses to situations, to which other actors may be unable to respond well on short notice.

Another way of interpreting actors' behavior can be to assume *rule-fulfilling* mentality. This is seen as characteristic of the bureaucracy, in which the aim is to fulfill regulations in a correct manner (Guneriussen 1999: 221; Varshney 2005: 7; Weber 2010: 99). Rule-oriented behavior is relevant in this thesis, since among the actors we find state employees who work in a strictly

policy-implementing capacity, whose very work description encourages rule-fulfilling behavior. By rule-fulfilling behavior is here meant not just actions taken in order to fulfill formal regulations and demands, but also behavior that has the purpose of fulfilling less formalized expectations from higher-ranking actors within a hierarchal system. Article IV (56) includes this behavioral mode to explain certain observed actions. Rule-fulfilling behavior falls outside this thesis' definition of rational behavior since it does not involve engaging in understanding-oriented processes of information gathering and evaluation – tasks may be solved simply by following the rule created for the situation.[30] Finally, we must recognize that all behavior – non-rational and rational – is ultimately based on the actor's subjective worldview, which is always to a certain extent beyond the realm of rationality since it is based on internalized discourses, including their group identities. Even when actors consciously try to act strategically, their actions will be limited by what actions they consider morally defensible, and certain actions will be literally unimaginable.

3.1.5. How to Explain Actors' Behavior

All the ways of explaining actor behavior presented above are legitimate ways of interpreting observed actions. Even so, when the object of study is political interaction, a case can be made that actions will often be most correctly interpreted if one reads them as resulting from strategic-rational considerations. Most political actors have entered politics with the express intention of influencing outcomes, and have defined goals that they want to achieve. Even in cases where the goals of a political group are a matter of general ideology and not very concretized, the emergence of a specific situation may lead the group to fix on a concrete situational desire that they wish to see realized. Furthermore, political actors operate in a social setting that heavily involves elements of alliance building, negotiation and strategic discourse promotion. It seems overwhelmingly likely that actors in such a setting would be conditioned to consider opportunities and constraints before acting towards the realization of their goals. It may also be argued that political actors who do *not* behave strategically will have less "staying power" in the game: they will lose battles, become frustrated, lose morale, and fail to achieve positions of importance. It is arguable that this kind of "selection" in the field of politics would ensure a high representation of strategy-minded individuals. Under such circumstances, it does not seem too prejudiced for researchers to search for explanations to actors' behavior by primarily looking through the lens of strategic rationality.

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[30] Granted, an actor may be presented with a situation where it is unclear which rules apply, or how to interpret the rules. That actor then needs to engage in a process of rational consideration, whether alone or through deliberation with other individuals.

This thesis concerns a case of political interaction where on-the-spot decision-making is seldom necessary, and where the individuals involved are anchored in organized groups and networks that generally have the opportunity and time to discuss facts and strategies prior to engaging in interaction with other actors. Central roles are played by people who have gathered substantial political experience through civil society activity, employment in the political apparatus, party politics – or several, if not all, of the above (see AIII; also Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012). These are all factors that make it prudent to expect strategic rationality. Still, we do observe that issues central Russian Sámi activists have declared as being of major importance are quite often resolved in other ways than these activists wanted (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012; AIII). Does this indicate that those actors choose poor strategies? Are their actions too directly rooted in values, too little informed by a strategy that considers external constraints? Do the causes they focus on clash so fundamentally with what decision-makers are willing to accept, that success is unnatainable whichever strategy they choose? Or, are we looking at the wrong set of goals when measuring their success or failure – perhaps the prime desire of the actors is simply something other than what we have assumed?

3.1.6. What can we Assume about Actors' Desires?

Analyzing political interaction without "thick" rational assumptions implies not taking actors' goals for granted but rather attempting to determine them through investigation – f. ex. by gathering data on the actor's officially stated goals, externally oriented rhetoric, in-group discourse, and other social context (see Fearon & Wendt 2006: 63). Of course, it is impossible to get on the mental "inside" of individual actors: we cannot ultimately know what drives an actor. For example, we cannot determine with certainty the extent to which the dominant discourse within a group has been internalized by a concrete individual belonging to that group – they may have unarticulated ideas that differ radically from that of the others. Nevertheless, mapping out dominant discourses is of interest because there is a high likelihood that these have shaped the worldviews of its individual members. In addition, the dominant discourses heavily constrain actors: breaching the frames of discourse too radically may cause the audience to reject the message and/or lead to social sanctions (AI: 21–2). Toeing the line of dominant discourse may hence form part of a strategic-rational consideration, or for that matter be done out of a sense of duty to act in line with it – sometimes norms are followed "for expediency's sake" (Donahoe 2009: 10; Nyyssönen 2007: 14; see also Parson's external normative constraints as described by Guneriussen, 1999: 137).

This thesis attempts to not assume too much about actors' desires. However, if we base ourselves exclusively on what is explicitly stated in documents and interviews, our analysis may be

seriously weakened: narrow self-interest or the desire to avoid sanctions may profoundly affect actor behavior, and yet such considerations are often not reflected in the sources available to us. If we disregard all possible desires of the actor that we cannot back up with sources, we may lose the ability to address unexpressed structures of dependence and exploitation, and unarticulated desires on the part of the actor, resulting in a "naïve" analysis. This thesis does point out instances when actors were positioned to get unarticulated benefits or disadvantages from certain actions, in cases where it was felt that not indicating such possible explanations would seriously weaken the analysis. This includes f. ex. explaining how the Norwegian Sámi Mission benefitted from the discourse of need about the Russian Sámi that they articulated in Norwegian media (AI: 26), or how some types of Russian Sámi civil society formations have disincentives to confront Murmansk authorities too sharply because of their dependence on those authorities (AIII), or possible unarticulated reasons for the Soviet regime's forcible removal of the Sámi (AIV: 50).

That said, it is an ambition of this thesis to steer clear of the "instrumentalist trap" (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 93): explaining all actions on the basis of actors' assumed self-interest, and thereby failing to register other possible explanations which presume actors to be more honest, or at least less selfish. Such "hermeneutics of suspicion" have been criticized for making historians "professionally blind for the fact that politicians can be honest" and for "lacking a principle to prevent honest play being misinterpreted as manipulation" (Skjervheim 1992: 25-36). This is not just a matter of trying to avoid one-sided analysis, but also a question of ethics: many of the actors in Russian Sámi politics during the last quarter-century are still alive and active, and research results published in the West do "spill back over" into the society under study, with possible negative effects on movements and individuals. On some occasions, Western academics have shed negative light on identifiable or named people and groups in Russian Sámi society (see 2.2, 2.3, 4.1.2). This thesis attempts to not assume too much about actors' desires, while not being blind to the fact that unarticulated resource-gathering or sanction-avoidance may be important explanatory factors.

3.2. Network Governance

This thesis discusses the inclusion of Russian Sámi representatives into an international political community where both state and non-state actors are active, and into the indigenous politics of Murmansk Region. Structures for communication between state and non-state actors are hence of core importance to the thesis. The social sciences have paid considerable attention to such structures, recently through the political science literature on "network governance" in particular. Network governance theory is discussed in Article III (214-220), but the following subchapters go somewhat deeper, discussing the relationship between formal network governance,

representation, state power, and informality, and introducing some analytical models that are used in the thesis.

In this thesis, the discussion of network governance centers on its application to the *Russian* context rather than to the *indigenous* context, despite the core subject of the thesis being indigenous politics rather than Russian politics. This is a conscious choice. There are case-crossing similarities between indigenous politics in different countries, not least because of the existence of a globalized discourse of indigenous rights, but there are substantial differences in different states' indigenous policy (deCosta 2015: 24-56; Robbins 2015: 65-86) – something exemplified well by the major differences between Sámi policy in the Nordic countries and in Russia (Berg-Nordlie 2015a). The Russian context is more important for understanding Russian Sámi politics than the context of global indigenous politics.[31]

3.2.1. Defining Network Governance

The academic discourse on "governance" emerged in Europe in the beginning of the 1990s (Torfing & Sørensen 2014: 2–4). It constructs a fundamental division between hierarchal *government* through the state's traditional chain of command and *governance* in the sense of "new practices of coordinating activities through networks, partnerships, and deliberative forums" which involve a wide range of actors including "labour unions, trade associations, firms, NGOs, local authority representatives, social entrepreneurs and community groups" (Hirst 2000: 18–19). The discourse posits that there is a difference between an "old model" for research into politics which takes the state structures as the point of departure, and a "new model" which "looks more generically at the coordination and various forms of formal or informal types of public-private interaction, most predominantly the role of policy networks" (Peters 2000: 39). In short, the analytical focus is shifted from being state-centric to being network-centric. It is furthermore claimed that actual political practice is also shifting from hierarchal government to a form of governance more inclusive of non-state actors (Davies 2011: 11-14, 3.2.3.). The reasons given for this shift have been divided into "problem-centered" and "actor-centered": the first discuss the change as a consequence of increasing social complexity which necessitates the involvement of non-state actors, the second as a response to state fragmentation and overspecialization which makes networks necessary (Davies et al 2016: 136-7).

Within the governance discourse, we find various terms for the object of research, including but not limited to "governance," "new governance," "pluricentric governance" and

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[31] For discussions on network governance in an indigenous context, see Berg-Nordlie 2015a, Josefsen 2015a (3, 50–2, 57–78), Josefsen 2015b, and Ulvevadet 2015.

"network governance." There are also several different operational definitions – if we are to borrow concepts from Fearon & Wendt (3.1.3), some "thicker" and some "thinner" (Hirst 2000: 14–19, Jung 2010: 352; Rhodes 2000: 54–90; Torfing & Sørensen 2014: 5–6). This thesis utilizes the term "network governance". A basic distinction may be drawn between three ideal types (modes) of governance: *hierarchal*, *market*, and *network*. In the first mode, the government of a policy object is seen as being the exclusive domain of state, and input from non-state actors is absent. In the second mode, the state defines the object of policy as best managed without its direct participation, and allows private actors to regulate the field through free interaction and competition, resulting in a compulsion for people to be governed by market forces (Davies et al 2016: 139). Finally, network governance is taking place when the state allows actors from civil society and private business to participate in policy-making and policy-implementation. These are ideal types, and in the real world, patterns of the mix should be expected (AIII; Winsvold et al. 2009:408–21).

In this thesis, "network governance" refers only to openly declared and legal networks between state and non-state actors. The state/non-state transcending networks investigated in this thesis are all of this type. Many of the Russian networks analyzed in Articles III and IV are, more specifically, what will be referred to as "formal governance networks": network governance arenas that have been given recognition by, or created by, state authorities (see also 3.2.2, Fig. 1).

The definition of network governance utilized in this thesis is thicker than for example Torfing & Sørensen's (2014: 6) definition, which does not demand the inclusion of both state and non-state actors in governance networks. It is both thicker and thinner than the general definition of governance used by the same authors (2014: 6) – thicker since their definition is not limited to legal and publicly declared networks ("[governance is] the process of steering society and the economy through collective action…"), but thinner since their definition assumes a fundamental position of common interest on part of the involved actors ("…in accordance with common goals"). The definition used here does not necessitate any notion of a common goal among the participants. It also includes governance networks that involve actors who are in conflict, and who fail to reach any agreement. In the context of Sámi governance research, the definition is thicker than that used by Ulvevadet (2015: 126) – "the totality of interactions between state-based and private actors which are necessary to solve problems and create opportunities", but thinner than that applied in the most recent PhD on network governance and Sámi politics (Josefsen 2015a: 3, 7, 61), which explicitly excludes "advisory organs established by the government, or other inclusive administrative organs that act out from a mandate given by

central authorities." Josefsen also limits the definition to "formalized arrangements between 'equal' parties, with the intention of joint decision-making."

It is not unusual for definitions of governance to assume that there is a degree of mutual dependency between state and non-state actors, and that interactions will not be characterized by much hierarchal power wielding on the part of the state, while generally acknowledging that governance processes do occur "in the shadow of hierarchy" (Josefsen 2015a: 61; 2015b: 175; Rhodes 2007: 1253; Vabo & Røiseland 2008: 91). Reflecting this, the Norwegian term for "network governance" (coined by Vabo & Røiseland, 2008) is *samstyring*, which translates literally as "joint steering." When this thesis does not include mutual dependency or actor equality into its definition of network governance, it reflects the author's skepticism towards the idea that non-state actors should be considered as fundamentally on equal footing with state-based actors. This is given a more substantial discussion in 3.2.3.-4 (also AIII: 215-16; Berg-Nordlie 2015a: 390-93). For now, the reader should simply note that in this thesis, governance networks that prove to be dominated by state-based actors will not be considered as deviating from any "norm" of state/non-state interaction.

Torfing & Sørensen (2014: 11–14) divide research on governance into two "generations." The first generation, they say, focused on demonstrating that this new type of governance exists, and defining what it is. The second takes as a point of departure that the phenomenon exists, and has a research agenda that encompasses a multitude of questions. Among the questions listed by Torfing & Sørensen, this thesis is oriented towards exploring how governance networks can facilitate and enhance democratic participation; and the roles of "soft power," "complex power games" and "metagovernance" (see Torfing & Sørensen 2014: 11–14). In short, this thesis examines not only how network governance can facilitate democratic participation, but also how the practice of power on the part of traditional elites can limit and undermine such participation (AIII, 3.2.3., 7-8).

3.2.2. Theories and Models, Focus and Blindness in Research

Scientific theory contains toolsets that can be applied to wrench meaning from raw data: categories to be used in analysis, and ideas about how these categories generally relate to one another in terms of causality and correlation. In one sense, a theory is a discourse – a way of perceiving and discussing the world we study. Between the overarching theory and the concrete, case-specific hypothesis, we find the analytical model. Such models are comparable to Weber's ideal types: they are created by emphasizing certain aspects of the world, thereby enabling researchers to comment on how little or much observed reality deviates from the model (Berg 2000: 87–9; Kjeldstadli 1999: 132–3, 147; Weber 2010: 170–92). The formal governance network

is such an analytical model. The ideal type of such a network is here depicted in Fig. 3. State-organized channels for Sámi representation established in Russia between 2006 and 2014 all conform to this ideal type (AIII: 230-43; AIV: 54–8, 7-8).

Fig. 3: An Ideal type for Formal Governance Networks

1	A group of individuals, the existence of which is declared to the public, which
2	includes non-state actors (f. ex. from civil society or private business), and
3	was created by state-based actors, or includes such actors, or is *de facto* recognized by such actors as legitimate through their publicly involving the network in political processes, and
4	is defined as involved in policy-deliberation, policy-making, or policy-implementation.

The above ideal type is supplemented by two other models. The first of these describes how to include non-state actors in governance networks in ways that make it more likely these individuals "represent more than themselves", inspired by criteria for representativeness found in network governance literature (Røiseland & Vabo 2012: 63–4; Sørensen & Torfing 2009: 244–5; Torfing et al 2009: 6–7). By comparing real-life representation mechanisms to this model, the thesis attempts to measure the degree to which non-state actors in governance networks can be said to be genuinely representative of the group that they are described as representing (AIII; 5, 6).

Fig. 4: A Model for Representativeness

Representatives

⇧ 2 (3)

Electorate

⇧ 1 (3)
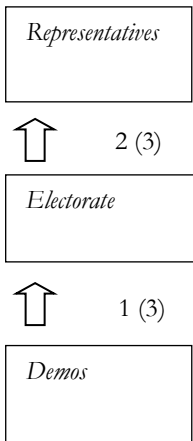
Demos

The *demos* is the group discursively constructed as "represented." Article III discusses how a demos needs one or several organized bodies to make its genuine representation possible. If the state simply chooses an individual directly from the demos to represent it, this cannot be considered genuine representation: the demos will have little to no possibility to sancton their "representative" if the latter is found to speak poorly or falsely on their behalf. The chain of representation necessitates a group of people recognized as emanating from the demos, which is adequately organized to be capable of electing and sanctioning representatives of the demos. This category is here referred to as the *electorate*. The electorate may for example be organized as an electoral registry where people who fulfill certain criteria can register, or (a model of high relevance for this thesis) NGOs may be given the role of electors, in practice treating the NGO members as an "electorate" emanating from the demos. Representatives may be elected for example to a formal governance network (Fig 3.) designed to include demos representatives, or a representation organ designed for the demos (like the Sámediggis of the Nordic countries).

Numbers 1-3 symbolize criteria that, if fulfilled, are considered to improve representativeness. Criterion 1 is that demos members of voting age should be able to participate in the election process (following the examples above, by joining an electoral roll or an elector NGO), but the electorate should not be so open that individuals external to the demos are

allowed participation. This is much less straightforward than it may sound. For one thing, there may not be general agreement on the definition of the demos. Different definitions of "Sáminess" have caused turbulent discussions about criteria for membership in the Nordic states' Sámi Electoral Registries (Berg-Nordlie 2015a; Nyyssönen 2015; Pettersen 2015). The thesis at hand contains no discussion about where the "cutoff" should go between eligible participants in Russian Sámi representative processes and others. The author is not convinced that it is the proper role of a researcher outside the Russian Sámi community to attempt determining where this dividing line should go. Still, in some cases this thesis will argue that the design of the electorate blocks the participation of people that should be considered part of the demos. Criterion 2 is that the electorate must ultimately control who represents them. Representatives must be either elected by the electorate, or chosen by people elected by the electorate. Those who have chosen a representative must have a constant or at relatively regularly occurring possibility to replace said representative. Finally, Criterion 3 is that actors outside this closed system should not prevent the free election of representatives, and should not delimit the electorate in ways that can be seen as blocking part of the voting-age demos from participation (Berg-Nordlie 2015a: 392–3).

The second of the two models is inspired by Arnstein (1969)'s ladder of citizen participation, and takes the form of a simple sliding scale which is utilized to comment on the degree of influence bestowed on non-state actors' through participation in network governance arrangements (cf. AIII: 216).[32]

Fig. 5: A Sliding Scale of Power for Non-State Actors

Manipulative or symbolic inclusion	Effective consultancy	Negotiating power (*de facto* or formal)	Decision-making authority
Non-state actors have no detectable impact on policy-making or policy-implementation.	Non-state actors can be shown to have influenced policy-making or policy-implementation, through an advisory capacity.	Decisions cannot be made unless non-state actors accept them.	Non-state actors are given the formal power to make decisions over policy or policy-implementation.

It has been argued that approaching the sources with such theoretical models in mind may lead researchers to select, interpret and represent data in ways dictated by the "tyranny" of their

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[32] The four categories in Fig 5. can also be related to discussions on indigenous self-determination. In Article IV (42), following Anaya (2004: 100–3, 150–6), indigenous self-determination is defined as arrangements for self-government within non-indigenous peoples' sovereign states, and further subdivided into *autonomy* (indigenous institutions make decisions on matters that concern the indigenous people) and *participation* (indigenous representatives participate in the decision-making of non-indigenous institutions, for example through inclusion on network governance arenas). In Article III, the term "self-determination" is reserved for decision-making authority and negotiating power (*de facto* or formal). It follows that arrangements for indigenous participation are considered as constituting indigenous self-government only if the indigenous representatives through such arrangements obtain negotiating power or decision-making authority over issues of relevance to their peoples.

models (Seip 1983: 225–7). I hold, with Hernes (1977: 88–90), Kjeldstadli (1999: 132–40) and many others, that abstract models and deliberately applied theories are necessary when writing academic history. Often there will be so much data available on the object of study that we need some way to discriminate, some criteria for determining what data are of interest to us. Furthermore, without any ideas about how phenomena are connected, we can only produce detailed chronologies, not historical narratives that attempt to explain why things happen. While theories and models allow us to focus and see certain things more clearly, they also make other things fall out of view (Kjeldstadli 1999: 138–40). The lesson of this insight is not that we should attempt "theory-free science", but that researchers need to describe their theories and models in detail, make them explicit. Another lesson is that the same object of study should be examined in the light of several theories.

Network governance theory is a good point of departure for research into the relationship between state and non-state actors, but may also produce blindness to certain aspects of politics – for example by causing other modes of governance to disappear from view. This thesis attempts to keep hierarchal power practices in the picture, primarily through a focus on state practices of metagovernance (3.2.3). While focus lies on legal network steering techniques, it should be kept in mind that state-based actors may also govern through informal and/or illegal ways. In Article III (214-15), governing through informal networks and informal hierarchies is analytically isolated from the other modes, and viewed as essentially another mode of governance. The relationship between formality and informality is, however, complex, and will be discussed more below (3.2.5, 4.1.3). When this thesis gives little attention to informal networking, it is not a result of theory-induced blindness but a function of the thesis project's core interest in formal structures for representation, and also due to methodological and ethical concerns discussed below (4.1.3). The thesis' focus on how formal governance networks are structured leaves little space to the actual *output* of the policy field – the decisions made and their impact on the Russian Sámi. This is no accident of theory or method, but the result of a conscious choice. At the time research for this thesis began, the most pressing demand for new academic contribution was seen as the need for a thick account of developments in the organization of Russian Sámi political representation (see 2.3). The theoretical approaches utilized were selected precisely because they would result in a certain focus, shedding light on what was perceived to be be the least-covered aspects of Russian Sámi politics.

3.2.3. State Power and Network Governance

It has been argued that network governance approaches may be better suited for some societies than others, and even particularly "the Netherlands and Scandinavia, that have dense networks of

interest groups and a history of working towards consensus (or at least accommodation)" (Peters 2000: 47). However, that advice is based on defining network governance as a "society-centric" model of explanation (Peters 2000: 49), which would require the state under study to have a strong civil society sector. It has even been said that when a network governance mode is operative in politics, "government is no longer supreme" and we have arrived at a "centerless society" (see Rhodes 2000: 58, 60). If network governance *by definition* involves giving substantial power to the civil society sector, then it would be misguided to claim that network governance occurs in the Russian Federation. Russia is a country where civil society is generally considered less than well developed and not very influential. However, as established in 3.2.1, this thesis does not utilize the concept of network governance in a way that means the state has taken the back seat. As for "centerless society", this is arguably a poor description of the political realities of not just Russia, but of any functional state.

While the existence of formal governance networks is an objective and verifiable fact, horizontal relations within them and the empowerment of non-state actors through them is an assumption. In practice, how much power the state, or other elite groups, wield over any concrete network, and how influential the network is, are empirical questions. One must take care not to allow the focus on networking to vanish inequality and disempowerment from the narrative – as Davies (2011: 11-12) has accused (in particular early) governance studies of doing. Indeed, Osborne (2010a: 9) has recognized that governance networks are "rarely alliances of equals," and McQuaid (2010: 137) emphasizes that in such networks "greatest power usually lies with those controlling resources." It most definitely constitutes a powerful resource to be backed by the state apparatus, to have the legal right to rule, and (often) popularly perceived legitimacy to make decisions. When actors who get their authority from the state structures enter into communication with non-state actors, there is a significant power imbalance that cannot be ignored. If we utilize some concepts from the classical (and for usage on a Russian context, somewhat unfortunately named) "NATO-model", it is obvious that a reasonably functional state should be expected to outmatch its non-state "partners" in terms of *authority*, generally also in terms of *treasure* and *organization*, and also to possess strong *nodality*. The two least intuitively understandable of these four concepts, organization and nodality, can be explained as respectively material- and staff-based resources, and centrality in webs of communication (Vabo & Røiseland 2012).

One way of retaining a focus on power in a network governance-based narrative is to include a focus on *metagovernance*, the governance of governance networks.[33] In the document at hand, a typology of five basic metagovernance techniques is utilized: *Formal framing* refers to the regulation of the governance network's formal structure and tasks, including drawing limits to what issues the network is to discuss. Those empowered to formally frame the network may include a strict *economic framing* (regulating economic means available to the network), and reserve to themselves the power of *direct participation* in the network or *participant selection* (as opposed to invited groups electing their own representatives). We may also talk about *rhetorical framing* as a metagovernance technique: strategic discourse articulation[34] that aims to further shape the limits of what can be discussed within the network, and to establish what is considered as acceptable solutions, arguments, and portrayals of reality (Davies 2011: 19-20, 62–4; Røiseland & Vabo 2012: 62–3, 80; Sørensen & Torfing 2009: 246–7, 251; Vabo & Røiseland 2012). In addition, the state formally remains free to ignore input from governance networks or the actors included in them – unless the state has given these veto rights or delegated decision-making authority (3.2.2, Fig. 5).

State metagovernance is often described as a way for the state to secure control in a society where its power is challenged by non-state actors, and to enforce the people's will as expressed through representative democracy, against non-elected actors that have been invited into politics. However, from the perspective that governance networks may in themselves be democracy-promoting through the inclusion of marginalized groups and groups particularly affected by the decisions that are to be made, it follows that metagovernance may also be a vehicle for traditional elites to maintain their dominance (Davies 2013; Sørensen & Torfing 2016; Vabo & Røiseland 2012). This thesis concerns the representation of an indigenous minority in the indigenous policy field. Since the author takes the normative position that including indigenous representatives in indigenous politics is a good thing, and since Russian representative democracy is so dysfunctional that one must question the extent to which the state is actually representative of the people's will (Bækken 2013; Sakwa 2015; Petrov et al. 2014: 4), state metagovernance will receive rather critical attention. AIII discusses how state metagovernance contributes to limiting the representativeness of the indigenous participants included in Russian Sámi governance, and limits their potential to influence indigenous policy.

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[33] The term "metagovernance" has different meanings. Røiseland & Vabo (2012: 34-9) lists behaviour within concrete networks that has the purpose of steering them; the overall designing and managing of networks; and the initial selection between different modes of governance (3.2.1). In this thesis, the metagovernance concept is utilized with the second meaning.

[34] "Discourse" is here utilized in a narrower sense that excludes formally regulative texts, which would here fall under the concept "formal framing".

Based on a rejection of the assumptions of horizontal relations and non-state actor empowerment in network governance, several recent studies have utilized this type of network governance theory to study Russian state-civil society relations. References to individual articles are found elsewhere in the document at hand, but see particularly the special issues of *Demokratizatsiya* (2/2016 (24)) and *East European Politics* (2/2016, (32)) titled "Network governance in Russia", which include contributions from the eponymous NFR-financed project to which this thesis partly owes its existence (see Preface).

