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***Balancing on Ice: Policy Related to Indigenous Tourism in the European Arctic – the Case of Sápmi.***

*A Content Analysis on Policies Documents Related to Tourism Activities Involving the Sámi in Norway, Sweden and Finland.*

*Eleni Kavvatha*

*Master thesis in Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis uses a content analysis approach to provide a summary of what extent the tourism policy is influenced by Indigenous Peoples, with a clear focus on the Sámi, in the Sápmi region, through a description of existing policies created with the involvement of the Sámi Parliaments, and related to the tourism industry. A thesis on indigenous tourism policy created with the direct involvement of the indigenous representative institutions is important as it sheds light on the ways in which indigenous peoples are involved in tourism policy-making. The thesis could provide a more nuanced understanding of the formation of tourism policy, as well as the challenges and opportunities for indigenous tourism policy development. Additionally, this thesis can help to fill a gap in research on the role of participatory approaches in indigenous tourism policy in the Nordic region. The thesis answers the research question of what the key themes of the policy documents of the Sámi Parliaments related to indigenous tourism in Norway, Sweden, and Finland are, and how these are reflected in the National Strategies. The aim is to illuminate the extent of influence of the Sámi Parliaments in policy formation in the national level. Policy documents produced from each Sámi parliament and the three countries' National Strategies on tourism were used as primary sources. Selected peer reviewed scientific articles and official reports were used as secondary sources. This thesis is relevant in the context of policy studies. A scholarly literature review was applied as a validation for the research. This study suggests that policy development in the area of indigenous tourism is evolving, with a focus deriving mainly from the Sámi side on promoting self-determination and participation, cultural authenticity and protection, sustainability and diversity. The research has identified that the key themes were not equally present in the exact wording/key terms in the National Strategies. However, they are not ignored, but alternatively they are reflected to a different degree. Overall, the studied policies and initiatives in Norway, Sweden, and Finland demonstrate a level of commitment to supporting the aspirations of the Sámi and promoting indigenous tourism. It seems that the Sámi Parliament's efforts to promote the participation of the Sámi people in tourism development have been successful to some extent, but that there is still work to be done to ensure that the interests and rights of the Sámi people are fully respected.

Key Words: indigenous, Sámi, tourism, policy, self-determination, participation, culture authenticity, protection, sustainability, diversity







# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	iii
Abstract.....	v
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1. Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic and Policy Formation – the Case of Tourism. ....	1
1.2. Thesis Aim, Research Question and Outline. ....	3
1.3. Why a Thesis on Indigenous Tourism Policy? .....	4
1.3.1. A Greek Studying Policy in the Arctic – Positionality.....	4
1.3.2. Participatory Approach in Sápmi – Tourism Policies in the Spotlight .....	5
1.3.3. Policy Development and National Tourism Policies .....	6
1.4. Choice of Countries.....	7
1.1.1 Why not Russia? .....	7
1.5. Thesis Outline .....	8
2. Literature Review, Theoretical Framing and Methodology.....	8
2.1. Theoretical Framing .....	8
2.1.1. Introduction to Theoretical Framing. ....	9
2.1.2. Indigenous Sámi Tourism VS Other Forms of Tourism: An Important Distinction. ....	10
2.1.3. Sustainability in Indigenous Tourism.....	13
2.1.4. Self-Determination and Participation in Indigenous Tourism. ....	13
2.1.5. Cultural Authenticity and Protection in Indigenous Tourism.....	14
2.2. Methodology .....	15
2.2.1. Defining the Sample – Data Collection.....	16
2.2.2. Coding Scheme and Analysis .....	17

2.2.3.	Data Discussion.....	18
2.3.	Summing up.....	18
3.	Indigenous Tourism Policies in the Nordics. ....	18
3.1.	Norway.....	19
3.1.1.	The Sámi Parliaments’ Policy Documents Related to Tourism.....	19
3.1.2.	Norway National Tourism Strategy 2030.....	20
3.2.	Sweden.....	20
3.2.1.	Sámi Parliaments’ Policy Documents Related to Tourism.....	20
3.2.2.	Sweden National Tourism Strategy.....	22
3.3.	Finland.....	23
3.3.1.	Sámi Parliaments’ Policy Documents Related to Tourism.....	23
3.3.2.	Finland National Strategy.....	26
3.4.	Summing up.....	26
4.	Thematic Analysis.....	26
4.1.	Findings from the Sámi Parliament Documents.....	27
1.1.2	4.1.1 Key Themes.....	27
1.1.3	4.1.2 A New Way of Conveying the Message.....	28
1.1.4	4.1.3. Tourism as an Emerging Livelihood for the Sámi. ....	30
4.2.	Findings through the National Tourism Strategies.....	30
4.2.1.	Norway.....	31
4.2.2.	Sweden.....	32
4.2.3.	Finland.....	33
4.3.	Findings on the Key Terms Through the Literature.....	34
4.3.1.	Findings on Sustainability.....	34
4.3.2.	Findings on Diversity.....	35

4.3.3.	Findings on Self–Determination .....	35
4.3.4.	Findings on Cultural Authenticity and Protection .....	36
4.3.5.	Indigenous Sámi Tourism versus Other Forms. ....	37
4.3.6.	How the Literature Review Helps Answer the Research Question .....	38
5.	Conclusions .....	38
6.	References .....	41



# **1. Introduction**

## **1.1. Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic and Policy Formation – the Case of Tourism.**

Indigenous Peoples in the Arctic are often involved in efforts to shape policy on the local, state and international level and the Sámi people residing in Norway, Sweden and Finland are no exception (OECD, 2019). The Sámi people residing in Sápmi, the region in Northern Europe which spans across Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia, and covers an area of approximately 386,000 square kilometres, have been proactively involved in shaping policy in Scandinavia. They do so, mainly through the Sámi Parliament, an elected body representing the Sámi people in Norway, Sweden and Finland, which aims to influence national policy on issues related to land use, reindeer herding, natural resource management, education, and cultural preservation, among others (Sámediggi Norway, 2021). The benefits of the Sámi being involved in policy formation processes through the Sámi Parliament and other mechanisms, include the ability to have a say in decisions that affect their lives and livelihoods, as well as the opportunity to preserve and promote their culture and traditions. This thesis puts the Sámi Parliaments in the spotlight, researching whether they have been able to influence the national policies on tourism in Norway, Sweden and Finland, which are relevant to the Sámi.

For example, the Sámi Parliament of Norway has been successful in collaborating with other indigenous organizations and stakeholders to influence policy at the national and international levels, and has been involved in shaping Norway's Arctic policy, including the development of the High North Strategy (Sámediggi, 2021). Moreover, the involvement of the Sámi people in policy formation processes also helps in strengthening their sense of self-determination and autonomy. By being involved in decisions that affect their communities, the Sámi people are able to exercise greater control over their own lives and futures, and to assert their rights as Indigenous Peoples (OECD, 2019, p. 156).

However more and more indigenous voices world-wide refer to barriers put in place regarding Indigenous Peoples' participation in policy formation processes, barriers not just political, such as exclusion from decision-making bodies or limited opportunities for public consultation and input, but also in terms of lack of adequate funding and resources for research,

advocacy, and community engagement activities and lack of common language and cultural understanding (Voukitchevitch, 2020). These barriers can limit Indigenous Peoples' ability to influence policy outcomes and to ensure that their perspectives and concerns are taken into account. The cultural and linguistic gap becomes one more obstacle they need to overcome when explaining to outsiders that policy impacts them in a more direct level. It has an immediate effect on their communities, impacting their traditional way of life, food practices, education systems, and overall sense of control over one's life and future (Hossain, 2016).

Today, as the global interest in the Arctic is rising making it a land of opportunity for growth and economic development in fields other than resource extraction, fishing activity and energy production, there is also a rise in common challenges and opportunities in various economic development fields in the region, that make it important for the barriers the Sámi face to be overcome (Bergmann et al, 2022). In the tourism sector, this has been strongly felt in rising tourism numbers, which has subsequently led to the overcrowding of visitors in fragile environments and in places that lack sufficient infrastructure, as well as the means to regulate the tourism business (Notzke, 1999). Moreover, a great number of people outside the Arctic do not realize how important practices such as traditional reindeer herding, subsistence hunting and fishing are to the indigenous population and how negatively Arctic policies can impact those traditional practices, especially in a field such as tourism which could create false stereotypes when it comes to indigenous identity and everyday life (Gundersen and Rybråten, 2022). Tourism practices in the Arctic and especially in the Nordics present prominent examples of the creation of false impressions, especially in areas where non-Sámi tourism actors have sought to respond to tourists' stereotypical presumptions of the Sámi, leading to multiple forms of cultural misuse and appropriation (de Bernardi, 2022). For example, some tourism experiences may focus on superficial or stereotypical aspects of Sámi culture, such as traditional dress and music, without providing a deeper understanding of Sámi beliefs and practices (Zhang & Müller, 2018).

To this reality we must add the recent global challenges affecting people globally, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent closing of several borders or the war in Ukraine raising geopolitical tension in the Arctic region, and their implications for the Sámi. These global challenges, create a new dimension of inequality for the indigenous entrepreneurs

residing in the Arctic, who are engaged in a number of economic activities as they struggle to maintain the traditional characteristics of their culture in everyday life, while also being involved in entrepreneurship in many fields. Tourism has also been identified as a potential source of economic activity that promotes development and cultural preservation for indigenous communities worldwide. Indigenous tourism is a type of tourism that is owned, managed, and/or operated by indigenous people and focuses on showcasing their cultural heritage and traditions (Telfer, 2002). In Sápmi, indigenous tourism has been promoted as a way to support sustainable development and cultural preservation, however the Sámi have experienced great difficulty in practicing traditional activities, while fighting to present their true colours when they engage in tourism activities, battling stereotypes and building a sustainable tourism industry (Kaltenborn et al, 2017). This is because the growth in tourism, in the region, has also brought new opportunities for non- Sámi entrepreneurs and attracts businesses from outside local communities, who in the name of profit do not hesitate to create false stereotypes regarding the indigenous culture they so eagerly advertise (Chen, 2016).

