



UIT

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Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

**“Now the Work Begins”**

*Gender Equality in Sámi Politics*

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## Abstract

This study examines gender equality in Sámi politics after 2005, the year the Sámi Parliament achieved balanced gender representation. The project seeks to answer the question: Within the context of Sámi politics, how is gender equality represented and addressed? To answer this question, the study is based on official documents by the Sámi Parliament and the women's organization Sámi NissonForum, as well as six semi-structured interviews with Sámi politicians and Sámi women's activists. Qualitative content analysis is the chosen tool utilized to analyze the respective data, which is divided into two separate sections, firstly a document analysis, and secondly an analysis of the interviews. The findings in this study indicate that gender equality still has a relevant position in Sámi politics, and has become a more integrated part in the work of the Sámi Parliament after 2005. Further, the findings suggest that the political field of equality has expanded after the achievement of gender balanced representation, and issues concerning sexual orientations and domestic violence are included. Also, the study findings reveal that gender equality as a concept has been developed and contextualized within a Sámi political framework, where the concept self-determination is explored through a gender perspective.

*Keywords:* gender equality, women, Sámi Parliament, Sámi politics, indigenous people.

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## Chapter 1. Introduction

“This is embarrassing. It shows that the council does not distinguish between: 1) The number of women participating in Alta, representing whichever group or cause 2) Feminists working with women and gender issues and getting this highlighted have acquired expertise and knowledge.” (Lindi, Halonen, Holm, Myrhaug & Blind, 2013, p. 2). This excerpt is from a press release by the board members of a Sámi women’s organization called Sámi NissonForum (Sámi Women’s Forum), questioning the Sámi Parliamentary Council’s understanding of representation.

The number of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament was a dominant issue in the debate on gender equality in Sámi politics until the election of 2005. The result of this election was the achievement of gender balanced representation (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 77), and thus, one of the main issues concerning gender equality was solved, namely political representation. Kuokkanen (2007), however, questions the significance of this percentage and states that one “needs to look beyond numbers and percentages” (p. 77) and that gender balanced representation is no guarantee for gender equality. This illustrates that the debate on gender equality has changed, and that the focus of the debate has changed as well. The excerpt from Lindi et al. (2013) indicates that there are still conflicting issues to be solved, but that the Sámi Parliament is not addressing this resolutely. Before exploring this issue further, a look at history will help in setting the scene and context of this study.

The Sámi people are an indigenous people who reside in four different countries, namely Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway, and the focus of this paper will be on the latter. The earlier Norwegian policies concerning minorities, which included the Sámi people, aimed at assimilating them into the Norwegian majority society. This was a process of state building, where all residents within the territorial borders were to become Norwegians. After the Second World War the ethnopolitical movement grew stronger and in the 1970s the focus on land rights increased (Minde, 2005, p. 14-16). According to Henry Minde (2003, p. 91), this was due to the ongoing conflict within Norway at that time called the Alta-Kautokeino Conflict. This conflict was prompted by a decision by the Norwegian government in 1978 to build a hydro-electric power plant that would leave a great area of land that was utilized as reindeer herding pastures under water (Kuokkanen, 2011, p. 42).

The Sámi ethnopolitical movement was not able to stop the building of the hydro-electric power plan, but limited the inclusion of the village of Máze. Beatrice Halsaa (2013a, p. 218-

219) finds that the movement gained a new alliance partner in the Norwegian state which went from having not ratified the International Labour Organization's (ILO) convention no. 107 of 1957 to both promoting and being the first state to ratify the revised ILO convention no. 169 of 1989. One of the consequences of this conflict was the establishment of Sámediggi, or the Sámi Parliament, in 1989 which gained an advisory role to the Norwegian Parliament on matters concerning the Sámi people (Minde, 2005, p. 23). From this moment on, Sámi politics were institutionalized and a new channel of political participation opened up. According to (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 226), the expanded political space contributed to bigger opportunities for women to question internal issues such as gender equality within Sámi society without risking dividing the ethnopolitical movement into different political fragments.

From the establishment of the Sámi Parliament to the fourth parliamentary period in 2001-2005 the decreasing number of female representatives was questioned (Pettersen, Eikjok & Keskitalo, 2002). The first parliamentary period with 33% to the fourth period with 18 % showed a significant drop which concerned both the Sámi Parliament and the Sámi women's organizations (Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 9; Pettersen, 2005, p. 260; Stordahl, 2003, p. 221). The low number of female representatives was a challenge to both the legitimacy and representation of the Sámi Parliament (Stordahl, 2003, p. 221), and in 1996 the Sámi Parliament initiated a three year long project called the Woman Project (Stordahl, 2003, p. 222), which would later lead to an institutional concern about gender equality through the Parliament's Action Plans and Evaluations of gender equality in Sámi politics.

Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, p. 77) questions the significance of gender balanced representation and whether such an achievement is capable of changing political practices and procedures. Examining the debate on gender equality in Sámi politics from the time of the election of 2005 until recent times can provide an illustration of the development of such a debate.

## **Problem Statement and Research Questions**

This study seeks to explore gender equality in Sámi politics and how this topical issue has developed since the election of 2005. By exploring harmony and contrasts between political representation and content in politics, this project hopes to contribute to a deeper understanding of how gender balanced representation has influenced Sámi gender equality politics as such. The study aims to achieve this by examining documents that address the topic

of gender equality in Sámi politics, as well as voicing the narratives of a number of Sámi politicians and activists. To lead this study, the following research question is posed: Within the context of Sámi politics, how is gender equality represented and addressed?

In order to answer this question, two tasks will be conducted where the first is to map the process that resulted to gender balanced representation in the Sámi Parliament. The second task is to analyze the debate on gender equality on the basis of this achievement.

## **Previous Research**

The issue of women's situation within the indigenous Sámi people has been a topic of discussion, both in media and in academic research, internationally as well as nationally. Vigdis Stordahl (1990a) examined the low number of female Sámi leaders in Sámi organizations and institutions. Others have studied women's organizations and Sámi activism, both in relation to the majority society and to the internal dynamics of the Sámi society itself (Sára, 1990; Stordahl, 1990b; Olakunle, 2006; Halsaa, 2013a). The myth about the strong Sámi woman who was not oppressed like her Norwegian sister, but rather had an equal position vis-à-vis her male counterpart, has been examined by several researchers. Also, the issue of Sámi women being double oppressed is dealt with by some of the same authors (Paulsen, 1984; Eikjok, 2000; Kuokkanen, 2007; Roy, 2005). The low number of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament before the election of 2005 was also the issue of many reports and academic articles published (Eikjok, 2000; Eikjok, 2007; Kuokkanen, 2007; Pettersen et al., 2002).

The Sámi ethno-political movement initiated at the same time as the women's movement in Norway, namely in the 1970s. Beatrice Halsaa (2013a, p. 209) discusses why and how Sámi women mobilized in this time period, and concludes that the Sámi women's movement had a window of opportunity in this particular decade. This was due to the Reindeer Herding Act of 1978 and the Alta-Kautokeino conflict which were so severe for the traditional Sámi way of life, especially for reindeer herders, that claims of rights were expressed and fought for (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 217-218). The latter conflict resulted in the establishment of the Sámi Parliament in 1989. The first Sámi women's organization, Sáráhkka, was also established at this time, and the Sámi women's movement was institutionalized for the first time since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 220; Sára, 1990, p. 52). According to Halsaa

(2013a, p. 223) the Sámi women's movement was integrated in the ethnopolitical movement so as not to split it in the plight for Sámi rights in a critical time.

In "Myths and Realities of Sámi Women", Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, p. 77-78) discusses how a myth about the Sámi woman grew forth in the 1970s where Sámi women were pictured as strong matriarchs, carriers of culture and free of oppression. According to her, the myth was used to distinguish the Sámi society from the Norwegian society as well as a tool against those who questioned the role of women and gender imbalance in society. Both Jorunn Eikjok (2000, p. 39) and Rauna Kuokkanen (2007, p. 73) question this myth and states that Sámi women were facing a double mechanism of oppression, where on one hand they experienced oppression from the majority society for being Sámi, and on the other hand they faced oppression from their male counterparts for being women, and thus they had to fight two struggles at once (Eikjok, 2000, p. 39).

In their study about gender representation, Pettersen et al. (2002) seeks to find out the reasons behind the low and decreasing number of female representatives on the Sámi Parliament. Their main conclusions were about the organization of the electoral system itself, and that women were often bound to traditional roles focusing on children and family (Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 94-95). They also found that in constituencies with high female representation a local consciousness about equal representation was important, and also that in constituencies with small Sámi environments Sámi politics were to a larger degree focused upon than gender politics (Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 95-96). Concerning the organization of the electoral system it was challenging for candidates placed lower on the list to be elected, and since few women were on the top lists in the first place the indirect consequence was that fewer women were elected (Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 96).

In her study *Sametinget som likestillingspolitisk arena* (The Sámi Parliament as an Arena for Gender Equality Politics) Eva Josefsen (2004) examines to what degree the Sámi Parliament as a political body is an arena for articulating gender equality in Sámi society. She finds that among the 39 representatives there were many different understandings of what gender equality is, which she further suggests could help explain why the Sámi Parliament has a simplified equality debate related to gender and gender relations (Josefsen, 2004, p. 73). Other conclusions Josefsen (2004, p. 74,79) draws are that due to the clear women's perspective the Sámi Parliament has on gender equality these types of policies are usually aimed at raising women to the standards of men as the norm rather than addressing the issues and needs of

women themselves. Also, the focus has been on achieving a higher number of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament itself. This is in spite of the Sámi Parliament having a strategic goal of gender mainstreaming in general, which means that all sections of the institution should have a strategy concerning the integration of the gender dimension (Josefsen, 2004, p. 74-75).

According to Josefsen (2004, p. 79-80), the policies on gender equality has had an institutional focus, meaning that the internal conditions of the Sámi Parliament has been given greater attention than society itself. In addition, these policies consist of single and concrete policies, with the exception of achieving gender balance among its representatives. Josefsen (2004, p. 85) therefore suggests that gender equality may have a symbolic value, in where the actual execution of the policies are not highly prioritized. Josefsen (2004) analyzed a plenary session of the Sámi Parliament, the Action Plan for gender Equality of 1991-2001 and the Evaluations of 2001, 2002 and 2004. Stordahl (2003) also analyzed this Action Plan as well as the Evaluations of 2001 and 2002, which will be presented and discussed further in Chapter 2 together with Josefsen's (2004) analysis of these documents.

Furthermore, in 2012, Ketil Lenert Hansen published a report on gender equality in Sámi society based on statistics. The report's findings were focused on differences in education, health and discrimination, both between men and women, but also between the Sámi and Norwegian populations in the northern parts of Norway. This report has contributed to a statistical foundation that may be used for future research (Hansen 2012).

The issue of women and the Sámi Parliament as well as the Sámi society, has been questioned by different researchers. From the establishment of the Sámi Parliament in 1989 up to the election of 2005 the question about equal gender representation was widely discussed, and several reports and academic articles were concerned about this matter (Eikjok, 2004; Pettersen et al., 2002; Pettersen, 2005; Josefsen, 2004). However, after the election of 2005, which resulted in 50 % female representation, scarce material on gender equality in the Sámi Parliament exists. Kuokkanen (2007, p. 77) addressed this issue and stated that numbers and percentages, although important, are not sufficient to say whether actual gender equality and change have been achieved.

## **Methodology and Data**

The focus area of the study is Sámi politics in the Sami Parliament in Norway. This includes the perspectives of Sami women's organizations. Qualitative content analysis is the chosen tool to analyze the data, which is divided into two separate sections, firstly a document analysis, and secondly an analysis of the interviews with a thematic approach. As Alan Bryman (2012, p. 469) mentions, the interview is one of the most utilized methods in qualitative research. The interviews made in this project were done in two places, Karasjok and Tromsø in Northern Norway. The full extension of the fieldwork included a fieldtrip to Karasjok, where the Sami Parliament is located, during the opening plenary session in October 2013, as well as participation in two conferences. The first was held by the Sami Parliament in June 2013 about gender equality and women's right to suffrage, and the second by the women's organization Sámi NissonForum in Tromsø in October 2013. In addition to interviews, document analysis has been chosen as a method where official documents from both the Sámi Parliament as well as from private sources are analyzed.

The nature of the fieldwork opens up for a consideration of the researcher's role. Bryman (2012, p. 441-444) discusses the differences between being a complete participant, where the researcher's identity is unknown to the informants, and being a complete observer, where the researcher does not interact with the informants. Between these two categories are the roles of participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant, where in the former there is a high level of interaction and participation in the society of the informants, while the latter includes a lower level of observation and absolutely no participation, and where the interaction is mainly done in the form of interviews (Bryman 2012, p. 443). As Bryman (2012, p. 441) states being a participant-as-observer more accurately describes the role of the researcher in an ethnographic setting, whilst the role as observer-as-participant can be discussed whether it should be considered ethnography or not. Concerning this project, the participation of the researcher was very low and it will therefore not be labeled as ethnography. However, the role of the researcher nevertheless is observer-as-participant since interview as a method does require some level of interaction with the informants (Bryman 2012, p. 443).

Concerning the selection of informants, King and Horrocks (2010, p. 29-30) discuss certain options, where one is theoretical sampling in grounded theory and another is targeted sampling which they refer to as purposive sampling. Due to the nature of the project, where the focus is on Sámi politics, theoretical sampling was not viewed as purposeful as it requires

an initial sampling of informants and a preliminary analysis of data in order to specify particular issues to continue one's research afterwards (Dalen 2011, p. 41-42; King and Horrocks 2010, p. 30). Concerns about time limitations and the politicians' schedules in an election campaign in 2013 made theoretical sampling less purposeful than purposive sampling. The choice of the latter type of sampling was motivated by the speech held by Sámi NissonForum for the *Global Indigenous Preparatory Conference for the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples 2014* where the issue of gender equality was questioned (Lindi et al., 2013). In this sense a theoretical sampling was not necessary as a particular issue was highlighted as potentially problematic by one of the women's organizations.

Concerning the informants, they were elected and recruited due to a variety of aspects (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 29) such as their relation to the Sámi Parliament and Sámi politics, their focus in political and activist work life, and to a certain degree their age and gender. The recruitment process was done in a direct manner without any major challenges. As King and Horrocks (2010, p. 30-31) discusses, the recruitment processes of different studies can vary a great deal in their access to relevant informants. There was no need to work with gatekeepers in authority positions or insiders of the group, and neither was it necessary to advertize the project to reach out to informants (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 31-35). Contact was established in the conference in the Sámi Parliament in June 2013 and by e-mail and telephone directly with the participants, and therefore no assistance from outsiders was necessary.

Six informants have participated in this project. Four of them are Sami politicians and two of them are members of the Sami women's organizations. In total, four of the informants are women and two of them are men. For the sake of the anonymity of the informants little personal information will be provided, and their status as politicians and activists will not be differentiated in this project.

As stated by King and Horrocks (2010, p. 42) the physical space is very important for how the interviews develop and proceed. In this project, five of the interviews were set during the opening week of the new Parliament in October, 2013, whilst the remaining interview was set in January, 2014. Informant 1 was interviewed in her office in the Sámi Parliament early in the day. However, due to her busy schedule the interview was quite short and lasted for half an hour. According to King and Horrocks (2010, p. 43) calculating extra time for an interview is a good strategy, and coping with a shorter time than prepared for can be challenging. In the

case of this interview having more time to spend would have been beneficial, but questions had to be selected carefully as the interviewer realized that the appointed time was coming to an end.

Informant 2, on the other side, chose to do the interview quite late in the day after she had finished her schedule, thus the interview lasted for almost an hour. The interview was set in the library of the Sámi Parliament and we were seated next to each other on a sofa, which allowed a relaxed and informal atmosphere (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 42-43). The interview of Informant 3 was set in Rica Hotel in Karasjok between two sessions in the Sámi Parliament. This interview also lasted for half an hour, and had the disadvantage of not being as private as is recommended (King and Horrocks 2010, p. 44). The interview of Informant 4 was also set in Rica Hotel and lasted for 45 minutes. As it was possible to designate the recommended time by King and Horrocks (2010, p. 43) the interview lasted as long as interviewer and interviewee saw it necessary. Concerning Informant 5 the interview was set in a home which offered a relaxed atmosphere, as well as privacy for the conversation to develop. The last interview was conducted in a café, which perhaps did not provide for an ideal private setting, but on the other hand, this was a request of the informant and a place this person felt comfortable and relaxed.

The two data collection methods used in this project are the qualitative methods named interview and document analysis. The form of interview used was semi-structured interviews, where an interview guide was prepared which consisted of topics formed as questions (Bryman, 2012, p. 472-473). These questions were not formed as analytical questions, but rather as questions inviting for a conversation (Søndergaard, 2000, p. 78-79). As Bryman (2012, p. 471) discusses, this form of data collection is non-rigid and provides the interviewees with an opportunity to be flexible in the manner they wish to respond, as well as asking questions back to the interviewer if they see it necessary. The purpose of using semi-structured interviews was that informants would be able to speak about their experiences and reflections more freely within a framework that was provided by the interview guide (Bryman, 2012, p. 471; Dalen, 2011, p. 26).

Also, the data collected from this method has provided insight in mapping the gender equality process in the Sámi Parliament, both in relation to other political interests and identities as well as an outstanding political aim in itself. Moreover, the semi-structured interview has made it possible to explore conflicts inherent in this issue, where different perspectives and



interests at times do not agree on how to reach the overall goal of equality between genders. As Bryman (2012, p. 471) emphasizes, the semi-structured interview encourages exploring how different participants view the world and the elements within it. The names of the informants participating in this study are not their actual names, and new names have been chosen so that the data cannot be connected to their original names. The name and gender of each informant is presented in Table 1.

<b>Table 1: Informants</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Elen	Female
Ánte	Male
Maria	Female
Inga	Female
Nils	Male
Birgit	Female

Concerning the analysis of documents, it includes documents that are not produced with social research in mind. In this project two categories of documents will be included in the analysis, namely documents produced by a state institution and documents produced by private sources (Bryman, 2012, p. 549-550). The main documents from the former are the Action Plan for Gender Equality of 2008 as well as reports from Parliamentary sessions in the Sámi Parliament evaluating the implementation progress of the Action Plan. These documents will be referred to as the Action Plan of 2008 and Evaluation of the respective year. Documents by private sources include press releases from the organization's own website and a report. Also, in the latter category, Sáráhká's report on domestic and sexual violence will be included. As Bryman (2012, p. 549-551) discusses, these two categories of documents are official and can provide a researcher with a great deal of information that can highlight different issues important to the researcher, and also, these documents are more or less public and are therefore easily accessed.

Bryman (2012, p. 557-560) considers three methods of document analysis, namely semiotics, hermenautics and qualitative content analysis. Concerning semiotics, its main purpose is to unveil hidden meanings in the texts through signs and interpretations of these signs (Bryman 2012, p. 559). Hermenautics, on the other hand, analyzes the text through the interpretation and position of the author, and the social and historical context of the produced text is

important (Bryman, 2012, p. 560). Qualitative content analysis is a method where underlying themes are coded, studied and extracted from the texts and shown as quotes in order to illustrate the examined factors. What makes this method different from the others is the thematic approach the researcher has in order to revisit and reexamine the topics that are interesting for the researcher (Bryman, 2012, p. 557).

