

**THE SAMI AND THE NATIONAL
PARLIAMENTS**

CHANNELS OF POLITICAL INFLUENCE

by

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Foreword

This article is a revised version of an article published by IWGIA¹. The article was published under the title “The Sami and the National Parliaments: Direct and Indirect Channels for Influence” in Wessendorf, Kathrin (ed.): *Challenging Politics: Indigenous peoples’ experiences with political parties and elections*, IWGIA Document No. 104, Copenhagen 2001.

This report is a presentation of two channels by means of which the Sami people influence the national parliaments in Finland, Sweden and Norway, namely the election of national parliaments and the election of the Sami Parliament. The report was not intended to provide an in-depth analysis of these channels. When preparing this report it has been necessary to make some choices with regard to what to include and what to leave out. One important limitation with regard to giving a broader presentation of conditions in Finnish Samiland has been the language barrier, which has meant that texts in Finnish have unfortunately not been available to the undersigned. Because there is relatively little literature in English or the Scandinavian languages about indigenous peoples’ channels of influence on the Russian side, it has not been possible to present anything other than a very short and superficial description of conditions there.

I want to thank IWGIA for making it possible to revise and publish this study in Norwegian, Sami and English under the auspices of the Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in Kautokeino. I would also like to thank Karin Mannela Gaup, Rune Fjellheim and Marit Myrvoll for constructive contributions and comments in connection with the revision of this report, in addition to the feed-back I received from those who participated in the IWGIA seminar in Kautokeino on 3 March 2000. However, any mistakes or omissions in the report are my responsibility alone.

As developments in relations between the Sami people and the state progress quickly, and the choice of a viewpoint can easily lead to important aspects not receiving the focus they should have, I hope that readers will take the time to send their feed-back and comments on the contents of the report to the undersigned.

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Alta, May 2003

¹ International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report examines the way in which the Sami relate to the nation states through the electoral systems and political parties. Sami mobilisation in Finland, Sweden and Norway has developed differently over time, and conditions for political participation and influence have also differed from country to country. Developments towards social equality between the Sami and society as a whole were positive during the last decades of the 20th century. The greatest and most fundamental change occurred with the establishment of the Sami Parliaments in Sweden, Finland and Norway, but the Sami in Russia continue to work under extremely difficult conditions – economically, socially and politically.

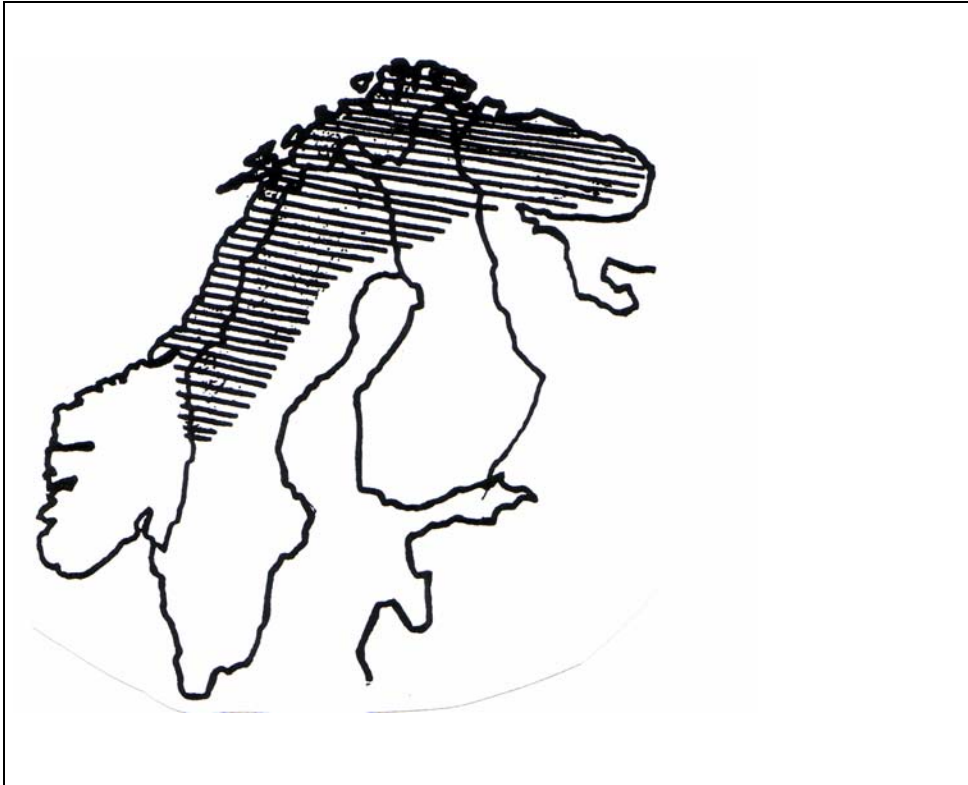
The Sami's formal relationship to the national parliaments comprises two aspects: on the one hand, a *direct channel* by means of political parties and elections to the national parliaments and, on the other, an *indirect channel* by way of the Sami parliaments.