## **1.2. Thesis Aim, Research Question and Outline.**

This thesis uses a content analysis approach in order to provide a summary of what extent the tourism policy is influenced by Indigenous Peoples with a clear focus on the Sámi, in the Sápmi region, through a description of existing policies created with the involvement of the Sámi Parliaments, and related to the tourism industry and tourism activities undertaken by the Sámi. To do so, policy documents produced from each Sámi parliament in Norway, Finland and Sweden as well as the three countries' national strategies on tourism were used as primary sources, complemented by the selected peer reviewed scientific articles and official reports as secondary sources (Stemler, 2010). Though there is a wide range of policies in place in all three countries, expanding in local, regional, national and international levels.–Due to time constraints and space limitations the national strategies were the main focus as they were created with involvement of the Sámi parliaments. It is however important to note that there is several documents not included in this thesis.

The overall objective of the thesis is to contribute to the understanding of indigenous tourism policies in Norway, Sweden, and Finland that are relevant to the Sámi. To achieve this aim, defining the research question is crucial as it sets the direction and scope of the study,



determines the selection of relevant data, and helps in identifying the appropriate methodology for data analysis (Neuendorf, 2016). Furthermore, a clear research question helps researchers in establishing the credibility and validity of their findings and conclusions (Krippendorff, 2013).

*The research question for this thesis is: What are the key themes of the policy documents of the Sámi Parliaments related to indigenous tourism in Norway, Sweden, and Finland and how are they reflected in the National Strategies?*

By examining key policy documents related to tourism published by the Sámi Parliaments, as well as the main National Tourism Strategy documents produced by the three states, this thesis aims to illuminate the extent of influence of the Sámi Parliaments in policy formation in the national level. This thesis is relevant in the context of policy studies. In addition to the studied documents, I apply a scholarly literature review as a validation for my research.

### **1.3. Why a Thesis on Indigenous Tourism Policy?**

#### **1.3.1. A Greek Studying Policy in the Arctic – Positionality.**

The study of policy affecting the life of communities living in vulnerable or remote environments was a natural choice for me to make as a political scientist, originating from the Greek island of Evia on the Aegean Sea and having witnessed first-hand various aspects of policy being applied on the field of tourism and in the name of sustainable development. Through my field of studies on political science, sustainable development and governance and entrepreneurship in Northern and indigenous areas, I started becoming more and more familiar with the participatory approach to policy making, which involves engaging diverse stakeholders in the policymaking process to ensure that their perspectives, interests, and concerns are considered. This approach has gained prominence in recent years as a way to enhance the legitimacy, effectiveness, and sustainability of public policies and can take many forms, including public hearings, citizen consultations, focus groups, expert panels, and participatory budgeting processes. The approach can be used at different stages of the policy cycle, from agenda setting to implementation and evaluation (Fung, 2006). I was surprised to observe that the participatory approach has been rather absent in the development of tourism policies for the

Aegean islands in Greece, where there have been some attempts to involve stakeholders in the policy-making process, but these efforts were often limited in scope and effectiveness, and there was a lack of coordination and communication among stakeholders (Tsiotas & Michalena, 2017). I was therefore interested to see what happens in a region of the world where the participatory approach seems to be used much more broadly and proactively and to what extent tools such as participatory planning and stakeholder consultation ensure that local communities are involved in decision-making processes related to tourism development.

### **1.3.2. Participatory Approach in Sápmi – Tourism Policies in the Spotlight**

Several scholars have explored the development of indigenous tourism policy in the Nordic region, with a focus on the involvement of indigenous peoples in the decision-making process and the development of policies that respect indigenous cultures and values (Arnadottir, 2019). However, some scholars argue that the involvement of indigenous peoples in tourism policy-making is limited and that there is a need for greater recognition of indigenous rights and interests in tourism development (Carr, 2016).

Overall, the literature highlights the importance of involving indigenous communities in the tourism development process and using the participatory approach as its theoretical lens. This thesis puts the spotlight on tourism policies created from or with the collaboration of the Sámi Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland. In the case of the national tourism strategies in the three Nordic countries examined in this thesis, the Sámi Parliaments were consulted and actively engaged in the creation process and collaborated closely with the national authorities to make sure their policy aspirations were included in the final outcome. The extent to which these aspirations were actually embedded in the policy documents varies from country to country as we will see later on in this thesis.

A thesis on indigenous tourism policy created with the direct involvement of the indigenous representative institutions – in this case the Sámi Parliaments - is important because it sheds light on the ways in which indigenous peoples are involved in tourism policy-making through their representative institutions. This is an important area of research because indigenous peoples often have unique cultural, social, and economic concerns that may not be adequately addressed in mainstream tourism policy. By studying how indigenous aspirations are embedded in tourism policy, researchers can identify gaps and challenges in current policy

approaches and develop more effective strategies for sustainable tourism development that respect the cultural values and traditions of indigenous communities. By studying the Sámi Parliaments' policy documents that include tourism, with a lens of participatory approach, a thesis on indigenous tourism policy can provide valuable insights into how Indigenous Peoples can effectively influence the development and implementation of tourism policies.

The thesis could cover a gap in research by focusing specifically on the influence of indigenous communities and stakeholders on tourism policy-making through their institutions. While there has been significant research on indigenous tourism policy, much of this research has been conducted from the perspective of government agencies or tourism operators (Jenkins et al, 2014). By centering the voices and perspectives of indigenous communities as expressed by their representative institutions, the thesis could provide a more nuanced understanding of the formation of tourism policy and the process of policy development, as well as the challenges and opportunities for indigenous tourism policy development. Additionally, this thesis can help to fill a gap in research on the role of participatory approaches in indigenous tourism policy in the Nordic region. While there has been some research on participatory approaches in indigenous tourism policy in other parts of the world (e.g., Australia, Canada), there is room for further research on this topic in the Nordic context (Butler, 2021).

### **1.3.3. Policy Development and National Tourism Policies**

Policy development is an important aspect of promoting and supporting the growth of indigenous tourism. Indigenous tourism policies in the Nordic countries have evolved from a focus on promoting cultural heritage and authenticity to a more holistic approach that also includes sustainability and economic development (Keskitalo et al, 2021).

National tourism policies in the Nordics are created through a collaborative effort between government agencies, industry stakeholders, and other relevant actors. The process typically involves extensive consultation and research to ensure that policies align with the goals and priorities of all stakeholders involved (Árnadóttir, 2019; Oschell, 2013). As mentioned previously, the Sámi Parliaments represent the Sámi people and play an essential role in developing policies related to indigenous tourism. However, the effectiveness and appropriateness of these policies have been subject to debate, with differing perspectives among

indigenous communities regarding their impact on cultural preservation, economic development, and environmental sustainability (Schevvens et al, 2021).

## **1.4. Choice of Countries**

Having a broader perspective of three countries when studying indigenous tourism policy in the Arctic is crucial because it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the complex and diverse issues facing indigenous communities in the region. As the Arctic is home to many indigenous communities with unique cultures, histories, and challenges, a comparative approach even amongst Sámi living in the different states, can help identify similarities and differences amongst policies and practices in different countries and regions, and facilitate the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. For example, studies of indigenous tourism in the Arctic, mention that comparative analysis can help identify key factors that contribute to the success of indigenous tourism, such as community involvement, cultural authenticity, and sustainability. They also note that a comparative approach can highlight the impact of broader political and economic contexts on indigenous tourism, such as climate change, globalization, and resource development (Fletcher et al, 2016). Similarly, several studies emphasize the importance of comparative analysis for understanding the diverse ways in which indigenous tourism is practiced and regulated in different regions of the Arctic. A comparative approach can help identify both the opportunities and challenges facing indigenous tourism development, as well as the complex power dynamics between indigenous communities, governments, and the tourism industry (Stewart et al, 2005).

### **1.1.1 Why not Russia?**

It is important to note that this thesis has chosen not to present tourism policy and indigenous perceptions in Russia although the author recognizes that a conclusive analysis related to Sápmi, should indeed include all the regions where Sámi population is found. However, this study is primarily based on documents deriving from each of the Sámi Parliaments existing within Sápmi. In Russia there is no Sámi Parliament, and the presence of peer reviewed articles and reports on tourism policy as secondary data is quite limited. Therefore, the exclusion of Russia from this project was a choice to make at this point. On a brief note, the state of indigenous tourism policy in Russia is characterized by a lack of attention from the government and inadequate support for Indigenous Peoples in the development of their tourism industry.

Overall, while there have been some positive developments in recent years, the state of indigenous tourism policy in Russia remains challenging, with a need for stronger government support and collaboration with indigenous communities to develop a sustainable and culturally appropriate tourism industry (Timoshenko, 2020).

## **1.5. Thesis Outline**

The thesis is divided into five chapters, starting with an introduction followed by a literature review related to indigenous tourism. The methodology is also presented in the second chapter, which outlines the content analysis approach used in the study and the criteria for selecting the primary data sources as well as secondary data for analysis. In this chapter, the core concepts used for thematic analysis further ahead are analyzed, including their relation to indigenous tourism. The third chapter which is the descriptive analysis, presents the relevant policies in Norway, Sweden and Finland in policy documents published by the Sámi Parliaments and the National Tourism policies created by the states. The fourth chapter, presents the key findings of the thematic analysis. The thesis concludes with a final chapter containing the summing up of the findings and drawing conclusions, also reflecting to what extent Sámi perceptions are sufficiently embedded in the policy created so far, as well as final remarks on the Greek context.