In this project the latter method, namely the qualitative content analysis, is the chosen tool used to examine relevant issues. The purpose of this method is to categorize and explore how topics are addressed and what perspectives they have. It is also purposeful exploring the development of topics in order to evaluate the progress of implementation. As Bryman (2012, p. 559) mentions, such an approach can to some degree have hermeneutical features as it provides sensitivity to the social and historical context.

## **Concepts: Gender Equality and Intersectionality**

According to Squires (2007, p. 1), gender equality has become increasingly important on the global political agenda over the past thirty years, and is now perceived as a central value and prerequisite for the realization of social justice in politics and society. Social justice is an important concept where rights and equal political access is a prerequisite in the process of positive peace development. Concerning equality as a political field in Norway, it is diverse and includes not only gender, but other thematic categories such as ethnicity, religion, disability, LGBT<sup>1</sup> and age, as well as violence and harassment (Likestillings- og diskrimineringsombudet [LDO], 2014). It is worth noting that the concept of women is often synonymized with gender and gender equality, but this is a limited understanding, and it is important to emphasize that gender equality includes both men and women. In the equality politics of the Sámi Parliament, ethnicity and gender are the main areas focused upon (Sametinget, 2008, p. 9). Ethnicity is addressed in relation to the Norwegian society and political system, whilst gender is addressed as an internal issue in Sámi politics and not in relation to the majority society.

Gender equality as a phenomenon can be understood and argued from different perspectives, depending on how actors perceive and comprehend equality. These understandings can be both rights-based and utility-based, where in the former one understands gender equality as

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<sup>1</sup> Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender [LGBT].

justice and that it is a right for women to participate on equal terms of men, independent of whether they affects the policies and decision making processes or not (Josefsen, 2004, p. 44; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18; Teigen, 2006, p. 191). This argument often referred to as the justice argument or equality perspective, is based on an understanding that women and men are in principal equal (Squires, 2007, p. 22). Thus, a strategy to achieve equality is built on providing equal opportunities for women to access arenas traditionally reserved for men, and vice versa. Structures, however, are not discussed in this approach and the result is that these are treated as gender neutral.

The utility-based arguments are based on consequences and interests, where in the former, equal participation of women and men in the decision making process is important due to the different experiences, values and competences that women and men have. Therefore, women and men will influence the content of politics in different manners (Josefsen, 2004, p. 45; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18). This perspective is often labeled as the consequence argument, or democratic argument, and entails that decisions that are said to be gender neutral may indeed have different consequences for men and women. Therefore, integrating a gender perspective through gender mainstreaming is often a strategy motivated by this perspective.

Lastly, the interest argument claims that women and men inherently have different interests, and thus female representation is important in order to protect the interests of women (Josefsen, 2004, p. 45). This argument is often referred to as the women's perspective, and a strategy based on this perspective entails that the differences between men and women are so significant that the ways in which men and women work politically are different. Thus, the system needs to be adapted to women as well as men (Josefsen, 2004, p. 12). Practically, this often signifies close cooperation with women's organizations. As argued by Helga Hernes (as cited in Holst, 2002, p. 54) state feminism is an institutionalization of feminist interests on a state level in Norway where strong grassroot mobilization, together with cooperative responses from the government, influenced development in the political field of gender equality (Halsaa, 2013b, p. 51). Thus, state feminism can be seen as an example of the interest perspective.

These arguments, or perspectives, are useful when exploring motives behind equality politics and how this topical issue is discussed. They do not, however, open up for a discussion on what happens to a debate on equality when different areas of politics cross, i.e. ethnicity and gender or gender and LGBT. Here, the concept of intersectionality may be helpful in order to

increase sensitivity in understanding how gender intersects with debates on other areas of equality politics.

Concerning intersectionality, it can be described as a nodal point where different discourses meet, for example indigeneity, class and gender (Berg, Flemmen & Gullikstad, 2010, p. 15). In this nodal point time, place and historical relations between different groups will matter in how different identities are negotiated and articulated in relation to each other (Nielsen, 2006, p. 156; Walle, 2006, p. 220). As an analytical tool this concept enables one to be more aware of complex power constructs, without being led by a predisposed understanding of an ontological hierarchy between identity categories. Also, one can examine how certain categories are considered and represented as the same, such as culture and nation (Berg et al., 2010, p. 19). However, there are challenges by utilizing this concept in that it is very inclusive, and is often used as a metaphor, and in this sense can be used for everything, and therefore it will analyze nothing (Berg et al., 2010, p. 19). In spite of this, it is a concept that enables one to take in to consideration that one person has more than one identity and that politics have more than one expression, and that how these are articulated will vary from time to place. Thus, intersectionality is helpful in highlighting the complexity of these identities and political expressions.

## **Personal reflexivity and Ethics**

According to Longhofer, Floersch and Hoy (2013, p. 140) reflexivity in social research is significant in that it allows us to take contexts into consideration as well as viewing contexts in relation to ourselves as people and researchers. Only considering my role as a researcher in the research process is not enough, but my ability to see and have control over my own influence and factors from my social position is also of great importance in this process (Longhofer et al., 2013, p. 142). In examining the influences of my social position and how I can observe and control these factors I had to ask myself some questions about motivation, responsibility and position (Glesne, 2006, p. 126-127). In the field of indigenous studies, performing reflective exercises is considered a valuable task in order to control one's own influences on the study. As the topic of this study is addressing Sámi and therefore indigenous politics, such an exercise is in accordance with the traditions of this particular field.

This project illustrates three dimensions, namely gender, Sámi society and politics. The motivation of the gender dimension grew forth from a curiosity on how political relations and issues are gendered and how these affect articulation of one's gender and identity in a political sphere. Concerning the political dimension I was intrigued to explore the logic behind processes of gender equality policies.

At the start of this project I was very eager to include the full range of Sámi society in my analyses, but as this was too grand a project I narrowed it down to Sámi politics. The choice of study focus was motivated by my curiosity about Sámi culture, politics and language. An important influence in this dimension is my family's background where, on my mother's side of the family tree, Sámi identity has been more or less under articulated. It is important to stress that this project has not been part of a search for identity, but I would rather emphasize that my personal background has played a key role developing this project with a genuine interest and curiosity. As King and Horrocks (2010, p. 126) discuss, a researcher's subjectivity can intensify and benefit social research. However, personal influences have to be observed and controlled and taken into account.

Choosing the form of interview as a method in this project includes a personal engagement in the research. The interviews were made face-to-face and my presence and how I presented myself and the project influenced the interview situations (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 129). In some cases, especially before the first interviews, I found it challenging to present my project in a precise manner, which could have affected the expectations and direction of the interviewees. In some situations I had the impression that I had been able to establish good rapport with the participants, whilst in one interview I had the impression that their expectations had not been met concerning information and specific aim of the project.

As King and Horrocks (2010, p. 129) emphasize, the presence and identity of the researcher will somehow influence the situation, and me being a young woman from northern Norway did influence how they perceived me. Certain considerations were made before the start of the fieldwork, such as the insecurity the participants might have had around my ethnicity. My experience was that it was challenging to express whether I was Sámi or Norwegian, and even more so, how natural would it be in my own introduction? In one case it was natural to dwell upon my position vis-à-vis the Sámi electoral register, but this was done in the aftermath of an interview and not prior to it. In other cases I was clearly defined as an outsider of Sámi society, which could have been due to the presentation of me and my position in the project.

A note on language is necessary as well. The participants were either linguistically from North or South Sámi areas. I do not speak either of these dialects, and neither Lule Sámi, which is the Sámi dialect from my area. A question of whether I knew Sámi language was raised by the Peace Center early in my research, and as my answer was no this was also emphasized as problematic. In spite of all the participants speaking Norwegian, I do recognize the benefit of doing the interviews in Sámi for those who would have been more comfortable in doing so, but I also recognize that the differences in Sámi dialects could have been problematic as well if I had spoken Sámi, and that having a common language was in this case a helpful tool.

Concerning the position of the researcher, his or her particular standpoint will to some extent influence his or her study (Frønes, 2001, p. 169; King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 126). Being a student at the Master of Peace and Conflict Transformation has affected the manner in which I view the social world. In this case, I found myself with my conflict lenses on, which at certain times created challenges for me when defining the role of the gender dimension in the preliminary phases of my project design. Aware that I was wearing my conflict lenses on I was able to control my personal influences in the interpretation of relevant literature, and thereby reading with a more critical eye. One example is the literature on double oppression (Eikjok, 2000; Kuokkanen, 2007), which led me in the direction of structural violence. Whether this concept is a relevant tool to use in this instance or not is not the question of this project, but my meetings with reality, either through media, conferences or conversations did not support me in using such a tool, however relevant it is for peace studies as a discipline. In this lays the responsibility of the researcher to portray reality as thoroughly as possible, and not only as convenient as possible for the researcher.

## **Structure of Thesis**

The thesis is divided into 5 chapters. In the following chapter a brief historical overview of gender equality in Sámi politics is presented, followed by a discussion about actors. Also, the analyses by Stordahl (2003) and Josefsen (2004) of the Sámi Parliament's documents on gender equality that were published before 2005 will be presented and discussed. In Chapter 3, an analysis of documents concerning gender equality in Sámi politics by the Sámi Parliament, and to some extent of Sámi NissonForum, will be analyzed. The fourth chapter will include the analysis of the interview material with a focus on how the achievement of

gender balanced representation has affected the debate on gender equality. In the last chapter, the findings will be presented and discussed further.





## **Chapter 2: History, Actors and Policies**

This chapter will outline the context of this study. Firstly, it will shortly present the historical outline of gender equality in Sámi politics. Thereafter, a discussion about actors and how they have participated in the debate about gender equality will be examined, and lastly, Stordahl (2003) and Josefsen's (2004) studies where they analyze the political evaluations concerning gender equality will be presented and discussed.

### **The history of Gender Equality in Sámi Politics**

In 1917 the first national Sámi meeting was organized and headed by Elsa Laula Renberg, among others (Sámi NissonForum, 2010). After this event there was no Sámi women organization until 1988. The members of the newly established organization, Sámi nissonorganisašuvdna (Sámi women's organization), later Sáráhká, held their first meeting in 1989 (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003b, p. 17). The institutionalization of the Sámi women's movement took place 20 years later than the ethno-political movement as well as the national Norwegian women's movement. Halsaa (2013a, p. 226) discusses the reasons for this and finds that the establishment of the Sámi Parliament in 1989 resulted in a new channel of political participation, where both the institutional and discursive structures opened up for new possibilities politically. The scope for action was in general expanded for Sámi politics due to the establishment of Sámi Parliament, and this included the organization of Sámi women as well (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 226).

Sáráhká, which is named after the Sámi goddess of birth, was established after a conference by Nordic Sámi Council in 1988 with offices in four countries<sup>2</sup>, and their aim was to change attitudes towards women and to promote gender equality within Sámi society. Their strategy was to create awareness around real gender equality through changing laws and regulations so that women could have the same opportunities as men. Sáráhká also had an aim to make women culture more visible and raise the status of such a culture (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 227; Sára, 1990, p. 51-52). As Halsaa (2013a, p. 228) examines, the establishment of Sáráhká provided a formal organizational expression of the demand for economic and political equality between men and women. This was not well received by everyone, and after a female candidate was dumped from a list in the election of 1989 a group of organized women presented their own

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<sup>2</sup> Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

Sámi Women List in protest (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 228; Stordahl, 2003, p. 219). Today, this organization still focuses on issues of equality, but has expanded its mandate to include marginalized groups in society such as drug addicts (Field notes, 2014, p. 65-66)

In 1993 a women's network, later organization, called Sámi NissonForum established, where the aim of the organization was to promote local and regional development on the premises of Sámi women (Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 77; Sámi NissonForum, 2013). The focal points of the organization are to increase women's participation and influence in Sami local societies, to motivate and educate women on development on their own premises, to document Sami women's lives and work, and further cooperate with other organizations or institutions with the same targets. In later times, the organization has also addressed the responsibility of both Sámi and Nordic authorities to include Sámi gender equality in the Nordic debate about gender equality (Sámi NissonForum, 2010).

A third organization addressing issues of gender equality is the men's organization Dievddut (Men<sup>3</sup>) that was established in 2005 after a series of rape against girls that were minors (Eggebo, Halsaa, Skjeie & Thun, 2007, p. 75; Hætta & Skåden, 2009, p. 31). The organization defines itself as a non-political, independent man's organization by volunteers that have 3 objectives. The first is to work with the aim of preventing rapes, assaults and other types of violence against women. The second is to combat sexual harassment and discrimination of women, and thirdly, to influence boys and men and their attitudes towards their fellow human beings in order to a healthy view on sexuality (Hætta & Skåden, 2009, p. 30). In 2009 Dievddut published a book addressing these themes and sent a copy to each household in the communities of Karasjok and Kautokeino in the north of Norway (Guttorm 2009). In the book it is stated that it is published "in the spirit of gender equality" (Hætta & Skåden, 2009), and thus is a contribution to the debate on gender equality in Sámi society, as well as in Sámi politics. This organization is of today not active and their webpage<sup>4</sup> is no longer functioning.

As mentioned earlier the first election of the Sámi Parliament was held in 1989 and the ethno-political movement was institutionalized (Bjerkli & Selle 2003b, p. 21; Minde, 2005, p. 23). The issue of legitimacy, however, was a topic that was present in the newly founded Sámi Parliament. Legitimacy of a political institution is deemed as important within a liberal democratic system where it signals that the use of power and decision making is rightful and

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<sup>3</sup> Dievddut is the nominative plural of the word "man" in North Sámi.

<sup>4</sup> [www.dievddut.org](http://www.dievddut.org)

to some extent agreed upon (Østerud, 2007, p. 34). The legitimacy of the Sámi Parliament rests on many factors, i.e. international law, percentage of political participation and political actions (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003b, p. 26-30), as well as the question of a gender balanced representation (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003b, p. 30; Stordahl, 2003, p. 235). The latter issue was the source of a media debate created by the continuous decreasing number of women representatives before the election of 2005 (Stordahl, 2003, p. 228).

As Pettersen et al. (2002, p. 9) illustrate, the number of women in the Assembly decreased from 13 women out of 39 in 1989 to 7 women in 2001 (Stordahl, 2003, p. 221). This continuous reduction resulted in severe concern about gender equality in, and legitimacy of, the Sámi Parliament by media, people in general, and also the Sámi Parliament itself (Stordahl, 2003, p. 228; Sametinget, 2002, p. 35). The concern of this constant decrease of female representatives, as well as a low level of political participation from female voters, motivated the Sámi Parliament to initiate a campaign called *Increased Women Representation in the Sámi Parliament's election of 2005*<sup>5</sup> (Kuokkanen, 2011, p. 43; Sametinget, 2004, p. 64). This campaign influences changes in the representative body of the Sámi Parliament in the election that followed, and also what may seem as a general trend of balanced gender representation in the Sámi Parliament.

Year	Representatives	No. of women	% of women
2005	43	22	51 %
2009	39	19	49 %
2013	39	19	49 %

Information retrieved from <https://www.ssb.no/sametingsvalg>

Table 2 illustrates the results of the election of 2005 and that a leap from 7 female representatives in 2001 to 22 in 2005 is evident. This election had the highest percentage of female representatives in the history of Sámi Parliament, and the following elections of 2009 and 2013 showed a continued stable and balanced gender representation as mention above.

When exploring the development of gender equality and political representation in Sámi politics, a question of whom or what influenced this development appears. In the next section different actors and their scope of influence will be examined further.

<sup>5</sup> My own translation of: Økt kvinnerepresentasjon ved Sametingsvalget 2005 (Sametinget, 2004, p. 64).

## Actors

As Knoepfel, Larrue, Varone and Hill (2011, p. 39) discuss, defining who or what is an actor is essential in how one understands interaction. An actor can, in the widest sense, be understood as a dominant power that controls and decides through clear and determinant action, or as a passive agent that simply follows the given paths by a system (Callon, 2007, p. 273). There are many ways to understand the concept of actor, and defining who or what can be considered an actor is important in delimiting the scope of one's research. According to Knoepfel et al. (2011, p. 39-41) the concept of actor may entail an individual, a group of individuals, a legal entity or a social group. The elementary understanding of an actor is an individual (or more than one) who has an objective and uses specific means to achieve this aim of his/her (Frønes, 2001, p. 46; Knoepfel et al., 2011, p. 39-40). In the case of gender equality and Sámi politics, the overall objective is to obtain equality, but the specific means of the different actors vary.

Examining the actors in the debate about gender equality in Sámi politics closer, there are some that are more evident, such as the Sámi Parliament, and others that are more in the background, such as researchers. There are also individuals that shift from being an individual actor or being part of a legal entity to being part of another legal entity. More specifically, there are individuals that are part of the Sámi Parliament as an actor as well as one of the women's organizations, or as a researcher.

The Sámi Parliament is a political body elected by people registered in the Sámi electoral roster. The Sámi Parliament cannot levy taxes, and thus receives annual funding, or transactions, from the Norwegian state (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003a, p. 74). In the year of 2014, 886 million NOK were allocated to Sámi purposes from the state budget, and 401 million NOK of this sum is allocated for the Sámi Parliament to manage further (Sametinget, 2013, p. 16). The financial situation enables the Sámi Parliament to prioritize certain political areas when needed, such as gender equality was prioritized between the years of 2001 and 2005 with campaigns and projects (Sametinget, 2002, p. 35).

As Bjerkli and Selle (2003b, p. 37) discuss, knowledge must be viewed in the context of production, establishment, communication and transaction of this knowledge. Many actors are taking part in this process, and the role of politics reveals the Sámi Parliament is one of these actors (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003b, p. 37). Since 1999, the Sámi Parliament has produced Action Plans for Gender Equality and Evaluations of these, which will be included in the analysis in

the following chapter. The Sámi Parliament has, through these documents, not only created greater focus on this topic, but also influenced the development of the debate about gender equality in Sámi politics. The Sámi Parliament, to a large degree, defines what issues are to be discussed, what issues are not interesting, and what issues are outdated and therefore do not have allocated space in the text. As an actor, the Sámi Parliament, through its budget, has a considerable possibility of maneuvering in the political field of gender equality compared to most of the other actors. In this sense, the Sámi Parliament is the most dominant actor; a hegemon that can financially back up its chosen strategies, but not least, a corpus of human resources that enables implementation of these strategies.

In the view of the definitions of Knoepfel et al. (2011, p. 39-40) the Sámi Parliament is considered a legal entity, but at the same time it may consist of several individuals, where for example one political party is considered a group of individuals, whilst the Sámi Parliament as such may be considered a legal entity. To exemplify, the Sámi Parliament publically focuses on the need for continuation in its work on gender equality even if the Assembly has achieved gender balance (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2-3). This is the legal entity in its completeness expressing its objective. On the other hand, the Progressive Party (FrP<sup>6</sup>) is of another opinion, and its strategy is to end the production of policies on gender equality (Sametinget, 2012, p. 9). FrP is here not a legal entity, but several individuals in an office sharing the same objective and means to reach this objective (Knoepfel et al., 2011, p. 39). Also, the individual is more clearly visible in a group of individuals than in a legal entity, where in this case the representative presenting the group's objective is published with her full name, whilst in the legal entity it is the name of the entity itself that is presented (Sametinget, 2012, p. 9).

Concerning the women's organizations, Sáráhká and Sámi NissonForum, they are considered as legal entities through their status as organizations. Their great dependency on the work of a few individuals, however, would also make them eligible to the definition as a group of individuals. For example, one of the individuals spearheading Sámi NissonForum is Gudrun E. E. Lindi, and as can be seen from the organization's website and its publications Lindi is the leading figure behind many of the existing documents and initiatives of Sámi NissonForum.