In principle, the direct channel provides an opportunity for direct influence with regard to the composition of the national parliament and hence the policies that are pursued. Through the indirect channel, the Sami people can influence the composition of the Sami parliaments and thereby the policies the Sami parliaments are to pursue in relation to the national parliaments.

That the report takes this approach does not mean that all important decisions affecting the Sami population are made in the national parliaments. The Sami peoples also have opportunities for influence other than those it has been possible to present in this report. Local and regional elections provide one such means of exerting influence, and other cooperative relations and agreements provide another. The agreement between the Norwegian Sámediggi Plenary and Troms County administration that was entered into in 2003 is an example of the latter. Local, regional and central government administrations also play an independent role in the development of the Sami communities in Finland, Sweden and Norway. But within the framework of this report it has unfortunately not been possible to take a closer look at this aspect. However, this does not mean that the significance of government administration, from those responsible for the preparatory works to the implementers of political decisions, should in any way be overlooked.

2. THE SAMI

The Sami inhabit four countries: Sweden, Finland, Russia and Norway. The map below shows the traditional areas of Sami habitation:



Source: Myrvoll 1999: 11.

Providing exact statistics on the size of the Sami population poses considerable methodological problems. One reason for this is the earlier nation state policies of assimilation and repression of the Sami. However, it is estimated that 5,000-6,500 Sami live in Finland, 17,000-20,000 in Sweden, about 2,000 in Russia and 40,000-45,000 in Norway (Eriksson 1997). The Sami are a minority throughout almost the whole of the area they inhabit, with the exception of the municipalities Kautokeino and Karasjok in Norway and Utsjoki in Finland. There may also be other municipalities where the majority of the population is Sami, but there are no statistics to confirm this at present.

Just under 10% of the Sami are engaged in reindeer herding. Parts of the Sami population gain their livelihood from agriculture, fishing and wilderness industries, while many Sami are employed in the general labour market. The Sami language has 9 dialects which cross country borders. Many Sami have lost their language.

3. THE POLICIES OF THE NATION STATES TOWARDS THE SAMI

3.1 The policies of the nation states towards the Sami in the past

The policies of the Nordic states towards the Sami, from the 19th century up until after World War II, were based on assimilation. This meant that the Sami were expected to replace their own cultural characteristics and language with those of the majority culture. The Sami culture, language and economic activities were seen as obstacles to the consolidation of the national states and to the general development of society, an attitude that was ideologically founded on social Darwinism (Nystø 1993b). This ideological foundation influenced and permeated all social structures: legislation, education, research and practical politics. There were national differences, however. From the early 20th century, Sweden pursued a policy of segregation in relation to Sami reindeer herders and an assimilation policy in relation to all other Sami, while Norway adhered to an assimilation policy for all Sami. In Finland the policy of assimilation was not as explicit as in Norway. As a result, the attempts of the authorities to suppress the language and culture of the Sami also varied in intensity. Sjølin comments that, “the Sami outside of Sweden have been subjected to an even more stringent assimilation policy than the Sami here,” (R. Sjølin 1996: 28)

In the last half of the 20th century this ideology was gradually replaced by a more positive attitude on the part of the state authorities, including the granting of a set of universal human rights to each individual. In due course, an international understanding developed that it was not possible to treat everyone in the same way on the basis of identical standards.