3.2.4. Network Governance in Russia

Sørensen and Torfing (2009: 238) sum up the "Central and East European tradition" of thinking about networks as characterized by associating the phenomenon with murky elite networks outside of democratic control – something this thesis considers as "informal networking" rather than "network governance." While informal networking is most certainly prevalent (see 3.2.5), there is more to networking in Russia than this: also in Russia, actors from civil society, business life and the academic communities are increasingly included by the Russian state into formalized network governance arrangements. Russian public debate tends to portray the inclusion of selected non-state actors in policy-deliberation, and even implementation in some cases, as both natural and desirable (Aasland et al 2016; Myhre & Berg-Nordlie 2016). A significant event in the development of Russian network governance was the 2005 establishment of the Federal-level Public Chamber (*Obščestvennaja palata*), a body of civil society-based actors that functions as an advisory organ with a broad mandate. Public chambers have since sprung up in several provinces of the Federation (Richter 2009). Likewise, at all levels of Russian politics – federal, province and local – there is now a truly massive number of other chambers (*palata*s) and councils (*sovet*s) where non-state actors are represented. Some are framed to be broad and general, and include many different kinds of civil society-based actors; others have a narrowly framed thematic, and draw on only a specific sector of civil society. Some of them work intensively with decision-makers and relevant bureaucrats, while others are isolated and seem devoid of influence. Such formal governance networks in Russia have recently received much scholarly attention, see f.ex. Aasland et al. 2016; Berg-Nordlie 2015a; & Tkach 2016; et al. 2014; Bogdanova et al 2016a; 2016b; Davies et al 2016; Laine & Demidov 2012: 144; Kropp & Schumann 2014; 2016; Tarasenko et al. 2011: 13–16.

Of relevance here is Petrov et al.'s (2014: 9–10, 16, 21–2) concept of *substitution* in Russia. While the regime reduces the capacity of representative democratic institutions to supply it with input from below, it fills the void by creating institutions that are easy to control. Indeed, the proposal from President Putin to establish the Public Chamber came in the same month as his

proposal to abolish the elections of provincial leaders (Richter 2009: 10). Current NGO policy may likewise be seen as having a substitution aspect: Open criticism is partly substituted by criticism in state-designed forums for civil society inclusion. Organizations that are deemed "loyal" and "constructive" are encouraged through invitations to formal governance networks and increased state financial support to civil society – while organizations that are fundamentally oppositional to the regime, or central parts of its policy, may face harsh reactions. The latter is particularly true for those that operate with foreign funding or participate in international political networking (Bækken 2009: 73; 2013: 28–32; Evans 2008: 347, 355; Laine & Demidov 2012: 144; Richter 2009: 11, 6.4). This has been discussed as cultivating "consentful contention", i.e. criticism that targets concrete and non-securitized policy, and not the regime as such, while cracking down on "dissentful contention" (Cheskin and March 2015: 266).

The increased opportunity to join state-led governance networks is furthermore coupled with an understanding that it may be disadvantageous to decline. The resultant networks strengthen the nodal position of the state by organizing relevant actors around a structure of the state's framing, which the state has often designed to allow for substantial metagovernance. Russian formal governance networks generally tend to be framed as merely "advisory," and are often very actively managed by state-based actors (Aasland et al 2016). Studies of Russian public discourse on network governance, and interviews with network participants, have revealed a widespread understanding that the state is lead partner within such networks, and non-state actors are essentially present as a necessary partner for the state to realize its chosen policy in an optimal fashion, rather than to represent their constituencies' interests. Nevertheless, there is considered to be room for civil society-based actors to make gains by utilizing these governance networks, and many join them with hopes for political influence, or other gains (Aasland et al 2016; Berg-Nordlie & Tkach 2016; Myhre & Berg-Nordlie 2016). What Øyvind Østerud (1979, quoted in Berg 2000: 294) says of corporatism also holds true for governance networks in general: they may "make the participants hostages in cooperations that are not to their advantage" but they may *also* "be considered a Trojan horse, involving a takeover of the decision-making apparatus from the inside." It is an empirical question to what extent governance networks approach the "Trojan" type or the "manipulative/symbolic inclusion" type (3.2.5, Fig. 5), although we should not expect to find the former when we study Russian network governance. It is realistic to expect formal governance networks in Russia to have only an advisory role, and although network governance is increasingly present it cannot be expected to be the dominant mode of governance in any political field.

3.2.5. Formal and Informal Networking

In this thesis, network governance has been defined in a way that excludes informal networking: focus is on legal, formalized governance networks (see 3.2.2). This does not imply that informal networks are irrelevant for Russian politics. Indeed, Russian politics has been described as characterized deeply by a culture of informalism (Bækken 2009: 23–7, 59, 85–96; 2013: 15–17, 53–4, 59–79, 159–202; Ledeneva 2013: 4, 11, 13–16, 19–26, 32, 247–55). Kononenko (2011: 6) goes so far as to describe Russia as a place where informal networks "permeate virtually all areas of policy-making" and "[informal] network-based governance defines what the Russian state is, in effect, all about." The interrelation between informal networking and formal modes of governance is debated by many scholars of Russian politics. Sakwa (2010) discusses this within the concept of the parallel existence of a "constitutional" or "normative state", and an "administrative regime" constituted by "a [informal] network of social relations" where behavior can deviate from the formal rules. A part of this is *selective law enforcement*: when formal rules are utilized to punish or remove actors who have violated informal rules (Bækken 2013: 1-6, 59-67, 204-10; 2015). We will observe that this is of relevance in the study of Russian indigenous politics (6.4). Just as informality allows state-based actors to exert influence beyond their formal capacities, it should be noted that it also allows non-state actors to take advantage of legitimate state institutions (Bækken 2009: 22–9, 32–8; 2013: 73, 108, 199, 206). While we should recall that informal networking is obviously practiced in the West as well, the prevalence of "informalism" is particularly striking in Russia, as is the general acknowledgement of its existence. Ledeneva (2011) refers to it as an "open secret." Because of this muddled state of affairs, it can be challenging to understand which interests are ultimately being pursued by the various state- and non-state actors, and where decisions are really being made.

The interrelation between informal networking and formal network governance can go both ways. On the one hand, being included in a governance network could serve as a stepping stone on the way to becoming included in an informal network (Evans 2008: 358). On the other hand, an individual may be invited into a formal governance network beacause of their prior involvement in an informal network. Formalized governance networks can be used both to recruit people to informal networks, and to "whitewash" pre-existing unofficial networks by providing a legitimate meeting arena for government officials and non-state actors. In the latter case, the outside actors may be portrayed in official discourse as "representing" various groups that have a legitimate interest in the policy field. Studying Russian governance networks, we may find these to involve both "fake" representatives of the latter kind and representatives that are more "genuine" following the model utilized in this thesis (3.2.2., Fig 4). To complicate matters,

it is entirely possible to find participants who have been included in governance networks due to informal networking, but are still recognized by many members of the "represented" demos as indeed taking care of their interests. The widespread practice of informal networking adds another layer to political analysis. When studying Russian politics, this aspect should not be forgotten, nor should it when studying politics in the West, where it is perhaps less generally acknowledged but definitely present. The reality of informal networking furthermore has methodological and ethical consequences, that are discussed below (see 4.1.3).

4. Methodology and Ethics

4.1. General Methodological Challenges

4.1.1. General Methodology of the Thesis Articles

In the above, "theory" has been described as that which supplies us with analytical categories and ideas about the interrelation between these (3.2.2). Methods can be defined as the concrete measures taken to obtain the data that we seek to understand through theory. The methods applied for this thesis have been literature studies, media analysis, document studies, interviews, and non-participating observation at relevant events during the period 2009-2016. Three major field works have been performed in Russia (2009,[35] 2010, 2013), the last one over a period of two months. Localities visited in Murmansk Region include Apatity, Loparskaja, Lovozero, Mončegorsk, Murmansk City, and Olenegorsk. Fieldworks have been used to interview, observe events, go through archives, and gather relevant academic literature. Several interviews, observations and archive studies have also been made in Norway (Kirkenes, Oslo, and Tromsø). In addition, some of the articles refer to data gathered elsewhere in Russia, in connection with fieldwork for other research projects.

For AI, the method applied is media analysis, since the object of research for that article is media discourse. This took the form of a quantitative discourse analysis: scrutinizing all articles in all editions of selected newspapers published in a specific period, and categorizing the texts as articulating one or several (or no) discourses of interest. Quantitative discourse analysis of a large number of texts is extremely time-consuming, and limited time and resources for research made it difficult to justify utilizing it unless mapping media discourse is the central object of the study. AIV took an interest in both discursive articulations and the development of formal political structures. Due to this broader scope of the article, quantitative discourse analysis was not

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[35] During this fieldwork, interviews were conducted together with Dr. Jørn Holm-Hansen of NIBR.

applied. Nevertheless, a systematic investigation of relevant documents and media was undertaken, and analysis performed of articulations about indigenousness and the Sámi. Document studies constituted a substantial part of the research for AII, III and IV. The availability of relevant documents varied. Documents about Nordic Sámi or pan-Sámi affairs were for the most part relatively easily available from libraries, institutions, or online. Russian legislation and other documents normatively describing current political organization were also easy to obtain, since official Russian websites (like that of Murmansk Region's Government, Gov.murman.ru) generally make such information publicly available. It was more challenging to map out Murmansk Region's indigenous governance structures and representation mechanisms prior to 2004 and 2006, respectively. For this purpose, methods were triangulated. Firstly, existing literature was investigated and key informants interviewed. None of the academic works consulted offered a step-by-step account of developments in the policy field, but many contained information about how indigenous governance had been organized at various points. Interviewees were often uncertain, even if they had participated in Murmansk indigenous politics at the relevant time (as AIII details, the period 1992-2004 saw enough re-organizations as to confuse anybody) but some interviewees proved important sources. Following this phase, the data obtained from literature and interviews was used as a point of departure for systematic internet searches aimed at locating documents in online archives. Many such were found at the province's own news agency and document database (Murmansk.news-city.info), and at a law-oriented resource database (Docs.pravo.ru). By comparing interview statements and pre-existing literature with official documents and media coverage of events, developments in arrangements for indigenous governance and Russian Sámi representation 1992-2006 were reconstructed. For all articles, interviews have been an important part of the fieldwork. Interviewees were often sought out individually, after literature review and media analysis indicated persons of interest. Following this, a "snowball effect" occurred, with people recommending other interviewees and often facilitating contact with them. During the non-participating observations – such as the 20th Sámi Conference in Murmansk (2013) and Barents Indigenous Conferences (Kirkenes 2012, Tromsø 2015) the opportunity was utilized to secure interviews with individuals who seemed to be of special interest.

There are certain methodological problems associated with using interviews to reconstruct the past. Firstly, interviewees may have their own agendas that lead them to embellish on the truth or withhold information. Secondly, interviewees can have genuine problems with reconstructing the past correctly (see AIII: 229). For these reasons interview data should be double-checked. One way is to analyze media produced in, and for consumption by, the actor's

group in order to identify gaps between externally and internally oriented articulations. Another way is to examine documents and media produced by other actors, to check for discrepancies with the information given by the interviewee. Thirdly, one may systematically ask the same questions to different interviewees in order to check if accounts match. For this thesis, interview data have been double-checked using all these methods. For example, as regards the third method, it has been consciously attempted to secure interviewees from people on different sides of any given conflict, in order to avoid reporting events one-sidedly. If a certain depiction of past events is sourced exclusively to interview-based data, this is specified in the article text.

Languages utilized for research have been Russian, English, Norwegian, and Swedish. To a lesser extent, North Sámi and German have been applied. Studying North Sámi during the research period improved my understanding of this highly relevant language. Languages that I would have benefited from using, but unfortunately have no competence in, include Finnish and Kildin Sámi.

4.1.2. Interviews: "Anti-Immersion," Consent, and Interviewee Identification

A classic method of anthropology, the discipline responsible for perhaps most research on indigenous issues, is to conduct prolonged, immersive fieldwork that brings the researcher into close contact with the group under study. Such an approach entails the risk of blurring the awareness of the studied that research is being conducted, violating the right of informants to know what they are participating in (Alver & Øyen 2007: 24–, 39; NESH 2016: B7-8). This thesis is not an anthropological one, and field works have been shorter than what is common in that discipline. While field works have not exceeded two months, research in the field has been performed at relatively regular intervals during the period, and internet-based interviews have occurred between field works. This makes the risk of "blurring" relevant also for this thesis. Because of this, I have aspired to practice "anti-immersion": building and maintaining awareness that a research project is taking place, and that our respective roles are that of researcher and, if they are willing to participate, interviewees. To secure potential participants' free, prior, and informed consent, full disclosure of the project's background, research questions, and planned output were provided to potential interviewees (Túnon et al 2016: 67). They were given the opportunity to ask further questions about the project, and they often did. Reflecting insecurities about Western actors (3.2.4, 6.4) it was on several occasions necessary to clarify in detail the relationship of my home institutions to the Norwegian state structures, and the origin and purpose of the project. Interviewees were also given the project webpage's URL[36] and my contact

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[36] https://blogg.hioa.no/sapmirussia

details so they could ask for more information later on. Proposals from interviewees to form partnerships and joint projects were declined in order to prevent the researcher–interviewee relationship from becoming unclear. Mostly, these were legitimate and often quite interesting cooperation proposals. In one extreme case, an interviewee refused to participate in interviews or share documents in their keeping unless they were paid by my home institution as a hired expert on Russian Sámi issues. The offer was rejected, and data subsequently gathered without contributions by this person. In order to avoid being considered part of any political "camp," care was taken not to express sympathies or antipathies towards any parties to any conflicts. On a few occasions, interviewees demanded that I declare my position regarding certain political issues – mostly whether or not I supported the establishment of a Sámediggi in Russia. In such cases, I explained that I did not consider it my place as an outside researcher to take a position, and that my intention was to let all parties speak their point of view (see 4.2.4). This was ultimately accepted by all interviewees. It is not strange that many Russian Sámi expect researchers to pick a side in their internal conflicts. Many outside researchers on the group's affairs have vocally expressed sympathies and antipathies, both through their academic production and other activities.[37] It is difficult not to develop your own opinions on matters when you study politics, but my hope is that this thesis will succeed in not coming across as condemning or favoring one of the parties in conflict.

As a general rule, this thesis identifies interviewees by name. This is a deliberate departure from the last Western PhD about Russian Sámi political organization (Overland 1999, see discussion in Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012:7–9), inspired by the ideal of transparency in research: sources should be openly discussed so that others can verify the data. Strict reproducibility is a tall order when it comes to qualitative research, due to its interpretative nature and the fact that interview situations cannot really be completely reproduced (see Schmidt et al. 2011: 65–6). Nevertheless, naming interviewees does strengthen transparency, and it reduces the risk of reporting baseless slander and of researchers falsifying quotes. On the other hand, anonymization is often considered the ethically correct thing to do, as it shields informants from negative consequences of research participation (Alver & Øyen 2007: 27–31; Overland 1999: 47–9; NESH 2016: B9). Thus, there is a conflict between two ethical principles: transparency of research vs. protection of informants (see Alver & Øyen 2007: 28). Anonymization has also been questioned from an ethical perspective, as it "risks obscuring indigenous agency and knowledge" (Drugge 2016a: 14). While generally not anonymizing interviewees, the "anti-immersion"

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[37] This situation became a subject of discussion during an open debate on Western discourses on the Russian Sámi in Tromsø, February 7, 2015.

activities described above made interviewees aware of how their statements could be used. Thorugh these activities, free and informed consent to participation in the project have been ensured (Alver & Øyen 2007: 24–7, 39). Interviewees were offered the possibility to check and correct quotes, since when interviewees are identified the avoiding of misrepresentation becomes not just a matter of good methodology but also an ethical concern (NESH 2016: B16). The latter practice proved an advantage for data gathering: during the "quote check" phase, many interviewees expanded upon the information given in the original interviews. On the other hand, some interviewees did not reply to the quote-check emails, leaving the choice of either not using the data gathered in these interviews, or anonymizing them despite original intentions. In the event, data from anonymized informants have been included only when this was absolutely central to the analysis. In those cases, no personal data have been given that describe the interviewees, such as age, gender and occupation. The latter was avoided because several interviewees claimed that Overland 1999 did provide such data, making identification of the anonymized interviewees quite simple, due to the small size of the Russian Sámi political *milieu* – a common concern in indigenous research (Drugge 2016a: 14). In fact, Overland had changed the personal data of some anonymized informants, precisely in order to prevent identification (1999: 47-9). I interpret the claims made by interviewees as indicating that some people have erroneously assigned quotes to third parties who happened to match the personal data given, an unforeseen consequence that I wanted to avoid (NESH 2016: B13).

During fieldwork, interviewees also confronted me with another aspect of the last Western PhD on this subject: that anonymized informants had been allowed to give negative statements about named individuals. Overland (1999: 47–50) argues that publishing critical statements about these individuals is defendable since they are civil society activists, and hence public figures. Accusations given under the promise of anonymity may often provide researchers with valuable leads that may subsequently be examined, and verified or falsified. This has also been the case during my fieldwork. Nevertheless, as a matter of principle unverified accusations against named individuals made by anonymous interviewees, have not reproduced. I skirt the border in Article III, when quoting critical articulations from anonymous interviewees about unnamed but identifiable civil society activists. These statements represented a discourse that was widespread enough to require mention, but no interviewees articulating it were willing to be named. In the end, the quote was included, but equal space was given to articulations of the opposing discourse.

4.1.3. Informal Networks in Contemporary History

When researchers study Russian politics, it is highly likely that at some point they will find informal networks to be of relevance. This thesis is no exception. However, when the object of study is contemporary history and not the distant past, there are certain challenges associated with accounting in detail for informal networks of the hidden kind.

Firstly, one must consider the ethical side to identifying individuals, against their will, as members of hidden informal networks: the consequences for those identified could easily turn out to be disastrous. Depending on the nature of the network, the issues it deals with, and the type of state it operates in, such individuals (and innocent people connected to them) could experience anything from "mere" social ostracism to actual persecution by the authorities. Researchers must consider whose agenda the publication of such data would serve, possible negative consequences for both the people involved in the network and third parties, and whether the network's activities are in fact of a type that makes it ethically defendable to "out" people against their will (Alver & Øyen 2007: 28–9; NESH 2016: B12). In some cases, the individuals in question have also been among the researchers' interviewees during the project, increasing the ethical dubiousness of identification: the researchers then need to consider when it is ethically defensible to knowingly cause problems for people who have assisted you in your work. Secondly, there are significant methodological challenges. Since hidden informal networks by their very nature are rarely described in documents (although occasionally revealed by the media), interviewing tends to be the main source of information about them. Understandably, interviewees often want anonymity when discussing such matters. Here we encounter the aforementioned ethical and methodological problems associated with letting anonymized interviewees make accusations against named individuals (4.1.2.). All in all, informal networks are an object of study which is often difficult to describe in detail without resorting to highly non-transparent sourcing, which in turns reduces the overall value of the work. Finally, researchers should keep in mind that if they do name individuals as participating in activities that are illegal, or at least difficult to defend publicly, without giving "hard evidence" to back up the statement, that could leave them open to charges of defamation, with possible legal consequences.

Due to these considerations, this thesis' articles identify people as participating in specific informal networks only if the individuals in question themselves confirm their participation, either in interviews or in written sources. This becomes relevant mainly when discussing the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar (8, AIII; AIV: 58), which is technically an openly declared informal political network, but consists of elected representatives and discursively constructs itself as an independent representation organ for the Russian Sámi. Other cases have been more difficult to

deal with: several interviewees discussed, but did not want to be quoted on, the existence of informal networks that crisscross institutions and organizations, and whose interests and activities shape Russian Sámi politics and impact indigenous policy in Murmansk Region. It has not been possible to present these networks in ways that can be defended methodologically and ethically. Perhaps future research will be able to shed more light on them, in that window of opportunity when the individuals who were most active in them are gone but there remain witnesses who can speak of them openly as events in the past. Of course, there are also ethical considerations involved when discussing the deceased (Alver & Øyen 2007: 42–3; NESH 2016: B17), but we will not go into that here. In any case, informal networks were never meant to be the central object of research for this study, and the research questions can hence be answered without going into detail about them.

4.2. Research on Indigenous Peoples: Ethical Considerations

4.2.1. Relevance of the Category "Indigenous Peoples"

"Indigenous people" is no narrow category, the term being applied to a broad spectrum of ethnic groups with very different cultures, history, and social status. No universally recognized definition of the term exists (deCosta 2015: 24-56; Niezen 2003:18-23, 53-93). ILO-Convention 169 On Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1b) essentially defines a people as indigenous if it self-recognizes as such, retains some of their "social, economic, cultural and political institutions",[38] and descends from a population that inhabited (part of) a state's area prior to the establishment of present state borders. This definition downplays the importance of autochthonism (being native to the land, as opposed to immigrated) or historical primacy, but emphasizes the historical experience of being subjugated by the state of a people without historical primacy (Berg-Nordlie et al 2015: 9-10). While the ILO definition is widely used, different states tend to have different definitions and criteria for being recognized as indigenous (deCosta 2015). Some of the populations referred to as "indigenous" are economically and socially among the most marginalized people on Earth, whereas others live in affluent welfare states and their problems are related mainly to cultural survival. The relationships that these peoples have with their states also vary widely (Berg-Nordlie et al. 2015; Selle et al. 2013: 712–3). Furthermore, the category of "indigenous" is, like all ethnic categories, constructed rather than nature-given: its rise to prominence is relatively recent, having grown forth in the post-WW2 era (Minde 2003b: 81–7; 2005: 17–19; 2008: 58–60; Niemi 2002: 22, 35, 38; & Semb 2009; Nyyssönen 2007). That last

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[38] "Institutions" is here utilized differently from the common usage, f.ex. a language is a cultural institution.

statement – that the category of "indigenous" as we know it today is a relatively recent construction – comes with two big caveats.

Firstly, the concrete discourse of "indigenous peoples" who possess "indigenous rights" may be a modern phenomenon, but it is also the contemporary version of an old practice: categorizing certain ethnic groups as ancient inhabitants of the land and treating this as a legally and politically relevant fact. In the overseas European colonies and the sovereign states that emerged from these, the indigenousness of certain peoples has been thematized in law, politics, and science from the very beginning of colonization. The Nordic Sámi were also discussed, in official documents from the 1700s, as their area's "earliest occupants" and having certain rights as a result of this (Niemi 2002: 26-9, 35; Pedersen 2008: 491–508). The same thing occurred as the Russian state expanded to incorporate the lands and peoples on its periphery, including the Kola Peninsula and the Russian Sámi. The lands were claimed as legally ownerless, and the people inhabiting them subjected to taxation, but they were also put into a separate category of peoples, and recognized as having been present on these lands before the Russians (6.1.1., AIV). Secondly, recognizing that a category is constructed does not mean claiming it to be irrelevant or "untrue" – *all* categories are constructed. Moreover, the concept of indigenousness does hold relevant meaning: it emphasizes a people's descent from populations that inhabited their current homelands prior to the integration of that homeland into another state, and the resulting category includes peoples that while different, do share a fundamental political position. They live in areas in which their peoples have been present since before the arrival of the states that now control those areas, and yet the states' names, languages, borders and modes of functioning express the identity and culture of another people. They have experienced systematic attacks on their culture and identity, sometimes also on their physical existence. Some peoples are still in that situation, others are now in a position to attempt rebuilding what was broken. The concept "indigenous peoples" refers to historical realities that have shaped the present situation for the peoples included in the category – and it refers to a common experience, the harshness of which varies by degrees.

Finally, the category of indigenousness has enhanced its own relevance: its existence has fundamentally changed politics for many of the peoples included in it. Domestic political discussions about these groups are frequently linked up to the global discourse on indigenous peoples and their rights, which may eventually influence state policy towards the groups.

4.2.2. Compensatory and Nation-Building Research: Who Benefits?

Scholarly research on indigenous peoples has been a two-edged sword for the peoples who constitute the object of research. On the one hand, researchers have documented aspects of

indigenous culture that might otherwise have been lost during long periods of assimilation, and this documentation has become valuable in later periods of cultural revitalization. Some researchers were also active opponents of oppressive and assimilatory policies against the peoples they studied. On the other hand, many researchers played a destructive role by lending scientific legitimacy to the idea that the groups they studied were less worth than the majority populations. Scholars were, for example, central in the discursive construction of the Sámi as individuals of lesser "racial" quality, as a people fated to become extinct, or as an "immigrant" people alien to Scandinavia (Drugge 2016a: 13; Ingierd & Fossum 2009; Niemi & Semb 2009; Olsen 2016: 29-30; Pedersen 2008: 497–506). Furthermore, researchers often behaved in ways that would not conform to today's ethical standards of obtaining free and informed consent – at times even utilizing their position as part of the dominant group, or as backed by the state, to impose themselves on people. Such shameful aspects of earlier researchers' relations with indigenous peoples have led many of today's researchers to adopt a stance referred to as "compensatory research": they attempt to produce research that impacts on the indigenous people they study in a positive way (Brox 2009; Niemi 2002: 23, & Semb 2009; cf. Ryymin & Nyyssönen 2012: 48, 50-66). A related phenomenon is "nation-building research" (Berg 2004: 109–10), when academics use their work to attempt to empower an ethnic community.

It is a noble ideal that research on a community should give something back to that community. Neither is it, in itself, morally wrong to want one's research to be of some benefit to one's own people. Nevertheless, such a research agenda may be ethically problematic. "Activist research" of this type can end up conflicting with researcher integrity and impartiality (NESH 2016: A1). It has also been pointed out that such concerns may lead researchers to self-censorship, as they skirt certain issues for fear that reporting on them could worsen the group's situation. If this causes researchers to withhold data that are relevant for answering research questions, or to submit flawed or lacking analysis, it may be in violation of researcher integrity. Another question regarding compensatory and nation-building research is: whom exactly does it empower? Every group consists of several subgroups – political, cultural, linguistic, generational, gender-based, geographical etc. There will always be internal conflicts and skewed distributions of goods. When researchers aim to "strengthen the nation," blindness to internal divisions may lead them to strengthen certain groups to the detriment of others. If they simply adopt the discourse about what constitutes "the nation's interest" as presented to them by the group's internal authority figures, they may end up supporting internal elites against internal marginalized groups (Berg 2004: 109–10; Ingierd & Fossum 2009; Lawrence & Raitio 2016: 127-8; Olsen 2016: 33-5, 41-2). Researchers are not doing nations under research any favors by strengthening

internal elites against oppressed subgroups, or by not shedding light on internal problems. If research is to benefit the people and not the elites, then it must investigate critically the nation's own power structures and internal antagonisms.