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<sup>6</sup> Framskrittspartiet

The financial situation of these two organizations influences their work capacity. Directly, funding creates the framework for the actions of an organization, and indirectly, secure and continuous human resources are dependent on funding. The Sámi Parliament allocates an annual sum to these two organizations devoted to gender equality, where Sáráhká in 2014 is estimated to receive 150000 NOK while Sámi NissonForum in the same year is estimated to receive 160000 NOK, which is an increase for the latter of 10000 NOK from the previous year (Sametinget, 2013, p. 121). These numbers illustrate their possibilities, but also their limitations, where most of the work is, and has to be, done through volunteering. When viewing the amount of reports, press releases and organization of conferences, Sáráhká and Sámi NissonForum have contributed to the production of knowledge in a quite efficient manner when taking their capacity and finances into account<sup>7</sup>.

A comparison of the budgets of the Sámi Parliament, Sáráhká and Sámi NissonForum illustrates the imbalance of possibilities and resources between the Parliament and these organizations. The production of knowledge concerning gender equality is thus executed by the main political body in Sámi society, namely the Sámi Parliament. In this sense it is not equitable to treat them as equal actors. When the capacity of one is considerably greater than that of the others. Therefore, the analysis will mainly focus on the documents of the Sámi Parliament and its politicians, but the voices of the organizations will be included, to see both how they communicate with each other, but also to emphasize the dissonance and harmony that might exist between their viewpoints (Smith, 2000, p. 321).

Also, the freedom that these organizations enjoy through being small should not be understated. Their size and independent roles enables them to work more freely on what they deem as important themselves rather than being in a position, such as the Sámi Parliament, where action and focus to some degree is determined by national tendencies and bureaucracy. This freedom is a positive factor in their roles as watchdogs to the Sámi Parliament, as Olakunle (2006, p. 49) described them.

The men's organization Dievddut has worked with issues concerning gender equality, but has been more or less inactive after 2009, which is the year they published a book about sexual violence (Hætta & Skåden, 2009). Due to its inactivity this organization will not be addressed

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth to noting that when extra projects or conferences have been held Sáráhká and Sámi NissonForum have had the possibility of applying for extra funding, and in some instances they have received this, others not.

further as an actor in this project. This does not mean, however, that the work of this organization is of less importance than that of the others when discussing gender equality.

As Bjerkli and Selle (2003b, p. 37) discuss, the production of knowledge is not only done by politics, but also by media and research. In this section research will be the focus, where researchers on gender equality in Sámi society are labeled as an actor that consists of several individuals (Knoepfel et al., 2011, p. 39). In this sense, each researcher may be considered as individual actors, or academia as such can be viewed as a formation of individuals forming one actor. The former suggestion will here be considered as the chosen option, as that enables one to explore the nuances between the different research projects.

In general, little research is done on the Sámi Parliament and Sámi politics, both in relation to the state system and internal questions of the Sámi political system (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003b, p. 39). Reports requested and funded by the Sámi Parliament itself and The Research Council of Norway and executed by Pettersen et al. (2002) and Josefsen (2004) are examples of production of knowledge about this topical issue. Also, Stordahl (2003) is an example of a researcher who belongs to this group of individuals that is considered an actor and has contributed to an increase in both numbers and variety on this issue. Concerning the scholars' affiliation with different institutions, this strengthens the legitimacy and authenticity of their work.

A noteworthy comment on the definition of actors and roles is that there are not always clearly specified limitations for individuals acting within the framework of one actor, and at a later point within the framework of another. Both Stordahl and Josefsen, as an illustration, are researchers moving in more than one arena. They are both academics and they have both been very active in Sámi politics and activism. Stordahl has been active in Sámi NissonForum (Stordahl, 2003, p. 220) and Josefsen as a political representative both in the Sámi Parliament and in the Sámi Parliamentary Council (Stordahl, 2003, p. 235). Their positions as researchers, politicians and activists show that there are not necessarily clearly defined roles for each and every one, and their voices might overlap or cross with other voices. This will, to some extent, have consequences for the discourse and how the debate develops.

## Political Evaluations of Gender Equality Policies

In 1999 the first Action Plan on Gender Equality was created, with documents that reported on, and evaluated this Action Plan as well as Evaluations of 2001, 2002 and 2004 (Sametinget, 1999; 2001; 2002; 2004). These documents have not been included in the analysis of this study, and the thesis will therefore support its own argumentation on the basis of Stordahl (2003) and Josefsen's (2004) analyses. Vigdis Stordahl (2003) and Eva Josefsen (2004) analyzed the evaluations after the Action Plan for Gender Equality 1999-2001, where Stordahl (2003) examines the Evaluation of 2001 and Josefsen (2004) discusses the Evaluations of 2001, 2002 and 2004.

In her article "The Sámi Parliament – Women Limited Access?"<sup>8</sup> Stordahl (2003) discusses the debate about women representation on the Sámi Parliament. Stordahl (2003, p. 221-222) finds that female representation can be seen as part of two debates in Sámi politics, where the first is the general debate about political representation and legitimacy in the Sámi Parliament, i.e. representation of different interest groups and linguistic groups. The second is a debate concerning representation in relation to the work of a more specific gender equality focus in politics. Increased women's representation was therefore argued on the basis of a representational democratic argumentation (Østerud, 2007, p. 166), as well as on the basis of a feminist and gender perspective.

Stordahl (2003, p. 222-226) continues by discussing the gender equality work of the Sámi Parliament through analyzing the Action Plan for Gender Equality of 1999-2001 and the Evaluation of this in 2001. The main criticism by Stordahl (2003, p. 225-226) of these documents is that the Evaluation of 2001 is vague and does not refer back to the original plan document. This makes it challenging to understand what has been followed up from the original plan and what results have this led to. Stordahl (2003, p. 225) also criticizes the inclusion of the Kindergarten and Training Sector in the Evaluation of 2001 as examples of implementation of a women's focus, when this sector was not part of the original document. Another point concerning the Evaluation of 2001, according to Stordahl (2003, p. 226) is that when actions have not been implemented, the Evaluation fails to explain the reasons behind the lack of implementation.

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<sup>8</sup> My own translation of: Sametinget – Kvinner begrenset adgang? (Stordahl, 2003).



Concerning the arguments of increased female representation, or gender balance, Stordahl (2003, p. 237) examines these in view of a media debate that started in 2001. She states that the justice argument and resource argument are the most widely used arguments. Stordahl (2003, p. 238) emphasizes that the debate focuses on discussing why women should be represented, rather than explaining why they are not, and she continues by discussing some explanations. She presents two main explanations, where the first is the organization of the electoral system and the internal organization of the Sámi Parliament (Stordahl, 2003, p. 238-239), and the second is related to attitudes concerning gender equality in Sámi society (Stordahl, 2003, p. 238).

In conclusion, Stordahl (2003, p. 243-244) reflects upon gender as a political category and whether there is a clear understanding in the political groups of how to understand the relationship between gender and politics. She interprets some of the female representatives, among them Eva Josefsen, as understanding politics as gendered, but that they fail to see that the political group as a whole is gendered (Stordahl, 2003, p. 244). Stordahl (2003, p. 245), conclusively, criticizes the Sámi Parliament for not seeing the importance of cooperation with the women's organizations, and the use of their experience and competence concerning issues of gender equality, women and women's issues.

A note on methodology of Stordahl's (2003) article is necessary. The example of quotes from people in the streets and their reactions to a boycott by the female politicians creates some challenges. Who are these people? How representative are they of Sámi society in a general manner? How many people? The term "the man/woman in the streets"<sup>9</sup> gives a generalizing image of the situation. These quotes thus become both coincidental and unreliable in a methodological context.

Josefsen's (2004) study *The Sámi Parliament as an Arena for Gender Equality Politics* discusses the Sámi Parliament as an arena for articulating gender equality in Sámi society, Josefsen (2004) analyses the Action Plan for Gender Equality of 1999-2001 as well as the Evaluations of 2001, 2002 and 2004 of the progress of implementations of this plan. The Evaluations of 2001 and 2002 have a clear internal focus, whereas the Evaluation of 2004 is attempting to have a more external focus on Sámi society (Josefsen, 2004, p. 30).

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<sup>9</sup> "mannen/kvinnen i gata" (Stordahl, 2003, p. 226)

Concerning the Evaluation of 2002, Josefsen (2004, p. 30) emphasize that there is no real discussion about connections between gender inequalities, society and power, and therefore shaping good actions and implementations is challenging.

As mentioned above, the Evaluation of 2004 does not have the same focus on internal issues of the Sámi Parliament as the previous Evaluations have, and according to Josefsen (2004, p. 30-31) attempts to focus more on Sámi society and existent issues such as gender roles. This approach, however, is more descriptive than analytical and as Josefsen (2004, p. 31, 59) expresses, the policies from this evaluation are based on assumptions about reality. Even though the Evaluation of 2004 aims at looking at gender equality in a Sámi context, there is a clear lack of contextualizing the paper to Sámi society and politics, and thus policies and concrete strategies to achieve this are lacking (Josefsen, 2004, p. 60-61).

In 2004, Josefsen participates in a plenary session in the Sámi Parliament, and analyses oral discourses in a debate about gender equality. The debate on gender equality in Sámi politics is, according to Josefsen (2004, p. 62), understood as a women's phenomenon. The discourses focus on women in relation to the ILO Convention No. 169 and the Constitutional § 110a, as well as opportunities for women in rural areas. The debate also revolves around the need to change attitudes about women in society, where they should be viewed as a resource and not as a burden.

There were no concrete suggestions, however, on how to transform these discourses to political strategies (Josefsen, 2004, p. 62). The major focus of the debate was on the low number of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament and how to change this trend. Thus, the analysis shows that the change of focus from internal issues to societal issues that was indicated in the Evaluation of 2004, is perhaps not real, and that the focus of the Sámi Parliament is more or less the same as in previous years (Josefsen, 2004, p. 63).

Conclusively, the Evaluation and the plenary session of 2004 do not discuss structural issues or structural power relations in a great degree. In the case where structure is discussed it is in women's relation to the system and not to gender as such (Josefsen, 2004, p. 61, 64). Further on, the debate concerning gender equality is focused on sizes such as election, representation and the number of women in the Parliament. As Josefsen (2004, p. 64) argues, if there is an aim to look at structures of society in relation to gender equality, there is a need to develop a conceptual framework that most people can agree upon, as has been done with other discourses such as the rights discourse and the industrial political discourses.

## Summary

The election of 2005 showed a clear shift in the number of female representatives in the Assembly of the Sámi Parliament. The participation of all three gender equality organizations, Sáráhkka, Sámi NissonForum and Dievddut, have influenced the general debate about gender equality in Sámi politics, but as the latter organization is more or less inactive today, it is not defined as an actor in today's debate. The Sámi Parliament is the most dominant actor in this political field, and this is due to its budget as well as its large bank of human resources. The women's organizations Sáráhkka and Sámi NissonForum are also significant actors. Lastly, scholars were mentioned as actors in this political field and in the production of knowledge (Bjerkli & Selle, 2003b, p. 37). These categories of actors described in this chapter are not static actors, and individuals move with great easiness from one arena to another.



### **Chapter 3. Gender Equality and Content**

This chapter will examine documents on gender equality of both the Sámi Parliament and the women's organization Sámi NissonForum. The documents in this analysis have been carefully selected. The documents of the Sámi Parliament are, as mentioned in Chapter 1, official documents from a public institution, while the documents of Sámi NissonForum are official documents from a private source (Bryman, 2012, p. 549-551). More precisely, the examined documents of the Sámi Parliament are the Evaluations of 2006, 2007, the Action Plan of 2008 as well as the most recent Evaluation of 2012. Concerning the documents of Sámi NissonForum, these include press releases of 2009 and 2013 from the organization's own website and a report from 2012 where Sámi women and self-determination are discussed. Sáráhká's report on domestic and sexual violence will be mentioned as well, but as this report focuses on Sámi society rather than Sámi politics it will not be analyzed as such.

The documents produced before 2005 have not been included in the analysis itself, but are only analyzed in a comparatively manner to the documents mentioned above. As was shown and discussed in Chapter 2, the Evaluations of 2001, 2002 and 2004 of the Sámi Parliament have already been analyzed by Stordahl (2003) and Josefsen (2004), and will therefore not be analyzed further here. The main documents discussed in this chapter are those by the Sámi Parliament. This is due to the position of the Sámi Parliament as the biggest actor in Sámi politics.

#### **A Note on Text**

As Jennifer Platt (2010a, p. 83) mentions it is important to not only consider what types of documents exist and what problems that follow by using them, but also to give importance to how one uses the documents. Generally, in content analysis the aim is to extract data from a written or verbal text. This is done through a systematic and objective process of identifying certain features of the documents (Smith, 2000, p. 314).

Platt (2010b, p. 112-113) exemplifies different strategies that may be useful when conducting a document analysis. However, a combination of different strategies, Platt (2010b, p. 113) suggests, may be the most useful as certain strategies require a high level of acceptance of the author's authority, whilst others are often so detailed and intricate that the data can become

more or less unmanageable. The analysis of this project focuses on such a combination, with an emphasis on an illustrative style, where each selected example has to follow the principle of qualitative representation, meaning that the quotes chosen have to represent the full body of data. Examples will be given to each point in the analysis to bring the subtext, the documents themselves, to the surface (Platt, 2010b, p. 112-113).

In the process of identifying specific characteristics of the text, the chosen coding units are themes. The choice of these coding units rests on the purpose of this project where the expression and examination of ideas, topics and motifs concerning gender equality in Sámi politics are the objectives of the research (Bryman, 2012, p. 557; Smith, 2000, p. 320-321). Practically speaking, the themes were first categorized in main themes, such as representation and sexual orientations, and these were further categorized in subthemes, such as justice under representation, and concepts under Sámi gender equality. The criteria for the main themes to be selected were that the precise phrasing of the themes was expressed and that they had a high frequency in, and continuity through, the texts. The subthemes were selected by exploring the context units, which signify that the texts before and after the coding units were included in the analysis (Smith, 2000, p. 321). In this manner, the context of the themes is explored, and harmony or dissonance in the texts can be discussed.

The debate on gender equality is evolving and new perspectives have been included. The Sámi Parliament is to a large degree steering this debate as it is a much larger actor than the other institutions addressing this issue, and therefore the analysis is mainly focused on documents from this institution. Furthermore, the documents by Sámi NissonForum are responding to the directions chosen by the Sámi Parliament, and there is in this manner a degree of communication between the different documents. Four themes have been selected for analysis in this project. The first theme selected is Sámi gender equality and central concepts. The second theme is gender equality and political representation, the third theme is different sexual orientations, and lastly, the fourth theme is domestic and sexual violence.

Concerning the quotations of documents from this chapter, they will be presented in their original language, Norwegian, with the English translation in Appendix A. Quotations that only exist in English will only be presented in their English versions.

## **Sámi Gender Equality and Central Concepts**

The manner in which gender equality as a concept is addressed by the documents of the Sámi Parliament has changed before and after 2005. In the first Action Plan of 1999 the Sámi Parliament justifies their focus on gender equality through a universal argumentation of social justice, and parallels are drawn from both national and international experiences. In spite of this universal approach of social justice, the Action Plan of 1999 includes a vision of applying gender equality in a particular Sámi framework, but does not express this further (Sametinget, 1999, p. 5), and neither is such a framework mentioned in the Evaluations of 2001 and 2002 (Sametinget, 2001; 2002). In the Evaluation of 2004 gender, however, a Sámi framework to gender equality was mentioned, but as Josefsen (2004, p. 59) finds, this was done in a descriptive, not analytical, manner. After 2005, however, the Evaluation of 2006 addresses gender equality in a Sámi political context, and an attempt is made to apply a Sámi indigenous framework to the gender equality policies.

The shift in focus from 2004 to 2006 expresses an attempt to define what is particular about Sámi gender equality rather than understanding equality between genders through a more universal argumentation.

We can say that Sámi politics are about equality politics. Sámi politics and gender equality politics, to a large degree, build on the same ideology where the aim is equal treatment of two or more in principal equal parties. It may be Sámi or Norwegians, men or women, youth or elders, homosexuals or heterosexuals (Sametinget, 2008, p. 9).

Here, a parallel is drawn between gender equality and Sámi politics, and self-determination, justice and equity are concepts that illustrate equality between different parties (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2). The documents of the Sámi Parliament reveal how after 2005 such a parallel is drawn (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2; 2008, p. 2-3; 2012, p. 6).

The reason for this is an attempt to view gender equality in a Sámi context and draw lines between already established political areas, such as the Sámi rights discourse, and in this sense utilize concepts already familiar to more or less most Sámi people. According to Duedahl and Jacobsen (2010, p. 83), the way in which one understands certain concepts depends on what experiences and expectations one has to these concepts. In the context of Sámi politics, the concepts of self-determination, justice and equity are originally built on the discourse on rights in relation to the majority society. The phrasing of the documents of the Sámi Parliament thus attempts to transfer these useful concepts from the issue of Sámi politics

in general to gender equality in particular. The experiences that Duedahl and Jacobsen (2010, p. 83) mention are that these concepts were efficient before in the rights discourse, and that the documents entail expectations that these concepts will be just as useful concerning the issue of gender equality. A transfer of these concepts is thereby made from one discourse to another.

As mentioned, in Chapter 1 Josefsen (2004, p. 64) emphasizes that developing concepts for the discourse on Sámi gender equality is needed in order for the debate to evolve further. As the quote from the Evaluation of 2008 illustrates there is a conscious attempt to do so, and the concepts self-determination, justice and equity are part of this effort. Self-determination as a concept is contextualized to gender equality in Sámi politics in the Evaluation of 2006:

In a Sámi political context self-determination is central. As referred to above this includes both collective and individual rights. Not least is this important when it concerns a topic that touches body and sexuality in a gender equality perspective. Because the right to decide over one's own body and one's own sexuality is one of the most basic rights a person holds. Violence and sexual assaults are a breach of this right (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5).

Here, self-determination over one's own body and sexuality is in focus, where violence and sexual assaults are actions that violate this individual right (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5). The quote further illustrates the importance of self-determination in Sámi politics in general, where the legitimacy of the Sámi Parliament as an institution partly rests on this concept. According to the scholars Bjerkli and Selle (2003a, p. 49), this signifies that the Sámi people, as an indigenous people, have a right to influence their own destiny. By introducing the concept of self-determination in relation to Sámi politics, the text draws lines between the discourse on rights to the discourse on gender equality.

This concept and its context is presented through a context unit, which includes a discussion about practical politics and that the Sámi Parliament does not support gender neutral politics, as this may enforce and maintain gender inequalities. The discussion on self-determination is followed by yet a context unit, where the men's organization Dievddut is praised for its focus on gender equality through their preventative work on violence and sexual assaults against women (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5) Also, a parallel is drawn from the importance of this concept in Sámi politics, in a general manner, to its significance to body and sexuality specifically. This is the only instance, however, that self-determination is exemplified or contextualized to Sámi gender equality in the documents by the Sámi Parliament. In the Evaluation of 2007 this concept is mentioned, but not dwelled upon any further (Sametinget, 2007, p. 1).