## **2. Literature Review, Theoretical Framing and Methodology**

### **2.1. Theoretical Framing**

Indigenous tourism in Norway, Sweden, and Finland is grounded in a set of core theoretical concepts that center on the relationship between tourism and indigenous culture, heritage, and identity (Keskitalo et al, 2021). These concepts are important because they highlight the need to acknowledge and respect the unique cultural and historical experiences of Indigenous peoples (UN, 2019). Specifically, the literature discusses the importance of self-determination and participation, cultural authenticity and protection, and sustainability and diversity in indigenous tourism policy in the Arctic (Butler, 2021). In the context of the Sámi, these terms emphasize the importance of recognizing and supporting Sámi cultural heritage, traditions, and rights, while also promoting sustainable economic development and tourism practices that are

culturally appropriate and respectful of Sámi perspectives and values. Overall through the study of the literature it seems that the development of Indigenous tourism in the Arctic revolves around the themes of self-determination, cultural authenticity and protection, sustainability and diversity to ensure that tourism practices are respectful of Sámi cultural heritage and contribute to sustainable economic development (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019; de Bernardi, 2019; Saarinen, 1999; Lu & Nepal, 2009; Carr, 2016; Hsu & Nilep, 2015; Chen, 2015).

But to what degree are these principles present in the documents published from the Sámi Parliaments and in what way are they embedded - if they are embedded - in the National Tourism Strategies for Norway, Sweden and Finland?

### **2.1.1. Introduction to Theoretical Framing.**

The key terms that emerge through the study of the Sámi Parliaments' published documents for Norway, Sweden, and Finland include wording and phrasing related to participation, self-determination – sometimes expressed as “control” or “own terms” - , cultural authenticity and protection, and sustainability. These terms are reflected in the emphasis given on the involvement of Indigenous communities in tourism development, the protection and promotion of Sámi culture and traditions, the development of sustainable and diverse tourism initiatives that benefit Sámi communities, and the importance of Indigenous self-determination in tourism policy (Sámediggi, Norway, 2017; Sámediggi, Finland, 2018, Sámediggi, Sweden, 2016).

It is therefore important to look into *self-determination and participation, cultural authenticity and protection, and sustainability* when studying Indigenous tourism policy from a Sámi perspective in the Nordics because not only are these factors critical to ensuring that Indigenous tourism is developed and managed in respectful, sustainable, and beneficial to Indigenous communities manner, but also they emerge through the study of the relevant policy documents. Participation and self-determination are important because Indigenous communities must have a say in the development and management of tourism initiatives in their territories. This can help ensure that tourism development aligns with Indigenous values and priorities, and that Indigenous communities are able to benefit economically, socially, and culturally from tourism activities. Cultural authenticity and protection are also important because Indigenous tourism should showcase and celebrate Indigenous cultures and traditions

in a way that is respectful and accurate. Indigenous communities should have control over how their cultures and traditions are represented in tourism initiatives and be able to ensure that their cultural heritage is protected and preserved. Finally, sustainability is crucial because tourism initiatives should be developed and managed in a way that promotes economic, social, and environmental sustainability, and that supports the diversity of indigenous cultures and traditions. This can help ensure that tourism activities are beneficial to indigenous communities in the long term and that they contribute to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. But before diving deeper into those key terms, I will elaborate on indigenous Sámi tourism and why it is of specific importance as a new arena of sustainable development.

### **2.1.2. Indigenous Sámi Tourism VS Other Forms of Tourism: An Important Distinction.**

*Indigenous tourism* is often confused or included in the broader term *sustainable tourism* or is presented in a way that doesn't highlight that it is distinct from *adventure tourism* or *nature based tourism*. (Carr et al, 2016). For the purposes of this thesis it is important to note that in the term Sámi tourism has occurred various times and will be used as a synonymous to indigenous tourism.

According to Smith (1996) there are four different categories by which one can define the term *indigenous tourism*: These include habitat (geographical settings), heritage (traditions), history (acculturation, assimilation) and handicrafts (tangible, marketable products), widely known as the four Hs in indigenous tourism. These categories 'describe the indigenous tourism phenomenon, as a culture-bounded visitor experience' (Smith 1996: 287). They can be used to assist local populations and specifically indigenous communities to choose which way they want to participate in the tourism industry. They can also be used by researchers as a basis in order to better comprehend all of the aspects of indigenous tourism (Smith, 1996). A study by Hinch and Butler (1996) defined tourism occurring in indigenous areas, as the one involving participation of members of the indigenous community in the organization and control of any tourism activity taking place in those areas, or involving indigenous culture as a factor that mainly attracts tourism in the region. They also express the view that the ways of exercising control over an area vary and the same happens with the accommodation of tourism by these

communities. For example while indigenous culture in a specific area might be visible, the indigenous community itself might not have been involved in the planning of tourism development and as a result might not have control over it. This certainly does not mean that there do not exist tourist attractions both operated and moderated by indigenous populations (Hinch and Butler, 1996).

As far as the Sámi are concerned, they have engaged into tourism activities by creating and managing tourism companies, mainly in an effort to complement traditional livelihoods such as reindeer herding (Müller and Pettersson 2006). The range of these activities can be included under the term indigenous tourism and comprise what is called Sámi tourism, but do not mean that the engaged populations have not faced issues regarding control over tourism which is related to culture. One example, is the use of Sámi customs and symbols in non-Sámi tourism industry in Norway as well as Finland and Sweden, for a great period of time (Müller and Pettersson 2001; Olsen 2006; Saarinen 1999). Despite the fact that in the three mentioned countries there are differences regarding tourism development related to Sámi, it is a common concern expressed by the Sámi, that tourism has caused disturbance. However, it is also commonly expressed that tourism can become a positive force from a cultural and economic standpoint (Müller and Huuva 2009; Pettersson and Viken 2007; Tuulentie 2006; Viken 2006).

*Sustainable tourism*, refers to tourism activities that are designed and operated in a way that minimizes negative impacts on the environment, society, and economy, and maximizes positive impacts (UNEP, 2005). Sustainable tourism is concerned with promoting responsible tourism practices that contribute to the well-being of host communities and ecosystems, while also meeting the needs and expectations of tourists (UNEP, 2005).

While indigenous or Sámi tourism and sustainable tourism share a common goal of promoting responsible tourism practices, there are some important differences between the two. Indigenous or Sámi tourism is primarily focused on preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of indigenous or Sámi communities, while also generating economic benefits for these communities (Bunten & Graburn, 2009). Sustainable tourism, on the other hand, is primarily focused on minimizing negative impacts on the environment, society, and economy, while also maximizing positive impacts (Carr et al, 2016).



Like for all other tourism, it is possible for indigenous or Sámi tourism to be sustainable if it is designed and operated in a way that minimizes negative impacts on the environment, society, and economy, and maximizes positive impacts. However, not all indigenous Sámi tourism activities are necessarily sustainable, as they may have negative impacts on the environment or cultural heritage if they are not designed and operated responsibly (Carr et al, 2016).

*Adventure* tourism, on the other hand, is a type of tourism that involves high-risk activities, such as mountaineering, skiing, and kayaking, often in remote and wild environments. Adventure tourism is often associated with adrenaline-seeking tourists who are looking for a challenging and exciting experience in nature. In the Arctic, adventure tourism can involve activities such as dog sledding, snowmobiling, and ice climbing. The aim of adventure tourism is often to provide visitors with a unique and thrilling experience in nature (Stewart et al, 2005).

The distinction is important when studying policy related to indigenous tourism because it highlights the need for policies that support the diversity and self-determination of indigenous communities. Indigenous tourism policies should prioritize the involvement of indigenous communities in tourism planning and development, as well as the protection and promotion of indigenous cultural heritage. In contrast, policies related to adventure tourism may prioritize risk management and safety regulations, but may not necessarily address the unique needs and concerns of indigenous communities (Bunten, 2010).

The distinction is especially important in a Sámi context, as it also relates to issues of self-determination. Adventure tourism can have negative impacts on the Sámi people and their environment, as it often involves large numbers of tourists, which can put pressure on natural resources and disrupt traditional Sámi land use practices (Bunten, 2010). In contrast, indigenous tourism can provide economic benefits to Sámi communities while promoting the preservation of Sámi culture and traditions (de Bernardi, 2019) and supporting the self-determination of the Sámi people, by providing opportunities for them to control their own economic development. In contrast, adventure tourism can be seen as a form of external control, as it is often developed and managed by non-Sámi stakeholders. In the next chapter this thesis will attempt to answer

the question of how Sámi Parliaments address the concept of self-determination through their policy documents of relevance for tourism.

### **2.1.3. Sustainability in Indigenous Tourism.**

Sustainability refers to the ability of tourism activities to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Related to indigenous tourism in the European Arctic, sustainability involves the responsible use of natural and cultural resources in tourism activities, and the promotion of economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Chen, 2015; de Bernardi et al, 2017). Sustainable development in indigenous tourism requires the recognition of diversity being included into indigenous tourism policy understood as practices that can lead the overall respect of the environmental values of indigenous communities (Saari et al, 2020). The term diversity as I use it, refers to the differences and variations that exist within a particular community, society, or group. In the context of indigenous tourism, diversity can encompass the various cultural, linguistic, and social differences among indigenous communities, including differences in traditional practices, beliefs, and values and is therefore a key sub-aspect of sustainability (Saari et al, 2020).

### **2.1.4. Self-Determination and Participation in Indigenous Tourism.**

Self-determination as a concept, refers to the right of Indigenous Peoples to determine their own political status, exercise control over their own cultural, social, and economic development, and freely pursue their own priorities and aspirations without external interference (United Nations, 2007). The literature on self-determination in indigenous tourism in the Nordics has highlighted the importance of indigenous communities having control over tourism activities and resources. This can be achieved through the establishment of Sámi-owned tourism enterprises and the incorporation of Sámi cultural practices and traditions in tourism activities (Jhang & Müller, 2018).

How is participation as an aspect of self-determination embedded in tourism policies created via the participatory approach? By participatory approach here I mean actively involving the Sámi Parliaments in policy formation processes, allowing them to have a say in

the policies related to tourism that affect them. This involves establishing communication channels between the Sámi Parliaments, national authorities, and other stakeholders involved in the tourism industry. One way to achieve this is through consultation and dialogue, where representatives from the Sámi Parliaments and national authorities come together to discuss tourism policy issues and share their perspectives. This can help to identify areas of agreement and disagreement, and ensure that the interests and needs of both parties are taken into account when developing tourism policies. Are the concepts of self-determination and participation addressed in the national policies?