4.2.3. The "I" of the Beholder: Getting an Inside Perspective

Explaining the behavior of political actors is ultimately a matter of interpretation. As researchers, we can never know with full certainty why actors make the choices they do, and our analysis of data may say as much about us as it does about the object of research (3.1.6). This is not to say that academic writing is entirely subjective and cannot be criticized or rejected out from scientific criteria. Even if recognizing that an academic text reflects the subjectivity of the writer, that text can still be criticized for example for lacking internal logical cohesion, containing data errors, or referring to sources deemed inadequate by peers. Nevertheless, explanations will be colored by the worldview of the individual researcher: it is not possible to approach any research object without prior expectations, and these expectations will influence the observer's interpretation. At this level, complete researcher impartiality is not possible. Granted, the researchers' internalized discourses on the subject at hand can change as they are confronted with new data. After all, refining knowledge in the light of new data and analysis is an essential feature of scientific activity. Realistically, though, researchers can be expected to use their standard types of explanatory variables first, and if one or several of these should result in explanations that they deem satisfactory, they will not always test other possible explanatory factors – they may even fail altogether to recognize certain possible explanations. These unconsidered explanations would perhaps have been addressed by other researchers, who again may be "blind" to the types of explanation used by the first. Researcher subjectivity comes into play not only during analysis, but already in the selection of research objects and cases, and in the kinds of data sought for shedding light on the objects. These choices are contingent on what researchers identify as interesting and relevant. Researchers can ensure a certain degree of transparency by being open about how they are situated in relation to the subject and the cases, and about their thoughts behind the choice of sources (see Jørgensen & Philips 2006: 120–1) – but this only "lampshades" the subjectivity, it does not actually remove it. It is this attitude to the ultimate subjectivity of research that has led me to apply the term "research *objects*" consistently. Words like "participants," "collaborators" and "subjects" may serve to mask the power of the researcher as the active, data-gathering, and interpreting party.

Researcher subjectivity becomes especially important in the context of research on indigenous peoples, since scholars in this field have generally not come from the groups under research, resulting in indigenous peoples having been generally described academically from

outsider positions. Researchers positioned within the group studied may have provided other questions, interpretations, and conclusions (Berg 2000: 68; Olsen 2016: 29-30). It is a valid statement for both media- and academic discourse that indigenous peoples, indeed minorities in general, have traditionally had little chance to shape the discursive constructions of their own people (Eide & Simonsen 2007: 28–35; Skogerbø 2003: 364–5). Calls have been made for decolonization – identifying "colonialist bias" in research, and encouraging indigenous perspectives (Olsen 2016: 29-32). There are even those who hold that only indigenous researchers should do research on indigenous peoples (this opinion is discussed in f. ex. Berg 2004: 106; Nyyssönen 2007: 2–12; Porsanger 2004a: 109). In my view, the idea of barring researchers from access to certain fields of study because of their ethnicity is morally indefensible, and I will not waste words arguing against it. On the contrary, an outsider's view is a necessary supplement to research on any group. When it comes to indigenous studies, though, it has traditionally been the inside perspective that is the supplement to the outsiders' voices. Research has tended to be carried out by foreigners, or by representatives of the state's majority ethnos.[39] Since it is impossible to escape writer subjectivity completely, this leads to a situation where majority attitudes about the minority may dominate the academic discourse on the latter. Outsider dominance is not only an ethical problem since it reduces groups' opportunity to impact fundamentally the dominant discourses on themselves, but also a methodological problem since researchers who lack insider perspectives may overlook important aspects or misunderstand what they observe.

There are several ways to attempt dealing with a lack of in-group perspectives. For example, programs and projects could be established with the aim of recruiting more academics from the group, or one could attempt to decolonize research by giving indigenous representative bodies a say as to which types of research are conducted (Berg 2004: 106; Nyyssönen 2007: 2-12). However, it may be considered ethically unsound if such bodies are given the power to *veto* research plans – that would be in direct opposition to the freedom of research (NESH 2016: A2). It may also have unfortunate consequences for the type of output produced: such bodies may be dominated by internal elites, which are then in a position to censor research that would support internal marginalized groups (4.2.2). Therefore, one could argue that such institutions must be carefully designed in order to prevent the dominance of traditional elites – and they should be positioned to finance, promote, advice, and recruit, rather than directly censor. At the level of

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[39] This description is not as apt for the Nordic Sámi today, as it is for other indigenous groups: in recent decades, a large number of Nordic Sámi researchers have focused on the historical and contemporary situation of their own people. However, the description of in-group researchers being outnumbered by out-group researchers does fit well the situation of the Russian Sámi (2.2).

concrete research projects, one could attempt to include in-group professionals in the project, or if necessary, establish an indigenous reference group. Indeed, such groups are often used – not just due to ethical concerns, but also for the methodological advantages, since they can assist researchers in gaining access to data and interviewees, and can provide valuable input (Drugge 2016a: 11-12). Again, however, there are challenges related to the composition of the group and the delimitation of its powers. How can we avoid the dominance of internal elites in the reference group, and ensure that various relevant subgroups are represented – *genuinely* represented (AIII, 2.3.2 Fig. 4.). If we cannot avoid elite dominance, how can we make sure that our research is not overly colored by elite interests? What expectations of influence do researchers provide when they invite people to a reference group, and are they able to deliver on these expectations? How much power *should* such bodies be given? (Alver & Øyen 2007: 27.) We must be aware of precisely which interests are being given influence over our research questions and our analyses, and where the border goes between influence and censorship.

4.2.4. Insiderness and Outsiderness

This chapter of the thesis has defended the right of non-indigenous scholars to study indigenous peoples, but also advocated that indigenous researchers be included in projects when possible, and argued that certain institutional measures should be considered in order to ensure indigenous voices and insights. The natural question now is: how does this thesis stand up to these ethical and methodological standards?

The answer depends on what is considered the relevant group in this regard: the Sámi, or the Russian Sámi. If we accept the discourse of the Sámi as a "border-transcending nation" (AI: 19–23; II: 437; III; 6.5) it should logically follow that as a Sámi I am now doing research on my own group. If we accept this discourse, there has also been a certain element of institutionalized indigenous influence involved: the Russampol and Pansamru projects (Preface) were financed by the NRF's Sámi Research Programme. The board (which also considers the ethical standards of research) both has several ethnically Sámi members and (more in line with the Fig. 4 definition of representativeness) observers from the Norwegian Sámediggi. Moreover, these research projects were aimed explicitly at improving conditions for border-transcending cooperation between the Nordic and Russian Sámi by producing material, both academic and popularized, to fill the substantial Western Sámi knowledge gap on Russian Sámi politics and shed critical light on attitudes to the Russian Sámi. However, if we apply a more "localist" perspective on indigenousness (Berg-Nordlie & Schou 2011: 20–3), my in-group credentials become less clear, since I am not a *Russian* Sámi. The Russian Sámi differ so much within the Sámi ethnic collective that a Nordic Sámi researcher's work on them cannot be said to address their grievances and

portray their society "from within." That said, my sharing the indigenous and Sámi position with members of the Russian Sámi community makes it difficult to consider me a complete outsider. Perhaps my position in this context is best referred to as that of an "internal outsider," or an "external insider." In any case, there is a definite "outsider" aspect, which is particularly relevant for the parts of the thesis concerning Russian Sámi relations with the Nordic Sámi, in which the latter (as will be argued) are empowered over the former (6.5, 7.3, 8.4, 9). There is an inherent risk in the PhD project of projecting external ideas about what it means to be a Russian Sámi as opposed to a Nordic Sámi, and also more generally to be Russian as opposed to Western. It could be argued that the PhD project should have included some form of institutionalized input from members of the group dealt with in the thesis. The influence of the NFR Sámi Research Programme cannot count as such influence in this regard, since its board did not include any Russian Sámi representatives.

When initiating the Russampol project (2009), the researchers involved did indeed consider creating a reference group of Russian Sámi representatives, but decided against it. The fact of the matter is that the project encountered one of the problems described in the thesis: there exists no generally acknowledged and unifying structure for Russian Sámi representation. At the time, we concluded that we could not invite all Russian Sámi political groups and institutions to send representatives to a reference group, simply because there were so many of them; nor could we discriminate between them since we did not want to be seen as supporting some groups to the exclusion of others. As the events in Russian Sámi politics developed, it became even more difficult to invite a group of representatives. To incorporate both sides of the conflict, the project would have had to invite both main parties in the conflict over Russian Sámi representation occurring at the time – the self-declared Russian Sámi Parliament and the Council of Representatives (AIII, 8). However, the project concluded that this, too, ran the danger of being interpreted as taking a position – namely that the parties were equally representative. Hence, there was no institutionalized participation in the project's design and process by representatives of the specific community that was mainly under study, as opposed to what is often recommended (Túnon et al 2016: 69). However, the PhD project has attempted to be of benefit to both the Nordic and Russian Sámi communities by gathering, analyzing, and disseminating data that will ease conditions for cooperation by increasing the knowledge basis for political action. Furthermore, the project has attempted to give Russian Sámi opportunity to speak through the thesis articles: an attempt has been made to let every side of the relevant conflicts be heard, in line with what has been communicated to interviewees (4.1.2). As argued above (4.2.3) researcher subjectivity, in the final analysis, makes complete impartiality impossible

– but it is possible to strive for *relative* impartiality by giving all parties described in publications a chance to explain their actions and positions.

5. A Guide to the Thesis Articles and the Remainder of the Thesis

This chapter provides a presentation of the four articles that form the basis of this thesis (5.1-4). The findings from the articles are themselves *not* presented in Chapter 5. Instead, these are summarized in the introductory/summary section's second part (Chapters 6-9), where key findings will be presented in the form of a chronological narrative that also incorporates data and analysis not present in the articles. The structure of the introductory/summary chapter's second part is explained in more detail below (5.5).

5.1. Article I: *Need and Misery in the Eastern Periphery: Nordic Sámi Media Debate on the Kola Sámi*

AI was published in the journal *Acta Borealia* (2011), and investigated Nordic Sámi media debate on the Russian Sámi[40] through discourse analysis of Nordic Sámi newspapers and journals in the period 1992–2009. AI primarily sought to contribute to RQ3 (1.4), by providing analysis that could be used to explain actor behavior seen as important for discussing causes of changes and continuities in Russian Sámi representation – primarily on the pan-Sámi arena, but also in Russian politics. Findings in AI regarding the discursive inclusion of the Russian Sámi into the border-transcending ethnic collective shaped the research design for AII, e.g. its interest in checking the degree of equal treatment given to the Russian Sámi in pan-Sámi political structures.

The media subjected to analysis were the South Sámi Christian magazine Daerpies dierie, the Sámi women's journal Gába, and the Norwegian-language Sámi newspaper Ságat – as well as a "mirror" compendium of texts from non-Sámi newspapers, assembled using the searchable database Atekst (now Retriever). While AI was mainly concerned with externally produced discourse on the Russian Sámi, a few texts retreived were produced by "internals" (albeit mainly for external consumption) as Gába occasionally printed texts written by Russian Sámi activists, giving the group a rare opportunity to influence Nordic discourse on itself. This phenomenon can be explained by institutional factors: Gába is published by Sámi nissonforum (Sámi Womens' Forum), an international NGO that includes Russian Sámi activists.[41] The texts were grouped after decade of publication (1990s vs. 2000s) in order to check for differences in discursive

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[40] Referred to as the "Kola Sámi" in this article. Both Kola Sámi and Russian Sámi (*kol'skie saamy*, *rossijskie saamy*/*saamy Rossii*) are used as endonyms and exonyms. Eventually, "Russian Sámi" was chosen for further writing about the group since this term contains the state affiliation of the group, which was considered of higher relevance for analysis of the group's political situation than its geographical affiliation to the Kola Peninsula.
[41] Saminissonforum.org: *Sámi Sobbar på russisk side – kvinnene leder an også der*, http://www.saminissonforum.org/norsk/?p=676).

tendencies between these two periods. The article's interest in investigating discursive change within the period under analysis was hence not realized as an analysis of how discursive tendencies gradually changed within the period seen as a whole – instead, texts from the two sub-periods were analysed in accordance with the same criteria, and differences between the periods noted.

5.2. Article II: *The Iron Curtain through Sápmi. Pan-Sámi Politics, Nordic Cooperation and the Russian Sámi*

Article II was printed as a chapter in the anthology *L'Image du Sápmi II: études comparées* (Andersson 2013, Ed), published as part of the University of Örebro's series *Humanistica Oerebroensia*.[42] It addressed RQ1 and 3, and related to AI by commenting on dissonance between discourse on pan-Sámi unity and real-life arrangements for Russian Sámi inclusion into pan-Sámi politics. Regarding comparison of discourse and mechanisms for political representation, we must keep in mind that the latter are not entirely "non-discursive" in themselves (3.1.1): representation mechanisms are supposed to reflect regulating texts (laws, rules etc.) which also constitute articulations of discourse. For clarity, AII did *not* look for dissonance between representation practices and regulating texts, but took discursive articulations of a non-regulating nature as its point of departure and commented on how practices and regulating texts fulfilled or did not fulfill the normative position of border-transcending unity identified in the former.[43] The article accounted for how the main pan-Sámi political organizations, institutions and projects have their historical roots on the Nordic side of Sápmi, and critically examined if the Russian Sámi have been given equal opportunities to take part in these. It looked specifically at the Sámi Council (est. 1956 as the Nordic Sámi Council, name changed in 1992), the Sámi rights' convention project (originating in the 1970s), the Sámi Parliamentary Council (est. 2000), and the Nordic Sámi Cooperation (est. 2000).

One arena of very high relevance in pan-Sámi cooperation was not subjected to analysis in AII: the Barents Cooperation, an international cooperation regime in the northernmost parts of Europe (est. 1993), the two levels of which are the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (government level) and the Barents Regional Council (province level). The Working Group of Indigenous

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[42] Abbreviated and updated versions have later been published in Norwegian and Swedish (Berg-Nordlie 2015b and c),

[43] The normative position of *pan-Sámism* (see also 1.3) is referred to as "ideological" at one point in the article. That usage of the term "ideology" is not in accordance with how the word is defined in the present text (3.1.1), where it is reserved for sets of political beliefs that are publicly recognized and discussed as such. While the pan-Sámi normative position is often articulated in modern Sámi political debate, it is rarely discussed as a political position. Instead, border-transcending Sámi unity, with all its symbols, practices and institutions, are generally treated as something natural, or at least unquestionably desirable. Pan-Sámism has more in common with other definitions of "ideology" where the term is used to describe entirely internalized political positions and practices (3.1.1).

Peoples (WGIP, est. 1993, permanent since 1995) has an advisory function towards both these councils, and includes representatives from the Sámi communities of Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. The Nordic Sámi participate through representatives of their Sámediggis, which are technically appointed by the Sámi Parliamentary Council.[44] WGIP has some crucial differences that set it apart from the structures chosen for analysis: the Barents Cooperation is not explicitly founded on the pan-Sámi normative basis, but on an ideational foundation emphasizing Nordic-Russian cooperation in general. Due to this different point of departure, WGIP is not exclusively pan-Sámi but also includes other indigenous groups of the Barents Region. In the second half of the introductory/summary chapter, the Barents Cooperation will be brought up when relevant (see particularly 8.1 and 8.2).[45]

5.3. Article III: *Who Shall Represent the Sámi? Indigenous Governance in Murmansk Region and the Nordic Sámi Parliament Model*

Article III constituted a chapter in the anthology *Indigenous Politics: Institutions, Representation, Mobilization* published by *ECPR Press* (Berg-Nordlie et al 2015, Eds). The article addressed RQ2 & 3 by providing a thick description of developments in Russian Sámi representation, and highlighting changes and continuities. AIII introduced network governance theory into the research on Russian Sámi politics, and discussed how insights from this literature could be used to study mechanisms for indigenous representation and self-determination. The article's theory chapter furthermore discussed representativeness in the network governance context and the indigenous context (3.2.2).[46]

After describing some basic differences in indigenous governance between the Nordic states and Russia, AIII accounted for how the idea of a Russian Sámediggi ("Sámi Parliament") originated from a combination of domestic needs, ideas about indigenous representation that

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[44] Beac.st: *Working group of indigenous peoples* (http://www.beac.st/en/Working-Groups/Working-Group-of-Indigenous-Peoples#members); Sametinget.no: *Barentssamarbeidet,* https://www.sametinget.no/Tjenester/Internasjonalt-arbeid/Barentssamarbeidet

[45] Another cooperation structure of note that goes untreated in AII is the Arctic Council. While the Sámi Council and RAIPON (6.3-4) are permanent participants in the Arctic Council, the council does not ensure participation rights to all states' Sámi communities and is hence less of a pan-Sámi arena than the other structures mentioned here.

[46] Article III utilized the term "proxy demos" for what is here called "the electorate" or "electors". The term "proxy" was intended to emphasize that this entity s not identical to the demos, but an intermediary body between the demos and the representatives. "Proxy" was also intended to invoke, through association, the idea of an "approximation" to the demos. The term was later found to be suboptimal in light of responses that argued the word "proxy" could lead to misunderstandings, since readers may associate the term "proxy" with an intermediary that is *separate* from both the entities between which it facilitates contact (cf. "proxy server") – as opposed to an intermediary that originates within the demos discursively constructed as represented. To increase clarity, "proxy demos" is replaced in the document at hand.

spread through pan-Sámi networking, and new discourses on Russian Sámi history.[47] Following this, the article provided an overview over Russian Sámi civil society's development into increasing complexity and specialization from 1989 to 2014. AIII subsequently accounted for findings regarding how Sámi representation mechanisms have been organized in Russia during three periods (1992-2003, 2004-2008, 2009-2014). Analytical focus lay on the extent to which the representation structures established could be said to have empowered the Russian Sámi by allowing for genuine political representation on arenas important for Sámi policy-making and -implementation. Much attention was also paid to conflicts over how representation should be organized (both internally among the Russian Sámi, and between activists and state-based actors), and how the idea of a Russian "Sámi Parliament" influenced these conflicts. The article concluded by discussing change and continuity between the three periods studied.

5.4. Article IV: *Two Centuries of Russian Sámi Policy. Arrangements for Autonomy and Participation Seen in Light of Imperial, Soviet and Federal Indigenous Minority Policy 1822–2014*

Article IV was published in the journal *Acta Borealia* (2015). It addressed RQ2 & 3. AIV intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of the situation in Russian Sámi representation by comparing developments to tendencies in general Russian indigenous policy. This article also began to comment on the issue of how pan-Sámi networking impacted Russian Sámi politics, which is explored more thoroughly in Chapter 9 of the document at hand. The article furthermore presented facts about the Imperial-Era organ often referred to as "the first Sámi Parliament" by activists in the contemporary Sámi Parliament movement.

AIV noted a tendency in Western literature and media to utilize Nordic Sámi policy as a standard against which to measure Russian Sámi policy. Resultantly, Russia is often analyzed in terms of its deviation from "the West". This thesis is also somewhat "guilty" of this: While it sets up more general ideal types with which to compare Russian realities (see 3.2.2) the thesis also, particularly in AI & III, comments on how Russia, unlike the Nordic states, does not have any official representation organ elected by its Sámi citizens. The document at hand similarly highlights differences between the Nordic states and Russia, for the benefit of the unfamiliar reader (1.1-3). Comparing cases from different countries is a tried and true method for uncovering case variation, but it is necessary to investigate domestic politics in order to understand why the case variation exists. Furthermore, if international comparison is done by

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[47] Article III contains a typographic error: in footnote 4, page 220, it is written that the Finnish Sámi parlameanta (a predecessor of the Finnish Sámediggi, in the article referred to by the name "Sámi Delegation") was established in 1971. Article II gives the correct year, 1973 (Kulonen et al 2005: 346-7; Lehtola 2005: 165-6).

researchers setting the system they are familiar with as the ideal, and then evaluating the other country's system as being better the closer it comes to what they are used to, this may be seen as having some questionable ethical aspects (4.2.4, 9).[48] Hence, AIV examined Russian indigenous policy history to isolate some general tendencies that could serve as a Russian baseline with which to compare Russian Sámi policy. The article also utilized analytical terminology chosen for its relative universality, centered on broad concepts such as indigenous *autonomy* and *participation*, which are not historically limited to the Nordic countries or "the West".

The article established that there has never existed a "Sámi policy field" at any level of Russian politics, while there does exist a general "indigenous policy field", and provincial implementation of this policy towards the Sámi (1.2).[49] Article IV analyzed developments in the macro-level policy field and compared these to observed tendencies at the micro-level of Russian Sápmi. Discourse was operationalized somewhat differently from in AI & II. The latter two focused on articulations in texts with a non-regulating status, while in AIV, both texts with a regulating status and others were treated as discourse articulation. AIV furthermore differed from the other three articles by going beyond the thesis' period under analysis, desiring to understand change and continuity in a longer perspective. It examined policy tendencies in three periods (Late Imperial, 1822-1917; Soviet, 1917-1991; Federal, 1992 -) regarding indigenous autonomy and participation at the macro level. For each period, developments at the micro level were compared with the former. In the conclusion, general tendencies and local deviations were summed up, and explanations suggested.

5.5. An Introduction to Chapter 6-9: Research Questions, Summaries, and Periodizations

The remainder of this thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 6 is a chapter of context information to the following chapters. Key data is given about the relationships between the Russian Sámi, and the Russian state and the pan-Sámi networks. In itself, Chapter 6 does not

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[48] It could be discussed if the model for representation (3.2.2. Fig. 4) utilized in this thesis is "ethnocentric". It is impossible for researchers to free themselves completely from their own cultural background, and this thesis' definition of representativeness (not to mention its basic focus on representativeness) is obviously colored by the author being accustomed to, and supporting of, representative democracy. In defense of this definition, it could be said that while representative democracy is relatively dysfunctional in Russia, the discourse applied to give political power legitimacy in Russia nevertheless utilizes its language: the official position of Russian authorities, as expressed in public debate, is that leaders and representatives should be elected. Democracy-based definitions of representativeness can be used on Russia without committing conceptual "colonization."

[49] AIV uses the term "indigenous minority policy" instead of "indigenous policy". This choice of words was made to emphasize that the policy field covered has generally dealt not with all ethnic groups that may be discussed in English as "indigenous peoples" (1.3, 4.2.1), but a specified subset of these, which are characterized by being (among other things) small-numbered. While the translation "indigenous minority" for *korennoj maločislennyj narod* has also been also applied by others, I do in hindsight consider this choice of words as suboptimal since the other groups possible to consider as "indigenous" are also minorities in Russia. This summary chapter does not utilize the term "indigenous minority policy", but instead uses "indigenous policy".

address the research questions of the thesis (1.4), but it provides data that are necessary to address the research questions. Subchapters 6.1-6.3 account for developments prior to the period under analysis that are crucial to know about. These subchapters draw mainly on AII and AIV, as well as other sources that are provided in the text. Subchapters 6.4-5 present developments within the period under analysis that are not about Russian Sámi political representation as such, but have explanatory value over developments in Russian Sámi political representation. These data are drawn mainly from AI and AIV. Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 account for the establishment and disestablishent of different mechanisms for Russian Sámi representation on the pan-Sámi arena (7.1, 8) and in Murmansk Region (7.2, 8) during the period under analysis. Chapter 7 summarizes events 1992-2006, while Chapter 8 accounts for events 2006-2014. These two chapters mainly address RQ1 & 2 (1.4) – *Which mechanisms for Russian Sámi representation were established and discontinued 1992-2014, and how representative can these be considered as having been*? Each of the chapters end with a discussion of the representativeness of arrangments for Russian Sámi representation observed in the period (7.3 and 8.4). Chapter 9, the final chapter of the thesis, is constituted by a discussion focused on RQ3 – *What were the main changes and continuities in Russian Sámi representation 1992-2014 and how can these be explained? How were developments in Russian Sámi representation in Russia affected by Russian Sámi participation in pan-Sámi networks?*

Chapters 6-9 neither repeat all findings provided by the thesis articles, nor the sources and references given in these articles. When sources and references do appear in these chapters, it means that the sourced data or analysis does not appear in AI-IV. This is information that was omitted from the articles due to maximum word count constraints, or came to the author's attention after the articles were finished, or refers to events that took place after the articles were finished. There is a certain degree of unavoidable repetition between the articles and Chapter 6-9. Furthermore, utilizing the form of a chronological narrative to summarize findings has resulted in the present document being somewhat longer than what may be considered the norm for an article-based thesis' introductory/summary section. This has been considered warranted because of the following added value: Firstly, tying together findings from AI-IV into an integrated chronological narrative facilitates an overarching and diachronic perspective on the object of research. The individual articles did also (to differing degrees) include chronological presentations of events, but each article had a more narrow focus on specific aspects of the object under study. The form utilized below makes it possible to integrate findings from the different articles into one whole narrative. Secondly, recounting the events 1992-2014 gives possibility to insert findings about the period that were not published in the articles. Thirdly, the reader's understanding of the significance of the new events presented in the document at hand (events in

2014 and their aftermath, see 8.3) and these events' relationship to what came before, may be increased when this new information appears in the form of a "closing chapter" to a longer narrative. Finally, Chapters 7-9 discuss the findings explicitly in light of the RQs established in 1.4.

The periodization utilized in the following diverges from that in a previous work on Russian Sámi politics that the author took part in writing: *Bridging divides* (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012). This book focused exclusively on Russian civil society, which made it fitting to operate with a "pre-organizational phase" before the creation of the first Russian Sámi NGOs (- 1989), a "unipolar phase" when politics was dominated by one NGO (1989-1998), and a "multipolar phase" characterized by a multiplicity of organizations and organization types (1998 -). Conversely, the start year of this thesis' periodization is 1992. This is because the USSR gave way to the Russian Federation on December 25, 1991, and because a watershed event in Russian Sámi representation in pan-Sámi structures occurred in 1992 (7.1). While *Bridging Divides* set 1998 as the major dividing line in post-Soviet Russian Sámi politics because of an internal schism in Russian Sámi civil society, AIII utilized 2004 because Murmansk Region decided to establish the Indigenous Peoples' Centre in this year, resulting in a certain institutional stabilization in Murmansk' indigenous governance. The Centre went on to establish Russian history's first official Sámi representative body, the Coordination Council (8.1). In the following, the year of the Coordination Council's foundation (2006) is treated as the major dividing line within in the period 1992-2014, since the thesis considers that as a catalyst event for ensuing developments in Russian Sámi politics. This periodization also makes it easier to discuss developments at the pan-Sámi level: all main Russian representation mechanisms on the pan-Sámi arena were established prior to 2006, while after this year, activists at the pan-Sámi arena had to relate to a new situation: the emergence of a movement for a Russian Sámediggi.