In Sámi NissonForum's report on Sámi women and self-determination the concept self-determination is understood by many Sámi women as the right to have control over one's own body and sexuality, but also over one's own culture and everyday life. "SNF [Sámi NissonForum] focused on self-determination in relation to women's perception of the concept, which [...] includes control over one's own culture and everyday life, and one's own body and sexuality" (Lindi, 2012, p. 4). Here, the concept of self-determination in relation to gender equality is explained more in-depth than it is by the Sámi Parliament. Concerning self-determination over body and sexuality, this concept is contextualized to Sámi society with a locus on Sámi women and the need for crisis centers. Such centers, according to Ebba Krumlinde, will help women to demand their rights and stop assaults, and thereby gain control over their own bodies and sexuality when living in unhealthy relationships (Lindi, 2012, p. 4).

When discussing control over one's own culture and everyday life, self-determination is exemplified in language and history, where knowing one's mother tongue well and having knowledge about one's history might strengthen one's identity, feeling of belonging and also release many young people from the burden of having a heavy responsibility of representing Sámi culture. According to the report, Lotta Omma states that this will have positive health consequences, and self-determination in this context is also connected to health and being secure in one's own identity and belonging (Lindi, 2012, p. 4). Overall, Sámi NissonForum takes a step further than the Sámi Parliament in contextualizing self-determination in a gender equality perspective where this concept is linked not only to body and sexuality, but to culture, language and identity as well.

The concept of justice is mentioned in relation to representation and influence (Sametinget, 2007, p. 4; 2008, p. 4; 2012, p. 3). In 2007 this concept was contextualized in the discussion of increasing funding for women in the primary industries.

The increase of women's influence in business life is desirable from a principle of justice. In addition, the female practitioners in business life are a major untapped resource that should gain more space in the Sámi Parliament's commitment to industry politics (Sametinget, 2007, p. 4).

Here, the Evaluation of 2007 illustrates that justice as a principle is important when discussing gender equality and greater influence of women in business life through the funding mechanisms of the Sámi Parliament. Through this principle, women's participation and equalization within business life is emphasized (Sametinget, 2007, p. 4). In the Action Plan of

2008 and the Evaluation of 2012 justice is mentioned in the context of representation, where equal representation between men and women is just and fair, but also it allows for different interests to be taken into account as well as utilizing human resources in a broader sense (Sametinget, 2008, p. 11-12): "Participation in decision making processes is not only a question of justice or democracy, but a necessary prerequisite so that both women and men's interests are taken into account" (Sametinget, 2012, p. 3). As illustrated in this excerpt, as well as the one above, justice is not the only important concept that argues for a greater influence of women in this political area; resources and interests are also of significance.

The use of these concepts is recognized as the justice argument, the consequent argument and the interest argument. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the justice argument claims that it is fair and just for women to participate in the political sphere, whether this affects the policies or not. The consequence and interest arguments, on the other hand, claim that the content of politics will change when women are included (Josefsen, 2004, p. 44-45; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18). However, when discussing justice as a concept the documents more or less rely on the justice argument of political representation. This argument is recognized in a variety of situations when debating gender equality, and in this sense is not a particular Sámi contribution to a debate about gender equality in Sámi politics. The importance of this argument, however, is not to be argued against. Nonetheless, the discussion about what it means to transfer this concept from the discourse on Sámi rights to the discourse on gender equality in Sámi politics is a little vague.

The concept of equity is mentioned in most documents after the elections of 2005. In the Evaluation of 2006 it is contextualized to Sámi society in a reference to sexual orientation. The document briefly states that there are important issues concerning sexual minorities that need to be addressed, but does not take this any further (Sametinget, 2006, p. 8). In 2007 and 2008 equity is mentioned as an important element of gender equality and as a foundation for good coexistence (Sametinget, 2007, p. 1; 2008, p. 2).

## **Gender Equality**

The focus on representation has changed after the election of 2005. Previously, representation and the number of women in the Sámi Parliament were more urgent issues than they were after 2005. As Stordahl (2003, p. 241) emphasize, the low number of women was seen by

many observers as a problem of legitimacy. This change is reflected in the documents of the Sámi Parliament where representation in the plenary assembly is no longer the main focus. Nonetheless, the internal organization is still the main focus when discussing gender equality in the documents of the Sámi Parliament.

The Evaluation of 2006 focuses on creating a new platform for further work on gender equality. Reflections around the earlier emphasis on representation are presented, and a vision of having a continuous perspective for the work on gender equality in the future is laid out. As it was stated: "If we believe that gender equality is an achieved good, this in itself can be a hinder in achieving real gender equality" (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2). Here, the Evaluation of 2006 underline that balanced gender representation cannot automatically signify gender equality, and that there are still issues that need to be addressed. Failing to address further issues by stating that balanced gender representation equals gender equality can potentially hinder a continuation of work and progress within this field. In other words, the Evaluation of 2006 lays the foundation for a new path in the Sámi Parliament's work on gender equality politics where the precarious focus on gender representation in the Assembly has shifted.

The documents of the Sámi Parliament focus on practical politics and integration of a gender perspective. As is stated in the Evaluation of 2007:

What we need as a starting point is that very little politics are generally gender neutral [...]. This entails the practical consequence that a gender perspective must be implemented in all the work of the Sámi Parliaments own organization, in all levels and in all faces in the shaping of politics, in the distribution of funds, in the planning, execution and evaluation of programs and projects. (Sametinget, 2007, p. 2)

As this quote illustrates, a new strategy is in effect in the Sámi Parliament, aimed at its internal organization. Gender mainstreaming, according to Squires (2007, p. 39), is a strategy of gender equality that aims to integrate a gender perspective into all policies from planning to evaluation in order to examine the respective situation of both men and women. The strategy of gender mainstreaming is a tool that ideally enables a political institution to revise any policy that show itself disfavoring one gender on behalf of the other.

In the Evaluation of 2012, the Sámi Parliamentary Council states that gender mainstreaming is implemented in the planning and evaluation faces of the internal work of the Sámi Parliament. Also, the budget has been evaluated and a gender perspective is, according to the document, implemented, both in relation to gender specific funding, and in the different

financial posts on a whole (Sametinget, 2012, p. 2). In general, gender mainstreaming as a strategy seems to be utilized increasingly after 2005.

Although balanced representation as such receives less attention there are still other aspects of representation that are included in the continuous work of the Sámi Parliament. One of these issues is to secure both genders' equal participation in boards and offices (Sametinget, 2007, p. 4; 2008, p. 11). "Equal participation, where political decision making processes are implemented, is desired both from a justice perspective and from a wish to be able to profit from human resources in the best possible way" (Sametinget, 2008, p. 11). There are two types of argumentations utilized to justify this goal, where the first is that it is just and fair for both genders to have access to all boards and offices in the Sámi Parliament independently of whether the politics decided is affected or not (Josefsen, 2004, p. 44; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18). The other argument is the consequence argument, stating that employing a wide range and variety of human resources will only have beneficial influence on the Parliament and decision making processes (Josefsen, 2004, p. 45; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18; Phillips, 1994, p. 197).

The measures to achieve the goal of equal gender representation in boards and offices revolve around requiring 40-60 % gender balance to lists before elections and to appointed committees, boards and offices within the Sámi Parliament. Attention is also given to balanced age representation, with a particular focus on recruiting young men (Sametinget, 2008, p. 11). In the Evaluation of 2012 it is stated that the requirement of 40-60 % gender representation in institutions receiving funding has been implemented (Sametinget, 2012, p. 12). The focus here is on balanced representation in other areas of the Sámi Parliament than the Assembly itself. As Josefsen (2004, p. 64) emphasize, the debate before 2005 revolves around representation in the internal organization of the Sámi Parliament, and as the documents of the Sámi Parliament show, this is still an important emphasis.

Pertaining women representation, Lindi et al. (2013, p. 2) ask in a press release on the organization's website for more attention to be given to the content of representation. According to Østerud (2007, p. 166) it is not always clear what political representation entails, and one does not always know exactly what representatives really represent. In the press release of 2013 the lack of a women's delegation to the international conference in Alta was the issue up for discussion:

[...] the SNF received an answer from the Sámi Parliament, stating that the female participation is looked well into and acceptable according to the delegates in Alta 2013[...]. This is embarrassing. It shows that the council does not distinguish between: 1) The number of women participating in Alta, representing whichever group or cause 2) Feminists working with women and gender issues and getting this highlighted have acquired expertise and knowledge (Lindi et al., 2013, p. 2).

The criticism Lindi et al. (2013, p. 2) present is that it is unclear what these female politicians really represent, and whether it is the interest of the Sámi Parliament as a political institution or if it is on behalf of indigenous women as a whole. She concludes that it is the former option that is correct, and questions further that the Sámi Parliament does not differentiate between being a woman and having knowledge and competence about women's issues (Lindi et al., 2013). Here, it is emphasized that there is a difference between social representation and political, or interest oriented, representation, where in the first there is a focus on the composition in relation to the population, and in the latter it is on the content, or political ideas, of the representatives (Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 17-18; Phillips, 1994, p. 196; Lindi et al., 2013; Østerud, 2007, p. 167).

Referring to the Action Plan of 2008, Lindi (2012, p. 15) argues critically that women's issues have been more or less removed from the political picture of the Sámi Parliament where only 5 out of 29 measures are aimed at women. Lindi (2012) states that “[t]he perception of SNF is that women political work is degraded in the public Sámi society and more or less eradicated from the Sámi Parliament's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2009-2013” (p. 15). This lack of focus on women and women's issues is in the report of the project “Sámi women and self-determination” defined as one of the main challenges by Sámi NissonForum. The organization asks the Sámi Parliament how the Parliament will build their competence concerning these issues (Lindi, 2012, p. 13-15). Sámi NissonForum has a clear position concerning women's issues and gender equality, where one to a certain extent signifies the other.

Concerning the measure on cooperation with organizations Sámi NissonForum expresses that it finds it unsatisfying. In the press release of 2009 it is communicated that the organization wished to discuss certain issues with the Sámi Parliament, and with the President in particular, being responsible of the field of gender equality politics through its position (Sámi NissonForum, 2009). The Sámi Parliament initiated a change after 2005, where annual dialogue meetings were aspired between the Parliament and the two women's organizations, Sáráhká and Sámi NissonForum, and the first meeting was arranged in 2006. The aim was to

include a critical perspective in the work on gender equality by the Sámi Parliament (Sametinget, 2007, p. 3). From the Press Release of 2009, it is not explicit what is unsatisfying with this arrangement, other than the lack of the presence of the President.

## **Different Sexual Orientations**

The issue of sexual preferences in the context of gender equality was for the first time addressed in the Evaluation of 2004, where openness around sexual orientation and identity is emphasized as important in order to create changes in norms and values within society. The silence and shame many face concerning their sexual orientation is emphasized in this document (Sametinget, 2004, p. 61,62). In 2006 this issue was briefly addressed again, where equality of different sexual orientations in relation to the heterosexual majority is mentioned (Sametinget, 2006, p. 8). It is not until 2008, however, that this issue is addressed more consciously with a goal, strategy and measures. In the Action Plan of 2008, the Sámi Parliament has defined acceptance and tolerance of homosexuals as their goal. As a strategy to achieve this goal the Sámi Parliament has to participate actively in work aimed at changing attitudes about homosexuality:

Strategy: The Sámi Parliament must participate actively in working on improving attitudes about homosexuality

Measures:

- Continue to develop the dialogue with organizations for homosexuals and lesbians
- The Sámi Parliament must acquire knowledge about the situation of homosexuals and lesbians
- The Sámi Parliament must initiate a campaign on attitudes towards openness

The Sámi Parliament encourages organizations to put different sexual orientations on the agenda. Increase knowledge and initiate research on attitudes/discrimination (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13)

Equality is here stressed, where equal acceptance and tolerance towards people with different sexual orientations relate these issues to the general political field of gender equality. These measures first and foremost have the aim of changing attitudes by increasing knowledge on this issue.

In the Evaluation of 2012 it is concluded that even though many projects have been founded, there are no results of these projects. In spite of the lack of results, the funding of these projects, it is stated, has stimulated deliberation on the situation of homosexuals in Sámi society (Sametinget, 2012, p. 4). The document, however, does not explain which projects were funded or why they did not lead to any results. Also, an explanation on how an increased focus in the institution's budget alone affects the goal of improving attitudes and increasing tolerance in society is not mentioned, especially since these projects have produced no hard evidence of results.

When discussing challenges, the Sámi Parliamentary Council states that there is a need for measures that can contribute to homosexuals feeling included in Sámi society (Sametinget, 2012, p. 7). When looking at the measures from the Action Plan of 2008 it is perhaps not the need for measures that is most acute, but rather that the measures decided upon are followed up. The Evaluation of 2012 firmly states that this has not been the case (Sametinget, 2012, p. 4). Also, the Sámi Parliamentary Council expresses that the lack of implementation, or attention, from the Sámi Parliament has contributed to a continuous silence about homosexuality in Sámi society, which is considered as one of the major challenges for homosexuals according to a report made in 2009 by Fafo<sup>10</sup> (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). In other words, the focus area of increasing the level of tolerance towards homosexuals in the Action Plan of 2012 has been more or less untouched.

The documents of the Sámi Parliament briefly mentions challenges that people with different sexual orientations face in Sámi society. In the Action Plan of 2008 the lack of openness of other sexual orientations than heterosexuality is problematized, where prejudice and fear of reactions from one's community are what often keeps one silent about one's sexuality (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). In the Evaluation of 2012 a report on homosexuals in Sápmi is discussed, where indications of it being less challenging being an open lesbian than an open homosexual man is presented. The Evaluation continues by conjecturing about the narrow male gender role and if this can be a reason for the indication on experienced difference between homosexuals that are men and women. It is suggested that perhaps the men's conference to be held that same year might help highlight this issue (Sametinget, 2012, p. 7). This suggestion becomes rather speculative, and it is not clear how the men's conference is

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<sup>10</sup> One of the largest research foundations in Norway (Fafo, 2014).

supposed to address male gender roles in a way that will move Sámi society closer to the main goal, namely creating acceptance and tolerance towards different sexual orientations.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy to question the manner in which the Sámi Parliament only includes homosexuals in this discussion, and how people with other LGBT orientations are not encompassed in the examples or discussions. It gives the impression that the Sámi Parliament is cut off from the discourse about gender and sexuality. Questions of whether this is founded upon lack of knowledge on this topic, or that it simply has not been prioritized are therefore posed.

A note on the organizations engaged in the question of gender equality is necessary. Neither of the organizations have addressed this issue or voiced their opinions about this matter. The issue of sexual orientation in a Sámi political context has solely been addressed by the Sámi Parliament as an issue within the debate about gender equality and Sámi politics. The cause of this is not clear. One of the measures stated in the Action Plan of 2008 is that these organizations are encouraged to address issues concerning different sexual minorities on their agendas (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). What this encouragement entails more specifically is also unclear from the Action Plan of 2008.

## **Domestic and Sexual Violence**

The issue of domestic violence was first addressed in the context of gender equality in the Evaluation of 2006. This document was produced right after the series of rape and sexual assaults against minor girls came out (Hætta & Skåden, 2009, p. 31). Violence and sexual assault, according to this Evaluation, breaches with the principle of self-determination over one's own body (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5). Self-determination and attitudes of boys and men towards women are the main topics addressed. Additionally, the men's organization Dievddut makes positive contributions in changing attitudes and working locally in the area of Kautokeino (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5). In the Action Plan of 2008 the focus changes from violence and sexual assaults to domestic violence. This shift is connected to an increased awareness about these issues nationally. It is in part motivated by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security and the Action Plan against Domestic Violence 2008-2011 that the Ministry initiated. As is stated by the Sámi Parliament: "This Plan will assist in creating a starting point for the work of the Sámi Parliament" (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). In other words, the Sámi



Parliament's vision is that this national Action Plan will help guide the directions of the work against domestic violence in Sámi society. Thus, this is an illustration of how national trends and tendencies of national politics on gender equality influence Sámi politics in this field.

The Action Plan of 2008 includes a goal, as well as a strategy. Importantly, there are 3 measures to achieve this goal. The goal is that women and men have the right to live their lives without violence and threats of violence, and children have the right to an upbringing free from assaults and fear (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). The goal in itself is formulated as a right and it can thus be challenging to measure the achievement of this goal since holding a right and safeguarding a right are two different goals. In other words, this goal does not seem as a very efficient goal if the aim is to work against direct violence towards women and children, as the Action Plan of 2008 describes (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13).

Further on, the strategy of the Sámi Parliament is to strengthen the support system, based on Sámi language and culture, against all forms of domestic violence. The measures to do so is to secure the rights and the rule of law of Sámi children through Children's houses<sup>11</sup>, to work on strengthening the support system for people exposed to domestic violence, and lastly, to work to facilitate treatment for abusers in Sámi society (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). Concerning the implementation of these measures, the Sámi Parliamentary Council concludes that concerning the Children's house in Tromsø it has the responsibility of all Sámi children in Norway as this center has competence in Sámi language and culture (Sametinget, 2012, p. 4).

In contrast to this, the other measures have not been implemented. In the Evaluation of 2012 it is stated that this is due to the lack of knowledge in this field, and that the Sámi Parliament therefore has initiated a project with the Ministry of Justice and Public Security about domestic violence in Sámi society in order to gain more knowledge to develop measures concerning this issue in the future (Sametinget, 2012, p. 4-5). As mentioned before, Josefsen (2004, p. 64) underlines the importance of knowledge as a concept, and acquiring knowledge about an issue there exists little information about is important in order for gender equality to be involved in a specific Sámi context. Here, the women's organization Sáráhká has contributed to the production on knowledge through producing a report concerning domestic and sexual violence in local Sámi communities (Minde & Utsi, 2011). Sáráhká's report is based on a seminar that the organization held in 2007, and focuses on violence and its impact

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<sup>11</sup> Children's houses are centers that provide assistant in a variety of areas when there is suspicion that a child has witnessed or is victim of domestic violence or sexual abuse (Sametinget, 2012, p. 4; Statens barnehus, 2014, para. 2).

on Sámi society, not on Sámi politics. The Sámi Parliament, however, funded this seminar, as well as the writing of this report, and thus, domestic and sexual violence, through this report, can be seen as a focus area in Sámi politics (Minde & Utsi, 2011, p. 4).

The women's organization Sámi NissonForum has also engaged itself in the issue of domestic and sexual violence. In November 2011 they published a press release asking for an evaluation to be made of the Action Plan of 2008 where domestic violence should be one of the focus areas to be evaluated (Sámi NissonForum, 2011). In this document the Sámi Parliament is criticized for not having defined responsibility of gender equality to any particular position within the assembly or administration, and the Sámi NissonForum thus concludes that gender issues and women's situation cannot be addressed in a Sámi perspective. The organization includes the goal, strategy and measures of the Action Plan of 2008 in their document, but it is not clear for what purpose they do so as they do not address this particular issue in this document itself (Sámi NissonForum, 2011).

Concerning the focus area of domestic violence in the Action Plan of 2008, the situation of women has received special attention and focus. "...both women and men can be abusers. Nonetheless, women are in a larger degree than men exposed to the most severe violence. It is therefore particularly important to have a focus on men's violence against women" (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). In contrast, the measures do not reflect this focus and has a more or less gender neutral perspective. This perspective is contrary to the focus in the Evaluations of 2006 and 2007, where the gender perspective was emphasized, and gender neutrality was said to contribute to maintain or strengthen gender based inequality (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5; 2007, p. 2). Henceforth, when the consequences of women in domestic violence are stressed to such a degree, it is expected that the proposed measures will to some extent reflect this emphasis. This point is made by Lindi (2012, p. 15) of Sámi NissonForum when discussing gender equality in Sámi politics.