### **2.1.5. Cultural Authenticity and Protection in Indigenous Tourism**

Authenticity is a key factor in the development of indigenous tourism policies. Cultural authenticity in particular, is an important concept in indigenous tourism, referring to the extent to which cultural experiences and practices accurately reflect and preserve Indigenous traditions and beliefs (de Bernardi, 2019). In the context of indigenous tourism, cultural authenticity, is often paired with cultural protection which refers to efforts made to safeguard and promote the cultural heritage of a particular community or group in the context of tourism (Hinch & Butler, 2007). Cultural authenticity and protection are seen as key factors in indigenous tourism, ensuring not only that indigenous cultures are respected, preserved, and promoted in tourism activities, but also that the benefits of tourism are shared equitably among members of the indigenous community (Müller & Brouder, 2019). There are studies that note that in both Sweden and Norway, the promotion of Sámi tourism has been linked to the protection, preservation and promotion of Sámi culture and traditions (de Bernardi, 2019). In Finland however, there exists a history of mass tourism expansion, mass tourism on indigenous land, which has impacted the indigenous Sámi population, particularly in terms of cultural authenticity and protection. In addition, the commercialization of Sámi cultural practices, such as reindeer herding and traditional handicrafts, has led to concerns about cultural commodification and the loss of cultural authenticity. In some cases, the promotion of "Sámi tourism" as a distinct product has led to the standardization and commercialization of Sámi cultural practices, which can undermine the authenticity and uniqueness of Sámi culture (Joy, 2019). Once again, the distinction between adventure tourism and indigenous tourism is important for culture authenticity and protection. Adventure tourism can sometimes have

negative impacts on the cultural authenticity of indigenous communities, as tourists may be more interested in the physical challenges and natural landscapes than in learning about the culture and traditions of the Sámi people (Hägglund et al, 2019) This can lead to a superficial understanding of Sámi culture and can contribute to the commodification of traditional Sámi practices and artifacts (Joy, 2019). On the other hand, indigenous tourism has the potential to promote cultural authenticity and protection by providing opportunities for Sámi people to share their traditions and stories with visitors on their own terms (de Bernardi, 2019). In the next chapters this thesis elaborates on the content of the Sámi Parliaments policy to ensure cultural authenticity and protection.

## **2.2. Methodology**

This section outlines the methodology used for conducting the content analysis of the selected documents related to policies concerning indigenous tourism and the Sámi in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Content analysis is a commonly used research method for analyzing textual data, and can be a useful tool for exploring the content of policies related to indigenous tourism and the perceptions of the Sámi people regarding these policies (Krippendorff, 2013). Boreus and Bergstrom (2017) note that content analysis is a rigorous and time-consuming process that requires careful planning, attention to detail, and adherence to established procedures. However, the insights gained from content analysis can be invaluable in understanding social phenomena and informing policy decisions and this is why this method was chosen for this study. Specifically, this section presents the research questions, data collection, coding process, and data analysis techniques used for this study.

As the scope of tourism policies in the selected states is huge, this thesis will use policy documents produced by the Sámi Parliaments in all three countries as a starting point and elaborate on the Strategy for Swedish Tourism 2016 – 2020 and the launched in 2021 but not yet implemented Swedish National Tourism Strategy (OECD, 2022) and The Finnish Tourism Strategy 2019-2028, as well as the Norwegian government's National Tourism Strategy 2030 which was launched in 2020.

### **2.2.1. Defining the Sample – Data Collection**

The next step in content analysis after defining the research questions, is to define the sample, or the set of documents that will be analyzed (Neuendorf, 2016). It is important to ensure that the data source is relevant to the research question and that it provides sufficient data for analysis (Boreus and Bergstrom, 2017). In the case of this thesis, the sample consists of the formal documents regarding policies produced by the Sámi Parliaments where tourism is specifically mentioned, namely: The Šattolas Sápmi Sustainable business development Revision of the Sami Parliament report, adopted in 2022 (Sámediggi, Norway, 13.10.22, Case 42/22), and the Samisk reiseliv & salg av kulturuttrykk (Sami tourism & sales of cultural expression) document available in the Norwegian Sámi Parliament website, the SWOT analysis of Sweden's Rural Program and the Sámi Action Plan for rural development as well as the report: "Sweden, 2019 – Submission from the Sámi Parliament to Sweden" from the Swedish Sámi Parliament and the "Principles for Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism" document from the Finish Sámi Parliament. These documents were followed by the study of the National Tourism Strategies mentioned for each state. I made a point of using public institutional sources, as I consider these documents to be the most authentic, credible and representative ones, because they derive straight from the elected institutions.

To derive the secondary data for this study, a literature review approach was applied to reviewing English-language publications on 'Sámi tourism.' To determine the documents for my sample, I used as key words through the search engine: 'indigenous' 'Sámi' and 'tourism.' To ensure that all (or at least a substantial number) relevant publications were retrieved, I used several possible spellings: Sámi OR Saami OR Sámi; and the word tourism was translated also in four languages: reiseliv (Norwegian), turism (Swedish), matkailua (Finnish) and turisma (Northern Sámi). I also used combinations with other relevant words or phrases: "tourism policy", "arctic tourism", and "indigenous tourism in the Arctic". The literature search of the selected databases provided a search result of 102 peer-reviewed articles (after removing duplicates) and 34 book chapters. Seeking to determine the relevance of these publications, all abstracts and at a later stage the full publications were read and assessed in relation to specific criteria (Hägglund et al, 2019). To be included in the literature review, the article or book chapter needed to have a clear focus on both tourism and Sámi, in conjunction, or contain extensive research related to several aspects of tourism policy formation focused on indigenous populations or the Sámi. Accordingly, most articles with no clear focus on 'Sámi' and 'tourism'

in conjunction were excluded, such as articles mentioning these words as examples only, or articles or book chapters focusing on indigenous peoples in places that did not seem useful as comparison with the Sámi. In the end a total of 39 peer-reviewed articles and reports related to indigenous tourism and the Sámi in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The selection was made based on relevance to the research questions and core terms as well as availability of data (Stemler, 2010). The articles and reports were published between 1996 and 2022. To this point I must note that I acknowledge the possibility that several relevant publications might not have been included. This is partly due to time and space limitations, but more importantly it is due to the language limitations, as I am a native Greek and my knowledge of Norwegian, Swedish and mostly Finnish is very limited.

### **2.2.2. Coding Scheme and Analysis**

The third step in content analysis is to develop a coding scheme, or a set of categories or themes that will be used to analyze the documents (Neuendorf, 2016). The coding scheme is a set of categories and codes that researchers use to analyze the data. The coding scheme should be developed based on the research question and should be grounded in existing literature and theoretical frameworks (Boreus and Bergstrom, 2017). In the case of this thesis, the coding scheme included the following core terms/categories which appeared to be present with greater frequency in the relevant documents analyzed: *self-determination and participation, cultural authenticity and protection, sustainability and diversity*. This coding scheme came up after having read the first 20 documents and keeping notes on the terms that came up most and in repetition. The terms *control, power* or *own terms* also appeared and for the sake of the study were categorized under the theme *self-determination*.

The next step in content analysis is to apply the coding scheme to the documents and analyze the data (Neuendorf, 2016). The coding process involves reading and analyzing the text and assigning codes to specific categories based on the coding scheme (Boreus and Berstrom, 2017). In our case, this procedure involved reading through the documents and assigning codes to different sections or themes. The coding process involved identifying key policy approaches and themes present in the articles and reports, and categorizing them into relevant themes. The coding process was informed by a priori codes based on the research questions, as well as inductive codes emerging from the data, such as specific terms and concepts.

### **2.2.3. Data Discussion**

The final step in content analysis is to interpret the findings and draw conclusions based on the analysis (Neuendorf, 2016). This involved identifying key themes or patterns in the data and linking these to the research question. The analysis in this thesis also involved comparing and contrasting the studies policies to derive themes for discussion. The data analysis for this study involved both descriptive and thematic analysis. Descriptive analysis was used in Chapter 3, to present the studied policy documents and present specific wording present. Thematic analysis, was used in Chapter 4, to examine the distribution of key policy approaches and themes across the official documents and find equivalents in the articles and reports. In the same chapter patterns and relationships within the data are identified and used to draw conclusions and discuss the finding to determine whether they provide sufficient answers to my research questions. Finally in Chapter 5, I conclude and give an overview of the thesis.

### **2.3. Summing up**

This chapter has provided a comprehensive review of the existing literature related to policies related to indigenous tourism, created from or the with the participation of the Sámi Parliaments in Norway, Sweden, and Finland. The chapter has also presented key theoretical concepts, followed by an overview of the methodology used to perform this study. The chapter which follows present the existing indigenous tourism policies in Norway, Sweden and Finland, as expressed by the Sámi Parliaments publications and in the three National Strategy Documents. This descriptive analysis will be used in the next chapters.

## **3. Indigenous Tourism Policies in the Nordics.**

Studying the Sámi Parliaments' policy documents that are relevant to tourism or "turisme" or "reiseliv" as it is stated in the Norwegian language in a thesis on indigenous tourism policy with a lens of participatory approach is only natural, as the Sámi Parliaments are the institutions representative of the Sámi people and important for several reasons. First, the participatory approach is a key component of indigenous tourism policy, as it emphasizes the active participation of indigenous communities in the development and implementation of tourism policies and strategies (Abinash & Jitendra, 2015). Second, the Sámi Parliaments are the official institutions promoting Sámi tourism and developing, co-developing or attempting to influence

policies that reflect Sámi perspectives and priorities (UN, 2011). Third, the Sámi Parliaments have unique insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Sámi tourism, as well as the cultural and environmental considerations that are important to Sámi communities (UN, 2011).

However, it is essential to recognize that the Sámi Parliaments are dependent on national institutions to implement policy. The inclusion of national policies in the thesis is therefore necessary as it provides an understanding of the broader policy context within which the Sámi parliaments operate. This enables a more comprehensive analysis of the factors that influence the Sámi Parliaments' tourism policy creation, including the constraints and opportunities posed by national policies and institutions (Björk & Wall-Reinius, 2019).