6. The Russian Sámi in Russia and Sápmi: Prehistory and Contemporary Context

In the following, subchapters 6.1-3 provide a "prehistory" for the period under analysis. Some information about the period 1822-1992 has been given earlier in this document (1.2-3), but the period will here be presented in a more detailed manner, which also incorporates some elements not present in the articles AII & IV. Subchapters 6.3-4 focus on 1992-2014's developments in Russia of particular relevance to indigenous representation, and on post-Soviet Nordic Sámi discourses on the Russian Sámi. Data covered in 6.3-4 are considered key to understand why Russian Sámi political representation developed in the way it did, during the same period.

Marginalized minorities are, in the final analysis, unable to determine unilaterally which level and forms of representation they are to have in the political structures of the dominant groups. If possessing adequate resources, a marginalized minority may launch a forceful campaign for empowerment, but even in the most successful cases their position when negotiating and discussing solutions is not one of equal power with state-based actors. Perceptions of the marginalized within the dominant population, and their general policies towards them, are of importance when trying to explain the results obtained by the marginalized when campaigning for self-empowerment.

6.1. The Late-Imperial and Soviet Disempowerment of the Sámi, 1822-1985

As the Moscow-centered Russian state cast of Mongol overlordship, it expanded into new areas and became a multiethnic empire in its own right. The peoples inhabiting the new lands were placed in categories that underscored this internal otherness, such as *tuzemnye* ("of the other lands") and *inorodcy* ("alien-born") (Sokolovski 2000: 91-105). The first major legislation on Russian indigenous groups, the 1822 Charter on Governance of the *Inorodcy*, contained an ambition of allowing Russia's indigenous peoples to preserve their traditional social structure and culture while evolving socially and culturally into "more advanced" peoples. Administrative structures for indigenous communities could be based on traditional leadership structures. Imperial indigenous policy ambitions were paternalistic (2.2) in their ideal of the state facilitating protection of indigenous peoples' culture, but by the end of the Imperial period Russian authorities nevertheless facilitated colonization of indigenous lands, legally considered ownerless (*terra nullius*), bringing socio-economic troubles to many indigenous groups. The Charter provided no special statutes for the Sámi, being mostly aimed at Siberian peoples. The Sámi were considered comparatively well integrated into the realm, and legally categorized and taxed the same as northern Russian state peasants (Berg 2001: 88, 198; Myklebost & Niemi 2014: 324; Volkov 1996: 93-8). Nevertheless, their treatment conformed to general norm. The Sámi were organized into micro-level administrative areas (*pogost*s) which are often described as continuations of the traditional Sámi *sijt*s.[50] The authorities also established two districts (*volost*s) demographically dominated by the Sámi: the western Kol'sko-Loparskaja ("Kola-Lappish") and the eastern Ponoj Districts. Nevertheless, colonists could freely exploit the area's natural resources. Colonists came from the South, from the West as Norwegians were allowed to settle the coast from the 1860s (Orekhova et al 2014:229), and the Ižma Komi from the East were

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[50] The main political unit of traditional Sámi society, cf. the North Sámi *siida* and South Sámi *sijte*. There is discussion about the extent to which the pogosts retained *sijt* elements, as opposed to being fundamentally Russian of origin (Kuoljok 1987; Tanner 1929, Wheelersburg & Gutsol 2009).

allowed to colonize the inland from the 1880s.[51] The Russian Sámi were challenged on all fronts, and socially and economically marginalized. The organ often referred to in contemporary discourse as the "first Sámi Parliament" (2.2, 8.2), the Kuèllnègknjarrk Sobbar, was neither a unifying political organ for all the Russian Sámi, nor a consultative/participatory organ on Sámi affairs specifically – but the district court of the Kol'sko-Loparskaja *volost*. Contemporary sources further indicate that the Sámi preferred to solve matters at the *pogost* level, among themselves, rather than at the *volost* level that brought them into contact with Russian authorities. In 1915-1917, the building of the railway from Petrograd[52] to the Murman Coast (the Kola Peninsula's northern shoreline) constituted a watershed event: for the first time, a large-scale government project transformed and alienated core Russian Sámi lands. In 1916, the town Romanov-na-Murmane ("Romanov on the Murman") was founded at the end of the railway. Following the Revolution, the Imperial family name was dropped. The city of Murmansk was later to become the Kola Peninsula's political center.

Soviet indigenous policy retained the ideal of state paternalism. Certain peoples were grouped into a separate socio-economic category based on their being small-numbered, living in areas seen as peripheral, and associated with rural traditional economic activities (the *malye narody* (or *narodnosti*) *severa*, "small nations (or "nationlets") of the North",[53] Sokolovski 2000: 105-08; Sokolovskiy 2011: 242), and declared these as needing special state aid to climb the "ladder" towards communism. However, it was also influenced by broader Soviet nationality policy discourse that advocated empowering minority nations through territorial autonomy, and the recruitment and education of cadres from such nations (*korenizacija*). The Northern Committee (est. 1924) was given responsibility for indigenous policy, territorial autonomies were delineated, and local councils for nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples established. This empowerment should of course be seen in context: it happened in a one-party state where the central apparatus decided on society-altering policies without consulting indigenous populations. One example is collectivization of micro-level indigenous economic units, such as reindeer herding groups, which was enforced throughout the USSR starting with the first five-year plan in 1928 (Myklebost & Niemi 2015a: 131-2; Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 34-39). Early Soviet indigenous policy was challenged by a discourse on the Russian North that accentuated *osvojenie* ("making [the North] ours") – transformation of the North for economic developmental purposes, entailing land

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[51] The language of the Ižma Komi is of the Finno-Ugric group, but is not very close to the Sámi languages.
[52] The name of St. Petersburg between 1914 and 1924. Following this, the city was called Leningrad until 1991, when the original name was re-adopted.
[53] In Russian parlance, "North" refers to a large area encompassing Northern European Russia and most of Russia east of the Ural Mountains.

alienation and settler influxes. In 1935, the Northern Committee was dissolved. Many activists and employees found that their work to implement early Soviet indigenous policy was retroactively constructed as attempts to undermine Soviet authority. After Stalinism (1928-1953), Soviet northern policy remained dominated by the drive for economic development. Border-near indigenous peoples found that the Cold War entrenched the power of Russian military- and security structures in their homelands. From the late 1950s, indigenous policy was (in line with contemporary agricultural policy) characterized by *ukrupnenie*, the amalgamation of small economic units into larger and more state-controlled ones, discussed in paternalistic language as improving indigenous communities' access to welfare services, as well as their "educational and cultural level". There was no official policy of assimilation, but for many peoples the effects of Soviet policy was a social process of assimilation (cf. Zachariassen 2012: 10-11).[54]

The Soviet Sámi experience generally follows the tendencies above. In 1920, the Soviet Union claimed Russian Sápmi back from foreign interventionists and anti-Bolshevik forces. A lesson had been learned, and steps were taken to secure the resource-rich and strategic peninsula. The inter-war period saw a massive influx of settlers and Sámi lands were alienated to the railway, industry, and military. The Northern Committee established a Murmansk branch in 1927 and sent ethnographer Vasilij K. Alymov (see 2.2) as their local envoy. In addition to efforts in promoting education and cadre building, Alymov proposed two Sámi autonomous districts (*rajony*): a West Lappish and an East Lappish District. The Murmansk Area (*okrug*) Government only supported the Eastern district. In 1930, the authorities in Leningrad Region (*oblast'*)[55] ruled against the proposal, and the same year the Northern Committee's Murmansk Branch was abolished, although Alymov remained as its local representative. The suggested Sámi autonomy on Eastern Kola was likely a direct influence on the decision to declare Lovozero District a "national" district in 1931, and on the 1936 renaming of Ponoj District to "Sámi District" (*Saamskij rajon*). However, Lovozero was no longer referred to as "national" by the end of the 1930s, and Ponoj (bar the military area Gremikha) was merged into Lovozero in 1963. The Russian Sámi did not benefit from early Soviet indigenous policy's ideal of territorial autonomy. Stalinist purges struck Russian Sápmi hard. The most well-known case today, the "Sámi Republic Affair", featured false accusations of secession in collaboration with Finland, and led to executions. Alymov' was executed in 1938 as the conspiracy's "leader". The Sámi appear to have

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[54] One may also discuss at what point integration policy becomes *de facto* assimilation policy: when policy includes the destruction from above of a people's socio-economic structure and forced removal to areas where they become a minority, it is possible to characterize this as *de facto* assimilation policy, even if attention is given to preserving folkloristic aspects of traditional culture.

[55] Murmansk did not become a province in its own right until 1938, and was at this point an area (*okrug*) under Leningrad Region (*oblast*). (Fedorov 2011: 177).

been targeted more than many other indigenous minority peoples, but their case was not unique among Soviet minorities: Finnish-Karelian activists suffered much the same accusations and consequences. Several ethnic groups in border zones were subjected to collective forced removal from their homelands – such as the Ingrians around St. Petersburg, Koreans in the Far East, and Kurds of the South Caucasus (Kassymova et al. 2012: 166; Katus et al. 2003: 148; Kim 2009: 16–19). The Russian Sámi escaped that fate, although the borderlands and coastal areas of special interest to the military were largely emptied of Sámi, who were concentrated elsewhere within their homeland. The first round of forced relocation happened when the *sijt*s were collectivized in 1920s- 1930s, the second began with the 1950s' *ukrupnenie* policy (Afanasyeva 2013: 27-64; Allemann 2013: 47, 54, 59, 63, 67-72; 78-91; Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 34-38).

After forced removals, purges, war, and now forced removals again, the Russian Sámi population was largely concentrated in a small number of eastern settlements, notably Lovozero (Afanasyeva 2013: 43-5; Allemann 2013: 90-6). The western part of Russian Sápmi was given over to military and industrial development purposes, the culmination of a gradual process that had begun with the Petrograd-Murmansk railway. In the lower education system, assimilatory practices prevailed (Afansyeva 2013: 53; Allemann 2013: 54-6, 58; Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 38-9, 58-63), while at the level of higher education there remained Sámi quotas at Leningrad's Herzen State Pedagogical University, which had been established during the early Soviet indigenous policy. These quotas indeed contributed to supplying "native cadres", some of which would take up central parts in the subsequent formation of a Russian Sámi civil society.

6.2. The Birth of Pan-Sámi Politics and the Cold War Divide, 1917-1985

It could be argued that during the late 1800s, Nordic Sámi policies were at the very least no better than Russian indigenous policy.[56] Nevertheless, it was in the West that the first *intelligentsia* of educated Sámi activists saw the light of day. Sámi activists created the first Sámi NGO in Sweden in 1904, and in 1906, a Sámi was for the first time elected to a state parliament. In 1917, the first border-transcending Sámi congress was held (Johansen 2015: 30-33, 115-129; Lantto 2012: 67-76, 120-140, 219-283, 330-57, 76-80; & Mörkenstam 2015: 139-47; Zachariassen 2012: 43-109, 231-64, 290-317). The latter meeting took place without delegates from Finland and Russia. The

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[56] In Norway, assimilation of the Sámi became the policy goal during the second half of the 1800s (Minde 2005c: 5-12; Pedersen 2008: 487-508; Zachariassen 2012: 26-42). In the same period, Swedish Sámi policy became oriented towards segregation and paternalism in relation to the nomadic reindeer-herding Sámi, while other types of Sámi were defined out of the policy field and neglected (Lantto 2012: 11-20, 137-40, 173-206; 219-68; 306-30, 334-57, 365-80; & Mörkenstam 2016: 137-43; Zacchariassen 2012: 133--134). In Finland, Sámi rights "eroded" after Finland passed to Russia in 1809, while ideas and practices of cultural assimilation picked up speed during the second half of the 1800s, although not to the same extent as in Norway (Nyyssönen 2007: 49-67).

peoples under the Czar experienced their own political watershed this year.[57] Radical change in Nordic states' Sámi policies came only in the second half of the 1900s. Ideas about cultural revitalization and land rights would then gradually gain more currency, and representatives of the Sámi gained audibility in the Sámi policy debates (Bones et al 2015: 453; Josefsen 2010: 1-27; Lantto 2012: 330-381; & Mörkenstam 2015: 145-50; Lehtola 2005: 160-66 ; 2015: ; 136- 42; Minde 2005c: 7-13; Nyyssönen 2007: 71-82, 86-98). Similarly, despite early beginnings, international Sámi cooperation was not institutionalized until 1956, with the Nordic Sámi Council (Davviriikkaid Sámiráđđi). The formation of this unifying organization for the Sámi of Norway, Sweden, and Finland was directly inspired and supported by the Nordic Council (est. 1952). It proved difficult to involve Soviet Sámi in the Nordic breakthrough in pan-Sámi networking. One arena that did give such possibilities was the border-transcending North Calotte Conventions. Sámi representatives from all the four states met during such a convention in Murmansk, 1966, and during the 1977 Convention, a delegation of Sámi from the three Nordic countries were able to visit Lovozero (Bones et al 2015: 458; Kiseljov & Kiseljova 1981: 192-4). It was more challenging to achieve Russian Sámi participation at Nordic Sámi Council events. In 1968, four Soviet researchers[58] on Sámi issues were allowed to attend one of the Nordic Sámi Conferences (border-transcending congresses arranged by the Nordic Sámi Council) but not until 1983 was an ethnic Sámi from Russia, Vasilij Selivanov, allowed to attend. The Cold War effectively ensured that when pan-Sámi cooperation became possible, it was limited to be Nordic Sámi cooperation in practice. When the Russian Sámi finally got the opportunities to be active in pan-Sámi politics, they entered an arena where people had enjoyed more than three decades of networking, coordination, and border-transcending learning.

6.3. Perestroika and the Russian Sámi, 1985-1991

During the Perestroika, activists of the "small peoples" etablished several NGOs to represent their nations' interests. The Russian Sámi were no exception. The authorities in Murmansk were skeptical, and their representatives at the 1989 founding conference of AKS (Association of the Kola Sámi) tried, in vain, to persuade participants from organizing (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 94). The first AKS leader was Vasilij Selivanov, the 1983 envoy to the Nordic Sámi Congress. In 1990, he was replaced by Nina Afanas'jeva, who would remain in charge until 2010 (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 95).[59] In 1990, AKS participated in establishing a Union-wide

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[57] Kalstad (2009: 37) claims that two Russian Sámi (Vladimir Matrjokhin and Aleksej Galkin) participated in the October Revolution in Petrograd, but the book provides no sources.

[58] The publication from this Conference mentions Georgij Kert and Tat'jana Luk'jančenko (2.2), and Jurij Savvatejev. The fourth researcher's name is not mentioned (Nordiska samerådet 1969: 13, 143-150).

[59] The foundation of AKS and its internal politics during the 1990s is a subject discussed in depth in Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012.

umbrella organization for indigenous NGOs. RAIPON made demands for improved indigenous representation and autonomy for the indigenous peoples of the Soviet Union, including a Union-wide congress of directly elected deputies that could participate in policy-making. This mirrored the establishment of elected indigenous representative organs ongoing in the Nordic states during the same period.[60] The Soviet auhtorities did not implement RAIPON's suggestion.

The Perestroika saw the first involvement of Russian Sámi in a major pan-Sámi project. The idea of an international rights' convention to secure the same rights to all Sámi had been floated in Nordic Sámi networks since the 1970s. It picked up speed after a Nordic Sámi Convention was proposed by professor of international law Atle Grahl-Madsen at a 1985 seminar for the Sámi and the Nordic autonomies.[61] In 1986, a Nordic Sámi Conference discussed the issue, and in 1987, the Nordic Sámi Council established a law committee to work with it. This commitee included members from all four countries and met several times in Russia. At this time, Russian Sámi activists, a significant number of whom were women (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 98-99), also began to take part in international Sámi women's networking. The first truly pan-Sámi organization was the women's NGO Sáhráhkká, which branched into the USSR soon after its formation in 1989.[62] In 1991, AKS was invited as observers to a Nordic Sámi Council meeting in Finland, and the next year they would participate at the Nordic Sámi Conference in Helsinki. By then, however, the Soviet Union no longer existed.

6.4. Key Developments at the Federal Level, 1992-2014

After the USSR gave way to the Russian Federation, the new state was engulfed by social and economic problems, including challenges to retaining centralized statehood in the face of strong provincial elites and ethnic conflicts. Indigenous policy was given little priority and remained weakly institutionalized. Responsibility shifted between different state organs until 2004, when it was given to the Ministry of Regional Development. RAIPON's requests for a Federal-level

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[60] The idea of elected Sámi representation organs at the state level had been brought up as far back as the Nordic Sámi Conference of 1962 by Finnish researcher and activist Karl Nickul, together with the idea of elections to the Nordic Sámi Conferences (Lehtola 2005: 165). In 1971, a border-transcending "Sámi Parliament" was suggested in the Nordic Sámi Council, but then envisioned as an international body of representatives from Nordic Sámi NGOs. The first organ referred to as a "Sámi Parliament", Finland's Sámi parlameanta (1973, also called the Sámi Delegation) instead followed Nickul's model, being elected by ethnically Sámi citizens of Finland (Lehtola 2005: 165-6). In 1981, Swedish Sámi activists demanded such an organ, and the Nordic Sámi Council gave the same advice to Norway. State commissions set down to investigate Sámi rights claims created a joint Nordic committee to discuss the issue and, in 1984, the Norwegian commission suggested a "Sámi Parliament" for Norway. The Norwegian Sámediggi was established in 1989, Sweden followed suit in 1993, and Finland's Sámi parlameanta was reorganized into a Sámediggi in 1996.
[61] Åland, the Faroe Isles, and Greenland.
[62] The first board meeting of Sáhráhkká took place in Lovozero in 1991 (Hætta 2003: 48-50). A more notable organization in contemporary Russian Sámi politics is Sámi nissonforum (Sámi women's forum, 5.1) which existed informally in Norway from 1993, and as an international NGO since 1998 (saminissonforum.org: *SNF birra*, http://www.saminissonforum.org/snf-birra/).

indigenous representation mechanism were not answered postively, but certain provinces did create their own mechanisms for indigenous representation. In terms of indigenous law development at the Federal level, the 1990s have been referred to as a "lost decade" (Øverland & Blakkisrud 2006: 186). Following a decade of RAIPON lobbyism, the turn of the Millennium saw several major decisions being made. In 2000, a Federal list of indigenous peoples – "native, small-numbered peoples" (*korennye maločislennye narody*) was fixed. Criteria to be on the list include that the peoples lived in territories inhabited by their ancestors, number less than 50,000 individuals, and maintain traditional ways of life and economic activities. As of 2016, the list included 47 peoples, of which RAIPON claimed to represent forty-one. During 1999-2001, a set of indigenous-oriented laws were enacted. Of particular relevance for the account at hand were *On Guarantees of Rights for Indigenous Peoples* (1999) which confirmed province's rights to create councils of indigenous representatives under the executive (Guarantees §6.8) and the right of indigenous peoples to delegate "authorized representatives" to such councils (§8.7), and *On General Principles for the Organization of* Obščiny (2000) which regulated the establishment of kin- and community-based organizations to facilitate traditional economic activities. While indigenous representation systems and *obščina*s already existed in several provinces, there had been no Federal-level legislation. The accentuation of traditional economic activities conformed to a widespread discourse on rurality and traditionalism as markers of "true" indigenousness. This discursively reifies indigenous peoples as rural and peripheral, and excludes indigenous persons that lead a more modern lifestyle. The image fits rather poorly with the reality of many Russian indigenous individuals: a full third of the *korennye maločislennye narody* population live in urban areas, and only among six of the listed peoples does the share involved in traditional economic activities exceed twenty percent (Sokolovsky 2011: 244). This problem also applies to the Russian Sámi, who live in the most urbanized part of the Arctic and whose traditional ways of life were completely altered during the Soviet Era. Continuity from Soviet policy was demonstrated: there was not established any common policy for all the ethnic groups of Russia that would be considered indigenous under a more subjugation-based or autochthonousness-based definition (4.2.1), but a separate policy targeting small peoples considered as needing particular assistance to preserve their lifestyle.

Developments after the 1990s must be considered in light of the Russian state's recentralization under Vladimir V. Putin (President 2000-08, Prime Minister 2008-2012, President 2012 -). The "power vertical" became a dominant metaphor in political discourse, referring to a normative preference for strictly hierarchal governance with decisions made at the center and implemented at lower levels. After terror attacks in 2004, the regime curbed alternative power

centers by abolishing elections to provincial leadership posts, making provincial Governors and Presidents dependent on approval from the Federal President to retain their posts, rather than local electorates. Provincial leadership elections were returned in 2012, with a further specification in 2013 that provinces could choose if they wanted their leaders to be selected or elected (Berg-Nordlie 2015a: 409-10). The recentralization drive also led to province mergers, specifically in the form of abolishing minority nations' territorial autonomies. Following the USSR's collapse, indigenous autonomous areas (*avtonomnye okruga*) had been promoted to provinces instead of third-tier entities. The policy now became to retain their names and borders, but make them third-tier entities within other provinces. Currently (2017), only Čukotka, Jugra, Jamalo-Nenec and Nenec remain at the second tier. The principle of indigenous territorial autonomy lost favor, while non-territorial arrangements for indigenous participation in provincial governance became widespread. The disestablishment of territorial autonomy and emphasis on non-territorial representation echoes well another trend during the rule of Putin: the policy-field transcending tendency to create formal governance networks that are subject to very active state metagovernance, and with limited political influence (see 3.2.4). Increased involvement of non-state actors may be seen as clashing with the drive for recentralization, but there is no real contradiction here: Network governance is not spreading "wildly" in Russian provinces, it is seen as "proper" to establish such bodies (Richter 2009: 13), and well known that this way of doing politics is desired from the central level. Indeed, networks at the provincial level are often established due to rule-fulfilling behaviour, as local politicians and administrators create formal governance networks simply because they are supposed to (Aasland et al 2016). In 3.2.4, the Russian network governance phenomenon is discussed as having an element of substitution: the regime needs input from below, and substitutes input-providing institutions that may challenge the regime publicly by input-providing institutions that are easier to control. The substitution phenomenon may be seen as extending to civil society, as public criticism is attempted substituted by internal advisory activities within governance networks. This is in line with the "carrot and stick" strategy of Russian authorities *vis-à-vis* civil society: organizations that are seen as having crossed a line in their open criticism of the regime (dissentful contention – see 3.2.4) may face harsh consequences, while organizations that are seen as uncritically supportive, or criticizing within accepted boundaries (consentful contention) are cultivated.

RAIPON's relations with the Russian authorities constitute an interesting case of state/NGO interrelations in the Putin period. From 2004, the indigenous policy field experienced ten years of relative institutional stability, as it remained under the Ministry of Regional Development until the Ministry was abolished in 2014 and indigenous policy responsibility

transferred to the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Regional Development did not give indigenous policy high priority, but RAIPON succeeded in establishing working relations with it. Furthermore, as a Federation-wide organization RAIPON had the right to propose Federal law changes and take part in governance networks at the Federal level, including in the Public Chamber (Berezhkov 2012 :24; 3.2.4). RAIPON continued its joint strategy of working with the authorities to improve legislation and policy, but simultaneously being openly critical, including by taking political conflicts to the level of international politics.[63] However, RAIPON met with intensified opposition when criticizing the alienation of indigenous lands to extractive industries. As Russia re-emerged from its economic crisis, the discourse of *osvojenie* of the North again rose to prominence. Russian indigenous NGO life was furthermore affected by the Western states and Russia falling into a spiral of conflict. The gradual development of this conflict is much too complex to account for here. A non-exhaustive list of significant events includes: the USA's invasion of Iraq, and the international controversy surrounding this (2003); conflicts over the foreign policy courses of Georgia's and Ukraine's post-revolutionary governments (2004, 2005); Russian protests over plans to deploy a missile defence system in Central-Eastern Europe (2007); the recognition of Kosovo and Russia's reactions (2008); the Russian invasion of Georgia (2008); and Russian allegations that the USA was involved in domestic election-fraud protests (2011). A nadir in post-Soviet Russian-Western relations was reached in 2014, with the Ukrainian Crisis, Russian invasion of Ukraine and annexation of Crimea, and subsequent Western sanctions. Conditions for Russian NGOs with border-transcending networks were deeply affected by the hostile international relations. In 2012, the Foreign Agent Law made it illegal for NGOs to receive foreign funding while being involved in "politics" unless they formally registered as agents of a foreign power (Davies et al 2016). This development was ominous for indigenous NGOs, many of which were involved in the global indigenous movement and engaged in conflicts over indigenous rights to natural resources (IWGIA 2015: 30, 32-33).

RAIPON began to receive negative attention from the Ministry of Justice already in 2009, not over foreign contacts, or its open criticism, but over formalities as regarded the legality of their statutes (Berezhkov 2012: 23-30). This should be considered in the context of Russian law often being applied selectively to remove "troublesome" actors from the political game board, while refraining from using these laws against actors considered "loyal" (3.2.5). The Ministry first threatened to withdraw RAIPON's important formal status as a Federation-wide organization,

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[63] The latter strategy, lifting a debate to the international level in order to involve actors abroad, is referred to as "scaling up" or "scaling out" and is not unusual to see applied by indigenous movements as part of their general strategy of internationalization (Berg-Nordlie et al. 2015: 3-6; Minde 2005a: 79-101; Niezen 2003: 2–28, 182–92; Robbins 2007: 2, 4–13).

and eventually threatened its existence. During this process, RAIPON vice president Dmitrij Berežkov accused the Ministry of Justice of using law selectively on behalf of forces within the Ministry of Regional Development in order to curb RAIPON's influence (Berezhkov 2012, 2013). Berežkov had at this point already fled Russia. According to his own account, Russian security structures attempted to recruit him as an agent inside RAIPON in 2010, but he turned them down. Fearing reprisals, he escaped to Norway with his family in 2011, enrolling as a student at UiT Arctic University of Norway. In 2013, Russian authorities demanded to have him extradited on allegations of economic crimes. He was given political asylum in 2015.[64] RAIPON's activities were suspended in 2012. They were allowed to reasume their activities in 2013, but had to change their statutes. The President now had to be elected by a two-thirds majority. Because of this, the candidate receiving the most votes during the Presidential elections at the 2013 Federation-wide RAIPON congress, Pavel Suljandziga, had to run again against the second-most popular candidate – Grigorij Ledkov, a Duma deputy from Putin's United Russia Party and the gas-rich Jamalo-Nenec province that hosted the congress. Foreign observers and press were asked to leave the premises and in a closed session between elections, Suljandziga withdrew his candidacy, leaving the leadership to Ledkov. After Ledkov's election, most of RAIPON's employees were laid off, and the organization became less visible in public debate. IWGIA (see 2.2) refers to the organization as "operating under tight state control" from 2013 (2014: 31-33; 2015: 33-5; 2016: 42).