## **Summary**

Overall, the analysis shows that the manner of how gender equality as a concept is understood has changed from a universal argumentation of equality to an attempt to define what is particular about gender equality in a Sámi context. This change of focus is characterized by a transfer of concepts that have a central place in Sámi politics, as well as in indigenous politics

globally. These concepts are self-determination, justice and equity, with an emphasis on self-determination.

Further on, the documents show that numeric representation is still a topic of discussion in the Sámi Parliament, and revolves around gender balanced representation in boards and offices in the internal organization of the Sámi Parliament (Sametinget, 2008, p. 11). Lindi et al. (2013, p. 2) address gender representation as well, and question how the Sámi Parliament's representatives understand representation. They conclude that representation is understood as composition in relation to the Sámi population, and not in relation to the content of politics.

Also, equality as a political field in Sámi politics has expanded, and does not only include gender, but also different sexual orientations and domestic and sexual violence. Concerning the former, the Sámi Parliament has defined a goal and a corresponding strategy and measures in order to achieve this goal in the Action Plan of 2008 (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13). In the Evaluation of 2012 it is reported that no results have been achieved and that the Sámi Parliament has contributed to a continuous silence around this topic. The Sámi Parliament as an actor and voice is a rather weak one in relation to this issue, and their goal, strategy and measures are more or less symbolic when examining development in this political field. Without results and information about which projects have been funded and why there were no results, the issue and challenges of sexual orientation gives the impression of being more talk than action. In other words, the value it has is symbolic.

Concerning domestic and sexual violence, it is an issue that has gained more attention after 2005. The Sámi Parliament has defined women as particularly exposed to this type of violence, but as is emphasized in Sámi NissonForum's (2012, p. 15) report, this perspective is not reflected in the measures of the Action Plan of 2008, and a dissonance between the focus and the results is likely to occur.

In general, gender is still the main focus in the political field of equality, and the implementation of a gender perspective in practical politics illustrate that gender mainstreaming is one of the central strategies of the Sámi Parliament. The implementation of this strategy also shows that trends from Norwegian gender equality politics affect Sámi politics in this matter.



## **Chapter 4. Gender Balanced Representation: “Now the work begins<sup>12</sup>”**

This chapter addresses three main issues of the field data concerning representation. Firstly, the interviewees’ thoughts concerning representation and gender equality will be discussed. Secondly, reflections concerning men’s issues and women’s issues will be presented, and lastly, the consequences that the informants deem important when discussing increased female representation will be presented. In this manner, this chapter seeks to explain what role gender balanced representation has had for the Sámi Parliament and what the consequences have been with the increase of female representatives.

### **A Note on Interviews**

As Bryman (2012, p. 471) mentions, semi-structured interviews enable the researcher to gain insight into the world view of informants, and thereby explore how they understand and explain events and patterns. Also, this type of interviews makes valuable information available for the researcher in the sense that the information shared by the participants is challenging to retrieve through other methods (Bartolomew, Henderson & Marcia, 2000, p. 289). For this study, the purpose of utilizing interviews as a method is to examine how the participants understand the achievement of balanced gender representation in relation to gender equality, and what consequences such a representation might have had in Sámi politics. As Hanne Haavind (2000, p. 157) mentions, the idea of expressing and emphasizing gender is based on interaction. Interviews as interaction will assist in exploring what Sámi politicians and activists chose to emphasize and deemphasize when they talk about gender and gender equality.

Working with documents and informants in a parallel manner is a helpful strategy in exploring the different themes to be used in the analysis, and how the different themes relate to each other. This helped specify which types of stories would be interesting for this project, such as representation and gender equality, and thus, thematic analysis is the tool deemed most appropriate to explore these stories. The thematic analysis was accomplished through three stages, where in the first the transcripts of the interviews were read and highlighted, in the second the different codes were clustered after their meanings, and lastly these meanings

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<sup>12</sup> After the achievement of gender balanced representation in 2005, Sámi NissonForum sent a letter to the Sámi Parliament, stating that it is after such an achievement that the work on gender equality begins. My own translation of the phrase: “det er nå arbeidet begynner” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3).

were related to the research question (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 152-156). As Margareta Hydén (2000, p. 130) mentions, an interview is considered an interaction between interviewee and interviewer, and the character of the interview is decided from the interviewee's ability to express her/himself. Complying with Hydén's (2000, p. 130) note on interaction, all the interviewees in this study had the ability to express themselves distinctively and with confidence, and thus, the character and topics of the interviews were clear.

Concerning the quotes in this chapter, they have been chosen to represent and illustrate both the key themes and the variation present in the different clusters (Dalen, 2011, p. 87). As mentioned in the first chapter, Norwegian was the language utilized for the interviews, but in the text these quotations will be presented in English. The translation was made by me, and a full overview over the Norwegian quotations from the informants, as well as their English translations, is available in Appendix B.

## **Political Representation**

As Øyvind Østerud (2007, p. 166) discusses, political representation is complicated and it is not always an easy task to understand what the different political delegates represent. In other words, the position of the representative and the content of what he or she will front are not always clear. For many of the informants, representation and what it entails were reflected upon in relation to gender and gender balance. All of them deemed a balanced number as important, but dwelled upon reasons, consequences and challenges around gender balanced representation.

After the election in 2005, which led to a 51 % female representation in the Sámi Parliament, the Evaluation 2006 stated that “[A] common focus and a conscious attitude from both politicians and voters have led to the result that we today can see, an elected organ by the people where women and men are equally represented” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3). All informants reflected upon the campaign which was organized in order to increase women's participation in Sámi politics, and saw it as a successful measure against underrepresentation of women in previous years. As Ánte expressed it: “I am sure that the work that was started at that time, and the focus which was on women, contributed to results. Also, that the results came, perhaps, faster than they would have done otherwise” (Field notes, 2014, p. 3). For Ánte, the campaign was important in two matters. Firstly, he saw a direct connection between

this campaign and the achievement of gender balanced representation. Secondly, the campaign accelerated the process of more women gaining political access to Sámi politics. In this sense, the process had already been initiated and results would have been achieved without the campaign, but that these results came in that particular moment is, by Ánte, explained by the campaign.

Concerning the achievement of gender balance, the Sámi Parliament stated in the Evaluation of 2006 that “If we believe that gender equality is an achieved good, this in itself can be a hinder in achieving real gender equality” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2). In other words, equal representation in itself cannot be considered real gender equality. Most of the informants reflected upon this, and Maria considers gender balance is important, but that it does not signify gender equality. She sees it as important to not forget other areas of gender equality, such as in the primary industries:

... What would the fisherman be without the fisherman’s wife, right? So, they are dependent on two genders, and it is not sure that they do the same things, but that they are appreciated, yes, that they are valued equally, because it is often the case that the work of the women in the primary industries has less value than the work of those who work with [meat] production, and it is often the man who works with production. [...] So, it is in a way *this* step. It is not enough just saying that we are 50/50. It does not help. (Field notes, 2014, p. 23)

For Maria equal value and appreciation of the work of both men and women are important, independently of whether it traditionally was a field dominated by men or women. Furthermore, she exemplified gender inequality through production, and that the value of men participating in the direct production of meat or fish is considered higher than the indirect production that women traditionally participate in. Here, she highlights structural challenges to gender equality, and she expresses that the achievement of gender balanced representation has little effect on these challenges. Elen has a similar view, where she does not believe that gender equality signifies that the woman has to be in the mountains with the reindeer herd, or that the man needs to sow, but that it is rather about equal value for the job men and women perform:

When one talks about the Norwegian concept of gender equality I have the impression that one talks about [being] equal numbers [...] So, in this way I..., perhaps the Sámi concept of gender equality, from my perspective, is a bit different than the Norwegian one. It is more about making the work one does equal, even though they are different. (Field notes, 2014, p. 68-69)

Maria and Elen share the idea about gender equality, where an equal representation is important, but that real equality is exemplified through primary industries and equal value and equity in the work men and women do, regardless of whether they are different in character or not.

Nils reflects upon the role of 50 % female representation and what it really means for gender equality and expresses that: "Generally speaking, quality should really be the basis when one thinks about gender equality, not numbers. Numbers are, as mentioned, should be taken for granted with a fifty-fifty, but within this [number] one should clearly look at whom is sitting around a table" (Field notes, 2014, p. 16) As mentioned above it can be hard to know what the delegates in fact represent (Østerud, 2007, p. 166), and this Nils addresses when discussing representation. The 50 % female representation is a necessary foundation, but there is a need, however, to look beyond the numbers and obtain quality among the representatives concerning the issue of women and gender in order to fill the gap between representation and real gender equality.

This gap is exemplified, by Inga, as knowledge about women and gender issues: "To believe that one has reached the goal when one has achieved 50/50, that is insane. You do not have that competence even if you are a woman. You do not have that knowledge and experience even if you are a woman and have worked in politics" (Field notes, 2014, p. 48). For Inga, competence, knowledge and experience about gender equality is what is important within a representative body in order to achieve real gender equality. She emphasizes that one cannot have this knowledge simply by being a woman, and therefore a female representative in herself cannot be sufficient security in advocating gender issues. Here, Inga draws the conclusion that the terms "woman" and "gender equality" have similar meanings, and as was mentioned in Chapter 1, understanding these as synonyms is not unusual.

Birgit, on the other hand, understands representation as a foundation, as well as a prerequisite, that can be formed into real gender equality. She expresses that balanced gender representation has consequences for the content of politics as well as the work environment on a whole. According to Birgit, it is through representation that one can fill the gap between numbers and real gender equality:

Simply, if there is space for the gender perspectives in different issues, and I think it has consequences for the decision making also. [...] There are very many aspects connected to gender equality and



representation, or balanced representation. I think it is a minimum prerequisite [...] A place we start.  
(Field notes, 2014, p. 64)

It is representation that can make the basis for the integration of gender perspectives in political issues. Here, Birgit emphasize the need to transform representation to content, and gender mainstreaming is a strategy she mentions in order to accomplish this.

Concerning gender and representation, the Evaluation of 2006 states that: “Power is about participation and the opportunity to influence. It is therefore completely necessary that bodies, which through democratic processes have power, have the greatest possible legitimacy through representation” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3). As Stordahl (2003, p. 221) emphasizes, representation and legitimacy have long been the concern of the Sámi Parliament, and when discussing gender and representation legitimacy was a topic that many interviewees brought up. As Ánte said: ”As long as one has, in fact today, as long as one acts within a political democratic system, gender equality will be a central concept and objective, in the same way as geography, [and] age” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4). As Ánte expresses, gender equality and representation are topics that will always be relevant in a democratic context. He refers to other concerns of equality that he deems important and that is geographic representation and balance between different age groups.

Stordahl (2003, p. 245) has earlier criticized the Sámi Parliament for not establishing sufficient contact with Sámi civil society, where the parliament as a political organ can make good use of the knowledge and competence that organizations hold, and women’s organizations in the case of gender equality. For Nils it is important to include civil society and to establish good connection with Sámi organizations:

The civil society, the Sámi civil society it is very fragile. They are small organizations, it has after a while become quite many organizations, but they are vulnerable, and one cannot afford to act arrogant, or not include them, the few [organizations] that in fact are very active and engaged. And in the end, it matters to the legitimacy of the Sámi Parliament that one is able to make the connection from Karasjok. The aim is to include as many as possible [...] and then one needs to be open and including (Field notes, 2014, p. 17).

Here, Nils argues for cooperation between the Sámi Parliament and the women’s organizations on the basis of legitimacy. For him Sámi civil society is valuable, but fragile, and as he mentions, it is important to include as many organizations as possible as actors in a Sámi political context.

For Maria cooperation between the Sámi women's organizations and the Sámi Parliament is of importance. She is not, however, completely satisfied with the situation the way it is: "I wish there was a much closer cooperation between the Sámi Parliament and the gender equality organizations. A more constructive...we could have played on the same team concerning which measures are necessary" (Field notes, 2014, p. 33). The wish for a closer cooperation between the organizations and the Sámi Parliament is for Maria motivated by an action oriented focus, where the possible results are the main reason for cooperation. For Nils, on the other hand, cooperation between civil society and a political body concerns the legitimacy of the latter.

Due to the wish for closer cooperation, the women's organizations are perceived by Nils and Maria as relevant actors concerning the topic of gender equality, where they all have the same overarching aim. Maria, however, is not convinced that the Sámi Parliament and the organizations agree on "...which measures are necessary" (Field notes, 2014, p. 33). Here, it is not a conflict concerning the aim that is illustrated, but rather the means to reach this aim.

In conclusion, all informants considered a balanced gender representation important and as an important foundation for further work in gender equality. For Inga, the next step is integrating knowledge and increasing the competence about women and gender equality in the Sámi Parliament, and for Birgit it is continuous work of integrating gender perspectives in the different political fields and issues. Both Nils and Maria address cooperation with Sámi civil society and the women's organizations in particular, and while Nils is concerned about legitimacy, Maria is focused on results.

## **Issues of Men and Issues of Women**

In the Action Plan of 2008 it was stated that "Gender equality is often considered to be a women's issue. One of the biggest challenges in the future is to underline that work on gender equality should involve both genders" (Sametinget, 2008, p. 10). The idea that certain issues are labeled as "women's issues" and others as "men's issues" engaged most interviewees in a discussion about validity and reasons.

Ánte saw the division between men's and women's issues as more or less natural and says that: "It is more natural for women to address issues such as kindergarten, [and] language than it is for men" (Field notes, 2014, p. 5). Here, children and language training are considered as

women's issues by Ánte. He uses the term "natural" to describe why women's issues concern women, but afterwards he explains this through women's interests and focus in everyday life. Concerning labeling issues as typical men's or women's issues, Birgit does not find this conflicting either: "These are fields of issues [education and language] that I personally am concerned about, yes, as a politician, as a woman, as a mother, so they are important fields of issues, and if they are labeled as a field of women's issues I don't have a problem with that" (Field notes, 2014, p. 64). For Birgit it is not problematic to label education and language as women's issues. She explains her own concern about these issues on the basis of three aspects of her identity, namely as a politician, as a woman and as a mother, and thus, labeling them as women's issues is therefore valid. Maria, on the other hand, did not agree with the labeling of women's and men's issues when asked:

No, I don't like that. [...] Because I see it as, rather as everyday problems or everyday issues that concern you on an everyday basis. It does not concern you on an everyday basis who can drive an ATV on the tundra. But it does concern all Sámis on an everyday basis whether their children have a good enough Sámi offer in their kindergarten or in school. So many of those issues, no matter where you live, not only if you live in Kautokeino [...] or if you belong to a particular industry, they concern you as a Sámi. So I wouldn't say that they are directly women's issues, but everyday issues. Yes, but that women seem to have a greater focus on than men (Field notes, 2014, p. 30)

Maria defines them as everyday issues rather than women's issues, and to some extent Ánte views them as a reflection of women's concerns even though he defines them as more natural for women: "...it [women's issues] does also reflect what one considers important and spends time on in everyday life. What problems and what views one uses one's time and resources on" (Field notes, 2014, p. 5). Elen expresses similar views as Ánte, and explains that these issues, like issues of gender equality and equity, are local issues, and considered issues close to family life. Therefore they are of more interest to women than to men:

It is a difference between men and women even if we talk about gender equality. Yes, I believe so. Also in the field of interests. What is it that women view as important, and what is it that [men] view as important? Women may have other issues that they view as important, and these will likely be the close issues that will embrace family and your children, and the local society. (Field notes, 2014, p. 68)

Here, Elen emphasizes that women and men have different fields of interests, and that women have interests that can be identified as local and near, or close, issues, such as family and children. Maria, Ánte and Elen all mention women's issues in relation to what concerns and interests women. Maria, however, does not connect these issues directly to gender, but rather to what men and women relate to in their everyday lives. She emphasizes further that

education and language are not issues that should only concern women, and that the concern of one's children is an issue for both men and women. Maria adds further that women have a greater focus on education and language than men, and in this sense, she interprets certain political areas to be connected to women's interests in particular. Therefore, like Ánte and Elen, Maria considers women to have a certain degree of common interests, as the women's perspective claims (Josefsen, 2004, p. 46).

When talking about certain issues being labeled as typical women's issues Nils responds by saying: "It provokes me a bit, actually. Because, I feel that, first of all, it scares the men away [...] even if it doesn't scare of course, it has such a subconscious consequence that 'one leaves it to women to work with that'. I think it is wrong to think like that" (Field notes, 2014, p. 13). Here, Nils discusses how labeling certain areas of politics as "women's issues" can have an excluding effect for men, even if it is on a subconscious level. Nils continues by saying:

A core discussion here is how we can make language tough politics [...] So, removing this stamp of [it being] soft politics, a bit like kindergarten politics. We are removing this [stamp of soft politics] concerning language and making it into a discussion about rights [...] So, it has provoked me very often that it is downgraded. And you might say that it is downgraded to a women's issue, even if that is not a downgrading in itself, but it seems like it, and that is too bad (Field notes, 2014, p. 13)

Nils discusses how to change the status of the political issues considered women's issues, especially in relation to language. He wants the perception of these issues to be elevated and considered as tough rights politics, and not as soft politics. Even though it is not his opinion that women's issues have a lower status than men's issue, or rights issues, his statement opens for questions about hierarchy between issues and whether they are related to gender.

Ánte continues by dwelling upon which areas are considered men's issues: "Politics concerning industries, for example, are considered men's issues, and I think [...] what concerns fisheries and rights of fisheries, I think it is an important case for the Sámi Parliament" (Field notes 2014, p. 5). Here, Ánte exemplifies primary industries as issues that concern men, and that these issues in general are important for the Sámi Parliament. He continues by saying that: "It could very well be that women think this is important as well" (Field notes, 2014, p. 5). He does not exclude that women find these issues important as well, but explains this by what women and men in general are interested in, and what they spend time on.

When discussing women's issues Birgit uses the word "macho" to describe what Nils defines as tough politics: "Now, I think we have many [male] politicians who also think that these [education and language] are important fields of issues, [...] but these [issues] are not really considered very macho" (Field notes, 2014, p. 64). Birgit does not express particular values around labeling certain fields macho, and she mentions them in a very descriptive manner.

For Maria, however, she links these macho issues with male stereotypes and myths:

...we had a man's conference [...] So, we went through those myths about what a Sámi man is, and it is still present, those myths about these macho things. We are now going through culture, making three committees. One of them is planning and finances, the other is culture and industries, and the third is training and education. Then it turns out no one [of the men] wants to be in training and education. It is a committee that there are mostly women in. Everyone wants to sit in culture and industries or planning and finances [...] because it is macho (Field notes, 2014, p. 24)

According to Maria, these myths about what a Sámi man is have effects on how the composition of political committees in the Sámi Parliament is organized. These myths can therefore be connected to what issues are considered men's issues. She exemplified further: "There was no one [in the men's conference] that said a man is a kindergarten uncle<sup>13</sup>..." (Field notes, 2014, p. 24). Maria uses these examples to show why tough politics concern rights rather than resources and why they are considered men's issues. According to Josefsen (2004, p. 47) socialization are processes that lead to a person identifying him or herself with a set of social norms and perceptions that a group of people holds. As Josefsen (2004, p. 47) emphasizes, representatives of the Sámi Parliament have all been socialized into different social environments. When viewing the myths that Maria speaks of through lenses of socialization, it can help explain why issues of rights are often considered men's issues.