Furthermore, the study of national policies in the thesis can provide insights into the challenges faced by indigenous communities in engaging with national institutions and developing policies that reflect their cultural and environmental values. This can potentially inform recommendations for improving the participatory approach to policy development and implementation at the national level.

### **3.1. Norway**

#### **3.1.1. The Sámi Parliaments' Policy Documents Related to Tourism.**

The Norwegian Sámi Parliament provides general guidelines related to land and environment with the overall aim of ensuring that the natural resources of Sámi areas are managed with a vision to safeguarding future generations, with a basis for existence and the opportunity to develop Sámi culture. The concern of the Sámi Parliament is to secure the natural basis for Sámi culture and business practices (Olsen et al, 2019). In relation to *Sámi tourism* the Norwegian Sámi Parliament in its official website (sametinget.no) features a report under the working title Samisk reiseliv & salg av kulturuttrykk (Sami tourism & sales of cultural expression). The report provides an overview of the project Samisk Reiseliv (Sámi tourism) a three-year project, which was initiated in 2012, and aimed to strengthen the Sami aspect of tourism in Northern Norway (Sámediggi, Norway, 2014). The project aimed to define what *Sámi tourism* is, and to draw up ethical guidelines for it. The document mentions that the tourism arena can be said to consist of an interweaving of three main elements: Identity, Culture and Industry and states that there are challenges that arise when these three elements collide.



The word *authenticity* is clearly mentioned in the document as a heading (p.17) and the document concludes with the statement that *Sámi* tourism wants to develop tourism *in a sustainable way* (p.31). The document concludes with the need to develop ethical guidelines for the tourism industry regarding *Sámi* culture (p.32).

In the same site, under the search *Samisk reiseliv (Sámi tourism)* the reader comes across an official document stating that the *Sámi* Parliament defines *Sámi* tourism as tourism where *Sámi* cultural elements “form the main element of the business”. The page also states that the *Sámi* Parliament wants many year-round tourism businesses that convey *Sámi* culture in a way that the *Sámi* recognize themselves in and that it creates some additional challenges that we must not forget. It also verifies what is said in numerous studies, traditional dissemination of culture can be experienced as stereotyped, not relevant and unengaging.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.1.2. Norway National Tourism Strategy 2030**

The main document related to tourism that this thesis takes into account is the most recent National Tourism Strategy 2030 launched in 2020 (OECD, 2022). In the strategy the *Sámi* Parliament is clearly stated as one of the stakeholders that was involved in the consultation process along with 11 county authorities and the governor of Svalbard. *Sámi* tourism is mentioned as a sub-strategy in page 61 of the official document, where the headings *sustainable indigenous tourism, preservation* and sustainable companies working with *Sámi* tourism are also present, while the *Sámi* Parliament is indicated as responsible for the follow up of the objectives set in the *Sámi* tourism sub-strategy. In the national strategy document in page 34, the subheading “cultural experiences” mentions the words *cultural resources, indigenous culture, Sámi tourism* and *on its own terms*. (Nasjonal reiselivsstrategi 2030).

## **3.2. Sweden**

### **3.2.1. Sámi Parliaments’ Policy Documents Related to Tourism.**

In Sweden, the *Sámi* Parliament is consulted by the national government in matters related to tourism, particularly in the northern regions of Sweden where *Sámi* culture and traditions are a significant attraction for visitors (Lawrence & Mörkenstam, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sametinget.no/naring/samisk-reiseliv/>

The Sámi Parliament of Sweden has conducted a SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis of Sweden's Rural Program which serves to illustrate how Sámi businesses and initiatives could be better supported by both rural and regional development efforts. The strengths of the community lay in their unique culture, language and traditions for which small scale, high quality ecologically produced and sustainable activities and products are valued. Within this, reindeer herding is clearly a very visible and important component, but there are also new and emerging opportunities in such areas as the promotion of Sámi food and tourism and using traditional knowledge in new ways. *Sámi tourism* has a separate subchapter (p.13) where it is stated that "municipalities have different interpretations of the legislation which makes it more difficult for businesses to work over municipality borders" (Sámediggi Sweden, 2014).

Based on this the Sámi Parliament has also issued a Sámi Action Plan for rural development where it states that new service solutions – e.g. new technologies – will help Sámi businesses make the most of these emerging opportunities and gain vicinity and increase access to markets. The enabling environment for Sámi businesses and livelihoods could be enhanced in order to build on its strengths and help to realize its possibilities (Sámediggi Sweden, 2015).

In July 2019, The Sámi Parliament contributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle universal periodic review of Sweden with the report: "Sweden, 2019 – Submission from the Sámi Parliament to Sweden" where it is clearly stated that "the self-determination will continue to be highly limited until the Sámi Parliament has the power to influence relevant decisions, decide its activities and priorities and has sufficient funding of its own to allocate as desired." (Sámediggi Sweden, 2019). Also, Article 26 of the document, stated that "The commercial use of land for resource exploitation and extractive industries, large infrastructure projects, mining activities, energy installations, forestry activities, increased recreational activities and tourism, carnivore population management and the impacts of climate change are all recognized as threats to Sámi livelihoods and culture." (Sámediggi Sweden, 2019). *Self-determination* as a term is clearly mentioned early on in the document (p.2).

The Swedish Sámi Parliament has also produced the "Eallinbiras – Our Living Environment guide, which provides a framework for the Parliament's pursuit for the Sámi living environment and the long-term ambition to improve and strengthen the situation for the

Sámi people and their rights. This document clarifies the values of the Sámi Parliament and provides the framework for all Sámi Parliament expertise programs and action plans. Eallinbiras aspires to be a foundation for the entire Sámi Parliament, both the agency's administrative work and the parliament's political work, to define a long-term determination focus and ambition to develop a sustainable and viable Sápmi. It also aims to convey and inspire Sámi environmental views and Sámi values and to contribute to a worldview and improve the Sámi people's and Sámi Parliament's position on issues of sustainability and living environment. Finally it is meant to be a principal document for the creation of more refined action programs and planning instruments ( Sweden, 2021).

### **3.2.2. Sweden National Tourism Strategy**

In Sweden, Sámi affairs are reflected in regional and rural policies at the national level (OECD, 2019)<sup>2</sup>. Both national rural and regional policy as well as the EU-funded parts of these policies fund and support rural and regional development within the Sámi society in such areas as tourism, businesses within duodji, etc.

The Strategy for Sustainable Regional Growth and Attractiveness 2015-20 (OECD, 2022) is the existing formal document on policy on a national level so far, but a new Sweden National Tourism Strategy was announced in 2021 with the aim to reach 2030 (Barents Council, 2021) – however until this point it has not been in place. The Strategy for Sustainable Regional Growth and Attractiveness 2015-20, describes the priorities of the government for regional policy, but up to date it applies in the national level and it acts as guidelines for actors to prioritize regional-level activities, such as sector programming at the national level and the regional-level development strategies. It is also used to support spending evaluations, specifically of national grants, and it monitors and steers the use of central government appropriations for regional growth measures (OECD, 2017).

The strategy was developed through close dialogue with regions and other actors. Despite being associated with concrete objectives, the strategy is non-binding to the relevant actors – following it is purely voluntary – and there are no explicit incentive mechanisms to

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<sup>2</sup> Also available in the official website of the Sami Parliament  
[https://www.sametinget.se/indigenous Sami regional development](https://www.sametinget.se/indigenous_Sami_regional_development)

prompt actors to incorporate these guidelines into their relevant programming. This said, regions can and do use the strategy to help them prioritize regional growth efforts, Regional Development Strategies (RUS) and programming for EU funds. Where the strategy is binding is in term of how national funding is distributed to national agencies and regions (OECD, 2017).

One of the primary measures of the strategy is to facilitate and maintain a continuous dialogue among a wide and diverse array of stakeholders (e.g. municipalities, counties, central government, central government agencies, third sector actors and the private sector) via the Forum on Sustainable Regional Growth and Attractiveness. Another very important policy measure has been to further clarify the roles and responsibilities among the national and regional actors. Regions across Sweden are taking on a greater role in regional development in order to stimulate regional growth. This process is being supported by ongoing dialogue between the national, regional and local levels to build trust between these actors as their roles evolve (OECD, 2017).

The Strategy 2015-20 mentions the Sámi only once in reference to the unique assets of the northern regions and the need to better promote cross-border co-ordination (Regingskansliet, 2015, p. 54[9]).

### **3.3. Finland**

#### **3.3.1. Sámi Parliaments' Policy Documents Related to Tourism.**

In 2018, recognizing the issue of growing misconceptions related to the Sámi culture and identity, and the need to address them to promote more ethical and sustainable models of tourism, the Sámi Parliament in Finland adopted the “Principles for Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism” (Sámediggi, Finland, 2018). The primary purpose of these ethical guidelines is to terminate tourism exploiting Sámi culture and to eliminate incorrect information about the Sámi distributed through tourism. The second priority is to safeguard the cultural practices and traditions of Sámi population outside the travel industry, while presenting opportunities for tourism growth. Since 2018, literature indicates that there are indeed a few efforts undertaken in Finland regarding ethical tourism practices on indigenous territory, or/and performed by indigenous entrepreneurs. The most prominent example is the Inari region in the

finish Lapland, where various Sámi businesses operate under these guidelines, presenting a modern, sustainable and ethical aspect of tourism activities in Sápmi (Vicken and Mullen, 2017).

The Principles for Responsible and Ethically Sustainable Sámi Tourism consist of eight principles that cover different aspects of tourism development and operation. The principles include:

- Respect for Sámi culture and traditions
- Recognition of Sámi rights and ownership
- Participation of Sámi communities in tourism development
- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Protection of Sámi heritage and cultural landscapes
- Employment and training opportunities for Sámi people
- Responsible marketing and communication
- Monitoring and evaluation of tourism impacts

The principles recognize the importance of Sámi culture and traditions in tourism development and operation and emphasize the need to involve Sámi communities in the planning and decision-making process. The principles also highlight the importance of sustainable use of natural resources and protection of Sámi heritage and cultural landscapes.