6.5. Nordic Sámi Discourses on the Russian Sámi, 1992-2014

From 1989, the Nordic Sámi entered a period of intense institutional development, both at the level of individual states, and at the border-transcending level. The most relevant of the new institutions and new organizational developments are dealt with elsewhere in this document – such as the formation of the Sámediggis (6.3, footnote 60), the "pan-Sámification" of the Nordic Sámi council, and the establishment of the Sámi Parliamentary Council (7.1), and the work with a Sámi rights convention project (6.3, 7.1). This subchapter will instead sum up findings presented in AI, about Nordic Sámi discourse on the Russian Sámi during the period under analysis.

The Russian Sámi were consistently discussed in Nordic Sámi public debate as an integral part of the border-transcending Sámi nation. After the Cold War's division of the Sámi, the collapse of the USSR was discussed as giving a chance to reestablish contacts.[65] This echoed a

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[64] Berezhkov 2013; Nrk.no: *Begjært utlevert av Putin – Fikk asyl i Norge*, https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/russisk-urfolksaktivist-fikk-politisk-asyl-1.12155531

[65] To compare modern discourse with historical realities, the Sámi under Russian dominion began to be separated from those under the Nordic states already during the 1800s when the land borders were drawn. The Russian Sámi did not participate in border-transcending Sámi political organizing prior to the Russian Revolution or the Cold War.

parallel discourse on Norwegian–Russian relations, the so-called "dramaturgy of reunion" that portrayed Northern Russia and the Nordic countries' northern areas as having deep historical ties, disrupted by the Cold War, which should be re-established through the Barents Cooperation (5.2) and other border-crossing cooperation ventures. These two discourses were mutually reinforcing, but the Nordic Sámi discourse on the Russian Sámi went deeper, as it established ethnic unity with a Russian population group.[66] Nevertheless, the Russian Sámi were discussed as an internal "special case" in light of Western perceptions that they were more socio-economically marginalized, and faced harder state suppression. Nordic Sámi media furthermore had little to no reporting on Russian Sámi attempts to solve their own problems, Russian Sámi organizing, and Russian state-Sámi interaction. The resultant image was one of passivity and dependence on the West. The relationship portrayed was suspiciously similar to the donor–recipient relationship found in Western discourse on the "Global South" and the "great misery discourse" on Russia during the economic crisis of the 1990s. One must remember that Sámi public debate is not insulated from general public debate: participants in the first are exposed to, and participate in, the latter. One may also note a more random parallel to Nordic Sámi descriptions of Russian Sámi as passive recipients of material aid, education, and political support: the paternalistic Russian discourse on aiding and supporting the *malye narody* (6.1).

The portrayal of the Russian Sámi as an oppressed group must be seen in light of Nordic Sámi self-representations' tendency to focus on historical and current oppression. As such, portrayals of the Russian Sámi did not deviate fundamentally from the Nordic Sámi self-image, the deviation was one of degrees of oppression. On the other hand, the lack of attention to Russian Sámi political activism did constitute a fundamental deviation. Nordic Sámi paternalism towards the Russian Sámi was arguably different from that of affluent nations towards poor nations, since it constituted caring for the weaker parts of one's own ethnic community, and since the narrative of subjugation and marginalization was shared between the groups constructed as donor and recepient. The attitude approached solidarity rather than paternalism, but it is ultimately difficult to categorize as such because of the tendency towards depicting the Russian Sámi as dependent and inactive, and also to exaggerate the ills they suffered.

However, the Cold War did entrench the pre-existing separation between Nordic and Russian Sápmi, due to the lack of possibility for Russian Sámi to participate in the border-transcending Sámi movement that grew forth in the Nordic states.

[66] Regarding the strong position of pan-Sámi discourse, it must be underscored that it was hegemonic only in the discourse of the Sámi minority population. Pan-Sámism is no widespread ideal among the majority populations and their elites, who ultimately hold power. Quite the opposite, other internationalisms like pan-Nordicness, Euro-integration, or Eurasianism have much more currency in the big picture, and these *cement* the East-West divide through Sápmi. In contrast, the Barents and Arctic regional identities appeals to a broader mass than the Sámi population but overlap with and facilitate pan-Sámi identity and activism.

Comparing texts from the 1990s and from the current Millennium's first decade (- 2009), the discourse of need was found to be present also in the latter, but in a modified form. The level of detail was still low in the reporting on Russian Sámi politics, but there were slightly more portrayals of the Russian Sámi as culturally and politically active. There was also a different emphasis on what the Russian Sámi were portrayed as needing: less focus on social and material ills, and more attention to a perceived lack of political rights and institutions, such as a Russian Sámediggi. Again, Nordic Sámi discourse reflected majority media trends, this time the increasing Western focus on Russian democratic deficiencies. The notion of a need for Western-inspired political reform was strengthened by the Russian Sámi activists that were given opportunity to speak in Nordic Sámi media. The Russian Sámi Parliament movement (from 2007, 8.1) met a sympathetic audience in the West thanks to pre-established discourse, but it also contributed to strengthening this discourse.

7. 1992-2006: NGO-Based Representation in Russia and Sápmi

7.1. 1992-2006: Pan-Sámi Representation from Momentum to New Marginalization

In 1992, the 15th Nordic Sámi Conference was held in Helsinki, Finland. This was watershed event in pan-Sámi history: the Nordic Sámi Council became genuinely pan-Sámi by accepting AKS as a member organization, and subsequently dropped the word "Nordic" from its name.[67] The Russian Sámi were from now treated as an equal member of the Sámi Council (Sámiráđđi)". A challenge presented itself in 1998, when AKS experienced a schism following years of internal conflicts, among other things over the state of its internal democracy (7.3), and the rival organization OOSMO was established.[68] The period of unrivalled AKS nodality in Russian Sámi civil society ended, and Russian Sámi civil society from now grew increasingly complex and multifaceted. However, there was no rule in the Sámi Council against including more than one NGOs from each state (indeed, there were already three member NGOs from Norway and two from Sweden), and OOSMO was simply given equal status to AKS in 2000. Eventually, Aleksandr Kobelev of OOSMO was given a period of leadership of the Sámi Council (2005-06) just as Nina Afanas'yeva of AKS had led the Council earlier (1996).

The project for a Sámi rights convention (6.3) underwent some interesting developments during the 1990s. After completing its work, the four-country Law Committee passed its suggestions to the Sámi Council. This passed it on to the Sámediggis, which involved the Nordic

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[67] This Conference also chose Februray 6th as the national day, and decided on a tune for the Sámi national anthem. The 1986 Conference had approved of the lyrics, as well as the Sámi flag

[68] The internal processes of AKS leading up to the establishment of OOSMO will not be covered in detail here. This has been done in Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012.

states in deliberation. Following this, Norway took the formal initiative to start a process towards a *Nordic* Sámi Convention in 1993 (St.meld 1992-93: 69-70; 1996-97: 19). From there, the matter was dealt with by a Nordic Council working group (1995-1998) and later an expert group (2001-2005) set down by the Nordic Sámi Cooperation (see below). These groups involved Nordic states and the Sámediggis, but no Russian representation. The expert group was instructed to consider the Russian Sámi issue, and re-established communication with Russian activists, but by then the convention had been firmly established as a Nordic project. The draft convention presented in 2005 was one to be ratified by Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and oriented towards securing the rights of Sámi in these states. It was by no means a new idea to streamline Sámi rights through a Nordic-only convention, so this development was not entirely surprising. Nevertheless, it is perhaps symbolically unfortunate that the first pan-Sámi project to include Russian Sámi activists ended up excluding the Russian Sámi so completely. Nordic Sámi reasons for disregarding the pan-Sámi ideal were informed by a combination of strategic-rational consideration of the project's realism and Nordic Sámi self-interest: Firstly, it was considered more realistic that the Nordic states would agree on a convention, due to these states' traditions for learning and cooperating in Sámi policy. Secondly, if managing to involve the Russian Federation, this would set mid-1990s Russian indigenous law as the legal baseline. The resulting convention would then hardly improve the situation of the Nordic Sámi, the constituency of most Sámi politicians active in the project. It did turn out difficult enough to realize an international Sámi convention on the Nordic arena: as of 2017, the process towards a Nordic Sámi Convention is still ongoing.

Including the Russian side into the Sámi Council had technically just been a matter of allowing NGOs from a new state membership in an international NGO umbrella organization. The Council's format had fit the Sámi political landscape in Russia at the time well, since this was also based on NGOs. With the ascendancy of Nordic state-based actors, including the Sámediggis,[69] on the pan-Sámi arena, equal inclusion of the Russian Sámi representatives became more challenging. There was an absence in Russia of top-level state institutions with mandate, competence, and resources to participate in pan-Sámi affairs. Unlike the Nordic states, the Russian state had no tradition of dealing with Sámi issues as a specific political concern, let alone an international issue. As for the provincial level, Murmansk Regions's apparatus for indigenous

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[69] The Sámediggis are referred to as "state-based" because they have been established by states and are regulated by state laws, the scope of their activities is framed by the states, and they are funded by states. That the Sámediggis are state-based does not mean that they should be seen as representing the interests of their states' governments. The institutions are framed to represent non-state interests – the interests of a specific minority population, and regularly occurring, contested elections are held to make them ultimately accountable to a Sámi electorate (see 3.2.1., 3.2.2, Fig. 4; also AIII; Berg-Nordlie 2015a: 390).

governance was weakly and unstably institutionalized until 2004 (7.2). That there was no analogous institution to the Sámediggis caused further challenges. In 1994, the Nordic Sámi representation organs tasked legal expert John. B. Henriksen to draft a proposal for an institutionalized inter-Sámediggi cooperation. In line with the pan-Sámi ideal, discussions on the Nordic side established early on that if the envisioned Sámi Parliamentary Council (Sámi parlamentáralaš ráđđi) were to speak on behalf of the Sámi as one people, it would have to include Russian Sámi representatives in some manner. When a structure for the Parliamentary Council was proposed in 1998, it included a suggestion that the Russian Sámi population should be given participating observer status through their NGO. However, upon the Sámi Parliamentary Council's establishment in 2000, there was no longer just one Russian Sámi NGO. Like the Sámi Council, the Parliamentary Council solved the new "multipolarity" in Russian Sámi civil society by including both AKS and OOSMO, first as observers from 2000, subsequently as permanently participating observers from 2003.[70]

The best example of Nordic Sámi commitment to including Russian Sámi representatives in border-transcending Sámi networking may be an attempt that failed. The Nordic Sámi Cooperation (Davviriikkalaš sámi ovttasbargu, est. 2000) was organized as an arena for communication and coordination between Sámediggis and the ministries of the Nordic states responsible for Sámi policy. It had an informal connection with the Nordic Council of Ministers, and an attached structure responsible for following up issues, the Nordic Civil Service Body for Sámi Issues (est. 2001, replacing the Nordic Cooperative Body for Sámi- and Reindeer Husbandry Matters, est. 1964). Even in the work of such a through-and-through Nordic structure, it was considered proper to attempt involving the Russian side in some manner. Russia was eventually involved in dialogue over the matter in 2005, but the result of these discussions was that the cooperation remained Nordic-only. The fact that an attempt was made illustrates well the power of the pan-Sámi ideal – even if it could, as in the case of the Convention, in practice be disregarded in favor of pragmatic concerns rooted in a Nordic Sámi perspective.

7.2 1992-2006: the Long "Lost Decade" of Murmansk Indigenous Policy

When AKS was established in 1989, the organization proclaimed itself "the unitary organ of Soviet Sámi society" and the political representative of the USSR Sámi. At the central level, this representation was performed through RAIPON, of which AKS' Anna Prakhova served as vice president during part of this period (1994-1995). Mainly, AKS focused its activities on the

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[70] Samedigge.no: *Samisk parlamentarisk råd.* https://www.samedigge.no/Dievnastusa/Internasjonalt-arbeid/Samisk-parlamentarisk-raad-SPR

provincial and international level. They chose to have its headquarter in Murmansk city, seeing it as necessary to have a strong presence in the province's political power center. In 1991, AKS had requested that the Provincial Government establish a committee on indigenous issues. This was followed up in 1992. The Indigenous Issues Committee was tasked to work with AKS, among a number of organizations. The Sámi NGO had put itself forward as a potential partner in governance arrangements with the state structures, and the authorities now appeared to reply positively. However, while there were indeed meetings of a consultative nature between AKS representatives and the Committee, Sámi representation in provincial politics was not given any formalized and stable institutionalization. Murmansk Region generally failed to institutionalize its indigenous policy robustly in this period. The Committee was understaffed, going from five employees to three in 1993, and two by the end of its existence in 1997. It also had low political authority, being mainly tasked with dealing with requests for financial support. Eventually, the Committee was reorganized into a sector (subcommittee) of the Committee on Governance of the Agricultural-Industrial Complex, Trade, Connections at the Inter-Provincial Level and with Former Soviet States. The same year that the Committee was reorganized into obscurity, AKS leader Nina Afanas'jeva was given the position of Advisor to the Governor on Indigenous Issues. This was a prestigious and potentially influential position, but the position was personal, bestowed by Governor Jurij Jevdokimov (1996–2009), and was not continued by the next Governor.

This period saw the first initiative to establish a Russian Sámediggi. Following the 15th Sámi Conference (1992), AKS set down an internal committee to discuss a Russian "Sámi Parliament" modelled on the Sámediggis that were being established in the West during this time (1989-1996). The committee was headed by Zinaida Kal'te, who also took part in the pan-Sámi Law Committee that discussed the Sámi rights' convention (2.2, 6.3, 7.1). AKS activists increasingly saw a Russian Sámediggi as desirable, for several reasons. As the spirit of pan-Sámism and cross-border cooperation took hold, and Sámediggis were inaugurated in the West, the absence of a Russian Sámediggi came to underscore the deviation of the Russian Sámi within the ethnic collective – the Sámediggi model obtained a symbolic value of its own. A Russian Sámediggi also began to be seen as having potential to be strategically valuable: Firstly, the work for a Sámediggi-based pan-Sámi cooperation structure, which picked up speed from 1994 (7.1), threatened to sideline the Russian Sámi on the pan-Sámi arena. Secondly, this type of organ was seen as a possibile tool to solve local challenges. In 1995, Zinaida Kal'te wrote an open letter to the newspaper Poljarnaja pravda, signed in her capacity as member of the Sámi Council's Law Committee. The letter, titled "A Sámi Parliament: [our] last chance?" warned of industrial

extraction projects threatening natural resources of importance to her people, and accused the provincial authorities and its Indigenous Issues Committee of passivity. Kal'te held up the Sámediggi model as an ideal. She argued that in order to ensure that the Sámi were heard in provincial politics, the Sámi needed the possibility to elect their own representatives to a *saamskij parlament* that could participate directly in political processes of relevance to the people (Kal'te 1995). The next Sámi Conference, held in Murmansk in 1996, made a declaration that put the Sámi Council collectively behind a "popularly elected Sámi organ" in Russia. Nina Afanas'jeva declared in her closing words to the Conference that the Russian Sámi would work towards this goal but "may have to wait long for results to manifest". These words proved prophetic, as AKS quickly encountered resistance. Governor Jevgenij Komarov (1991–1996) opposed the idea, and Sámi activists began to hear accusations of secessionism both in public debate and from provincial officials. These accusations invoked traumatic memories of the "Sámi Republic Affair" and other past repressions (6.1). In addition, there was little active support for a *saamskij parlament* at the AKS' grassroots level. This was likely, in part, because AKS already fulfilled many functions associated with the Sámediggis. AKS united the Russian (or at least Murmansk Region) Sámi around a common node, it was accepted by Russian authorities as a partner in dialogue over indigenous policy (although with a low level of influence), and was recgonized as an equal partner to the Nordic Sámi NGOs in pan-Sámi politics (although new, state-based structures were emerging). These first discussions of a Russian Sámediggi did not grow into a broader movement, but the seed had been planted and "Sámi Parliamentism" would later resurface in Russian Sámi political debate.

In 1998, OOSMO (Non-Governmental Organziation of the Murmansk Region Sámi) was established (7.3). From this point on, Russian Sámi civil society grew in complexity.[71] The organizations established after OOSMO were more specialized, organizing Sámi living in specific localities, or having an interest in certain cultural or economic activities, or belonging to the younger generation. After the Federal *Obščina* Law was enacted (2000, 6.4), a movement for establishing Sámi *obščina*s appeared. Activists such as Jelena Jakovleva (AKS) argued that such organizations could facilitate the re-introduction of traditional Sámi small-scale, family-based reindeer herding. Sámi reindeer herding had been forcibly collectivized into state-owned companies during the Soviet Era (6.1), and these units were privatized in the Federal Era. Resultantly, two enterprises now controlled nearly all reindeer herding on the Kola Peninsula.

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[71] As discussed in Overland & Berg-Nordlie (2012: 96-7) some other Sámi organizations did exist also during the "AKS-unipolar" period 1989-1998, but none of these came close to rivalling AKS' position. This was fundamentally altered by the establishment of OOSMO (1998), and later the ascendancy of the *obščina*s (2006 -), and the creation of new organziational points of orientation such as NCAs and the youth organization.

Jakovleva furthermore argued that the Sámi NGOs were arenas for "people with higher educations and stable incomes", and that other parts of the Sámi population could benefit from a return to traditional economic activities (AIII). In 2002, Jakovleva formed the first Sámi *obščina*, "Kil'din", which was registered in in Murmansk City. Many actors proved willing to support the *obščina* movement. These included local Sámi NGOs, non-state and state-based foreign actors (among these the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, the Danish indigenous-oriented NGO Infonor, the Sámi Council, WGIP, the Sámi consultancy firm SEG, and the Tromsø University Museum), and the authorities of Murmansk Region (Kalstad 2009: 62-73; Prosjektkatalog 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 2007; Vladimirova 2011: 29-35, 322-5, 361-72).[72] The number of Sámi *obščina*s eventually grew to more than thirty, but there has so far not ocurred any large-scale re-establishment of family-based Sámi reindeer herding. The activity level and orientation of Sámi *obščina*s came to vary widely: some exist mainly on paper, some involved themselves in ethno-tourism, or focus on other traditional activities, some are more committed to reindeer herding. In addition to the challenging nature of the work itself, skill sets important for successful *obščina* running involve competence in navigating complex paperwork, and good relations with actors that are crucial to the success of the *obščina*'s business (cf. Vladimirova 2006: 372-82). The relationship between *obščina*s and Murmansk Region should be noted: the state is a source of sorely needed financial and material support, and for land leases necessary to accomplish f. ex. reindeer herding.

During the early new Millennium there was also a second initiative for a Russian Sámediggi. "White Reindeer" – a joint project of OOSMO, the Jona chapter of AKS, and Infonor – hired a legal firm to investigate possibilities in Russian law to have such an organ (Berg-Nordlie 2011: 62). The firm concluded that Russia's closest analogy to the Sámediggis were national-cultural autonomies (NCAs), a type of NGO that enjoys high symbolic status and may receive financing from state-based actors, but has no policy-making authority. NCAs are not widely used by indigenous peoples, but the Russian Sámi came to be an exception. The first Sámi NCA was established in 2007. The NCAs were intended to unify activists of AKS and OOSMO, and were established particularly in urban areas, where provincial authorities had come to establish a practice of not registering *obščina*s.[73] Two years later, in 2009, young activists created

[72] Gov-murman.ru: *Gosudarstvennaja podderžka,* http://gov-murman.ru/region/saami/statesupport/; Sismus.org: *Tromsø Museum Universitetsmuseet i Tromsø Årsberetning 2002. Representasjon – Internasjonale verv*, http://www.sismus.org/museums/report/Norvegia/Tromso/Tromso_2002.pdf.

[73] Murmansk Region has in practice tended to not register *obščina*s outside the province's Federally-recognized "Places of [Indigenous] Traditional Inhabitance and Traditional Economic Activities" – the districts Kola, Kovdor, Lovozero and Ter. While covering most of the Kola Peninsula geographically, the districts on this list exclude all major urban areas.

the first formally registered Russian Sámi youth organization: Sám' Nuraš ("Sámi Youth"), likewise open to members of all other Sámi NGOs.[74]

The two "catch-all" organziations dominated Sámi representation in Murmansk Region, as it was, until 2006. Likewise, the two were given equal recognition at the pan-Sámi level (7.1). The Federal level proved less flexible: RAIPON had a policy of allowing only one member organization per eligible nation. RAIPON did establish a working relationship with OOSMO, but AKS remained the Sámi people's designated representative in that organization. As for province-level representation, the main problem was not Sámi division but lacking provincial commitment to organize democratic and stable mechanisms for representation. Murmansk Region's Charter (the provincial "constitution") of 1998 declared that the authorities should cooperate with the province's indigenous people, but this was not followed up by any reform of representation mechanisms. Sámi representation remained relatively *ad hoc* and focused on individual leader figures. Indigenous policy kept being moved about in the system and not given high priority. Between 2000 and 2002, there was again a Committee for indigenous issues under the Government, but this was subsequently merged into the Committee for Issues of Local Self-Government, Problems of Military Garrisons, and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. In 2004, yet another reform took place, but this time the reform would prove to "stick": the new organ, with responsibilities for coordinating and implementing provincial indigenous policy, would remain in existence throughout our period under analysis. This organ was a "state regional institution" (*gosudarstvennoje oblast'noje učreždenie*) founded and controlled by the Regional Government's Department for Legal Projects and Reforms of Local Self-Government,[75] which was called the Centre for Native, Small-Numbered Peoples of the North but would later have its name changed to the Murmansk' Centre for Northern Peoples.[76] Upon its inception, the Indigenous Peoples' Centre was led by a Sámi, Andrej Agejev. The creation of the Centre was in line with governance trends in the Russian Federation: the establishment of institutions with political responsibilities

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[74] Sám' Nuraš was chosen for historical reasons, having been the name suggested for a potential Russian Sámi youth organization during the late 1980s. It was also considered positive that the name, although Kildin Sámi, could be understood by speakers of other Sámi languages (Interview: Anna Afanas'yeva, then leader of Sám' Nuraš, Murmansk 22.04.10). Cf. Sáminuorra in Sweden ("Sámi Youth," North Sámi), Suoma Sáminuorat in Finland ("Finland's Sámi Youths," North Sámi) and Noereh in Norway ("Youths," South Sámi). Names used for other attempted Russian Sámi youth organizations during the 1990s and early 2000s include *all'p* ("butterfly") and *tass't* ("star"). *All'p* is *beaiveloddi* in North Sámi and *biej-åbloe* in South Sámi, while *tass't* is *násti* in North Sámi and *naestie* or *daasta* in South Sámi.

[75] At the moment of writing classified as a "state regional budgetary institution", *gosudarstvennoje oblastnoje bjudžetnoje učreždenie.*

[76] On the face of it, this name change seems to indicate that the centre now has a broader field of activity than just Sámi issues. For this reason, the new name is occasionally criticized by some Sámi activists. In practice, the activity of the Centre still appears to be exclusively oriented toward Sámi issues (Gov-murman.ru: *Gosudarstvennoje oblastnoje bjudžetnoje učreždenie "Murmanskij centr narodov Severa"* (http://www.gov-murman.ru/region/saami/mcns/); *Ustav gosudrstvennoje oblastnoje…* http://www.gov-murman.ru/region/saami/mcns/ustav.pdf).

that operate with varying degrees of autonomy, but are ultimately owned by a state-based actor that has determined its tasks. For example, such institutions are observed to have a role in ethno-politics for non-Northern and non-indigenous peoples, where their tasks include among other things a coordinating role in relation to ethnic civil society. This nodal role is achieved f. ex. by being necessary points of orientation for economic reasons, and by organizing meetings and councils of NGO representatives – the latter also in line with at the time emerging Russian policy trends, e.g. the establishment of formal governance networks (Aasland et al 2016: 153-4; Berg-Nordlie & Tkach 2016: 182-3; 3.2.4). In 2006, the provincial authorities established a program for support to indigenous people's "economic and social development" (Kučinskij 2011), and in the same year the Indigenous Peoples' Centre established history's first official organ for Russian Sámi representation. This marked the end of Murmansk Region's long analogue to the Federal level's "Lost Decade" in indigenous policy.[77]

7.3. Discussion of Representativeness

Prior to 1989, the Russian Sámi activist *milieu* had no formal organization. Since no organized electorate existed, no mechanisms for choosing a representative to the Sámi Convention project could have fulfilled the criteria in 3.2.2 Fig. 4. From 1989, a catch-all Sámi NGO was available to perform this function. The Sámi Council rapidly approved of AKS as the elector of Russian Sámi representatives to the pan-Sámi umbrella organization, contact was established between AKS activists and provincial authorites, and the Sámi NGO provided representation at the Federal level through its RAIPON membership. NGO-based representation can be seen as less democratic than electoral registry-based representation. Members of the demos may not want to join the organization(s), f. ex. due to dissent against politics or practices of the organization(s), and hence lose the opportunity to participate in the chain of representation. However, in the absence of a Sámi electoral registry in Russia, the NGO sector did constitute the most democratic alternative available. In order for the criteria in 3.3.2 Fig. 4 to be fulfilled, AKS would have had to regulate membership in such a way that all adult demos members were able to join, and non-Sámi kept out (Criterion 1). The organization did claim openness to all Sámi in Murmansk Region. In order to fulfill Criteron 2 and 3, the internal democracy of AKS would have had to function well enough that representatives sent by AKS could be considered as ultimately representing the organization's members. However, the 1990s did see continuous controversy among the Russian Sámi over AKS' democratic credentials. The third election for the AKS presidency (1995) devolved into open conflict, as different factions accused each other of violating the organization's rules to promote their candidate for the leadership post. Three

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[77] Gov-murman.ru: *Gosudarstvennaja podderžka,* http://gov-murman.ru/region/saami/statesupport/

different election meetngs were held until, at the last meeting (1996), only one candidate ran (Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012: 95-6).