An important point for Nils is that most issues concerning resources are actually issues concerning rights. The latter he considers tough politics and the former soft politics. In a discussion about Sámi speaking kindergartens Nils exemplified: "Perhaps we take it for granted, but I believe that when we realize [...] how big rights issues we are really talking about here, then perhaps more men would have been engaged to participate in these women's debates about kindergarten and language" (Field notes, 2014, p. 15). Here, Nils is breaking with the idea that women's issues are necessarily soft, and that they can potentially engage more men. In this sense he redefines the soft areas of politics as hard or tough, and in this way

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<sup>13</sup> In Norwegian the word "uncle" is used for male employees in kindergartens and the word "aunt" for female employees.

he allows more men to be included in what is today considered women's issues: "It is about oneself making politics tough. [...] it can be made tougher by the Sámi Parliament. We can expect sanctions, we can demand, sanctions, lift it up to the international level. Then, suddenly, women politics have become a bit harder." (Field notes, 2014, p. 15-16). In the last phrase Nils shows that one does not necessarily have to consider soft politics as the area of the women and tough politics as the area of men, and by considering education and language as tough, more men will enter into these debates. None of the informants, however, discuss tough politics as excluding for the women.

Concerning Nils' quotes, they illustrate how he understands gender in opposition. He defines what he believes is considered women's issues as soft politics, whilst men's issues are tough politics. Likewise, he explains how women's issues are often considered as less important, downgraded issues, whilst men's issues are important and more central in the international arena. Nils' interpretation of how gender is understood and valued in Sámi politics reveals a naturalist approach to gender and politics. He does, however, find these constructions provocative.

Taken together, the discussion of men's and women's issues may be a result of belonging to different socialized systems (Josefsen, 2004, p. 47). The view of certain areas concerning women more than men and vice versa was for some of the informants unproblematic. Neither one of them expressed that men's areas should solely be for men and women's areas solely for women, and as Ánte expressed, it might be that women are also interested in issues concerning primary industries. The explanatory factors for issues being women's issues and men's issues were that women and men have different focuses in an everyday basis, as well as myths and stereotypes concerning what a Sámi man is, and therefore is interested in. The latter was problematic to Maria, and she deemed it important to break down the idea of the Committee for Training and Education being an area for women's issues, which was important for Nils as well.

## **Consequences of Balanced Representation**

Whether achieving a gender balanced representation in an assembly will have political consequences or not was a question that most informants reflected upon. The justice argument claims that both men and women have the same right to participate in the political sphere, and

the major point is the access in itself, not that an increased representation of women will influence the content of politics (Josefsen, 2004, p. 44; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18). The majority of the informants, however, found that it was not just access that mattered, but that the content of the general politics had changed after achieving a balanced representation in 2005. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are two arguments addressing the change of content, where the first is called the consequence argument and the second the interest argument. In the former, women are argued to have a different perspective than men, and balanced representation will therefore mean utilizing the full competence, knowledge and experience of society. In the latter women and men are viewed as having competitive interests, and if women do not have access their interests will not be taken care of (Josefsen, 2004, p. 45; Pettersen et al., 2002, p. 18; Phillips, 1994, p. 197).

The change of content in politics was for many of the informants visible from 2005. When asked about consequences of increased representation of women Elen expressed that the focus has changed, where before 2005 rights to land and water were more present in Sámi politics than it has been after the achievement of gender balanced representation:

...there was perhaps a greater focus before on [...] the right to land and water. That the EU is included, and that it is a bit more big politics, if I should use that word. This number of women [...] I would actually say [...] that it has had a certain influence [on politics], yes. (Field notes, 2014, p. 71)

In this case, balanced representation resulted in more than just political access, and it has changed the general focus on politics. Maria does also reflect upon the increase of female representatives and potential consequences that might have followed:

This is completely subjective, [...] but I notice quite a few differences. That there are more and more language issues, health issues on the agenda in the plenary assembly, and that is precisely because women are this well represented that it is them that asks for [...] the everyday problems. It is not about driving vehicles, who can drive where, but it is simply about [...] why cannot children have Sámi education (Field notes, 2014, p. 28).

Here, Elen and Maria both relate increased female representation with a shift in political focus, where issues concerning rights are no longer the main focus of Sámi politics. Maria exemplifies this change from a rights perspective to a resource perspective by increased attention on issues concerning health, language and education.

The greatest change, according to most of the informants, is the shift from a rights perspective of primary industries as well as land and water related issues, to a resource perspective of

education, health and children. As Maria expresses it: “These old cases, they have been about rights, rights, rights and rights. And then we had a bit of resources, and a bit of resources, but then we had rights again. So, it is clear that if you start looking back you will see that there has been a change, and especially after 2005” (Field notes, 2014, p. 28-29). For her the issues that have gained more ground after the election of 2005 are not only interesting to women. In spite of this they have been focused on a great deal more after they achieved gender balance in the Sámi Parliament. Elen and Maria’s view, therefore, supports the consequence argument where the issues are not necessarily in conflict with each other, but rather that the increased number of women has addressed resource issues based on the experiences and competence of women.

Ánte has a similar view: ”It is not a coincidence that there were only female presidential candidates and top candidates on the lists. Because there are many skillful women. Now they are using their knowledge and experiences in the political field” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4). For many of the informants a qualitative use of society’s overall competence has been mentioned when talking about consequences after the achievement of balanced gender representation.

Even though Nils considers a change from a rights perspective to a resource perspective as a consequence of balanced gender representation, he is not completely convinced:

The move from rights to these soft areas of politics, I don’t think they necessarily are a result of the amount of women in the Sámi Parliament. It is more likely a general turn in Sámi politics. I often hear the older [...] veterans in Sámi politics, when they discuss, they discuss about the great cases of the past in the old days, so from the establishment [of the Sámi Parliament], to 2005, to the Finnmark Act was settled. And there were great battles, battle after battle, year after year, about rights issues. [...] But now it has kind of settled and the grey everyday [reality] for Sámi politics has started to settle and [...] so I think it has had a general influence in what is discussed in the Sámi Parliament. (Field notes, 2014, p. 15)

Here, Nils considers an historical event for, the Finnmark Act, as an explanatory factor for the shift in focus from a rights perspective to a resource perspective in Sámi politics. The Finnmark Act was passed in 2005 and had the effect that the previously contested state owned land in Finnmark was transferred to a private owner, namely the Finnmark Estate (Fefo) (Berg, 2010, p. 221). Fefo is acting on behalf of the interests of the Finnmark population and



with a special concern for the Sámi people in their mind<sup>14</sup> (Berge, 2005, p. 87-88). Even though Nils deems this event as important and relevant he does not completely exclude the possibility that gender played a role:

We have [...] the great rights issues, especially before 2005, before the Finnmark Act was settled, it was quite a lot of male dominance in the Sámi Parliament, and after that those things have calmed a bit down and it has become a greater focus on kindergarten politics, language, health and social [issues] that are very important issues, but that perhaps men back off a bit and leave it to others, to women. (Field notes, 2014, p. 11)

Nils in this case, considers the male dominance prior to 2005 as a possible explanation to the focus on rights issues, and the balanced gender representation after 2005 as a possible explanation to the shift in focus. He does not exclude, however, the contextual relevance of the Finnmark Act in the former quote. In this sense, Nils illustrates that reasons behind shifts in political focus are complex, and can have several possible explanations.

Furthermore, most of the informants reflected upon the increased number of women and whether the Sámi Parliament can be considered to have a female dominance. Ánte refers to female dominance to explain that language has become a major issue: "Language can be viewed as a soft value, a women's value, and the elevation of language is connected to the stronger female dominance in the Sámi Parliament" (Field notes, 2014, p. 5). Here, dominance is related to the position of issues that he labels as women's issues. The promotion of these issues, however, is seen as connected to the number of women in the decision making process, so all in all, female dominance for Ánte is related to both numbers and central issues on the agenda.

For Nils it is not as much the issues themselves he perceives as affected by female dominance, but rather to discuss issues from a different perspective:

As mentioned there are very many cases in the Sámi Parliament that directly engage most women, and that, one feels it as a man [...] in the Sámi Parliament, it is perhaps...there are some days that I miss a buddy in the cafeteria to put it like that, that discusses the same cases from a man's perspective. (Field notes, 2014, p. 18)

Female dominance for Nils is not only related to numbers, but to reflect upon cases in a male perspective. Here, Nils gives importance to how issues engage men and women, and when

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<sup>14</sup> A special court has been set up to identify the possession and owner rights within each municipality of Finnmark county, including the user rights of Sami in the municipalities where there is such a claim (Minde, 2005, p. 29). This is an ongoing process and the timeframe of this project is not defined as of today.

there are more issues that engages female representatives a male perspective is perhaps not as visible as the women's perspective. Maria and Elen, on the other hand, discuss numbers of women when considering female dominance:

I agree with some of, that says that in this period we have had four women in the Council and one man, and there has been some that have protested against it. It is...some has protested, and others have kept their mouth shut, but then there has been some who has said that had it been four men and one woman, then it would have been a lot of trouble<sup>15</sup>. [...] Perhaps in some arenas one accepts more that women are overrepresented in shorter periods than in others. (Maria) (Field notes 2014, p. 26)

The Sámi Parliament, I would say it this way, previously there has been focused on that when committees are elected...I saw it this last time, when it was [the selection of] the Sámi Parliamentary Council, then it was only women plus the President of the Sámi Parliament. And, it was no one who cried out about this. If it had been the other way around, then it would have been a huge scene<sup>16</sup>... (Elen) (Field notes 2014, p. 75)

Maria and Elen mention female dominance as numbers. Maria discusses whether an overrepresentation is acceptable or not, and concludes that more often it is accepted with the concern of women, but perhaps not with men, and then only for a short period of time. At the same time, such an acceptance is not complete, where in some occasions protests have been voiced, whilst in others they have been silent. Elen expresses a similar view as Maria on this matter, but does not reflect on potential resistance, whether expressed or not. Further, both highlight the protests that would have been voiced if there had been an overrepresentation of men in the Council.

For Inga the term female dominance and what it entails poses challenges as it could be understood both in numbers and in which issues that are promoted. In this sense she dwells upon whether it was representation or the consequences of representation that is important when addressing female dominance: "It is nothing to discuss that it has become...it is like that when you count heads, then it is a [female] dominance. But at the same time [I think] that women's issues and gender equality should have a greater focus" (Field notes, 2014, p. 53). For her there is female dominance in numbers, but at the same time the focus on content is not completely satisfactory to her. Thus, dominance in numbers does not equal dominance in character for Inga.

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<sup>15</sup> "Trouble" is here translated from "hel...hull liv". See full translation in Appendix B.

<sup>16</sup> "Huge scene" is here translated from "et spetakkel uten like...". See full translation in Appendix B.

Interestingly, even though the percentage of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament is 49 % all interviewees perceived that there was female dominance either in numbers or in issues considered women's issues. Maria and Elen, on the other hand, discussed numbers in relation to the Sámi Parliamentary Council, where four out of five representatives were women from 2009-2013.

Concerning the role of gender equality in Sámi politics many of the informants think that gender equality has become a more natural and integrated part of politics and the decision making process. This is explained by Ánte as such:

I think that, so far, it [gender equality] has become a natural part of many fields, even if the case gender equality [in itself] perhaps has not been debated that often, or frequently as it was at times before. But I think that the concern of gender equality, or the concept has become [...] a natural part when thinking politics, and also when thinking issues. (Field notes 2014, p. 4)

Here, Ánte reflects upon the role of gender equality in Sámi politics, and concludes that the debate is less concerned about gender equality and its status than it was before 2005. Rather, the topics discussed in the debate are concerned about issues, and how gender equality applies to these issues. Thus, a shift can be seen, where the characteristics of the debate is no longer defined by justifying the relevance of gender equality in Sámi politics, but rather integrating this perspective as a whole. This is, as mentioned in Chapter 3, recognized as a strategy by Squires (2007, p. 39) to integrate a gender perspective in all political areas of an institution, and as Ánte illustrates the focus of the debate has developed in such a direction.

Further, Inga highlights a consequence of balanced gender representation that she deems as important and which she considers has had impact on a societal level, namely female role models: "It has contributed to that there [...] are female role models, female images, and I think that is fantastic! That it no longer is so that it is the men who, [...] that you have a perception that it is men that should control the development of Sámi society" (Field notes, 2014, p. 53). Gender balanced representation is important because women in politics become a normal perception and illustrates that both women and men have access to power through politics.

Elen mentions a similar point: "That it is a woman [who is the President of the Sámi Parliament], think about all these young girls that grow up, right. She is a role model that one does not need to be a man" (Field notes, 2014, p. 71). Elen, like Inga, deems role models for young girls as important to change attitudes about gender and power. The main point they

make is that political power is no longer associated with being a man, but is accessible for both women and men. Also, Elen mentions “young girls”, which illustrates that female role models are of specific importance to the young generation. Here, both Inga and Elen consider a possible impact of balanced gender representation on Sámi society, not only Sámi politics.

Concerning the consequences of an increased female representation, most interviewees reflected upon the shift in politics from a rights perspective to a resource perspective and found the balanced gender representation as a cause for this. The Finnmark Act, however, was considered by Nils of contextual importance, but the settlement of this law might have helped the increase of women in the assembly in 2005, and therefore a shift in the focus of political issues. Also, most interviewees found that there was, to some extent, female dominance in the Sámi Parliament, and whereas most considered this by number, Nils expressed it as a wish to discuss issues with a male perspective to a greater extent. Overall, a majority of the participants thinks that gender equality in itself has changed in the way that an unbalanced representation is not an issue anymore, but rather gender equality has become a natural and integrated part of Sámi politics. Lastly, Inga and Elen mentioned a consequence on a societal level where balanced representation made new role models available for girls and young women.

## **Summary**

In conclusion, all interviewees considered gender balanced representation as an important factor in the work of gender equality. Balanced representation, however, was a good starting point, but the integration of competence, knowledge and gender perspectives were considered necessary in order to work towards real gender equality. Concerning men’s and women’s issues, most informants found it unproblematic to label certain issues as typical for men or typical for women. Some of them found it a bit provocative. In one case labeling language as a woman’s issue had an exclusive effect on men, and in the other case it was problematic to motivate men to sit in the Committee of Training and Education as it was considered soft politics and therefore a woman’s issue.

When discussing the increased female representation a shift from a rights perspective to a resource perspective was the overall conclusion. Many of the informants saw this as a result of utilizing women’s competences, perspectives and resources (Teigen, 2006, p. 194-195).

Another consequence that most interviewees expressed was that there is, to some extent, female dominance in the Sámi Parliament. The role of a balanced gender representation has for most of the informants been that gender equality has become a natural part of Sámi politics, and that now the debate about gender equality is more or less concerned with the integration of a gender perspective than the actual representation itself.



## Chapter 5. Discussion and Concluding Remarks

In this study about gender equality in Sámi politics the focus has been on how the debate about gender equality has developed after the election of 2005. This development has been addressed through exploring what the achievement of balanced gender representation signify for the debate, what issues are prioritized and how different actors, mainly the Sámi Parliament and Sámi NissonForum, communicate these issues. This study has been based on four documents by the Sámi Parliament and five documents by Sámi NissonForum, as well as six qualitative semi-structured interviews. Through these methods, the thesis has attempted to answer how gender equality in the Sámi political context is represented and addressed.

### Trends and Tendencies

The analysis in this project shows that the use of documents and interviews has contributed in different aspects. The documents have provided an understanding of the overall trends of gender equality in Sámi politics, such as extensive shifts in the issues addressed, as well as inclusion of new topics in the debate. The interviews, on the other hand, reveal more reflection around the development of these trends, as well as other specific issues.

One of the main trends after the achievement of gender balanced representation is that *gender equality as a political field has gained increased focus and become more systematically addressed in Sámi politics*. This is illustrated by how practical politics are addressed through gender mainstreaming, and issues such as climate, primary industries, budget and education are viewed through a gender perspective. In a similar manner, many of the informants expressed that gender equality has become a more natural and integrated part of Sámi politics after the election of 2005. Further, many of them explained that the debate on gender equality was not about whether gender equality was important or not. Rather, the discussion is concerned about which issues to be prioritized and the amount of resources to be invested in the different focus areas. Furthermore, whilst most of the informants explained this development in light of the achievement of gender balanced representation, one of them considered that it could also be explained by the settling of the Finnmark Act and establishment of FeFo in 2005, and that solving a major conflict concerning land with the Norwegian government, opened up the possibility for internal issues to be addressed in a more systematic manner.

Concerning the relevance of gender equality, both the documents and most of the informants argue for the importance of its position in Sámi politics. These arguments include the justice, interest and consequence perspectives. Even though all three arguments are to be found in both the documents and interviews, they emphasize the relevance of these arguments differently. The documents underline the justice argument when discussing the importance of gender and politics, whilst the informants use the argument of consequences more frequently. The latter argues that balanced gender representation will influence the content on politics as women and men focus on different issues. Even if none of the informants considered equal number of men and women as gender equality per se, most of them deemed it as a necessary prerequisite for real gender equality to be achieved. Therefore, a tendency can be seen where the written text is arguing through a rights perspective of what is just, whilst the informants reflect about what the consequences of real gender equality will signify, placing an emphasis on value in work life.

Further, a dissonance between the documents of the Sámi Parliament and of Lindi et al. (2013) may be signaled. Here, the issue of representation is problematized, where the question of what the representatives represent is the topic for discussion. This illustrates Østerud's (2007, p. 167) point, where representation can signify many aspects. The criticism of Lindi et al. (2013) illustrates a tendency where Sámi NissonForum as an organization does not agree with how the Sámi Parliament interprets representation when forming Sámi delegations, and asks for a greater focus on content rather than composition.

Further, a second trend concerning equality is found, where *the field of equality politics has expanded from mainly addressing gender to discussing issues of different sexual orientations as well as domestic and sexual violence*. This expansion is first visible in the Evaluation of 2006, and thus, indicates that such an inclusion of equality politics occurred parallel to an increased focus on gender equality in Sámi politics. Even though equality politics have expanded to include different sexual orientations, the Sámi Parliament has not prioritized implementing the measures addressing this issue. As the documents show, there are no results from the measures or the projects that received funding from the Sámi Parliament, and challenges concerning different sexual orientations have therefore not been addressed. In other words, the analysis demonstrates that the focus on different sexual orientations is of a symbolic value.



Also, a tendency concerning the political issue of different sexual orientations is found, where the Sámi Parliament does not mention bisexual and transgender person when discussing sexual orientations. In Norwegian equality politics, bisexuals and transgender persons are included in the debate, and LGBT as an abbreviation is used to illustrate this inclusion. Only mentioning lesbians and homosexuals explicit as is done in the documents, indicates that the Sámi Parliament, as the largest political actor in Sámi society, seems to be cut off from the discourse on gender and sexuality.

Domestic and sexual violence, on the other hand, is an issue that has gained increasingly political attention. Here, the Sámi Parliament draws parallels to ethnopolitics, where a breach over one's body and sexuality is a breach to the principle of self-determination. As the documents show, in 2008 the focus shifted from violence and sexual assaults to domestic and sexual violence due to national trends on this issue. This is an illustration of how trends of gender equality in Sámi politics is connected and influenced by the Norwegian trends on this matter.

Meanwhile, the report by Lindi (2012, p. 15) criticizes the Sámi Parliament for their lack of focus on women and women's issues in the debate concerning domestic and sexual violence. Even though women are defined as those most exposed to domestic and sexual violence, this is not reflected in the measures aimed at this issue. Consequently, this signifies that the chosen measures will not necessarily contribute to help those women that find themselves in such a precarious situation.