Following the Principles, the Sámi Parliament complemented this effort by creating a responsible visitors' guidance website<sup>3</sup> containing the word “matkailu” which means “tourism” in the Finnish language. The website is in English and apart from a set of illustrations created by the Sámi artist Sunna Kitti, it also contains a page under the title “Vocabulary of responsible Tourism of Sámi Homeland”<sup>4</sup> where the Sámi Parliament presents its own definitions of the words *authenticity*, *cultural appropriation* and *cultural safety*, *Sámi tourism*, and *sustainable tourism* among others.

**The Future We Want -illustrations based on the vision in the ethical guidelines.**

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<sup>3</sup> <https://samediggi.fi/saamelaismatkailu/en/?privacy=updated>

<sup>4</sup> <https://samediggi.fi/saamelaismatkailu/en/vocabulary/>



Source: <https://www.samediggi.fi/ethical-guidelines-for-Sámi-tourism/?lang=en#toggle-id-3>

The Sámi Parliament's Responsible Sámi Tourism Visitor Guidance with its accompanying materials has been financed by the Finish Ministry of Education and Culture (Sámediggi Finland, 2023).

### **3.3.2. Finland National Strategy**

The Finnish government has established policies and initiatives to support sustainable Indigenous tourism development that takes into account cultural preservation, environmental sustainability, and the participation and consultation of indigenous communities. The main policy document used in this study is the Finland Tourism Strategy 2019 – 2028 (and its update, Finland’s tourism strategy for 2022-2028 revised due to the changed operating environment, including the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's attack on Ukraine), which was developed in collaboration with the Sámi Parliament in Finland (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment of Finland, 2020). The document which is named ‘Achieving more together – sustainable growth and renewal in Finnish tourism’, mentions the words *cultural heritage*, *sustainable consideration* and *responsible productisation* of culture (p39), and has a “cultural tourism” section, but does not mention the Sámi. However it was complemented with the guidelines on Ethical Tourism produced by the Sámi Parliament in Finland and therefore even though the wording is not specific on Sámi or indigenous tourism these are explicitly mentioned in the Sámi Parliament document and the national authorities refer to this.

### **3.4. Summing up**

This chapter contains the descriptive analysis of the selected documents. Apart of explaining what each document is about, I indicate specific wording in the text that corresponds to the key terms useful for the thematic analysis that follows.

## **4. Thematic Analysis**

After conducting the descriptive analysis of the studied documents, we can observe that even though it is not always included in the title, Sámi tourism has become an increasingly important topic in recent years, and is somehow mentioned both in the Sámi Parliament policy documents as well as all of the national tourism strategies. In this chapter, we conduct a thematic analysis of the documents. Our aim is to identify key themes that emerge from these documents and to examine how the Sámi perspectives on tourism development are expressed in the text, and to what extent have the Sámi Parliaments managed to influence the formation of the National Tourism Strategies for Norway, Sweden and Finland.

By analyzing the Sámi Parliament's policy documents and national Tourism Strategy documents related to indigenous Sámi tourism, we can gain valuable insights into the Sámi policies on tourism development and the formally expressed positions of the Sámi Parliaments on what they consider important for achieving sustainable and culturally respectful tourism.

## 4.1. Findings from the Sámi Parliament Documents

### 1.1.2 4.1.1 Key Themes

By carefully studying the policy documents deriving from the Sámi Parliaments we see that the key themes emerging from the descriptive analysis in the previous chapter include:

**The importance of sustainability:** The documents emphasize the need for *sustainable tourism* that respects the environment and local *cultures*, and that benefits the Sámi communities in a long-term perspective. *Sustainability* is considered a critical aspect of tourism development, and the documents stress the importance of promoting sustainable tourism practices that benefit both the Sámi communities and the environment.

**The role of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage in terms of protection and authenticity:** The documents highlight the significance of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage as important assets for the Sámi communities, which should be protected and promoted through tourism. The challenges of balancing tourism development with cultural and environmental preservation emerge as an issue of protection against the potential conflicts between tourism development and the need to preserve Sámi lands, cultures, and ways of life. The issue of the culture being expressed in an authentic manner is highlighted and in several documents there is a clear distinction amongst Sámi tourism and other forms of tourism. *Cultural authenticity* and *protection* emerges from our analysis. It is very interesting that the Finish Sámi Parliament has an official vocabulary website with its own definition of Sámi Culture<sup>5</sup> and *authenticity* described as “indigenous people’s own vision and view of authenticity as well as what and how their own culture is wanted to be seen and presented, utilised and commercialized.”<sup>6</sup> The documents also emphasize the value of indigenous tourism

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<sup>5</sup> <https://samediggi.fi/saamelaismatkailu/en/vocabulary/#sami-culture>

<sup>6</sup> <https://samediggi.fi/saamelaismatkailu/en/vocabulary/>



as a means of preserving and promoting indigenous cultures and traditions while contributing to the local economy. As well, the documents recognize the importance of protecting cultural heritage and authenticity in tourism development, as well as the need for sustainable tourism practices that respect the environment and local communities.

**The need for self-determination and participation:** Through our analysis it is clear that the concept of *self-determination* is essential for the Sámi, as it emphasizes their right to make decisions about their own lives, including tourism development. The Sámi Parliaments policy documents highlight the importance of involving Sámi communities in decision-making processes and ensuring their participation in tourism development. The need for self-determination is expressed in the sense that the Sámi parliaments consider extremely important that they are allowed to develop a policy related to them “in their own terms”. In the Sami Parliament documents participation is also of great importance and mentioned quite thoroughly. The Sámi Parliament in Norway refers to past experience related to participation and how the past becomes visible through creating new narratives that contribute to strengthen Sámi communities allowing them to actively participate in the history they are part of. In the same document the Sámi Parliament of Norway expresses its willingness to facilitate processes related to participation of Sámi operators in formulating channels of cooperation with all the relevant stakeholders in the tourism industry. Similar views are expressed in the other two Parliaments’ documents with the Swedish parliament asking for Sámi industries to be considered strong partners and included in tourism development initiatives.

### **1.1.3 4.1.2 A New Way of Conveying the Message**

It is important to take note that the Sámi Parliament in Finland in the “Responsible Visitors’ Guide to World of Sámi Culture and Sámi Homeland in Finland” which accompanies their Ethical Sami Tourism guidelines, uses visualizations by the Sámi artist, Sunna Kittí. They do this in order to clarify and exemplify the ethical guidelines’ message of how to behave and act, to secure more responsible and ethically sustainable future in Sámi Homeland, and support the continuation of Sámi culture. This is another expression of the need for self-determination and culture protection, as the Sámi Parliament takes control of how tourists should be addressing indigenous Sámi tourism. And they do that, not only by choosing to tell the story, but also

choosing *how* the story is told, by creating a common language that can be understood in any context.

Why is it important to visualize and how does this help in terms of developing a common language and a common understanding? The answer lies in the use of “storytelling” which Indigenous Peoples have valued for centuries, as a way of conveying history and knowledge through their families and communities (Chan, 2021). By using the illustration the Sámi Parliament in Finland attempts to tell the story in a way that it is easily absorbed and comprehended regardless of the background on the receiver. It is a way to help people understand lived experiences, when the existing language or level of experience is not capable of adequately describing the situation the Sápmi are in. Moreover, the storytelling process – here with visuals - can be a way of reclaiming identity and the story, rather than being defined and storied by others (Chan, 2021). A prominent example is the illustration: “The future we want” available on the Finnish Sámi Parliament website, where the viewer can move the arrow in a way that illustrates the current and the desired situation in Finish Sápmi, without words (Image, 2)

**Image 2: “The future we want”**



<https://www.samediggi.fi/2022/05/16/discover-responsible-visitors-guidance-to-sami-culture-and-sami-homeland-in-finland/?lang=en>

#### **1.1.4 4.1.3. Tourism as an Emerging Livelihood for the Sámi.**

In the document “Šattolas Sápmi - Sustainable business development - Revision of the Sami Parliament report”, the Norwegian Sámi Parliament's proposal for the business report, the chapter on tourism and creative industries, takes one start from the point that both tourism and creative industries are characterized by the fact that Sámi knowledge, language and way of life constitute the fundamental values in these two different but intertwined business areas. Sámi businesses are considered important mediators of, and mediation arenas for, Sámi culture. This indicates that Sámi tourism is all about something more than an industry that contributes to growth and value creation in Sámi areas. However, though Sámi tourism is considered important enough as to be discussed in reports, it has not taken the extent of publicity that we see in the Finish Sámi Parliament, it does not have a dedicated strategy or dedicated guidelines.

The Swedish Sámi Parliament officially acknowledges that tourism is an important industry that allows the Sámi to remain in Sápmi and conduct their traditional livelihoods (particularly reindeer herding), yet there is no document solely dedicated to tourism. (Müller & Huuva, 2009). In fact, to this day and being fully aware of the limitations of this research and my lack of knowledge in the languages of the documents, I did not find any publicly available document coming from any of the Sámi Parliaments with the title “Sámi Tourism Strategy” or something similar, solely dedicated to indigenous or Sámi tourism.

However, it is clear from the documents that indigenous Sámi tourism is not less important for the Sámi Parliaments. It is alternatively treated as part of a combined livelihood, where tourism is a secondary form of income in times when traditional forms such as reindeer herding are not enough. It is also a way for the Sámi to be able to remain in their traditional lands and continue to engage in their traditional way of life, as they manage to sustain themselves also through tourism, in times and places when this would otherwise not be feasible.

#### **4.2. Findings through the National Tourism Strategies**

In contrast to the Sámi Parliaments, the National Tourism Strategies of Norway, Sweden, and Finland generally do not include the same level of emphasis on Indigenous participation, self-determination, cultural authenticity and protection, sustainability, and diversity that are reflected in the Sámi Parliament documents. This does not mean that there is no recognition of Indigenous tourism in these strategies, but more that it is often in a more general or cursory

way, and there is less emphasis on the specific concerns and priorities of Indigenous communities. However, even if not mentioned with the exact same wording – and this is an important issue to discuss regarding unanimity of the language used – the national policies seem to reflect to a certain extent the needs and suggestions of the Sámi people and that is made possible due to the involvement of the Sámi Parliaments in their crafting. The extent varies from country to country.