In 1998, AKS' internal conflicts led to the establishment of OOSMO. This schism meant that continuing to treat AKS as the only elector NGO for the Russian Sámi would violate Criterion 1 by delimiting the electorate to only one "party" in an internal conflict within the demos. The schism mainly weakened Sámi representation at the Federal level, as OOSMO members were from now unrepresented in RAIPON. At the provincial level, the situation remained much the same, the authorities cultivating contacts with leaders of both Sámi NGOs. The AKS leader's status of Indigenous Advisor (from 1997) was not revoked despite the schism, but this position was in any case personal, and not predicated on the approval of her organization. In theory, this constituted a case of the authorities simply chosing a person from the demos to represent it (3.3.2) – although to be fair, the leader of AKS was not just any person in the demos, but an individual who enjoyed the trust of at least a powerful faction within Russian Sámi civil society.

At the pan-Sámi level, the challenge of the schism was solved by, in 2000, giving AKS and OOSMO equal status as electors to the core structures of pan-Sámi politics – the Sámi Council and the Sámi Parliamentary Council. It is another issue if Russian Sámi representation was *equal* to that given to Nordic Sámi communities. AII concludes that representation was equal in the Sámi Council, but this rests on accepting as fair that the Russian Sámi received fewer members in the Council than the other states. Member quotas in the Council were based on general assumptions about the different sizes of the states' Sámi populations: two members for Russia, four each to Finland and Sweden, and five to Norway. At the Congresses, which constitute the highest level of authority in the Sámi Council system, each state was given the same number of voting delegates. In the Sámi Parliamentary Council, Russian Sámi representatives were given an unequal type of representation, with no voting rights. It could be argued that the Parliamentary Council demanded nothing more from the Russian Sámi than it did from other Sámi communities: in order to participate fully: an organ recognizable as a Sámediggi. On the other hand, this demand was in itself a product of the "Nordicness" of international Sámi cooperation: full inclusion was predicated on the emulation of Nordic Sámi policy through the establishment of a Russian analogy to the Sámediggi. The power imbalance between Western and Eastern Sápmi is also illustrated quite well by the Sámi Parliamentary Council case, as the power to decide what constitutes an acceptable analogue to the Sámediggis lies with the full members of the Sámi Parliamentary Council, i.e. the representatives of the Nordic Sámi. Finally, the Sámi Convention project and the Nordic Sámi Cooperation are example of wholesale exclusion of the

Russian Sámi. In the former, Nordic Sámi actors took the project back to the Nordic arena. In the latter, the Russian Sámi remained excluded despite attempts from Nordic actors to involve them.

8. 2006-2014: Conflict and Cooperation over the Sámi Parliament Movement

8.1. 2006-2008: The Centre and the Council

In 2006, the Indigenous Peoples' Centre created the Coordination Council, a formal governance network, to facilitate Sámi civil society input. It was framed to have an advisory role in relation to the Centre. This was the first Sámi representation organ ever established by Russian authorities. It became the nodal network in the, by then, fractured Russian Sámi political landscape. The Council was not intended to weaken the Centre's nodality, and indeed initially strengthened it: the Centre coordinated the Council's activities and its leader participated directly in Council meetings. A discussion of democratic representativeness is found in 8.4, but the Council can be summed up for now as having been fairly representative, in the sense that all Russian Sámi civil society formations were allowed to send one representative. However, several interviewees would in hindsight claim that the Centre/Council model had functioned poorly. Some described it as an essentially symbolic/manipulative creation (see 3.2.2, Fig. 5), others claimed it became dysfunctional due to unrealistic demands from certain members. The demands in question were for a reform of Murmansk's Sámi representation system aimed at obtaining an indigenous representation organ more similar to the Sámediggis – chosen by an electorate and with more political clout. The Coordination Council had inadvertently, by bringing together members of the two rivalling catch-all NGOs, facilitated cross-organizational discussions about a Russian Sámediggi. In 2007, AKS and OOSMO agreed to work together for a Russian *saamskij parlament*, and in 2008, a broader Initiative Group for the Founding of a Parliament for the Murmansk Region Sámi was established. It was headed by Valentina Sovkina, an activist in AKS and the border-transcending NGO Sámi nissonforum (Sámi womens' forum) who had earlier (2007) been selected by the Coordination Council to represent the Russian Sámi in Barents WGIP (WGIP 2007). An organized Sámi Parliament movement had now been established, constituting a new node in Russian Sámi civil society that was outside the provincial authorities' control.

Murmansk Region's authorities reacted negatively to this sudden pressure for reform of their indigenous governance structures. This is not surprising: the 2004-2006 reorganization of the indigenous policy apparatus had not been done because of pressure from below, global trends in indigenous politics, or indeed any indigenous-specific political process. The Centre/Council model of indigenous governance had been created out from a "bureaucratic"

rule-fulfilling mentality (3.1.3) to answer a need for obtaining input from local indigenous civil society into the process of implementing the economic support program that began in 2006 (7.2), and as a local expression of more general Russian governance trends (3.2.4, 6.4). The authorities did not foresee, and were not prepared for, this administrative reorganization to serve as the catalyst for a sudden and quite forceful campaign for the import of the Nordic Sámi model for indigenous representation. When the Russian Sámi Parliament movement took off at this precise time, it was not *only* a matter of the Coordination Council facilitating cross-organizational networking. The 2004-2006 reform also emboldened certain activists, who now perceived that further change in the direction of improved indigenous representation was realistic. As for why some considered the Centre/Council model inadequate, it should be kept in mind that after roughly two decades of pan-Sámi networking, many Russian Sámi activists by now considered the Sámediggis as the "go-to" model for Sámi representation. It was a goal in itself to have "normal" Sámi institutions. When comparing the Sámediggi model to the model offered by the province, the domestic variant was seen by many as falling short: one expected a more democratic and more independent representation organ. Strategic concerns furthermore made a Russian Sámediggi seem more desirable than earlier: Firstly, activists saw the need for an organ that was positioned to protect natural resources and the access of the Sámi to these, which were now increasingly coming under threat (Šaršina & Jakovleva 2008). Secondly, the Nordic Sámediggis had by this time established themselves on the pan-Sámi arena, and because the Russian Sámi had no Sámediggi, they were experiencing less than full and equal inclusion on that arena (7.1, 7.3). No actors in pan-Sámi politics saw this situation as optimal. Already in 2008, Sovkina informed the rest of WGIP that a movement for a Russian Sámediggi had now come into existence, but that it may need financial support in the future (WGIP 2008a). Finally, a new discourse on Russian Sámi history had served to root the idea of a *saamskij parlament* in Russian soil: the narrative that referred to the Imperial-era Kuèllnègknjarrk sobbar as "the first Sámi Parliament" (2.2, 6.1.) had inspired certain activists by adding an element of "returning to a golden past" (2.2) to the discourse on the Sámediggis. In addition to being an inspiration, the discourse on the Imperial-era Sobbar was also used strategically to establish the Sámediggi model as being "at home" in Russia.

Not all Sámi agreed with the Sámi Parliament movement. Certain *obščina*-based activists expressed particular skepticism – not seeing such an organ as beneficial for the strengthening of traditional economic activites, or seeing the model as a potential re-empowerment of AKS/OOSMO, whom they claimed were not adequately supportive of such interests. Skepticism was more widespread than just the *obščina* sector, however. Some held that the model did not fit

Russian conditions since the Russian Sámi were too few, or because Russia had too many indigenous peoples for all to have such "parliaments". Others were of the opinion that a similar organ may be possible, but the authorities would never acknowledge an ethnically based organ calling itself a *parlament*, as in Russian the connotations to legislative organs were too strong. The lack of clarity concerning the meaning of the term *saamskij parlament* also caused problems. Some opposed it, believing that "Sámi Parliaments" had powers exceeding what they felt an ethnically based organ should have, such as legislative rights. Some who supported the model also subscribed to incorrect ideas about the extent of indigenous empowerment inherent in the Sámediggi model. In light of mounting disagreements, the provincial authorities organized the "First Congress of the Sámi of Murmansk Region" (2008) to discuss the issue of Russian Sámi representation. The Centre disbanded the Coordination Council after a majority of the members present at one meeting voted for a declaration that the Council now constituted the "highest authority of the Russian Sámi until the holding of the First Congress" (Sovkina 2008). This can be seen as somewhat typical for the discursive practices of the Russian Sámi Parliament movement: They rejected the authorities' formal and rhetorical framing of indigenous representation as constituted by state-organized channels to provide user-group input about the state's indigenous policy. Instead, they inserted elements into discourse on indigenous representation that were taken from the Nordic Sámi context, and emphasized the need for direct election of indigenous representatives and the need to further empower indigenous people in indigenous governance.

The First Congress was held in the inland town of Olenegorsk, with participants from various Russian Sámi communities and the provincial authorities, and observers from the Nordic Sámediggis.[78] A discussion on the representativeness of Russian Sámi delegates to this congress is found in 8.4. An alliance of provincial representatives and Parliament-sceptics in Russian Sámi civil society tried to steer the congregation towards their suggested model: a representation organ elected by a Sámi congress, but with members needing approval from the Governor. This failed, and a majority of those present ended up siding with the Initiative Group's position. The Congress elected a "Council of Authorized Representatives" (SUPS)[79] for a period of two years, a "transition period – until the passing of a separate law in Murmansk Region for direct representation of the Sámi in the organs of authority of Murmansk Region" (Resolution 2008). SUPS was led by Valentina Sovkina, WGIP representative and former Initiative Group leader.

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[78] Nrk.no: *Olli med som observatør til Russland* (https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/olli-med-som-observator-i-russland-1.6351050).

[79] After the acronym for this entity's Russian-language name, *Sovet upolnomočjonnykh predstavitelej Saamov.*

RAIPON was quick to voice support for SUPS, even proclaiming it to *be* a Russian "Sámi Parliament" (Berg-Nordlie 2011: 69). A representative of the Provincial Government stated after the Congress that they did not consider the Congress' decision valid, citing the participation of non-elected Sámi in voting, which made the Congress merely "a gathering of citizens" without any special authority (see 8.4). Two discourses on the First Congress were now in competition, articulating different positions as to whether or not the Congress could legitimately elect a council of authorized representatives. After the First Congress, several Centre staff left their posts, including the leader, and the Centre was transferred to the Committee on Contacts with Civil Society Organizations and Youth Affairs.

8.2. 2008-2014: The Sovet and the Sobbar

In 2009, the provincial authorities established the Council of Indigenous Representatives under the Government of Murmansk Region (henceforth: the Council of Representatives). This Council was formally framed to have an advisory and participatory nature, but also to defend the legal rights and interests of the Sámi. The metagovernance technique of participant selection was utilized: Council members were selected by the Goverment, after proposals from organizations solely in the *obščina* sector. The Council was also regulated to include an ethnically Sámi member of the province's Public Chamber (*Obščestvennaja palata*), a provincial organ modeled on the Federal Public Chamber (3.2.4). The Council originally elected the representative of an *obščina* to lead it, but in 2010, this *obščina* was targeted by the authorities for misuse of funds.[80] During its next two periods (2011-2013, 2013-2015) the Council was led by Andrej Jakovlev, a Public Chamber representative who is also associated with the *obščina* "Puaz". While previously unknown to the Russian Sámi activist community, Jakovlev (no relation to Jelena Jakovleva) rapidly became a key actor within state-based Sámi political structures. The Council's design furthermore included direct participation from the authorities through the inclusion of a vice governor. This facilitated the Provincial Government's capacity to steer Council discussions, but it could also be seen as insurance that the advice of indigenous representatives would in fact be heard by high-ranking individuals. Representatives from other official bodies also took part in Council meetings when their presence was deemed relevant. Like the Coordination Council before it, the Council of Representatives had no direct control over economic or organizational resources. The Centre remained the provincial organ to work with Sámi issues on a day-to-day basis, and was set to manage the organizational affairs of the Council of Representatives without being formally placed under it – the Centre still answered to the Government. In sum, the

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[80] B-port.com: *Raznoglazija vnutri ètnosa* (http://www.b-port.com/news/item/26855.html); Tv21.ru: *Delo o "bumažnykh" olenjakh* (http://www.tv21.ru/news/2010/04/02/delo-o-bumazhnyh-olenyah).

Council was not designed as an organ where Sámi representatives could discuss matters without outside influence and decide on a course of action in relation to the authorities, but as a governance network where Sámi and state representatives met to discuss affairs, and over which state-based actors retained substantial power through metagovernance. As for its influence, nothing indicates that the Council has changed the course of provincial indigenous policy. Neverthelesss, it is not fitting to call it an entirely symbolic/manipulative structure (3.2.2 Fig. 5): several interviewees from different "camps" in Russian Sámi politics held that the Council was given real influence over the distribution of subsidies from the regional program for indigenous economic and social development to the *obščina*s.

SUPS continued to work as an activist network claiming to represent the Russian Sámi, drawing legitimacy from the decision of the First Congress. While the provincial authorities did not recognize it as such, Nordic Sámi media did present SUPS as a legitimate representative organ. Conversely, the Council of Representatives received virtually no attention. Due to the long-standing dearth of detailed reporting on Russian Sámi politics in Nordic Sámi media (6.5), most Nordic Sámi actors – activists and journalists alike – had little insight into Russian Sámi politics. Nordic Sámi interest in Russian Sámi politics was piqued when the idea of a Russian Sámediggi was brought up, and the Russian Sámi who were already part of pan-Sámi networks now had an advantage: it was easier for them to get their views across both to the media and to key actors in Nordic Sámi politics. The Sámi Parliament movement included activists that were very well positioned to inform Nordic actors about events in Russian Sámi politics from their point of view.[81] Conversely, the Council of Representatives did not make any special efforts to obtain recognition by Nordic kin, essentially allowing SUPS to win the Nordic Sámi audience on "walk-over". When it came to facilitating information about the conflict to Nordic actors, the Sámi Parliament movement enjoyed total nodality, and Nordic sympathies were shaped by this. It should also be considered that during the current Millennium, the Nordic Sámi "discourse of need" on Russian Sápmi had begun to focus on what was considered as institutional and political shortcomings (6.5). These discursive trends proved fertile soil for the Russian Sámi Parliament movement: the emergence of what was seen as a Russian Sámi democratization movement – directly inspired by Nordic Sámi practices, to boot – was met with enthusiasm among the Sámi of the West. Finally, it was of decisive importance that Nordic Sámi representatives had observed the First Congress and registered its outcome. Activists accustomed to democratic procedures

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[81] Among others two former leaders of the Sámi Council – AKS leader Nina Afanas'yeva (Initiative Group, SUPS, Sobbar) and former OOSMO leader Aleksandr Kobelev (Initiative Group, SUPS), Anna Prakhova who was former RAIPON Vice President and former WGIP representative (Initiative Group, SUPS) – and Valentina Sovkina herself (c.f 7.1).

would be hard-pressed not to respect the First Congress' majority decision. As for the discourse claiming that the First Congress' decisions were affected by non-delegates' voting (8.1, 8.4), this won no ears in the West.

WGIP came to base its approach to Russian Sámi politics on an acceptance of the First Congress' majority decision. In the 2009-2012 and 2013-2016 action plans for indigenous peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, a point was included stating that the Sámediggis should "through the Sámi Parliamentary Council, provide the necessary assistance regarding the establishment of an elected Sámi political body on the Russian side" (WGIP 2009a; 2012). In addition to the potential for material assistance, support from pan-Sámi structures and Nordic Sámi actors also had symbolic importance, as it was used rhetorically in the domestic discursive battle for recognition. Finally, the Sámi Parliament movement's participation at the pan-Sámi level was not at all just "mere" strategic action – there are all indications that it was also directly value-driven, based on the conviction that pan-Sámi activism has an inherent value. Among some who opposed the Russian Sámi Parliament movement, on the other hand, the vocal Nordic Sámi support was seen as indicating that Western actors were *behind* the movement. Such suspicions were not weakened when Valentina Sovkina was employed by the Barents Indigenous Peoples' Office (BIPO), the Russia-based secretariat of WGIP,[82] the year after her election to SUPS. Russia participates in the Barents Cooperation, and thus it may seem illogical for Russians to consider a Barents-based structure as being a Western actor. However, the idea that state-based or state-financed actors may operate on the international arena autonomously from the central state's wishes, is alien to many actors in Russian politics – and while BIPO was created to serve the interests of the indigenous peoples also in Russia, it was financed by the Norwegian Sámediggi and administered by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, the latter again owned by Norway's three northernmost counties.[83] The time-limited (2009-2012) strengthening of BIPO by one employee was registered in Barents Secretariat documents as a suggestion from WGIP and the Sámi Parliamentary Council based on a need to be "following up the political work among the Sámi on the Russian side". The position was financed by the Norwegian and Swedish Sámediggis, in addition to application-based support from the Norwegian Barents Secretariat's program for Norwegian-Russian joint projects, which gives financing to, among others, border-transcending indigenous projects (Prosjektkatalog 2009; WGIP 2009b). The new BIPO position was seen by many as tailored to help implement the decisions of the First Congress. This is far

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[82] Established in 2003 in Murmansk City, located in Lovozero 2007-2012, and then returned to Murmansk. Barentscooperation.org: http://www.barentscooperation.org/en/About/Indigenous-Peoples; Sametinget.no: https://www.sametinget.no/Tjenester/Internasjonalt-arbeid/Barentssamarbeidet.
[83] Barents.no: *Eies av Nord-Norge*, https://barents.no/nb/om-oss/eies-av-nord-norge; Sametinget.no: *Barentssamarbeidet* , https://www.sametinget.no/Tjenester/Internasjonalt-arbeid/Barentssamarbeidet

from unlikely, given the hegemonic attitude among Sámi actors in the West that the First Congress and its decisions were legitimate, and the traditions of organizing financial support to actors promoting Russian Sámi interests. Furthermore, the Sámi Parliament movement was directly represented within the Barents indigenous system through the SUPS leader's position as Russian Sámi WGIP representative. It is another matter altogether that Nordic actors' support of the Sámi Parliament Movement began to be discussed in Russia as implying Nordic *states'* support, and was embedded within the ongoing discourse on Russian-Western geopolitical rivalry.

In 2010, SUPS organized a "Second Congress of the Sámi of Murmansk Region" in Murmansk City. The three Sámediggis were represented, as was the Murmansk Region Parliament.[84] This Congress also had Western financing: SUPS and the Norwegian *Sámediggi* sent a joint application to the Norwegian Barents Secretariat's programme for support to joint Norwegian-Russian indigenous projects. The programme agreed to partly finance the conference, that was to "discuss matters of regional significance, inform the population about the activity of Murmansk Region's public authorities' executive organs, and implement societal self-governance" (Prosjektkatalog 2010). In the event, the Second Congress elected what it referred to as a Russian Sámi Parliament - in Russian called a *Saamskij parlament*, and in Kildin Sámi named the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar, a name that purposefully invoked the Imperial-era "Kuèllnègknjarrk sobbar" (2.2, 6.1, 8.1).[85] Like the Initative Group and SUPS, the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar was led by Valentina Sovkina. The Sobbar was to work for official recognition during a four-year period. Like SUPS, it did not register formally – a move made for strategic reasons: partly out from concern that registering as an NGO may have precluded later recognition as an authorized body of representatives, partly to avoid being targeted with selective law enforcement over formalities (3.2.5). As such, the Sobbar must technically be referred to as an informal activist network (3.2.2), although this was in no way a *secret* network: its members and activities were openly declared to the public, and it was indeed an important part of the Sobbar's

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[84] Nrk.no: *Et russisk sameting er målet.* (https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/et-russisk-sameting-er-malet-1.7419055); B-port.com: *V oblastnom centre prošjol vtoroj S"jezd saamov Murmanskoj oblasti*, http://www.b-port.com/news/item/45137.html

[85] Also referred to as the *Kuelnegk soamet sobbar* and the *Kuèlèdagk sobbar*. The word *sobbar* has been used not only in relation to the institution mentioned by Kalstad (and before him Tanner): Nickul (1977: 6–7) notes that it was also used more generally in East Sámi languages as the name of the council that constituted the supreme authority of any Sámi community, for example the *sijt sobbar*s, which consisted of representatives of Sámi households within the *sijt*. Nickul is of the opinion that the word *sobbar* is of Russian origin, and replaced the older word *norraž*. The word *sobbar* is presumably linked to the Russian word *sobor*, which today means "cathedral" but in old Russian meant "congregation" or "assembly", as with the *Zemskij sobor* ("Assembly of the land"), the advisory parliament established by Czar Ivan IV the Terrible in 1549 (Acton 1995: 23, 47).

strategy for recognition to advertise its activities as widely as possible. As a legal leg to stand on, Sobbar activists established the NGO "Fund for Sámi Heritage and Development" (est. 2011). Opponents of the Sobbar consistently described it as a type of organ alien to Russia, despite pro-Parliament activists' promotion of the Sobbar as both being in line with the concept of authorized indigenous representation in *On Guarantees of Rights'*, and rooted in local tradition from Imperial times.

The provincial authorities treated both SUPS and the Sobbar as not existing, since they had no formal registration. Nevertheless, they achieved a degree of nodality by virtue of being common councils for different sectors in Russian civil society, and through members' activity at the pan-Sámi level. On these points, the Sámi Parliament movement had an "edge" over the Council of Representatives, which was inactive at the pan-Sámi level and limited to one sector of civil society. However, the Sobbar received a blow immediately following its creation in 2010. That year, Nina Afanas'jeva resigned as AKS leader. Afanas'jeva had strong connections to the Russian Sámi Parliament movement as an early advocate of the idea, a member of the Sobbar, and the aunt of Valentina Sovkina. The new AKS leader, Jelena Jakovleva (founder of the first Sámi *obščina* in 2002, 7.2) had initially been part of the pro-Parliament movement, as a member of the 2008 Initiative Group (8.1). As leader of AKS, Jakovleva voiced support for the *obščina*-based Council of Representatives. While not all AKS activists (such as notably Sovkina and Afanas'jeva) agreed with this new policy of the AKS, the leader's dissent meant that the movement could no longer claim to be supported by both of the main Russian Sámi NGOs. This event was significant enough that Nordic Sámi media registered it. Information about internal controversy over the Sámi Parliament movement now began to appear in the West,[86] weakening the position of the Sobbar in its campaign for more substantial recognition abroad. Verbal and financial support from Western actors did not translate automatically into formal inclusion in pan-Sámi structures. The Sobbar applied for Parliamentary Council membership during 2010 and received the support of OOSMO – but not AKS (Sametingsmelding 2015). The application was denied, and the Parliamentary Council continued to treat AKS/OOSMO as the "elector organizations" of the Russian Sámi demos. The Sobbar's lack of state recognition was also essential in making it, ultimately, too different from the Sámediggis to accept as an equal partner.[87] The only pan-Sámi structure that could be seen as fully accepting the Sobbar as a Russian Sámi representation organ, was WGIP - in an annual report from 2013, Sovkina was referred to as appointed by the

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[86] Nrk.no: *Sterke kvinner uenige om sameting* (https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/stor-uenighet-om-russisk-sameting-1.7563483); – *Hva skal vi med et Sameting?* (https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/_-hva-skal-vi-med-et-eget-sameting_-1.7565691).

[87] Nrk.no: – *På tide at vi får bli med.* (https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/samer-i-russland-vil-inn-i-spr-1.7870404).

"Guelnegk Neark Sami Sobbar" [sic[88]] (WGIP 2013). As for RAIPON, one may expect that the loss of support from its Sámi member NGO would translate to the loss of that organization's support. However, the movement retained its good connections with RAIPON until 2013. For example, in 2012 a study trip to the Norwegian *Sámediggi* for Sobbar and RAIPON activists was organized through a cooperation by RAIPON, the Fund for Heritage and Development, and an institution for indigenous culture in Norway,[89] with involvement from Barents WGIP and financing from the Barents Secretariat's support program. A central actor in this project was RAIPON's Vice President Dmitrij Berežkov, who was at this point living in Norwegian Sápmi (6.4, Berezhkov 2012; Prosjektkatalog 2012).

The emergence of the Russian Sámi Parliament movement, with its intensive networking with Nordic Sámi actors, coincided unhappily with growing skepticism towards connections between Russian civil society and foreign actors. The consequence was increased securitization of Sámi politics in Russian discourse. In one widely circulated 2011 newspaper text, the Sámi were outright accused of being "the new card of the West in the battle over the Arctic" (AIV). In 2012, a provincial media spokesperson claimed to the press that named Sobbar activists were planning to use indigenous rights as a tool to draw revenues from local industry, and fomenting Sámi separatism to destabilize Russia on behalf of foreign powers. The Sobbar was described as "coordinated from abroad", and the movement as having been initiated by foreign organizations. To support these accusations, the spokesperson referred to Norwegian Sámediggi financial support, and mentioned WGIP as an arena used for unwanted activities.[90] The statement drew notably on the old discourse portraying Russian Sámi activists as a fifth column for the West, on notions of "indigenous blackmail" against industry, and on tendencies to discuss Western-Russian civil society cooperation through the language of foreign agency. Despite the seriousness of these accusations, no legal action followed. In 2013, OOSMO received a warning that it could be registered as a foreign agent, but no case has so far been opened against the organization.[91] While the statement of 2012 signified that the fronts were hardening, there was no total breach in contact between movement activists and the authorities: Sobbar-based activists participated in cooperations with the Centre, attended open Council of Representative meetings, and took part

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[88] The spelling appears to reflect a merger between (a) North Sámi "Guoládat" and Kildin Sámi "Kuèllènegk"; (b) the occassionally identical writing of "e" and "jo" in Cyrillic leading to a transliteration of "njoark" as "neark"; and (c) North Sámi "Sámi" vs. Kildin Sámi "Sám' ".

[89] The Centre for Northern Peoples (*Davvi álbmogiid guovddáš*). No connection to the Murmansk Northern Peoples' Centre (Senterfornordligefolk.no: *Murmansk Sámi Parliament på studiebesøk i Norge,* http://www.senterfornordligefolk.no/murmansk-sami-parliament-paa-studiebesoek-i-norge.5096433-146031.html).

[90] 7x7.ru: *9 avgusta vo vsem mire…* (http://7x7-journal.ru/item/20144)

[91] Finugor.ru: *Rossijskie saamy ne sčitajut sebja inostrannamy agentami*, http://www.finugor.ru/news/rossiyskie-saamy-ne-schitayut-sebya-inostrannymi-agentami

in the Council working groups, in which non-members of the Council were eligible to participate. For the activists, such work was both a pragmatic way of participating in indigenous governance, but also a form of strategic self-promotion: care was taken to describe this participation as Sobbar activities, utilizing the participation symbolically to underscore the readiness of the Sobbar to assume responsibilities. The authorities, meanwhile, not recognizing the Sobbar's existence, referred to this as only the participation of individual activists.