The role of the women's organization is affected by their position as actors, and as illustrated in Chapter 2 the financial abilities and limited human resources of Sámi NissonForum and Sáráhká determine their position as actors in Sámi politics. As Olakunle (2006, p. 49) concludes, their role can be understood as watchdogs in relation to issues of equality in Sámi politics. However, considering the limitations of capacity these organizations face, their influence on the Sámi Parliament and their role as watchdogs is perhaps not comparable to similar actors in the Norwegian political landscape.

A third main trend is found where *gender equality as a concept has been contextualized within a Sámi political framework*. This has been done by attempting to transfer the concepts of self-determination, justice and equity from the Sámi ethnopolitical discourse to the discourse on gender equality. The concept of self-determination is contextualized to the rights to decide over one's own body and sexuality, as well as to speak one's own language, practice

one's own culture, learn one's own history and being confident in one's own identity and belonging (Lindi, 2012, p. 4). The work of Sámi NissonForum on this topic has provided a deeper understanding of this concept through a gender perspective. Concerning the concepts of justice and equity, they are not contextualized to Sámi society or politics in particularity, but are discussed through a universal argumentation of justice and equity.

The concept of self-determination gained considerable attention in the Evaluation of 2006 where sexual violence and assaults were topics of discussion. The development of this concept in a Sámi context must be seen in relation to the abuse of minor girls that was discussed intensely at this time (Hætta & Skåden, 2009, p. 31).

## **Equality Politics and Intersectionality**

As mentioned in Chapter 1, equality politics includes a wide range of issues such as gender, LGBT, disability, age and ethnicity among others (LDO, 2014). The Norwegian state sets the Sámi political agenda, as the Sámi Parliament is an institution connected to the Norwegian Government (Broderstad, 2003, p. 154). As such, Hansen (2012, p. 43) underlines, the Sámi society and the Norwegian society more or less face the same challenges in the political field of equality. Equality in the Norwegian state, however, is a political field with considerable efforts in many of the different topical issues. Comparatively, the equality field of the Sámi Parliament is quite small, and has mainly focused on ethnicity and gender. Sexual orientation, violence and harassment, as well as age to a certain degree, have gained more attention after 2005, and equality in Sámi politics is in this manner expanding as a political field.

As Halsaa (2013a, p. 229) discusses, in the ethno-political struggle in the 1970s and 1980s, Sámi women did not organize as women, but as Sámis in order to fight for Sámi interests. During these decades the Alta-Kautokeino Conflict was at its peak (Minde, 2003a, p. 91), and ethnic identity as a Sámi and as a member of the indigenous population of Norway was articulated and prioritized over the identity they had as women (Halsaa 2013a, p. 223). Exploring this articulation in an intersectional framework enables one to examine these two identities and how they met and were negotiated at a nodal point (Nielsen, 2006, p. 156). Due to time and place, ethnicity was prioritized in order for the ethno-political movement to be unified, but also to show itself different from the Norwegian majority society (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 226-227).

Parallel to the establishment of the Sámi Parliament, Sámi women organized and a new focus on women's issues within Sámi society grew forth (Halsaa, 2013a, p. 227). The Alta-Kautokeino Conflict can in many ways symbolize an ethnic conflict in a political context, and the end of this conflict opened up for a stronger articulation of gender within Sámi ethnopolitics itself. The institutionalization of Sámi politics through the establishment of the Sámi Parliament therefore made way for other potential conflicts to be expressed, and thereby also the conflict between gender and political influence. Here, the nodal point of the ethnic and gender discourses is the Sámi Parliament (Berg et al., 2010, p. 15), where gender equality politics of the Sámi Parliament has been engaged in a constant negotiation with the ethnic and indigenous articulation of identity and political interests since the establishment of the Parliament. As Nielsen (2006, p. 156) explains, in such a cross section certain identities will be downplayed whilst others will be stressed, and here, the ethnic identity politics have been stressed, whilst issues concerning gender have been intersected and downplayed by ethnicity.

In 2001 a media debate was initiated, addressing the decreasing number of female representatives in the Sámi Parliament (Stordahl, 2003, p. 228). This attention is an example of the negotiation between the discourses on ethnopolitics and gender politics, where issues of gender were increasingly articulated. The achievement of gender balanced representation in 2005 can be viewed as an end to this conflict of gender and political influence, and therefore, once again, new areas of conflicts, or expression of new political interests, are opened up. Thus, explaining how different identities and political issues are negotiated and articulated in Sámi politics through an intersectional framework can be helpful in understanding the expansion of the political field of equality in general, but also the increased focus on gender equality after the year of 2005.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, ethnicity and gender are the main areas focused upon in the Sámi Parliament. Concerning politics of equality, gender has been, and still is, the main focus, but the expansion of this field includes both LGBT issues and domestic and sexual violence. Sámi politics, however, seems to be limited in its scope where it is not able to manage more than two or three areas of equality at once. As has been shown, both gender and domestic and sexual violence as focus areas have been explicitly articulated and followed up, whilst LGBT issues are under articulated both in Sámi politics and in the implementation of these, even though LGBT as a field also can be viewed as expressions of gender.

## Challenges

From this project two types of challenges are identified, where the first concerns the limitations of this thesis itself, whilst the second entails challenges and issues that may encourage further investigation in the future.

Firstly, this project is not an attempt to undergo a case study of the Sámi Parliament in a gender perspective. The results of such a case study will most likely lead to other findings and conclusions than presented in this study due to the application of different frameworks and concepts.

Moreover, the scope of this study has not included the international or regional level, and how gender equality in Sámi politics relates and communicates with indigenous organizations, communities or individuals on these levels. Neither has this project explored the connections with, and influences of, international or regional institutions, such as the UN or the EU.

Secondly, this study has demonstrated that the field of equality in Sámi politics is an area that is expanding, and has done so considerably after 2005. The symbolic value of LGBT issues suggests that the Sámi Parliament finds this rapid expansion challenging in terms of implementation, and as new issues of equality are continuously raised, this challenge will not diminish in the future.

Furthermore, the actors discussed in this thesis and how they interact, as well as how they influence each other, have not been examined in depth. Therefore, a situational study of the actors and networks in Sámi politics and relevant organizations on the topic of equality issues, is an area still unexplored.

## Conclusive Remarks

The analysis of this study demonstrates that there are three main findings to the question of how gender equality is represented and addressed in the context of Sámi politics. *Firstly, gender equality and general gender issues have acquired a more central position in Sámi politics after 2005.* The status of this political field is raised, and gender equality is generally viewed as an important field in Sámi politics. This importance is, by both documents and informants, exemplified through the justice argument, interest argument and the consequence

argument. The documents underline equality through the justice argument, whilst the interviews represent an emphasis on the consequence argument. Furthermore, neither the documents nor the informants express that gender equality has been accomplished, but rather that it is a process that will change and adapt to time and space continuously.

There is, however, disagreement between the Sámi Parliament and Sámi NissonForum about how much political attention this issue ought to receive, where the latter expresses that the focus and level of attention of today is not satisfying. Moreover, the analysis shows that for Sámi NissonForum and many of the informants, the content of politics concerning gender equality is not fulfilling, and a greater integration of competence, knowledge and gender mainstreaming is suggested.

*The second main finding is that the debate on equality in Sámi politics has expanded.* Even though gender equality is still the main focus, two other thematic areas have gained ground in the debate. These are domestic and sexual violence as well as different sexual orientations. The expansion of equality politics, however, does not signify that these two themes are considered as important as gender equality. Concerning domestic and sexual violence, this issue is represented as an important issue nationally as well as in Sámi politics. The communication between the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Safety and the Sámi Parliament about this issue, illustrates that it is deemed as a central political field. The issue of different sexual orientations, however, is less focused upon, and is more or less of a symbolic value in the equality debate.

*Thirdly, gender equality as a concept has been developed and contextualized within a Sámi political framework.* The concepts self-determination, justice and equity, which are central and principle concept in the ethno-political rights discourse, are attempted transferred and utilized in the discourse on gender equality. Self-determination in a gender perspective is exemplified through the right to determine over one's own body, sexuality, learning one's own language, history and culture. The lack of self-determination on these aspects is related to mental and physical health issues. While the concept self-determination has been contextualized to a specific approach on Sámi gender equality, the concepts of justice and equity still have not undergone such a transfer as successfully as self-determination, and these concepts are still utilized in a universal manner rather than in a specific Sámi or indigenous mode.

In brief, gender equality in a Sámi political context is represented as a political field in continuous development, where this political field is attempted contextualized to a Sámi political framework. Also, the expansion of the political field of equality introduces new issues to be addressed, and the topic domestic and sexual violence is partly related to the concept of self-determination. Nevertheless, gender and gender equality are still the main focus areas of the internal equality debate in Sámi politics. All in all, increasing knowledge in this field must be given continuous effort, and as Sámi NissonForum stated in 2013, distinguishing between numbers of representatives and having knowledge about gender issues is of great importance. Similar parallels can be drawn in direction of LGBT issues, which is a political field with more symbolic than real value. In this sense, the statement by Sámi NissonForum to the Sámi Parliament in 2006 is still relevant: “Now the work begins” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3).

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## Appendix A: Quotations from Documents

### Chapter 3. Gender Equality and Content

#### Sámi Gender Equality and Central Concepts.

“Vi kan si at samepolitikk handler om likestillingspolitikk. Samepolitikken og likestillingspolitikken bygger i stor grad på den samme ideologien der målet er likebehandling av to eller flere i prinsippet likestilte parter. Det kan være samer eller nordmenn, menn eller kvinner, unge eller eldre, homofile eller heterofile.” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 9).

”We can say that Sámi politics are about equality politics. Sámi politics and gender equality politics, to a large degree, build on the same ideology where the aim is equal treatment of two or more in principal equal parties. It may be Sámi or Norwegians, men or women, youth or elders, homosexuals or heterosexuals.” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 9).

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“I samepolitisk sammenheng er selvbestemmelse sentralt. Som henvist til over omfatter dette både kollektive og individuelle rettigheter. Ikke minst er dette viktig når det gjelder et tema som berører kropp og seksualitet i et likestillingsperspektiv. For retten til selv å bestemme over egen kropp og egen seksualitet, er en av de mest grunnleggende rettigheter en person har. Vold og seksuelle overgrep er et brudd på denne rettigheten” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5).

”In a Sámi political context self-determination is central. As referred to above this includes both collective and individual rights. Not least is this important when it concerns a topic that touches body and sexuality in a gender equality perspective. Because the right to decide over one’s own body and one’s own sexuality is one of the most basic rights a person holds. Violence and sexual assaults are a breach of this right” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 5).

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“SNF [Sámi NissonForum] satte fokus på selvbestemmelse i forhold til kvinners oppfatning av begrepet, som [...] inkluderer kontroll over egen kultur og hverdag, og egen kropp og seksualitet” (Lindi, 2012, p. 4).

”SNF [Sámi NissonForum] focused on self-determination in relation to women’s perception of the concept, which [...] includes control over one’s own culture and everyday life, and one’s own body and sexuality” (Lindi, 2012, p. 4).

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“Det å øke kvinners medvirkning i næringslivet er ønskelig ut i fra et rettferdighetsprinsipp. I tillegg er kvinnelige næringsutøvere en stor uutnyttet ressurs som bør få større plass i Sametingets næringspolitiske satsing” (Sametinget, 2007, p. 4).

”The increase of women’s influence in business life is desirable from a principle of justice. In addition, the female practitioners in business life are a major untapped resource that should gain more space in the Sámi Parliament’s commitment to industry politics” (Sametinget, 2007, p. 4).

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“Deltakelse i beslutningsprosesser er ikke bare et spørsmål om rettferdighet eller demokrati, men en nødvendig forutsetning for at både kvinner og menns interesser tas i betraktning” (Sametinget, 2012, p. 3).

”Participation in decision making processes is not only a question of justice or democracy, but a necessary prerequisite so that both women and men’s interests are taken into account” (Sametinget, 2012, p. 3).

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### **Gender Equality.**

“Tror vi at likestilling er et oppnådd gode, kan dette i seg selv være et hinder for å oppnå reell likestilling.” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2).

”If we believe that gender equality is an achieved good, this in itself can be a hinder in achieving real gender equality.” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 2).

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“Det vi må ha som utgangspunkt er at svært lite av politikk generelt er kjønnsnøytral [...]. Dette har den praktiske konsekvens at kjønnsperspektivet må implementeres i alt arbeid i Sametingets egen organisasjon, på alle nivå og i alle faser i politikktutforming, ved tildeling av

midler, i planlegging, gjennomføring og evaluering av program og prosjekt.” (Sametinget, 2007, p. 2).

”What we need as a starting point is that very little politics are generally gender neutral [...]. This entails the practical consequence that a gender perspective must be implemented in all the work of the Sámi Parliaments own organization, in all levels and in all faces in the shaping of politics, in the distribution of funds, in the planning, execution and evaluation of programs and projects.“ (Sametinget, 2007, p. 2).

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“Lik medvirkning der politiske beslutningsprosesser iverksettes er ønskelig både ut fra et rettferdighetssyn og ut fra et ønske om å kunne utnytte menneskelige ressurser på best mulig måte” (Sametinget 2008:11).

”Equal participation, where political decision making processes are implemented, is desired both from a justice perspective and from a wish to be able to profit from human resources in the best possible way” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 11).

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[...] the SNF received an answer from the Sámi Parliament, stating that the female participation is looked well into and acceptable according to the delegates in Alta 2013[...]. This is embarrassing. It shows that the council does not distinguish between: 1) The number of women participating in Alta, representing whichever group or cause 2) Feminists working with women and gender issues and getting this highlighted have acquired expertise and knowledge (Lindi et al., 2013, p. 2). [Only in English]

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“SNFs oppfatning er at kvinnepolitisk arbeid er degradert i det offentlige samiske samfunnet og nærmest utradert fra Sametingets handlingsplan for likestilling 2009-2013” (Sámi NissonForum, 2012, p. 15).

“[t]he perception of SNF is that women political work is degraded in the public Sámi society and more or less eradicated from the Sámi Parliament’s Action Plan for Gender Equality 2009-2013” (Sámi NissonForum, 2012, p. 15).

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## **Different Sexual Orientations.**

Strategi: Sametinget må delta aktivt i holdningsskapende arbeid om homofili

- Tiltak:
- Videreutvikle dialogen med organisasjoner for homofile og lesbiske
  - Sametinget må aktivt tilegne seg større kunnskap om situasjonen til homofile og lesbiske
  - Sametinget må igangsette holdningskampanje omkring åpenhet
- Sametinget oppfordrer organisasjoner til å sette ulike seksuelle legninger på dagsorden. Øke kunnskap og sette i gang forskning på holdninger/diskriminering (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13)

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Strategy: The Sámi Parliament must participate actively in working on improving attitudes about homosexuality

- Measures:
- Continue to develop the dialogue with organizations for homosexuals and lesbians
  - The Sámi Parliament must acquire knowledge about the situation of homosexuals and lesbians
  - The Sámi Parliament must initiate a campaign on attitudes towards openness
- The Sámi Parliament encourages organizations to put different sexual orientations on the agenda. Increase knowledge and initiate research on attitudes/discrimination (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13)

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## **Domestic and Sexual Violence.**

“Denne planen vil være med og danne utgangspunkt for Sametingets arbeid” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13).

“This Plan will assist in creating a starting point for the work of the Sámi Parliament” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13).

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“...både kvinner og menn kan være voldsutøvere. Likevel er kvinner i større grad enn menn utsatt for den mest alvorlige volden. Det blir derfor særlig viktig å ha et fokus på menns vold mot kvinner” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13).

“...both women and men can be abusers. Nonetheless, women are in a larger degree than men exposed to the most severe violence. It is therefore particularly important to have a focus on men’s violence against women” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 13).



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## **Chapter 4. Gender Balanced Representation: “Now the work begins”**

### **Political Representation.**

“Felles fokus og en bevisst holdning fra både politikere og velgere har gitt det resultatet vi i dag kan vise til, et folkevalgt organ der kvinner og menn er likt representert” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3).

“[A] common focus and a conscious attitude from both politicians and voters have led to the result that we today can see, an elected organ by the people where women and men are equally represented” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3).

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“Makt handler om medvirkning og mulighet til påvirkning. Det er derfor helt nødvendig at organ som gjennom demokratiske prosesser har makt, har en størst mulig legitimitet gjennom representasjon” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3).

“Power is about participation and the opportunity to influence. It is therefore completely necessary that bodies, which through democratic processes have power, have the greatest possible legitimacy through representation” (Sametinget, 2006, p. 3).

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### **Issues of Men and Issues of Women.**

“Likestilling blir ofte oppfattet som en kvinnesak. En av de store utfordringene framover er å få fram at arbeid med likestilling skal involvere begge kjønn” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 10).

”Gender equality is often considered to be a women’s issue. One of the biggest challenges in the future is to underline that work on gender equality should involve both genders” (Sametinget, 2008, p. 10).



## Appendix B: Quotations from Interviews

### Chapter 4. Gender Balanced Representation

#### Political Representation

“Jeg er sikker på at det arbeidet som ble startet opp da, og det fokuset som var på kvinner, bidro til resultater. Også det at resultatene kom, kanskje, fortere enn dem ville kommet ellers.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 3).

”I am sure that the work that was started at that time, and the focus which was on women, contributed to results. Also, that the results came, perhaps, faster than they would have done otherwise.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 3).

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“...Hva hadde fiskeren vært uten fiskerkjerringa, ikke sant? Altså, de er avhengige av to kjønn, og det er ikke sikkert at de gjør det samme, men at de prissettes, ja, at dem verdsettes likedan, for det er gjerne sånn at damene i primærnæringene har jo mindre verdi på det arbeidet dem gjør enn dem som driver med [kjøtt]produksjon, og så er det gjerne mannen som driver med produksjonen. [...] Så, det er liksom dét steget. Det er ikke nok å bare si at vi er 50/50. Det hjelper ikke.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 23).

”...What would the fisherman be without the fisherman’s wife, right? So, they are dependent on two genders, and it is not sure that they do the same things, but that they are appreciated, yes, that they are valued equally, because it is often the case that the work of the women in the primary industries has less value than the work of those who work with [meat] production, and it is often the man who works with production. [...] So, it is in a way this step. It is not enough just saying that we are 50/50. It does not help.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 23).

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”Når man snakker om det norske likestillingsbegrepet så har jeg veldig inntrykk av at da snakker man om [å] være like mange [...] Så sånn sett er jeg..., kanskje det samiske likestillingsbegrepet fra mitt ståsted er litt annerledes enn det norske. Det handler mer om det å likestille jobben man gjør, selv om de er ulike.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 68-69).

”When one talks about the Norwegian concept of gender equality I have the impression that one talks about [being] equal numbers [...] So, in this way I..., perhaps the Sámi concept of

gender equality, from my perspective, is a bit different than the Norwegian one. It is more about making the work one does equal, even though they are different” (Field notes, 2014, p. 68-69).

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“Sånn generelt sagt, så burde jo egentlig det med kvalitet ligge til grunn når man tenker likestilling, ikke tall. Tall er, som sagt, burde være en selvfølge at det med fifty-fifty, men innenfor det [tallet] så burde man jo helt klart sett på hvem som sitter der ved bordet.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 16).

”Generally speaking, quality should really be the basis when one thinks about gender equality, not numbers. Numbers are, as mentioned, should be taken for granted with a fifty-fifty, but within this [number] one should clearly look at whom is sitting around a table.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 16).