#### **4.2.1. Norway**

The National Tourism Strategy 2030, comes with a subheading that clearly indicates its scope: “Big Impact – Small Footprint”. Its aim is to set out a series of measures to ensure development of a more *sustainable* and *profitable* tourism sector by 3030. (OECD, 2022). The term “green tourism” comes up in the documents but is not associated with indigenous tourism, and while *diversity* appears in a headline, it is not used in the Sámi Parliament context, but indicates the variety of experiences that need to be offered generally by the tourism sector in Norway, including other forms of tourism. However in page 34, the influence of the Sámi parliament can be clearly seen, as the Strategy recognizes officially that “the indigenous culture has been under pressure for a long time and is particularly vulnerable.” The next sentence is particularly important as Sámi tourism is explicitly mentioned, and the theme of self-determination, involvement and control is expressed: “The Sámi tourism industry offers potential for growth, but it is important for it to be allowed to develop and mature on its own terms”.

The National Tourism Strategy document also recognizes the importance of diversity in tourism development, even when it is not explicitly mentioned in that sense, but can be derived by wording discussing promotion of cultural diversity and the development of diverse tourism products and experiences. In the chapter on Cultural tourism in Sápmi, the Sámi Parliament has managed to put forward an objective statement to facilitate for a future-oriented development of Sámi tourism which connects tourism, art, culture and knowledge. In the National Tourism Strategy 2030 this work is followed up through the” Program for innovative cultural experiences” with the purpose to release innovative projects and stimulate the development of commercial concepts. These can be seen as particularly interesting for future projects in Sápmi.

It is also important to note that Sámi tourism is considered as a sub strategy (p61) and under the heading 8: “Sámi tourism” there is a set of which include *sustainable Sámi tourism*

and the building up of *sustainable companies* working with *Sámi tourism*. The fact that the responsible stakeholder to evaluate whether these goals are met is the Sámi Parliament, demonstrate that the National Strategy considers it an important collaborator.

#### **4.2.2. Sweden**

The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, Tillväxtverket, is responsible for developing tourism at national level, and to create the National Strategy 2015-20 it received many contributions and ideas from a wide range of interests relating to tourism growth, entrepreneurship and employment through a public inquiry (OECD, 2018). The Sámi Parliament was included and amongst other actors, was encouraged to mobilize their combined efforts for the benefit of the tourism and hospitality sector.

Beyond cross-border collaboration, other elements of the National Strategy 2015-20 which are of particular importance for Sámi affairs are entrepreneurship and business development and support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs – given that Sámi businesses tend to be small and can face challenges accessing capita) alongside culture, leisure and tourism policies (OECD, 2019).

The policy priority for Sweden today, is to develop a long-term strategy to run until 2030 that promotes sustainable tourism development and provides a platform to implement actions that meets both national and global challenges (OECD, 2022). This new Sweden Tourism Strategy has been announced since 2021 but has not yet been placed in full force and the government receives criticism over it. However both documents mention as *sustainable development* a goal and it seems that the new strategy represents the efforts of Sweden to align with the Agenda 2030 goals. The policy must therefore contribute to the transition to a modern and sustainable welfare state. As it is mentioned in the new text in Swedish language “the work with promoting equality, integration and diversity and other social dimensions is important. Women and men must have the same opportunities to achieve influence in the development work and gain access to development resources”. This seems as an opportunity for the Sámi to participate more in the tourism development policy creation, a need already expressed by the Sámi Parliament in Sweden. But this is yet to be seen, as in Sweden, the policy documents that mention cultural tourism and Sámi dimensions do exist, but the implementation of the suggestions has been scarce. It is also in Sweden that the Sámi companies involved in tourism

emphasize the need for dialogue and communication and, one can argue, public leadership (Olsen et al, 2019).

However, there is no mention in the Strategy itself of any form of Sámi control or self-determination related to tourism development. But there is a regulation for regional growth (Förordning (2017:583) om regionalt tillväxtarbete) which states that relevant actors at the national, regional and local level should be *involved* in the cross-sectoral work on regional growth; that the regional strategic plans should be developed *with relevant actors* and; that the finalized plan must be sent to them – e.g. including the Sametinget (OECD, 2022). However, this is by no means satisfactory for the Sámi Parliament and the aspirations expressed through its policy documents so far.

### **4.2.3. Finland**

The Finish Tourism Strategy 2019 – 2028 comes with the subheading “Achieving More Together – Sustainable Growth and Renewal in Finish Tourism. The strategy was developed through a collaboration between the Finnish Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and a range of stakeholders, including tourism businesses, regional development agencies, and various interest groups, including the Sámi Parliament. The Sámi Parliament was invited to participate in the process and provided input on the development of the strategy.

Even though the wording in the Finland Tourism Strategy 2019-2028 is rather general it seems that it does take Sámi considerations into account and broadly mentions the importance of promoting *sustainable tourism* that respects *culture* and *heritage*. For example, the strategy states that one of its objectives is to "increase the value of cultural heritage and diverse cultures as tourism products and to ensure that they are appropriately presented and promoted," and by the visibility and funding the national government has provided to the development of the Ethical guidelines for Sámi tourism it can be derived that the Strategy also means the Sámi culture. The strategy also highlights the importance of collaboration with local communities in tourism development, stating that "the local residents and communities should benefit from tourism in the form of economic, social and cultural development."

Moreover, the strategy identifies several specific actions that could easily relate to Sámi tourism, such as promoting cultural experiences, improving the accessibility of cultural sites and events, and supporting the development of tourism products. In general, the strategy

emphasizes the importance of *sustainable* and *responsible* tourism that takes into account the needs and perspectives of local communities, and there is no reason to assume that this does not include the Sámi. Actually, according to the strategy “sustainable tourism” means tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of tourists, tourism enterprises, the environment and host communities, meaning that the Sámi are not excluded. The term *socio-cultural responsibility* is noted, and explained as the inclusion of activities that promote the development of the host society “based on its own values and needs, conserving and strengthening culture and cultural heritage”. This, can be interpreted as an inclusive for the Sámi wording even though they are not mentioned specifically.

It is also important to note that there seems to be an increasingly good collaboration between the National government and the Sámi Parliament regarding indigenous Sámi tourism. On the official national site on tourism “Visit Finland” there is a dedicated page named “Meet the Sámi”, where visitors are asked to “be respectful when visiting sacred places and heritage sites” and “respect the locals’ privacy”. But more importantly, there is a direct link to the Sámi Parliament’s website and the Ethical Guidelines for Sámi tourism with the statement “Sámi culture has often been commercialized and misappropriated for monetary gain, so please be sure you’re learning about and visiting with the Sámi in a respectful, ethical way” leading to it.<sup>7</sup> This is a distinction from both Visit Norway: and “Visit Sweden”.

### **4.3. Findings on the Key Terms Through the Literature**

#### **4.3.1. Findings on Sustainability**

The literature on sustainability in indigenous tourism has emphasized the importance of balancing economic development with the protection of cultural and natural resources. According to the literature sustainable tourism development should be based on a holistic approach that considers the economic, social, and environmental impacts of tourism activities on indigenous communities. Studies argue that sustainable tourism development for the

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.visitfinland.com/en/articles/meet-the-sami/>

Indigenous People should be based on the principles of eco-cultural tourism, which involves the protection of natural and cultural resources and the promotion of sustainable tourism practices. The literature highlights the importance of sustainable tourism development which is relevant also for the Sámi people, particularly in the context of reindeer herding. In the literature it is suggested that it can be beneficial if tourism activities are developed in collaboration with Sámi communities, and that the impacts of tourism on reindeer herding should be carefully considered to ensure sustainability (Höckert, 2015; Höckert, 2018; Lee et al., 2017; Saari et al, 2020; Saarinen, 2006; Soinio & Birkeland, 2014; Viken, 2019).

#### **4.3.2. Findings on Diversity**

The importance of diversity in indigenous tourism policies is a theme that emerges in literature in Finland as well as Norway and Sweden. Indigenous tourism in Finland is presented as being characterized by a diverse range of activities and experiences, including reindeer herding, handicrafts, and cultural events and that is exactly what the 4Hs demonstrate (Smith, 1996). The Inari region represents an excellent example of this: lake Inari and the surrounding region represents the habitat, involves the heritage (traditions and cultural events taking place certain times of the year), offers the history of the place (Sámi sacrificial island, “Ukko’s rock”) and handicrafts are widely sold in the region, created on the spot. Pietikäinen and Kelly-Holmes (2011) suggest that if a product is not diverse enough, it is not worth buying from a touristic standpoint. Their article illustrates how Sámi languages and well-known Sámi brands, such as the Duodji handicraft label, are used to authenticate something as Sámi (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes, 2011) and the more diversity is offered in Sámi tourism experiences, the more attractive they are. Finally, Laverack and Thangphet, (2009) emphasize the importance of recognizing the diversity of indigenous communities in tourism development, suggesting that tourism operators should take a community-based approach that involves the participation of different indigenous communities.

#### **4.3.3. Findings on Self-Determination**

The literature related to indigenous tourism policy indicates that policy development should be based on a collaborative approach that involves indigenous communities, tourism stakeholders, and policymakers. The participatory approach can help integrate indigenous perspectives and knowledge into tourism policy development thus ensuring that the policies produced are culturally appropriate and sustainable. By doing so, the goal of bringing policy related to



Indigenous Peoples one step closer to the principles of self-determination and one's control over their future, can begin to be realized (Carr et al, 2016; Mansor et al, 2019; Nielsen & Wilson, 2012; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008).