8.3. 2014: The Sobbar Substituted

After four years of activism, the Sobbar had not succeeded in obtaining the authorities' recognition as a representation organ, and while Valentina Sovkina was invited by Western actors to speak on behalf of the Russian Sámi in her capacity as Sobbar leader, the organ itself was not treated as a peer by the Sámediggis. The authorities' approval of the Sobbar was seen as a prerequisite for such recognition, and such approval was not increasing – quite the opposite: 2014 would prove an *annus horribilis* for the movement, as it would suffer attacks and defeats on several fronts. The international political climate worsened this year (6.4), making the situation for critical activists with ties to Western actors increasingly challenging. The Sámi Parliament movement was no exception. When Sovkina travelled to the September UN World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in New York, her car's tires were cut before her departure to the airport, her replacement car was stopped numerous times by the police on the way, and an unidentified assailant snatched the purse carrying her passport.[92] Elsewehere in Russia, several delegates to this conference experienced similar events (IWGIA 2015: 33-5).[93] One month later, when Sovkina tried to attend the Norwegian Sámediggi's 25th anniversary, she was denied exit from Russia for reasons difficult not to consider as selective application of law.[94] In November, Sovkina was elected the new leader of AKS, heralding a return of this NGO to its old policy on the Sámi Parliament movement. However, the provincial authorities did not recognize the election as valid since Sovkina had not received 2/3 of the votes, and determined that Jelena Jakovleva would retain the leadership of AKS until the holding of an extraordinary general assembly.[95] The latter occurred on March 14, 2015, and Jakovleva was in the event re-elected

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[92] Nrk.no: *Sametingsleder hindret fra å nå flyet*; *Keskitalo reagerer kraftig på trakassering av russisk sametingsleder*; *Takker det samiske folk for engasjementet* (http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/sametingsleder-hindret-av-politiet-1.11944065; http://www.nrk.no/troms/reagerer-pa-trakakassering-1.11946099; http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/valentina-sovkina-takker-samene-1.11948898).

[93] Rferl.org: *Delegates to UN Conference claim harassment by Kremlin* (http://www.rferl.org/content/indigenous-un-delegates-kremlin-harassment/26602566.html)

[94] The reason given was that she owed money for her apartment and could not leave the country until this had been paid. Nrk.no: *Sovkina hindret I å delta I Sametignets 25-årsjubileum* (http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/sovkina-nektet-utreise-fra-russland-igjen-1.11988898)

[95] Nrk.no: *All makt til Valentina Sovkina* (http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/all-makt-til-valentina-sovkina-1.12050798), *Valget av Sovkina er kjent ugyldig* (http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/sovkina-er-ikke-godkjent-som-ny-leder-1.12070201).

after Sovkina withdrew her candidature.[96] The reader may note some similarities to the experience of RAIPON in 2013 (6.4), but also to election controversies in AKS during the mid-1990s (7.3, Overland & Berg-Nordlie 2012).

Since four years had passed, the Sobbar was, according to the framing document established by the Second Congress, obligated to seek renewed legitimacy, and it began to plan for a Third Congress. In parallel, the provincial authorities also began to plan for a Sámi Congress. The congress that ended up being held in November in Lovozero, was organized not by the Sobbar, but by the Council of Representatives, the AKS, and a working group set down by the provincial authorities (Artieva 2014).[97] This time, the authorities and their allies in Sámi civil society did manage to avoid an outcome undesirable to them. There was no direct selection of participants to the Congress, but they organizers assigned quotas for voting delegates to various organizations. Some NGOs, such as AKS and OOSMO, were given specific representation quotas, while one representative was given to each of the *obščina*s and to "all other legal entities established on Murmansk Region's territory by ethnic Sámi". The representativeness of this congress is discussed in 8.4. The Third Congress proved unsupportive of the Sámi Parliament movement. This was not only a result of the quota system, one must also consider the context in which the Third Congress took place. The participants were aware that during all seven years of activism for a Russian Sámediggi, the provincial authorities had replied negatively to that request. They were also aware that the political situation had changed since the movement began, and that even if a Sámi Parliament had been realistic in 2007, the import of an indigenous representation model from the West was hardly on the table after the series of international conflicts since then, particularly the Ukrainian Crisis of 2014 and its aftermath. The latter was made abundantly clear by representatives of the authorities, both regional and Federal, who participated directly in the proceedings. One Murmansk Region Parliament representative claimed from the podium that Russia was being led into ethnic division by people paid by foreign actors.[98] It was also a symbolic blow to the movement that the Federal Parliament was represented by RAIPON's new

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[96] Gov-murman.ru: *Izbran prezident Associacii kol'skikh saamov* (http://www.gov-murman.ru/region/saami/saami_news/74956/); 7x7-journal.ru: *Kol'skie saami vybrali novogo prezidenta* (http://7x7-journal.ru/item/55594)

[97] Saamisups.ucoz.ru: *3 S''jezd Kol'skikh saamov 2014. Sozdanie iniciativnoj gruppy* (http://saamisups.ucoz.ru/publ/tretij_sezd_saamov_murmanskoj_oblasti/3_sezd_kolskikh_saamov_2014_sozdanie_iniciativnoj_gruppy/5-1-0-103); Nazaccent.ru: *Rossijskie saamy obsudjat na s''jezde novyj zakon i upravljajuščij organ* (http://nazaccent.ru/content/11187-rossijskie-saamy-obsudyat-na-sezde-kto.html); Nazzaccent.ru: *Izmenjon format S''jezda saamov* (http://nazaccent.ru/content/13935-murmanskie-chinovniki-izmenili-format-sezda-saamov.html);

[98] Youtube.com: *Vediščeva, N. N. Na s''jezde saamov. Obvinenie. Polnost'ju* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5xuJjrpG_I); Duma-murman.ru: *Vediščeva Natalija Nikolajeva* (http://www.duma-murman.ru/structure/deputies/vedisheva/); Finugor.ru: *III S''jezd rossijskikh saami: ne po položeniju, pod davleniem činovnikov, s obvinenijami v "rabote na Zapad"* (http://finugor.ru/iii-sezd-rossiiskikh-saami-ne-po-polozheniyu-pod-davleniem-chinovnikov-s-obvineniyami-v-rabote-na-za).

leader Grigorij Ledkov (6.4).[99] At the Third Congress and afterwards, some interesting shifts in discourse could be noted among opponents of the Sámi Parliament movement. Earlier Congresses were now discussed as legitimate, and the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar as having existed – but the Sobbar was presented as having failed to perform the tasks with which the Congress charged it, among other things by not registering its existence formally.[100] In the debate about the Third Congress' status, positions from the First Congress were reversed: some pro-Parliament activists argued that the meeting did not have the right to choose Sámi representatives, while the authorities strongly voiced the opposite opinion. A representative of the Federal Ministry of Culture, now responsible for Federal indigenous policy (6.4), claimed that denying the Third Congress legitimacy would constitute delegitimizing the First and Second Congresses. He subsequently seemed to imply unsavory foreign involvement in the Sámi Parliament movement by stating, whilst indicating the Sobbar leader: "educated people – people having received education in Norway – understand this".[101]

The Third Congress eventually elected nine individuals to represent the Russian Sámi. This body was given the name Saamskoje sobranie "Sám' sobbar" ("the Sámi Assembly Sám' Sobbar") and was stated to replace the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar. Several members of the old Sobbar ran for election to the new Sobbar, but only one of them garnered enough votes. The new Sobbar's leadership was given to the candidate who received the largest number of votes: Andrej Agejev, former leader of the Indigenous Peoples' Centre 2004-2009 (8.1). Since 2009, he had been active in the NGO "Sámi Nature Fund", an organization that also involves the Council of Representatives' Andrej Jakovlev.[102] In the aftermath of the Third Congress, two members of the new Sobbar were chosen as its deputy leaders: AKS leader Jelena Jakovleva and Andrej Jakovlev.[103] The Third Congress also decided that there should be created a unifying structure for all the Sámi of the Russian Federation, the Russian Sámi Union (Sojuz rossijskikh saamov), the

[99] Gov-murman.ru: *Protokol III s''jezda korennogo naroda Kol'skogo Severa – saamov* (http://www.gov-murman.ru/bitrix/redirect.php?event1=file&event2=download&event3=Position.tiff&goto=/upload/iblock/1b8/Position.tiff).

[100] Nazaccent.ru: *Saamy na s''jezde rešili sozdat' obščerossijskij sojuz naroda* (http://nazaccent.ru/content/13964-saamy-na-sezde-reshili-sozdat-obsherossijskij.html); Nazaccent.ru: *V Murmanske i Lovozer v Den' saamov podnjal nacional'nyj flag* (http://nazaccent.ru/content/14741-v-murmanske-i-lovozere-v-den.html); Nazaccent.ru: *Rossijskie saamy obsudjat na s''jezde novyj zakon i upravljajuščij organ* (http://nazaccent.ru/content/11187-rossijskie-saamy-obsudyat-na-sezde-kto.html).

[101] Youtube.com: *Žuravskij A. V. na s''jezde Saamov* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QVORdPRkExo)

[102] Moroshka.ucoz.ru: *Ustav fonda* (http://moroshka.ucoz.org/index/0-41); Regnum.ru: *Laboratorija izučenija saamskogo jazyka pojavitsja v Zapol'jare,* https://regnum.ru/news/cultura/1888521.html

[103] Gov-murman.ru: *V Murmanske sostojalas' pervaja vstreča clenov Saamskogo Sobranija "Sám' Sobbar"* (http://www.gov-murman.ru/region/saami/decisions_kmns_congress/news_saami_assembly/66949); B-port.com: *Gubernator Murmanskoj oblasti Marina Kovtun provela rabočuju vstreču predstaviteljam Saamskogo sobrania Sám' Sobbar* (http://www.b-port.com/officially/item/146513.html)

highest decision-making organ of which would be the future Sámi Congresses.[104] This organization has yet to be established. The Congress furthermore elected a new representative to the Barents WGIP, Domna Khomjuk, to replace Valentina Sovkina.

Leading activists of the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar later denied that the Third Congress had legitimately dissolved the old Sobbar, and tried to garner support for their position abroad and at home. This turned out to be an uphill struggle: it was used against the activists that they had legitimized the Third Congress by running for elections and participating in voting. Furthermore, active support for the Sobbar had diminished in the West. It was difficult for foreign observers to understand if, or to what extent, the Third Congress had been representative. Also, the climate of international conflict had convinced some that a Russian Sámediggi was currently not realistic. Furthermore, the discourse on the Sobbar that focused on its internal divisiveness was being articulated in the West, challenging the discourse that portrayed it as a Russian Sámediggi. The pro-Parliament movement could no longer "win on walk-over". Those favoring the new Sobbar paid attention to influencing Nordic opinion: following the Third Congress, a letter by Andrej Jakovlev about the Congresses and the Sobbars was circulated online. The letter (Jakovlev 2014) was made available in both Russian and English, and spread to Western audiences by sympathizers abroad. The next large, border-transcending gathering of Sámi activists was the Barents Indigenous Peoples Congress and Conference (BIPC) in Tromsø, 2015. The two discourses on the Sobbars now clashed in public on a Western stage, as Jelena Jakovleva challenged Valentina Sovkina's self-presentation as leader of the Sobbar, stating that the only existing Sobbar was that led by Andrej Agejev. It is notable that the organizers[105] listed Sovkina as "former WGIP member" while Domna Khomjuk was listed as "WGIP member" (BIPC 2015). As mentioned (8.2), WGIP was the only pan-Sámi cooperation structure that had given practical recognition to the old Sobbar. That recognition was now lost, as WGIP paid the same respect to the decisions of the Third Congress as it did to that of the First and the Second.

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[104] Gov-murman-ru: *Polozhenie o s"jezde korennogo naroda Kol'skogo Severa—saamov.* (http://gov-murman.ru/region/saami/saami_news/Polozhenie_11112014.pdf); *Protokol III s"jezda korennogo naroda Kol'skogo Severa—saamov* (http://www.gov-murman.ru/bitrix/redirect.php?event1=file&event2=download&event3=Position.tiff&goto=/upload/iblock/1b8/Position.tiff); *Programma S"jezda korennogo naroda Severa—saamov* (http://www.gov-murman.ru/bitrix/redirect.php?event1=file&event2=download&event3=Programm.tiff&goto=/upload/iblock/976/Programm.tiff); Finugor.ru: *III S"jezd rossijskikh saami: ne po položeniju, pod davleniem činovnikov, s obvinenijami v "rabote na Zapad"* (http://finugor.ru/iii-sezd-rossiiskikh-saami-ne-po-polozheniyu-pod-davleniem-chinovnikov-s-obvineniyami-v-rabote-na-za); *Saamskij aktivist: «S"jezd saami prošjol normal'no, narod vyskazalsja za ob"jedinenie»* (finugor.ru/saamskii-aktivist-sezd-saami-proshel-normalno-narod-vyskazalsya-za-obedinenie); 7x7-journal: *V Saamskom parlamente Kol'skogo poluostrova vozmuščeny sozdaniem podkontrol'noj mestnym vlastjami organizcii-dvojnika* (http://7x7-journal.ru/item/50717)

[105] The congress was a collaboration of WGIP, BIPO, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, and the Centre for Sami Studies at UiT Arctic University of Norway (Site.uit.no: *Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress and Conference 2015*, http://site.uit.no/focalpoint/en/2015/01/26/barents-indigenous-peoples-congress-and-conference/)

Regarding the Sámediggis, leaders of the Finnish and Swedish organs made initial statements in fierce support of Sovkina and the old Sobbar,[106] but subsequently went relatively quiet. At the March 2015 meeting of the Parliamentary Council, statements were made to the effect that there is no Sámediggi in Russia.[107] While its recognition abroad was weakened, the old Sobbar was not outright *rejected* at the pan-Sámi level. It did have a registered representative at BIPC 2015, and did participate in the 2016 roundtable on problems of Russian Sámi representation.[108] The roundtable, held in Murmansk, included a closed session with members of the old Sobbar, the new Sobbar, the Sámediggi leaders, and the Council of Representatives.[109]

8.4. Discussion on Representativeness

While the period 1992-2006 was characterized by unstable institutionalization of the policy field and lacking formalization of representation mechanisms, 2006-2014 was characterized by the continued anchoring of Sámi policy responsibilities in one state organ, and by several attempts by the authorities to organize a formal Russian Sámi representation organ. At the level of civil society, the period saw the first genuine movement among the Russian Sámi for a Sámediggi-type organ in Russia, a movement that ended up in conflict with the Provincial Government and other parts of Russian Sámi civil society over how Russian Sámi representation should be organized.

History's first official Russian Sámi representation organ, the Coordination Council (2006-2008), treated all Sámi civil society formations in the province as equal electors. As regards Criterion 1 (3.3.2 Fig. 4) this made for a system where the Russian Sámi had a wide register of organizations to chose from if they wanted to join one in order to influence representation. Regarding Criteron 1's aspect of preventing the participation of demos-external individuals, this is difficult to address in light of the thesis' abstaining from defining who is and is not Sámi (3.3.2). The absence of a formal Sámi registry in Russia entrenches the difficulty of performing

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[106] 7x7-journal: *V Saamskom parlamente Kol'skogo poluostrova vozmuščeny sozdaniem podkontrol'noj mestnym vlastjami organizcii-dvojnika* (http://7x7-journal.ru/item/50717); *Valget av Sovkina er kjent ugyldig* (http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/sovkina-er-ikke-godkjent-som-ny-leder-1.12070201); Finugor.ru: *Lidery saamskikh parlamentov Finljandii i Švecii nazvali Sojuz rossijskikh saami marionetočnym organom* (http://finugor.ru/lidery-saamskikh-parlamentov-finlyandii-i-shvetsii-nazvali-soyuz-rossiiskikh-saami-marionetochnym-or); Yle.fi: *Valentina Sovkina: Sápmelaččat Ruoššas besset dušše duhkoraddat smávva áššiiguin*
(http://yle.fi/uutiset/valentina_sovkina_sapmelaccat_ruossas_besset_dusse_duhkoraddat_smavva_assiiguin/7661356)
[107] Yle.fi: *Mii civkit SPR dievasčoahkkimis Oulus*
(http://yle.fi/uutiset/mii_civkit_spr_dievascoahkkimis_oulus/7877617).
[108] This event was originally suggested by the Norwegian Sámediggi representative at the March 2015 Sámi Parliamentary Council meeting, but ultimately organized by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat. For the sake of transparency, the author underscores that on this occasion he was employed by the Barents Secretariat to hold a keynote speech about Russian Sámi representation in Russia and at the pan-Sámi level, which served as the introduction to the closed session.
[109] From 2015, the Council of Representatives is headed by Konstantin Mironov of *obščina* Umba, with Andrej Jakovlev as vice leader. Five out of nine members of the new Council (from 2015) are Sám' Sobbar members. Murman.ru: *Sovet korennykh narodov Severa sobirajetsja v novom Sostave* (http://www.murman.ru/news/?d=28-05-2015_13:21); Old.mvestnik.ru: *Bol'šoj sovet malykh narodov*, http://old.mvestnik.ru/shwpgn.asp?pid=2015060211

such an evaluation. As for Criterion 2 and 3, the Centre framed the Council as open specifically to leaders or deputy leaders of Sámi organizations, and thereby did not provide themselves with the power of participant selection, reserving to the elector organizations the power to choose representatives. Criterion 2 also rests on the organizations themselves having functioning internal democracies. This thesis project has not examined each of the many Russian Sámi organizations (at the time of the Coordination Council eighteen) to evaluate their democratic standards. The representativeness of the Council could, however, be criticized out from a perspective *not* discussed in relation to 3.2.2 Fig. 4. It has earlier been regarded as "favorable" with reference to Criterion 1 that, in the absence of an organized electorate, many demos-anchored organizations are given elector rights, in order to make it likely that different groups in the demos get to participate in the representation process. This ignores, however, that some organizations may represent more members of the demos than other organizations. The design of the Council gave the two organizations representing a larger number of Russian Sámi, AKS and OOSMO, equal weight to the many organizations whose memberships were much smaller, such as notably the *obščina*s. In effect, the two catch-all organizations were "swamped" by specialized organizations with very few members. For some of the pro-Parliament activists associated with AKS/OOSMO, this may have been a non-articulated strategic reason for wanting to replace the Council. Simultaneously, the resistance of certain *obščina* activists to abolishing the Coordination Council may also be considered in light of this. However, the explanations presented above for the emergence of the Sámi Parliament movement and the resistance to it (8.1-3), arguably have adequate explanatory power in themselves.

As for SUPS (2008-10) and later the the Kuèllnèg knjoark sám' sobbar (2010 - *[110]), the evaluation of these depends on the extent to which the Congresses that elected them were in themselves representative in accordance with the model. Was the process of selecting Congress representatives adequately open to the demos (Criterion 1), and did elections take place without disturbances to democratic processes from outside (Criterion 3)? For the First Congress, participants were to be elected at local gatherings of Sámi. The absence of a Sámi registry again makes it difficult to determine whether anyone is or is not a Sámi, but accusations are not heard from any faction that non-Sámi participated as delegates. There were, however, accusations from some Sámi activists that the authorities' informed Sámi communities poorly about election meetings, resulting in skewed results (Criterion 3). Some places, activists therefore arranged separate election meetings for the Congress. After the Congress, accusations were levelled that

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[110] It is a politicized question whether or not this entity should be presented as having been discontinued in 2014, or as still existing (8.3).

non-elected Sámi had participated in voting, and that SUPS was no legitimate representative organ. The Sobbar's representativeness is even more difficult to assess. Those present at the Second Congress were neither envoys from civil society formations nor representatives elected through state-organized elections, but sent by SUPS-organized local Sámi meetings. This time also, accusations of skewed participation in the Congress were heard, now from the new leader of AKS.

The Council of Representatives (2009 -) does not satisfy the criteria for representativeness applied in this thesis. One issue is the narrowness of the elector organizations (Criterion 1): the *obščina* sector is in principle intended for Sámi with an interest in, and a possibility to, participate in traditional economic activities. Furthermore, it is limited to the Sámi who have the competence and time to establish and run such an organization. Utilizing informal connections to people in authority, one may manage to keep a "paper *obščina*" in existence in spite of the above, but this cannot be said to improve an organization's suitability as elector. Furthermore, as noted above, it could be said that the delimitation to the *obščina*s disfavor urban Sámi – although some of the people chosen to represent *obščina*s in the Council of Representatives are settled in urban areas. Another issue is that even this narrow elector group does not actually control who represents them in the Council, since the Government retained the power to appoint nine members among those nominated by the *obščina*s, violating Criterion 3. It ameliorates the issue somewhat that non-*obščina* activists were allowed to participate in Council activities such as observing meetings, addressing meetings, and participating in working groups. Still, voting rights were only given to full members of the Council.

At this point, the reader may take note that it is quite common for state-based actors in Russia to allow civil society groups the right to nominate participants in governance networks, but reserve for themselves the right to ultimately chose who participates. This can be considered a "security hatch" of sorts, allowing the authorities to remove any included actor that steps out of line (Aasland et al 2016; Berg-Nordlie & Tkach 2016; Davies et al 2016). The concrete delimitation of representation to the *obščina* sector is more interesting. It could be said to make a certain sense to give *obščina*s priority in an organ that advices the Government on how to allocate support to traditional economic activities. The other Russian Sámi organizations have more urban memberships, and have broader orientations than traditional economic activities, or altogether different ones. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the context of conflict in which the Provincial Government created the Council of Representatives. In that context, the delimitation of representation to the *obščina* sector could be interpreted as strategic action taken to effectively sideline AKS and OOSMO, who were at the time the central actors in the Russian Sámi

Parliament movement, and who were much more involved in pan-Sámi networks than the *obščina*s. One may also point to the fact that *obščina*s may encounter difficulties realizing their organization's ambitions if they engage in conflict with the authorities, who can supply or withhold financing and land leases. *Obščina*s have strong dicinsentives to engage in dissentful contention.

If we are to subject the new Sobbar to the an analysis of its representativeness, we may first establish that it is more democratic than the Council of Representatives in the sense that its members are not chosen by the Government, but elected by a Congress of representatives of Sámi organizations and legal entities. Criterion 1 is theoretically fulfilled since the list of eligible organization types was broad enough to ensure that many types of Sámi were able to participate. Criterion 3 is where this representation mechanism breaks apart: outside actors interfered massively in the selection process. This occurred both by state-based actors participating directly in the Congress with the intention of influencing outcomes, and by the organizers laying down rules for which organizations were to get how many representatives. Fixing the number of AKS and OOSMO delegates may in practice have limited the relative influence of the largest organizations. Contrariwise, bestowing one representative to each *obščina* gave these organizations quite a collective punching power, given their sheer numbers. Stipulating one representative to each and every "legal entity" established by an ethnic Sámi also had this effect, and is particularly problematic seen in light of lacking criteria to determine who is and is not a Sámi (Artieva 2014; Third Congress 2014a-b). Finally, we must note that Criterion 2 is difficult to analyze because this system is so new that there have never been possibilities to replace representatives. However, Criterion 2 now applies even more acutely to the old Sobbar: if we follow official discourse, the Third Congress elected its replacement, and even if accepting that the Sobbar was not technically dissolved by the Third Congress, the Kuèllnegk njoark sam' sobbar was still prevented from obtaining renewed legitimacy.

As for the pan-Sámi arena, developments here are rather easily summed up: despite all that happened in Russia, representation mechanisms at this level remained unchanged. The Sámi Council, being an NGO umbrella organization, would not in any case have included the Sobbar since it claimed precisely to not be an NGO. The Sámi Parliamentary Council's abstaining from including the Sobbar in its structure, on the other hand, amounted to a *de facto* denial of recognition. That the Sobbar was not approved by the Russian state proved a too large difference, and it was furthermore difficult to replace AKS/OOSMO representation with Sobbar representation after the new AKS leader withdrew her organization's support for the Sobbar. This action very effectively reduced the image of the Sámi Parliament movement from one that

all major Sámi NGOs took part in, to an internally controversial movement. The only structure of high relevance to pan-Sámi affairs that treated the Sobbar as an adequate basis for Russian Sámi represenation was WGIP, which accepted the authority of the Congresses to elect representatives. This recognition ended in 2014, as WGIP also recognized the Third Congress' authority.

9. Conclusions: Russian Sámi Representation in Russian and pan-Sámi Politics, 1992 -2014

The subject of this thesis has been the Russian Sámi quest for empowerment in their relationship with Russian authorities and the Nordic Sámi during the period 1992-2014. In the articles, different aspects of Russian Sámi representation on the Russian and pan-Sámi arenas have been examined. Chapter 1-2 established the thesis' research themes, gave an analysis of certain discursive patterns in the academic treatment of Russian Sámi politics, and identified lacunae. Chapter 3-4 discussed theoretical, methodological, and ethical issues of core relevance for the thesis project. Chapter 5 gave a brief guide to the four thesis articles. In Chapters 6-8, data from the articles were presented as a chronological account and updated with new information. Chapter 6 presented necessary background data to understand conditions at the thesis' "point of departure" in 1992, and gave other key information relevant to address the thesis' research questions. Chapters 7-8 accounted for events 1992-2014 with an eye to RQ1 & 2: *Which mechanisms for Russian Sámi representation were established and discontinued 1992-2014, and how representative can these be considered as having been*? Chapter 9, the present and final chapter of the thesis, focuses on RQ3: *What were the main changes and continuities in Russian Sámi representation 1992-2014 and how can these be explained? How were developments in Russian Sámi representation in Russia affected by Russian Sámi participation in pan-Sámi networks?* After addressing these issues, the chapter includes some closing words to the thesis as a whole.

9.1 Change and Continuity in Russian Sámi Representation

9.1.1. Representation on the pan-Sámi arena

As the period under analysis began, Russian Sámi representation occurred on an equal basis with that of the Nordic Sámi, but subsequently the group was increasingly given unequal or no representation on pan-Sámi arenas. The period began with full inclusion in the Sámi Council (1992). The group was also given equal influence to the other Sámi communities in the Barents WGIP (est. 1993). During the 1990s, the group was excluded from the Sámi Convention project,

they were given only participatory observer status in the Sámi Parliamentary Council (est. 2000), and they never gained representation in the Nordic Sámi Cooperation (est. 2000).