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“Å tro at man har kommet i mål når man har oppnådd 50/50, det er jo helt vanvittig. Du har jo ikke den kompetansen selv om du er kvinne. Du har jo ikke den kunnskapen og erfaringen selv om du er kvinne og har jobbet i politikken” (Field notes, 2014, p. 48).

“To believe that one is in goal when one has achieved 50/50, that is insane. You do not have that competence even if you are a woman. You do not have that knowledge and experience even if you are a woman and has worked in politics” (Field notes, 2014, p. 48).

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”Om det blir rom rett og slett for kjønnsperspektivene i ulike saker, og jeg mener det har konsekvenser for beslutningene også. [...] Det er veldig mange aspekter knyttet til likestilling og representasjon, eller balansert representasjon mener jeg er en sånn minimumsforutsetning. [...] Et sted vi starter.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 64).

”Simply, if there is space for the gender perspectives in different issues, and I think it has consequences for the decision making also. [...] There are very many aspects connected to gender equality and representation, or balanced representation. I think it is a minimum prerequisite [...] A place we start.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 64).

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”Så lenge at man har, egentlig i dag, så lenge man opererer i et politisk demokratisk system, så vil likestilling være et sentralt begrep og mål, på linje med geografi [og] alder.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4).

”As long as one has, in fact today, as long as one acts within a political democratic system, gender equality will be a central concept and objective, in the same way as geography [and] age” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4).

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“Sivilsamfunnet, det samiske sivilsamfunnet det er veldig skjørt. Det er små organisasjoner, det har etter hvert blitt ganske mange organisasjoner, men dem er sårbare, og man har ikke råd til å opptre arrogant, eller ikke ta dem med på lag, de få som faktisk er veldig aktive og engasjerer seg. Og til syvende og sist så går det jo på legitimiteten til Sametinget, hvor vidt man klarer å spenne de der antennene fra Karasjok. Målet må jo være at man skal favne flest mulig, og alle helst. Og da må man være åpen og inkluderende.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 17).

”The civil society, the Sámi civil society it is very fragile. They are small organizations, it has after a while become quite many organizations, but they are vulnerable, and one cannot afford to act arrogant, or not include them, the few [organizations] that in fact are very active and engaged. And in the end, it matters to the legitimacy of the Sámi Parliament that one is able to make the connection from Karasjok. The aim is to include as many as possible [...] and then one needs to be open and including” (Field notes, 2014, p. 17).

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”Jeg skulle jo ønsket et mye tettere samarbeid imellom Sametinget og de her likestillingsorganisasjonene. Et mer konstruktivt...vi kunne ha spilt litt mer ball på hvilke slags tiltak må til” (Field notes, 2014, p. 33).

”I wish there was a much closer cooperation between the Sámi Parliament and the gender equality organizations. A more constructive...we could have played on the same team concerning which measures are necessary” (Field notes, 2014, p. 33).

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## Issues of Men and Issues of Women

“Det er mer naturlig for kvinner å ta opp saker som barnehage, [og] språk enn det er for menn” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

”It is more natural for women to address issues such as kindergarten, [and] language than it is for men” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

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”Det er jo saksområder [utdanning og språk] som jeg personlig er opptatt av, ja som politiker, som kvinne, som mor, sånn at det er jo viktige saksområder, og om det blir kalt kvinnelige saksområder så har jeg ikke noe problem med det. (Field notes, 2014, p. 64).

”These are fields of issues [education and language] that I personally am concerned about, yes, as a politician, as a woman, as a mother, so they are important fields of issues, and if they are labeled as a field of women’s issues I don’t have a problem with that.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 64).

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“Nei, jeg liker ikke det. [...] For jeg ser det som, heller som hverdagsproblematikk eller hverdagssaker som angår deg i hverdagen. Det angår ikke deg i hverdagen hvem som får kjøre ATV på vidda, ikke sant. Men det angår alle samene i hverdagen deres om deres barn har et godt nok samisk [språk ]tilbud enten i barnehagen eller på skolen. Sånn at det, det er noe som er, hva skal jeg si, det er noe som er generelt i hele Sápmi. Så mange av de sakene angår, uansett hvor du bor, ikke bare om du bor i Kautokeino, [...] eller om du tilhører en spesiell næring, den angår deg som same. Så jeg vil ikke si at det er direkte kvinnesaker, men det er hverdagssaker. Ja, men som kvinner virker å ha større fokus på enn menn” (Field notes, 2014, p. 30).

“No, I don’t like that. [...] Because I see it as, rather as everyday problems or everyday issues that concern you on an everyday basis. It does not concern you on an everyday basis who can drive an ATV on the tundra. But it does concern all Sámis on an everyday basis whether their children have a good enough Sámi [language] offer in their kindergarten or in school. So many of those issues, no matter where you live, not only if you live in Kautokeino [...] or if you belong to a particular industry, they concern you as a Sámi. So I wouldn’t say that they

are directly women's issues, but everyday issues. Yes, but that women seem to have a greater focus on than men" (Field notes, 2014, p. 30).

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"...det [kvinnesaker] gjenspeiler jo også hva man vektlegger og bruker tid på i dagliglivet. Hvilke problemer og hvilke syn man har eller hva man bruker tid og ressurser på" (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

"... it [women's issues] does also reflect what one considers important and spends time on in everyday life. What problems and what views one uses one's time and resources on" (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

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"Det er litt forskjell på menn og kvinner selv om vi snakker om likestilling. Ja, det tror jeg. Også i interessefeltet. Hva er det kvinner ser som viktig, og hva er det [menn] ser som viktig? Kvinner kan ha andre ting som de ser som viktig, og gjerne det nære som vil omfavne familien og barna dine, og lokalsamfunnet" (Field notes, 2014, p. ).

"It is a difference between men and women even if we talk about gender equality. Yes, I believe so. Also in the field of interests. What is it that women view as important, and what is it that [men] view as important? Women may have other issues that they view as important, and these will likely be the close issues that will embrace family and your children, and the local society" (Field notes, 2014, p. 68).

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"Det provoserer meg litt, egentlig. Fordi, jeg føler for det første at det skremmer mannfolkene litt unna. [...] selv om det selvfølgelig ikke skremmer, så har det en sånn underbevissthetskonsekvens at man overlater det til kvinner å styre på med sånt" (Field notes, 2014, p. 13).

"It provokes me a bit, actually. Because, I feel that, first of all, it scares the men away [...] even if it doesn't scare of course, it has such a subconscious consequence that "one leaves it to women to work with that" (Field notes, 2014, p. 13).

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“En kjernediskusjon der er hvordan vi skal gjøre språk til en tough politics [...] Så, ta vekk dette stempelen som en sånn myk politikk, litt sånn ala barnehagepolitikk. Vi skal bort fra det når det gjelder språk og gjøre det om til en rettighetsdiskusjon [...] Så, det har provosert meg veldig ofte at det blir nedgradert. Og du kan godt si at det blir nedgradert til et kvinnespørsmål, selv om det ikke er en nedgradering i seg selv, men det oppfattes sånn, og det er veldig synd.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 13).

“A core discussion here is how we can make language tough politics [...] So, removing this stamp of [it being] soft politics, a bit like kindergarten politics. We are removing this [stamp of soft politics] concerning language and making it into a discussion about rights [...] So, it has provoked me very often that it is downgraded. And you might say that it is downgraded to a women’s issue, even if that is not a downgrading in itself, but it seems like it, and that is too bad.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 13).

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”Næringspolitikk for eksempel ansees som mannsaker, og jeg synes det som går på, jeg som er fra kysten for eksempel, det som går på fiskeri og fiskerirettigheter synes jeg er et viktig saksfelt for Sametinget” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

”Politics concerning industries, for example, are considered men’s issues, and I think [...] what concerns fisheries and rights of fisheries, I think it is an important case for the Sámi Parliament” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

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“Nå tror jeg det at vi har mange [mannlige] politikere som også synes det er viktige saksområder, [...] men det blir vel ikke betraktet som sånn macho egentlig” (Field notes, 2014, p. 68).

“Now, I think we have many [male] politicians who also think that these [education and language] are important fields of issues, [...] but these [issues] are not really considered very macho” (Field notes, 2014, p. 68).

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”...Vi hadde jo en sånn mannskonferanse [...] så vi gikk jo igjennom de der mytene om hva en samisk mann er for noe, og det henger mye igjen, de der forestillingene om de her



machotingene. Vi driver jo nå på å gå gjennom kultur, altså å sette sammen tre komiteer. Den ene er plan og finans, den andre er kultur og næring, og den tredje er opplæring og utdanning. Så viser det seg at ingen [av mennene] vil sitte i opplæring og utdanning. Det er en komité som det er mest damer bruker å sette seg i. Alle skal sitte i kultur og næring eller plan og finans [...] for det er macho” (Field notes, 2014, p. 24).

“...we had a man’s conference [...] So, we went through those myths about what a Sámi man is, and it is still present, those myths about these macho things. We are now going through culture, making three committees. One of them is planning and finances, the other is culture and industries, and the third is training and education. Then it turns out no one [of the men] wants to be in training and education. It is a committee that there are mostly women in. Everyone wants to sit in culture and industries or planning and finances [...] because it is macho” (Field notes, 2014, p. 24)

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“There was no one that said a man is a kindergarten uncle...” (Field notes, 2014, p. 24).

“Det var ingen som sa at en mann er barnehageonkel...” (Field notes, 2014, p. 24).

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“Vi tar det kanskje litt for gitt, men jeg tror når vi innser [...] hvor store rettighetsaker det egentlig er snakk om her, så hadde det kanskje engasjert også flere menn til å delta i de der kvinnedebattene om barnehage og språk” (Field notes, 2014, p. 15).

”Perhaps we take it for granted, but I believe that when we realize [...] how big rights issues we are really talking about here, then perhaps more men would have been engaged to participate in these women’s debates about kindergarten and language” (Field notes, 2014, p. 15).

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”Det handler om å selv gjøre politikken tøff. Og da er opplæringen, den kan gjøres tøffere av Sametinget. Vi kan forvente sanksjoner, vi kan kreve, altså sanksjoner, løfte det opp til internasjonale nivåer. Da er plutselig kvinnepolitikken blitt litt hardere” (Field notes, 2014, p. 15-16).

”It is about oneself making politics tough. And then training, it can be made tougher by the Sámi Parliament. We can expect sanctions, we can demand, sanctions, lift it up to the international level. Then, suddenly, women politics has become a bit harder” (Field notes, 2014, p. 15-16).

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“Det kan godt være at kvinner også synes det er viktig” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

“It could very well be that women think this is important as well” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

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### **Consequences of Balanced Representation**

”...det var kanskje større fokus før på [...] retten til land og vann. Dette med [at] EU skal være med der, og dette med litt mer storpolitikk, hvis jeg skal bruke det ordet. Denne kvinneandelen [...] vil jeg faktisk si [...] at den har hatt en viss påvirkning [på politikken] ja.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 71).

”...there was perhaps a greater focus before on [...] the right to land and water. That the EU is included, and that it is a bit more big politics, if I should use that word. This number of women [...] I would actually say [...] that it has had a certain influence [on politics], yes.” (Field notes, 2014, p. 71).

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”Det er jo helt subjektivt, [...] men jeg merker en del forskjeller at det er kommet flere og flere språkopplæringsaker, helsesaker på dagsorden i plenum, og det er nettopp fordi at det er kvinner er såpass godt representert at det er det dem spør etter [...] hverdagsproblemene. Det går ikke på motorferdsel, hvem som kan kjøre hvor, men det går rett og slett på [...] hvorfor kan ikke barn få samisk undervisning” (Field notes, 2014, p. 28).

”This is completely subjective, [...] but I notice quite a few differences. That there are more and more language issues, health issues on the agenda in the plenary assembly, and that is precisely because women are this well represented that it is them that asks for [...] the everyday problems. It is not about driving vehicles, who can drive where, but it is simply about [...] why cannot children have Sámi education” (Field notes, 2014, p. 28).

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“Disse her gamle sakene, og det har gått på rettigheter, rettigheter, rettigheter og rettigheter. Også har vi litt sånn ressurser, og litt sånn ressurser, men så har vi rettigheter igjen. Så, så det, det er helt klart at hvis du begynner å bla tilbake så ser du at det har vært en endring, og spesielt etter 2005” (Field notes, 2014, p. 28).

“ These old cases, they have been about rights, rights, rights and rights. And then we had a bit of resources, and a bit of resources, but then we had rights again. So, it is clear that if you start looking back you will see that there has been a change, and especially after 2005” (Field notes, 2014, p. 28).

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”Det er ikke tilfeldig at det bare var kvinnelige presidentkandidater og toppkandidater på listene. Fordi at det er mange flinke kvinner. Nå anvender de sin kunnskap og sine erfaringer på det politiske feltet” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4).

”It is not a coincidence that there were only female presidential candidates and top candidates on the lists. Because there are many skilful women. Now they are using their knowledge and experiences in the political field” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4).

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”Akkurat det med den forflytningen fra rettigheter til der her myke politikkområdene tror jeg ikke nødvendigvis kommer av kvinneandelen på Sametinget. Det er nok mer enn generell vending i Samepolitikken. Jeg hører ofte de eldre [...] veteranene i samepolitikken, når de diskuterer, så diskuterer dem om de der fordums store sakene i gamle dager, så fra opprettelsen til 2005, til Finnmarksloven kom på plass. Og da sto de der store slagene, slag på slag, år etter år, om rettighetssaker. [...] Men nå har det liksom kommet på plass og den grå hverdagen for samepolitikken har etter hvert begynt å sette seg, og [...] så tror jeg det har en generell påvirkning på hva som diskuteres på Sametinget” (Field notes, 2014, p. 15).

”The move from rights to these soft areas of politics, I don’t think they necessarily is a result of the amount of women in the Sámi Parliament. It is more likely a general turn in Sámi politics. I often hear the older [...] veterans in Sámi politics, when they discuss, they discuss about the great cases of the past in the old days, so from the establishment [of the Sámi Parliament], to 2005, to the Finnmark Act was settled. And there were great battles, battle

after battle, year after year, about rights issues. [...] But now it has kind of settled and the grey everyday day [reality] for Sámi politics has started to settle and [...] so I think it has had a general influence in what is discussed in the Sámi Parliament” (Field notes, 2014, p. 15).

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“Vi har [...] de store rettighetssakene, spesielt før 2005, før Finnmarksloven kom på plass, så var det jo veldig mye mannsdominanse på Sametinget, og etter det så har de greiene der tonet seg litt ned og det har blitt større fokus på barnehagepolitikk, språk, helse og sosial som er veldig viktige saker, men som kanskje da menn skygger litt unna, og overlater til andre, kvinner da” (Field notes, 2014, p. 11).

”We have [...] the great rights issues, especially before 2005, before the Finnmark Act was settled, it was quite a lot of male dominance in the Sámi Parliament, and after that those things have calmed a bit down and it has become a greater focus on kindergarten politics, language, health and social [issues] that are very important issues, but that perhaps men back off a bit and leave it to others, to women” (Field notes, 2014, p. 11).

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”Språk kan sees på som en myk verdi, en kvinneverdi, og heving av språk henger sammen med den sterkere kvinnedominans på Sametinget” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

”Language can be viewed as a soft value, a women’s value, and the elevation of language is connected to the stronger female dominance in the Sámi Parliament” (Field notes, 2014, p. 5).

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”Som sagt så er det veldig mye saker på Sametinget som direkte engasjerer [...] flest kvinner, og det har, man føler som mann [...] på Sametinget, så er det kanskje...det er noen dager der jeg savner en kompis i kantinen for å si det sånn, som diskuterer de samme sakene ut i fra et mannsperspektiv” (Field notes, 2014, p. 18).

”As mentioned there are very many cases in the Sámi Parliament that directly engage most women, and that, one feels it as a man [...] in the Sámi Parliament, it is perhaps...there are some days that I miss a buddy in the cafeteria to put it like that, that discusses the same cases from a man’s perspective” (Field notes, 2014, p. 18).

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”Jeg [skal] være enig med noen av, som sier at i den her perioden så har vi jo hatt fire kvinner i rådet pluss en mann, og det er jo en del som har protestert på det da. Det er...noen har protestert, og andre har holdt kjeft, men så er det noen som har sagt at hvis det hadde vært fire menn og ei dame så hadde det vært i hvert fall et hel...hull liv. [...] Det er på enkelte arena så kanskje godtar man mer at kvinner er overrepresentert en kortere periode enn andre” (Field notes, 2014, p. 26).

”I agree with some of, that says that in this period we have had four women in the Council and one man, and there has been some that have protested against it. It is...some has protested, and others have kept their mouth shut, but then there has been some who has said that had it been four men and one woman, then it would have been a lot of trouble . [...] Perhaps in some arenas one accepts more that women are overrepresented in shorter periods than in others” (Field notes, 2014, p. 26).

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”Sametinget, jeg vil jo si det sånn, tidligere har det vært fokus på at når man velger utvalg...jeg så det sist, når det var [utvelgelse av] Sametingsrådet, så sto jo bare kvinner pluss Sametingspresidenten. Og, det var ingen som ropte ut om det. Hadde det vært motsatt, så hadde det vært et spetakkel uten like...” (Field notes, 2014, p. 75).

”The Sámi Parliament, I would say it this way, previously there has been focused on that when committees are elected...I saw it this last time, when it was [the selection of] the Sámi Parliamentary Council, then it was only women plus the President of the Sámi Parliament. And, it was no one who cried out about this. If it had been the other way around, then it would have been a huge scene...” (Field notes, 2014, p. 75).

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”Det er jo ikke noe å diskutere at det er blitt...det er jo sånn når du teller hoder, så blir det jo en [kvinne]dominans. Men samtidig så savner [jeg] at kvinnespørsmål og kjønnslikestilling skal ha et større fokus” (Field notes, 2014, p. 53).

”It is nothing to discuss that it has become...it is like that when you count heads, then it is a [female] dominance. But at the same time [I think] that women’s issues and gender equality should have a greater focus” (Field notes, 2014, p. 53).

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”Jeg tror langt på vei så er det [likestilling] kommet inn som en naturlig del av mange saksfelt, selv om saken likestilling [i seg selv] kanskje ikke vært debattert så ofte, eller så hyppig som den ble i en periode. Men jeg tror at hensynet likestilling, eller begrepet er blitt [...] en naturlig del av det å tenke politikk, og å tenke saksfelt også” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4).

”I think that, so far, it [gender equality] has become a natural part of many fields, even if the case gender equality [in itself] perhaps has not been debated that often, or frequently as it was at times before. But I think that the concern of gender equality, or the concept has become [...] a natural part when thinking politics, and also when thinking issues” (Field notes, 2014, p. 4).

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”Det har jo gjort sitt til at det [...] er kvinnelige rollemodeller, kvinnelige forbilder, og det synes jeg er fantastisk bra. At det ikke er noe sånn lengre at det er de mannfolkene som, [...] at du har en oppfatning om at det er mannfolk som skal styre utvikling i samesamfunn” (Field notes, 2014, p. 53).

”It has contributed to that there [...] are female role models, female images, and I think that is fantastic! That it no longer is so that it is the men who, [...] that you have a perception that it is men that should control the development of Sámi society” (Field notes, 2014, p. 53).

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”At det er en kvinne [som er Sametingspresident], tenk på alle disse unge jentene som vokser opp, ikke sant. Hun er jo et forbilde at man trenger jo ikke være mann” (Field notes, 2014, p. 71).

”That it is a woman [who is the President of the Sámi Parliament], think about all these young girls that grow up, right. She is a role model that one does not need to be a man” (Field notes, 2014, p. 71).