In the literature there exist a variety of examples regarding tourism and how it can support indigenous community self-determination in the sense control and autonomy over cultural narratives, values, and socio-economic development. It also indicated that local communities are no longer only seen as passive “hosts” but that tourism activity can be perceived both as an opportunity and a challenge (Viken & Müller, 2017). There are also studies that illustrate that indigenous tourism businesses and stakeholders can take control of how they are represented “in complex, multiple, and hybridized ways” (Kramvig & Førde, 2020, pp. 195-197).

#### **4.3.4. Findings on Cultural Authenticity and Protection**

The literature on cultural protection in indigenous tourism in the Nordics presents the importance of collaboration between indigenous communities and tourism stakeholders in the development of cultural protection policies and practices (de Bernardi, 2019; Ruhanen & Whitford, 2019; Mazzullo, 2022). Several studies have appeared critical towards the way indigenous populations are portrayed so that they are more attractive for tourist, creating an image that no longer corresponds to the modern reality and way of life. For example a cultural marker such as Sámi traditional clothing can be used in a way to create “difference” and attract more visitors. Examples can be found also with traditional activities, traditional tents or reindeer herds (Viken & Müller, 2017).

The general marketing representation of the Sámi appears problematic (Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016; Olsen, 2006; Saarinen, 1999). Especially in Lapland, tourism exploiting Sámi culture still exists. This type of exploitative tourism happens when different tourism stakeholders come from outside the Sámi community and utilize or exploit elements connected or referential to Sámi culture in tourism services or products without actual connection to the Sámi community and deeper understanding of Sámi culture. Often, tourism exploiting Sámi culture is offensive, distributes both misinformation and disinformation that strengthens the pre-existing stereotypes, without the voice or vision of the Sámi themselves. Faced with this reality, they have been expresses their discomfort when their culture is presented in a way that

falls into certain stereotypes, that are false, or everyday life expressions of their culture are dealt as something “exotic” and treated like an attraction (Pettersson & Viken, 2007).

Tourism is also a way for the Sámi to re-negotiate their identities (Tuulentie, 2006) sometimes making a conscious choice to diversify themselves as a way to attract tourists (Viken & Müller, 2017). But this is under condition that as indigenous populations, they have control of their representations and tourism activities involving their culture, in the sense that they can represent themselves and their culture as they see fit (de Bernardi, 2019). However, the development of tourism in Scandinavia is still controlled by nonindigenous institutions (Viken & Müller, 2017) and the Sámi are also divided about their community’s role in tourism, since some see the advantages of commercialization, while others see it as a threat to the culture authenticity (Pettersson & Viken, 2007). Cultural commoditization or commercialization is overall an important issue. One example is whether or not to adapt certain types of cultural expressions (such as the Sámi knife and special cups, called *guksis*) for tourism purposes (Viken & Müller, 2017). The general argument is that commoditization brought by tourism potentially sabotages local cultures.

An interesting view of *authenticity* emerging from the bibliography is the view of authenticity based on compromise. This view allows for principles of authentication to be applied, as well as leaving room for subjective interpretations and a certain performance of one’s heritage. The compromise is also expressed in the practical situation of Sámi tourism entrepreneurs, which are often a constant fluctuation and contain conflicts related to their private lives, their belonging to the Sámi community (with its social and political implications), and their role as reindeer herders (Åhrén, 2008; Leu & Müller, 2016; Tuulentie, 2006; Viken, 2006). Furthermore, they are also engaged in conflicts regarding the involvement of their cultural heritage in tourism and varying opinions about it (Pettersson & Viken, 2007).

#### **4.3.5. Indigenous Sámi Tourism versus Other Forms.**

Emerging from the analysis, it is important to discuss the distinction between indigenous Sámi tourism and other forms of tourism such as adventure tourism, or nature based tourism. What can be derived from the literature review is that in the latest years the attention on the topic has been directed more and more to an increase in the involvement of Indigenous Peoples when it

comes to participating in and controlling tourism development (Butler, 2021; Nelson, 2016). This increased participation can lead to an expansion of the role of tourism from a simple source of income to one of the means to strengthen the indigenous political position in the sense of control over tourism policy development (Butler, 2021).

Several studies have highlighted the potential benefits of indigenous tourism in the Arctic for economic development and cultural preservation. Indigenous tourism has also been linked to improved community well-being and social cohesion in indigenous communities (de Bernardi, Kugapi & Lüthje, 2017)). However, there are also concerns that indigenous tourism can lead to cultural commodification, loss of traditional knowledge, and negative impacts on the environment (Scherrer, 2018).

#### **4.3.6. How the Literature Review Helps Answer the Research Question**

From the findings on this literature review, it is clear that the issues of self-determination and participation, cultural authenticity and protection, sustainability and diversity represent *challenges* that need to be addressed when creating tourism policy. The literature review also demonstrates that Indigenous Peoples aspirations on policy may not very often reflected in policies coming from the national level (Olsen, 2019).

Both my data and the reviewed scholarly literature seem to be indicative that when policy development is taking place in the national level in the three studied countries, indigenous Sámi tourism is not promoted in a way that would fulfill its best potential and its true nature, but it is rather forced to fit into a certain development “mold”. On this field both the National Governments and the Sámi Parliaments need to work more, and together in order to make progress.

## **5. Conclusions**

This thesis has conducted an examination of selected Sámi Parliaments policy documents and National Strategy documents related to indigenous and Sámi tourism in Norway, Sweden and Finland, with the aim to answer the question of what are the key themes of the policy documents of the Sámi Parliaments related to indigenous tourism in Norway, Sweden, and Finland and how are they reflected in the National Strategies.

Through literature review, descriptive analysis, and thematic analysis, this study has identified that the key themes indeed emerge from these documents and to a certain extent these are reflected in the National Strategies. During the thematic analysis chapter we had the opportunity to elaborate on issues that emerge and are useful to discuss so that this thesis, combined with further research on the field, can contribute to tourism policy studies.

Regarding the key themes, this research suggests that policy development in the area of indigenous tourism is evolving, with a focus deriving mainly from the Sámi side on promoting self-determination and participation, cultural authenticity and protection, sustainability and diversity. The themes were not equally present in the exact wording in the National Strategies. However, it cannot be argued that the key themes are ignored in the National Strategies, but alternatively they are reflected to a different degree, with Norway being the country where the Sámi Parliament has managed to achieve a great deal of mentions in the text. Finland is the country where there is significant progress in collaboration between the Sámi Parliament and the National authorities. Also, the fact that the Swedish Sámi Parliament contributed to the 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle universal periodic review of Sweden in which it expresses concerns on self-determination and the willingness to further influence decisions is a first step towards improvement. Combined with the conduction of the SWOT analysis for Sweden's Rural Program, these initiatives could indicate that there is a slow progress in further including the Sápmi in policy formation. Overall, in terms of visibility, Finland seems to have taken a great step in promoting Sámi tourism and giving the Sámi control over the narrative. The collaboration between the national government and the Sámi Parliament on the issue of Ethical guidelines for Sámi Tourism might set an example for the rest of the Nordics.

Applying the 4H approach, the term *sustainable tourism* seems to be used much more in policy documents produced from the national governments. The Sámi Parliaments in their use of the term sustainable tourism, are making it clear through their documents that the indigenous Sámi tourism they envision, requires particular sensitivity to issues of cultural authenticity, respect for indigenous culture, and the involvement and benefits of the indigenous community, which may not always be a primary focus of sustainable tourism initiatives and policy produced by the governments. However, the National States through their policy development clearly support sustainable development as a whole and this trait, if influenced adequately by the Sámi Parliaments or other institutions or initiatives deriving from the Sámi

can potentially help to ensure that the Sápmi are able to benefit from the growth of the tourism industry in the studied countries, while preserving their cultural heritage and natural resources.

All in all, the development of policies related to Indigenous tourism in Norway, Sweden, and Finland is complex and requires careful consideration of cultural, economic, and environmental factors. The Sámi people themselves have complicated and often ambivalent attitudes toward tourism development, which reflects the need for effective consultation and participation in policy-making processes.

A reality that is now more on the rise than ever, tourism growth in the Arctic has both advantageous and negative effects on the local communities, but for indigenous residents it tends to generate concern. It is therefore essential to be aware of the overall policy developments regarding tourism, in areas where indigenous people live and/or exercise their economic activities. It is important to observe in what ways indigenous culture becomes used and transformed in tourism settings and to what extent tourism is occurring in a respectful manner, recognizing the indigenous historical, political and socio-cultural identity of a certain region (Cassel, 2019).

Overall, the studied policies and initiatives in Norway, Sweden, and Finland demonstrate a level of commitment to supporting the aspirations of the Sámi and promoting indigenous tourism. It seems that the Sámi Parliament's efforts to promote the participation of the Sámi people in tourism development have been successful to some extent, but that there is still work to be done to ensure that the interests and rights of the Sámi people are fully respected in tourism planning and development as by studying the national governments' approaches, one can argue that they do not go far enough in addressing the challenges facing Sámi tourism. And as long as, challenges remain in ensuring that the Sámi have meaningful control over their own cultural and economic development, and that tourism development is sustainable and respectful of indigenous cultures and traditions in the way the Sámi envision it, the struggle for more inclusion, more participation, more authenticity, more self-determination will remain very much real, as is proved by the analysis of this thesis.

Further research is needed to explore the effectiveness of current policies and the potential for future policy interventions that support sustainable Indigenous tourism development in the

Arctic region. Perhaps the 4h approach could be a starting point for policy makers when they design policy on indigenous land.

And even more research needs to be undertaken on this issue in the Greek context, as the people residing in remote, island or mountain communities do not have the indigenous status as described by the UN. They cannot make use of any international treaties or relevant institutions to fortify their position when it comes to being engaged in tourism development. Of course in a perfect reality they do not need it, as they are residents of a Democracy, their views, needs and aspirations for the future being completely portrayed in their representative elected government's decisions. However, one would be naïve to think that in one of Europe's most touristic destinations, people's needs are not sacrificed in the temple of economic development, especially in a country which struggles financially for more than a decade. It only remains to be seen whether remote Greek communities will eventually find a way to have control over tourism development policy creation. The Sámi who have fought all their lives for their values, land and quality of life can become an example of resistance and diplomacy in equal proportions.

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