To understand these developments, we must go beyond our period under analysis, since two events that were to define the ensuing period occurred in 1989: the foundation of Russia's first Sámi NGO (AKS), and the foundation of the first Sámediggi. With AKS, the NGO sector was established as the channel for Russian Sámi representation. However, just as the Russian Sámi were finally positioned to take full part in pan-Sámi politics, which were at the time NGO-based, political realities in the West shifted and state-based organs became central actors in Nordic Sámi politics. In the age of the Sámediggis, pan-Sámi structures increasingly tended to involve these organs, putting the Russian Sámi at a structural disadvantage. Russian Sámi activists were unable to rectify this, although not for lack of trying. The latest attempt of creating a Russian Sámediggi, the self-organized Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar (2010), received encouragement and support from Nordic Sámi actors, but was despite this not given formal inclusion into pan-Sámi structures. Only Barents WGIP gave formal recognition to the Sobbar, recognizing the Second Congress that elected the Sobbar as a valid channel for Russian Sámi representation. The Sobbar lost this recognition in 2014, when WGIP gave the same recognition to the Third Congress. The situation of the Russian Sámi on the pan-Sámi arena demonstrate that while border-transcending Sámi structures built around state-based actors may fit Nordic conditions and needs, it is difficult to expand these into truly pan-Sámi structures. The Russian Sámi may be free to organize their own NGOs, but because Nordic Sámi actors' definitions of a Sámediggi tend to include that such an organ must be state-based or at least recognized by the state as an authorized representative of the Sámi, the Russian Sámi cannot obtain full representation in Sámediggi-based structures unless the Russian state agrees to this. In consequence, the centrality of the Sámediggis in pan-Sámi networking appears to have made the full participation of the Russian Sámi in pan-Sámi politics dependent on the approval of the Russian authorities.

A key to understanding the treatment given to the Russian Sámi in pan-Sámi politics is the dual nature of Nordic Sámi discourse on the Russian Sámi. The group is discussed as part of the ethnic collective that should be integrated into the people's common political structures, but there is also a persistent image of the Russian Sámi as a "ward" needing assistance from more empowered and well-organized kin. Given this, it is not difficult to understand Nordic Sámi actors' eagerness to include the Russian Sámi in all the main international Sámi networks, and their simultaneous notion that it is within the bounds of properness to offer said inclusion in the form of unequal partnerships, or even to discontinue Russian representation altogether. This is

particularly notable in the case of the Sámi Convention, where the reasons for phasing out Russian Sámi involvement were partly based on concerns over a suboptimal outcome for the Nordic Sámi. Notably though, the Nordic Sámi were not only worried about getting a convention of little value to themselves, but also about whether or not it would be realistic at all to obtain a Nordic-Russian Sámi Convention.

Our understanding is also improved by knowing the prehistory of pan-Sámi politics – concretely, to know that pan-Sámi politics is essentially a continuation of Nordic Sámi politics in an expanded geographical zone, rather than a system that has been born out of a merger between political systems in the West and the East. It is often said that the Cold War divided the Russian Sámi from the Nordic Sámi. This is somewhat misleading since there was no pan-Sámi structure to unite the Nordic and Russian Sámi prior to this event. The truth of the saying is that the Cold War isolated the Russian Sámi and the Nordic Sámi from each other at a time when crucial developments in international Sámi networking and institutionalization occurred on the Nordic side. This period saw the establishment of a Nordic Sámi political system that existed separately from the political world of the Russian Sámi. After the Soviet Union fell, the Russian Sámi tried to integrate into this system – but the system did not truly adapt to them, quite the contrary it continued to develop in ways that underscored its Nordic nature. It is difficult to fault Nordic Sámi actors for chosing to begin the institutionalization of border-transcending Sámi politics when the Nordic window of opportunity opened. During the Cold War, the realistic alternatives in border-transcending Sámi cooperation were Nordic pan-Sámi cooperation or no pan-Sámi cooperation. After the USSR fell, it became possible to include Russia in non-state cooperation, but it has proved too challenging to achieve state-based Sámi-oriented cooperations that transcend the old Iron Curtain. The gradual worsening of the climate in international politics during the current Millennium, which began to escalate around the time the Russian Sámi Parliament movement was initiated (2007) and reached a high point (so far) in 2014, has not made such ideas any more realistic. Taking into account political realities beyond their own control, Nordic Sámi actors have tended to continue making the same strategic choice as was done during the Cold War: to focus on Nordic Sámi integration, even if this means reinforcing the old Iron Curtain through Sápmi.

The latter statement highlights that despite Russian Sámi commitment to work at the pan-Sámi level, the power to make decisive choices in development of pan-Sámi politics has remained with the Nordic Sámi throughout the entire period under analysis. It is somewhat of a pattern in pan-Sámi affairs that the Nordic Sámi initiate processes, and subsequently evaluate if and how the Russian Sámi should be included. In the ensuing processes, there is dialogue with

Russian Sámi activists, but by the time they are brought in, idea development and (at least) basic planning has already begun. The power to decide how pan-Sámi affairs are organized remains firmly anchored on the Nordic side of Sápmi.

9.1.2. Representation on the Russian arena

Representation of the Russian Sámi has gone through two identifiable phases during the period 1992-2014. Prior to 2006, no formal structure specifically aimed at securing indigenous representation existed in Murmansk Region. Representation took place through contacts between Sámi civil society leaders and organs of the provincial authorities. During this period, Russian Sámi civil society was initially dominated by one NGO (AKS, est. 1989). In 1989, after a crisis that was to a large extent based on discontent with AKS' internal democracy, OOSMO was established as a rival representative organization. From this point, the civil society landscape became more complex, as more specialized Sámi NGOs appeared. Of particular relevance here is the Sámi *obščina* movement (from 2002), that focused on the creation of small organizations intended to facilitate traditional economic activities. The period after 2006 is characterized by repeated attempts by the provincial authorities to create formal governance networks for the representation of the Russian Sámi (2006, 2009, 2014), and the rejection of said structures by a substantial portion of the Russian Sámi activist *milieu*, but the acceptance of them by many activists with ties to the *obščina* sector. During this period, the first movement for a Russian "Sámi Parliament" saw the light of day, openly opposing the provincial authorities' models for indigenous representation. In 2010, activists of this movement founded Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar, an attempt to start a Sámediggi analogue from below, without state involvement, and in increasingly sharp conflict with the authorities. The period is capped in 2014 as the provincial authorities, together with the AKS leadership (in opposition to the Sámi Parliament movement from 2010), succeeded in organizing the election of a new Sobbar that was recognized by the authorities as representing the Russian Sámi. The Sámi Parliament movement, its roots and its effects, are discussed more in detail below (9.2).

The weak institutionalization of indigenous policy before 2004 and lacking formalization of indigenous representation mechanisms until 2006, falls in line with tendencies at the Federal level, with its "lost decade" (the 1990s) and institutional instability until 2004. Nevertheless, when comparing with other Russian provinces that have indigenous populations, we observe that some provinces designed innovative mechanisms for indigenous representation during this period. Murmansk Region was not one of these. The low level of awareness and priority given to the Sámi by provincial decision-makers is perhaps not surprising, considering the demography and history of Murmansk Region. The Sámi are a miniscule minority in their own homeland, unable

to draw political punching power from their numbers. As for the majority population, a large share of it does not have deep "roots" on the Kola Peninsula: they are descendants of Soviet-Era migrants from the south, many of whom came to the peninsula for work in the extractive industrial and military/security sectors, with which the Sámi have historically had an uneasy relationship to say the least. It can be reasonably assumed that this background has colored the knowledge, opinions, and priorities of the majority population and the politicians and administrators who hail from it. Furthermore, unlike certain other provinces, Murmansk Region was not created with any ambition to facilitate the autonomy of its indigenous people, but is simply a normal *oblast'* of the realm. The Region does not even have any connection to the aboriginal population in name, unlike so many other Russian provinces which' names are from local languages or allude to a local indigenous people.[111] In short: Murmansk is a province which, while built on indigenous land, has no strong and clear symbolic connection to its indigenous people, no tradition for giving special attention to it excepting for when it is considered as a potential security threat, and has a majority population that is relatively unconscious about its existence. Indigenous policy in the period 1992-2006 reflected this. The changes observed 2004-2006, with the establishment of the Centre/Council system, are explained satisfactorily by general Russian governance trends to establish policy-managing institutions owned by state-based actors, and formal governance networks to fulfill demands for consulting and coordinating non-state actors. Further reforms of indigenous representation in 2006-2014 can be explained as strategic reactions to counter the Sámi Parliament movement, the resistance to which resulted from the clash of Nordic-inspired models for indigenous representation with Russian network governance practices, and skepticism to pan-Sámi networking that only increased as international political tensions worsened.

One continuity we observe throughout the period is that Russian Sámi representation has occurred at the province level and not the Federal level. Technically, the Sámi have been represented at the Federal level through RAIPON – although after 1998 rather weakly, since only one of the two Russian Sámi NGOs (AKS) are members of this organization. It is interesting to note that the new "Russian Sámi Union" is proposed to be Federation-wide. If realized in this form, it will constitute a departure from element of Russian Sámi politics that has been present

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[111] Interestingly, there was a suggestion in 1867 to break the Kola Peninsula off from Arkhangelsk *gubernija* under the name *Laplandskaja oblast'* ("Lappland Region") (Fedorov 2011: 174). As for the word "Murman", it has conventionally been held to derive from Norwegian *nordmann* ("Norwegian"). A Sámi explanation of the toponym "Murman Coast" (*Murmanskij bereg*) which was first recorded in the 1880s by Kharuzin (2.2), is that it is rooted in the Kildin Sámi words *muur* ("sea") and *maa* ("land"). The latter would indeed connect also this province's name to its indigenous population, but the theory has not gained wide currency in Russia (Orekhova et al 2014: 219-20; Repnevskij & Nielsen 2014: 169).

throughout the entire Federal era. Even if created, however, it is likely that this entity will also relate mainly to the authorities of Murmansk Region. Another constant we may observe is that throughout the period under analysis, Murmansk Region's authorities never saw fit to establish a Sámi representative organ that was directly elected by the Sámi population. All the structures for Sámi representation established 2006-2014 were furthermore characterized by substantial metagovernance that safeguarded the provincial authorities' power in relation to them. Murmansk Region has controlled the means available to the representatives, defined their areas of activity as discussing and advising, and never given them an administrative apparatus under their own control. Participant selection was not utilized in the design of the 2006–2008 Coordination Council, which was bound to accept only leaders and deputy leaders of Sámi civil society formations as members. After the disestablishment of this Council, the Council of Representatives (2009 -) was created with a strict formal framing that allowed the Government to choose Sámi representatives from a narrow sector of civil society. As for the Sám' Sobbar (2014 -) the Third Congress was allowed to elect it, but the authorities influenced the Congress' composition and its decision-making process. The authorities have practiced direct participation in all these representation structures except the Sám' Sobbar, where they are not formally represented. These extensive practices of metagovernance to control governance networks are not unique to Murmansk Region's indigenous policy, but a far from uncommon way of practicing network governance in Russia.

9.2. Pan-Sámi Networking and its Effect on Russian Sámi Politics

The emergence of pan-Sámi political networks and institutions is one of the key contexts we must be aware of when explaining developments in post-Soviet Russian Sámi politics. Russian Sámi leaders have tended to give priority to participating on the pan-Sámi arena, and the Russian Sámi revival has come to be deeply influenced by symbols, ideas and practices with roots in Nordic Sápmi. In the following, it will be discussed how this border-transcending activity can be said to have affected Russian Sámi politics, with a particular eye to its effect on Russian Sámi representation in Russia.

9.2.1. Pan-Sámism and Russian State-Sámi relations

The pan-Sámi aspect of Russian Sámi politics has caused skepticism from Russian authorities towards large sections of Russian Sámi civil society. There has been a clash between on the one hand the East-West transcending nature of pan-Sámism and the ideas of elected indigenous representation that pan-Sámism has carried with it, and on the other hand two aspects of political developments in Russia during the current Millennium.

The first of these aspects is the steady deterioration of relations between the West and Russia and the resulting hostility towards non-state actors that cultivate contacts with the West. Since Soviet times, there has been an unfortunate tendency in Russian discursive treatment of the Sámi to portray the group, or more precisely activists trying to work for the benefit of the group, as a potential "fifth column" for Western interests. After the fall of the Soviet Union and the establishment of a Russian Sámi civil society that branched out onto the pan-Sámi arena, Sámi activists continued to be subjected to such accusations, as well as attention from Russian security structures. Under the international conflicts that developed during the period under analysis, contacts between Russian civil society actors and Western actors began to be treated much more critically. This made it possible to cast suspicions on most people who had ever had any part in the revival of Russian Sámi culture, language and identity. Because of a dominant discourse urging the Nordic Sámi to support the Russian Sámi, many of the ethnic revival projects on the Kola Peninsula had indeed received some form of support from Western actors, or had involved the Nordic Sámi in some way. The entire Russian Sámi revival movement could, in itself, be construed as cultivating contacts with the West, given the border-transcending element inherent in the Sámi ethnic identity. A "fifth column" type of discourse was eventually employed publicly by the authorities against key actors in the Russian Sámi Parliament movement. The fact that Nordic Sámi actors had supported the pro-Parliament movement strengthened the discourse that portrayed the movement as coordinated from abroad.

The second aspect was the Russian governance trend of organizing dialogue with approved non-state actors through the establishment of strictly metagoverned formal governance networks. In line with this trend, Murmansk Region's authorities demonstrated increased commitment to orderly and formalized forms of Sámi representation from 2006. After their first formal governance network for consultations with indigenous civil society (2006-08) ended in substantial political disagreement and open criticism, the other representative organs the authorities created (2009, 2014) were characterized by a desire to control with whom they were to be in communication, in order to avoid associating with actors they deemed as too dissentful and unconstructive. The border-transcending Sámi idea that indigenous representation should be organized in the form of organs elected by and from the ethnically Sámi citizenry, clashed with the Murmansk Region authorities' ideas, which were based on more general notions about how decision-makers' dialogue with civil society should be organized. As the international political climate worsened, a non-state actor's maintaining of close contacts with the West could, in itself, be construed as a type of "disloyalty" and result in being deemed unfit to participate on this type of arena for dialogue.

What we observed in the period 2007–2014 was a movement for an indigenous political organ in a part of Russia that directly borders NATO, intended to consist of representatives elected without any interference on the part of the state, and having as an explicit goal to cultivate contacts with ethnic kin in the West. Furthermore, this desired organ was modelled on institutions in the West, supported by co-ethnics in the West and Western political institutions, and championed by people who had deep connections with ethnic kin in the West. In this period of Russia's history, the country proved to be a less than hospitable environment for such a movement.

On the other side of the border, we observed that the Nordic "discourse of need" on the Russian Sámi began to focus on institutional and legal deficits during the current Millennium. Discussion of Russian Sámi politics was performed in a manner colored by discourses framing those who criticize Russian authorities as a vanguard of democratization and progressive ideas inside an authoritarian regime. The scant cooperation between Nordic Sámi actors and Russian state-organized Sámi political organs we have observed was overdetermined: it resulted not only from Russian pro-Parliament activists' better contacts at the pan-Sámi level, and not only from the relative inactivity on the pan-Sámi arena of Parliament-sceptics and Russian state-based actors, but was also a consequence of the critical attitude to the Russian state that dominates in the West. When the authorities of the Russian Federation are generally described in popular discourse in the language of despotism, violations of rights, and corruption, it is only to be expected that those involved in dissentful contention will be embraced, while government-sanctioned representatives are treated with the utmost skepticism. The tendency of Nordic Sámi actors of cultivating ties with pro-Parliament actors hence went beyond wanting to cooperate with those who shared their basic ideology of how Sámi representation should be organized – it also reflected general Western skepticism to the Russian state apparatus. Given the current tendency in Russian governance, under which Russian authorities generally want to determine which non-state actors they are to be in dialogue with, it is also very unlikely that any state-organized Sámi representation organ will fulfill Nordic Sámi ideas about what constitutes a democratically elected organ.

9.2.2. The Impact of the Sámediggi Model

An important influence of pan-Sámi networking on developments in Russian Sámi politics, is that through networking and border-transcending learning, the Sámediggi model was adopted by Russian Sámi activists as an ideal form of Sámi representation. During the period under analysis, there were two initiatives for the establishment of such an organ in Russia – the AKS proposal in the mid-1990s and the joint OOSMO/Jona AKS project during the early 2000s – and finally

there was a broader movement for a Russian "Sámi Parliament" that began in 2007. The latter came to facilitate both cooperation and conflict between Russian Sámi activists.

Looking at the trajectory of Russian Sámi political history, we observe that political division within the Sámi movement has been present from the beginning, as illustrated by the 1990s' clashes over the AKS leadership elections, and the 1998 AKS/OOOSMO schism. The second initiative for a Russian Sámediggi served to bridge the gap after the schism somewhat, by involving activists from both the main Sámi organizations, and culminating in the establishment of NGOs open for members of both AKS and OOSMO. When the Sámi Parliament movement began in 2007, it further unified AKS and OOSMO around a common goal and strategy. Enthusiasm was far from universal, but since the two major actors in Russian Sámi civil society were both on board in the movement, these critical voices lost out – even with the provincial authorities on their side. However, the choice between two models for representation that was offered at the First Congress (2008) turned out to be an illusion: the authorities were not ready to give that for which the Congress ended up voting. Consequentially, Russian Sámi politics were thrown into a *dvojevlastie*[112] with two rivalling structures for Sámi interest representation: the congress-elected "SUPS" (2008-2010) and the province-created "Council of Representatives" (2009 -).

Both SUPS and the Council of Representatives came to have its supporters among the Russian Sámi, who gravitated towards them for strategic or value-based reasons. On the one end of the scale were activists who accepted that their representatives were not directly elected, did not see pan-Sámi activity as being of core importance, and tended to voice a discourse that emphasized "realism" and the need for "compromise" with the authorities. *Obščina* activists were well represented in this camp. On the other end were activists who saw the creation of a Sámediggi as a goal in itself, who argued the importance of having the Sobbar be recognized and active at the pan-Sámi level, and who were increasingly critical to the behavior of the provincial authorities. Leading activists in AKS and OOSMO were generally found here. The above two "poles" are ideal types, two end-points on a scale of attitudes. The political opinions and strategic considerations of all activists did not conform entirely to one of these two positions, and there was no complete isolation between activists of different opinions.

In 2010, two new watershed events occurred. The Second Congress, organized by SUPS, replaced the First Congress-elected council with what they declared to be a "Russian Sámi

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[112] *Dvojevlastie* is perhaps a rather unsuitable term for the situation, since it contains the word *vlast',* "authority," which neither of the resultant representation councils possessed to any noteworthy degree.

Parliament", the Kuèllnègk njoark sam' sobbar. The Sobbar pursued several strategies to establish itself as the legitimate representative of the Russian Sámi: its activists referred to Russian legislation on indigenous representation, adopted the name of a century-old organ of Sámi governance that rooted their project in local soil, proved their readiness to engage in indigenous governance by being active in the processes of Russian Sámi political life that were open to them, and sought recognition at the pan-Sámi level. Several of these activities appeared to be performed for both strategic reasons and for directly value-oriented reasons. The other watershed event of 2010 was that the new AKS leader withdrew her organization's backing of the Sobbar, and cast doubts on the Second Congress' legitimacy. The Russian Sámi Parliament movement could no longer claim to unify the two main Russian Sámi NGOs, and the *saamskij parlament* was more than ever a divisive rather than a unifying issue. This severely affected the Sobbar's chances for recognition abroad.

In the following years, the authorities maintained a position of non-recognition towards the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar. They continuned to treat the *obščina*-based Council of Representatives as the official voice of the Sámi, and worked with the AKS leadership. As international relations deteriorated, the border-transcending element of the Russian Sámi Parliament movement was increasingly viewed as suspect. The authorities directed accusations of foreign agency against Sobbar activists, and the Sobbar leader encountered resistance and sabotage when she tried to travel to the West. It became increasingly obvious that the provincial authorities were not in any way *en route* to giving the Sobbar recognition, but quite the contrary were motivated by the securitization of Russian Sámi politics to sideline the movement completely. The Sobbar's continued demand to be recognized by the authorities as representing the Sámi became increasingly difficult to explain as rooted in strategic considerations of political realities – it did not appear realistic that it would happen. Perhaps the Sobbar's partial recognition and inclusion at the pan-Sámi level was considered an achieved goal that was worth defending. Perhaps one could explain this behavior as founded on sunk cost-based motivations: that the amount of work put into the Parliament project made abandoning it difficult. Or, perhaps this was a case of directly value-oriented behavior, in which it was seen as morally imperative to continue the political project – for example out from a sense of obligation to the First and Second Congresses, or out from a principle of not yielding in the face of resistance. Perhaps all the above reasons played a part. In any case, the result was that the Russian Sámi Parliament movement continued, and tried to seek renewed legitimacy through a Third Congress in 2014.

The Third Congress favored the opponents of the Sámi Parliament movement. There were several reasons for this: the ability of the authorities and their supporters in Sámi civil

society to influence the composition of the Congress; provincial and Federal actors' direct participation and clear messages about what kinds of decisions were off the table; and the knowledge among delegates that the authorities had now demonstrated over a period of seven years that they could simply ignore Sámi representatives that they did not find to their liking. The resultant body of Sámi representatives was one that the Murmansk Region authorities could easily accept. The new Sobbar can be considered a substitution – albeit a strange case, since the "substituted" organ did not formally exist in the first place. The authorities and their allies did not refer to the substituting organ as a *saamskij parlament*, but by utilizing the name "Sobbar" they did adopt a part of the Kuèllnègk njoark sám' sobbar's self-legitimizing discourse: they linked the new Sámi representation organ to the Imperial-era organ earlier promoted as an ideal by pro-Parliament activists. They also adopted aspects of the old Sobbar's organization model: a "Sámi Congress" that elects nine representatives to a "Sobbar", although instead of a congress by constituency-elected representatives, the new model operated with a congress of organizations represented in accordance with a quota system. The un-recognized and dissentful Sobbar was in essence substituted by a recognized Sobbar dominated by persons uncontroversial to the authorities.

9.3. Closing Words

This thesis has contributed to the study of Sámi political history by presenting and analyzing developments in Russian Sámi representation on the pan-Sámi and Russian arenas from 1992 to 2014. It has explored in particular the degree of representativeness that could be said to be inherent in these systems, changes and continuities, conflicts over how to organize representation, and the effect of pan-Sámi networking on Russian Sámi politics. It has also accounted for the background to, establishment of, and conflicts surrounding the movement for a Russian Sámediggi that took place during the period under analysis. The thesis has highlighted Russian Sámi civil society activists' work to improve their people's representation, presented and explained internal conflicts in a manner that aims to avoid giving support to one of the parties in conflict, and shed light on factors that have worked against the improvement of Russian Sámi representation on the Russian and pan-Sámi arenas.

The thesis' research has revealed a political landscape characterized by complex interactions between a multitude of non-state and state-based actors, Russian and Nordic actors. The period investigated has exhibited several highly interesting and interlinked developments: steadily increasing complexity in Russian Sámi civil society; mounting challenges in securing Russian Sámi representation at the pan-Sámi level in a context of increased participation of Nordic state-based actors; a clash between pan-Sámi inspired expectations regarding how

indigenous representation should be organized and Russian state structures' accustomed modes of organizing dialogue with civil society; and the securitization of Russian Sámi politics during a period of increased international tension.

The thesis also contains the story of the first movement for a Russian Sámediggi: its prehistory in the form of initiatives by Sámi activists during the 1990s and early '00s; its formation in 2007 that united some actors in Sámi civil society and divided others; its immediate conflicts with provincial authorities and successes in obtaining support from Nordic Sámi actors; its victory at the First Congress in 2008; the counter-attack in the form of the establishment of the Council of Representatives in 2009; the major setbacks of losing AKS support in 2010 and subsequently frustrated attempts at getting approved by the Sámi Parliamentary Council; the failed attempt at "reclaiming" AKS in 2014; and finally the crippling blow of the Third Congress that same year. Did the Russian Sámi Parliament movement end in 2014? Central activists of the movement are still active, but they are now involved in a more defensive struggle to retain their presence as an actor in Russian and pan-Sámi politics. However, even if the movement that began in 2007 ends, the idea of a Russian Sámediggi analogue predated that movement, and is likely to remain an aspect of Russian Sámi politics.

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Appendix: Transliteration system

In Articles I, II and IV transliteration from Cyrillic to Latin follows the requirements of the publications in question. In Article III and the introductory/summary section, a transliteration system inspired by North Sámi orthography has been applied. The exception to this rule is when a source is referred to that has an author name or title that was transliterated from Cyrillic to Latin in accordance with a different system. For example the author *Лукьянченко* is referred to twice in the literature list as *Lukjantschenko*, reflecting the chosen transliteration system of the German publications that published her work, but also once as *Luk'jančenko* because in that case the reference is to a Russian-language book and this document's own transliteration system has been used.

Cyrillic	Latin
а	a
б	b
в	v
г	g
д	d
е	e je – in the beginning of words and after vowels (except "-ie" at the end of a word)
ё	jo
ж	ž
з	z
и	i
й	j
к	k
л	l
м	m
н	n
о	o
п	p
р	r
с	s
т	t
у	u
ф	f
х	kh
ц	c
ч	č
ш	š
щ	šč
ъ	''
ы	y
ь	'
э	è
ю	ju
я	ja
Special cases	

а̄ Kil'din Sámi letter.	á
Ѣ Outdated Russian letter, used in old documents and literature	ě
I Outdated Russian letter, used in old documents and literature	ì

Example: Song of the Sámi People, Russian translation[113]

Под Медведицей Большой	Pod Medvedicej Bol'šoj
вдали синеет край Саамов.	vdali sinejet kraj Saamov.
Гора уходит за горой,	Gora ukhodit za goroj,
вода мелькает за водою.	voda mel'kajet za vodoju.
Грады вершин и гребни сопок	Grady veršin i grebni sopok
стремятся к небу высоко.	stremjatsja k nebu vysoko.
Шумят леса, текут там реки,	Šumjat lesa, tekut tam reki,
стальные мысы достигают	stal'nye mysy dostigajut
пространств волнующих морей.	prostranstv volnujuščikh morej.

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[113] Saami.su: *Saamskaja simvolika* (http://saami.su/saamskaya-simvolika.html)