It was gradually recognised that citizens could have different cultural backgrounds, even though society as a whole was dominated by the majority culture. This recognition led to a positive change in relations between the nation states and minorities and indigenous peoples.

The Sami’s demand for collective rights is based in their status as an indigenous people. Indigenous peoples’ rights are a response to circumstances the members of this group have not chosen for themselves. The most important circumstances are that they share cultural bonds and that “their *historical areas of habitation* have been incorporated into the nation state through the use of varying degrees of force” (Oskal 1998: 149). This implies that indigenous peoples have been collectively incorporated in the nation without their consent.

The political perception of the relationship between majority and minority, between state and Sami, has thus changed over time. With the establishment of the national Sami parliaments, the states accepted the principle of group rights. Not only did the newly established Sami parliaments lead to a structural change in the national political systems, they also led to a widened understanding of representative democracy (Broderstad 1999).

In parallel with developments in the perception of the relationship between state and indigenous people, there was a change in the way in which representation through majority election was understood. It was recognised that if votes in an election in a multi-cultural society were given equal weight, ethnic minorities would always be in a minority position, always at the mercy of the will of the majority. Attempts were therefore made to find ways to ensure that the Sami had a voice and were heard.

3.2 The formal basis for today's national Sami policy

Over recent decades, there have been positive developments with respect to policy on the Sami. Sami political issues have received greater attention and have been given more room than ever before on the national political agendas. Legislation has been adopted and decisions made that formally strengthen the rights of the Sami. These structural changes have created a new framework for Sami political activity and give the Sami, as a people, a potentially wider sphere of political influence than previously. There are, however, differences in the willingness of the individual nation states to grant the Sami broader political rights and to recognise them as an indigenous people, a group that can demand collective rights over and above the rights each individual has as a national citizen.

The formal basis for national Sami politics in Finland, Sweden and Norway consists of two pillars: international law and national legislation.

International law consists of a series of international agreements and conventions that the states have signed or ratified. The *UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966* and the *ILO Convention (No. 169) concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*, are two of the most central conventions.

Article 27 of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 states: *“In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language.”* UN bodies have further stated that the article’s concept of culture also includes the material basis for Sami culture. The nation states have also endorsed this interpretation.

ILO Convention no. 169 includes provisions for different sectors, among them education, health, occupational training, employment and working life. The convention is most frequently referred to with regard to Sami land rights, which are laid down in Articles 14 and 15, but there are also provisions to the effect that the states have an obligation to consult with indigenous peoples (Article 6) and that due regard shall be had to indigenous peoples’ customs and customary laws when applying national laws and regulations (Article 8).

3.3 Finland

The international agreements concerning human rights that Finland has signed are a part of the Finnish legal system on an equal basis with other Finnish legislation. The UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 was ratified by Finland and is therefore also a part of Finnish law. ILO Convention no. 169 has not been ratified.

The Finnish constitution contains two provisions that deal with Sami rights. In Section 17, 3rd paragraph, the Sami’s rights as indigenous people are recognised as well as their right to use the Sami language when communicating with the authorities. Section 121, 4th paragraph states that the Sami people have linguistic and cultural autonomy within the Sami homeland² to the extent that this is laid down in other legislation.

In 1995, the Finnish parliament (*Suomen Eduskunta*) approved a Sami Parliament Act (no. 974 of 17 July 1995). Section 1 has the following formulation on cultural autonomy within the Sami homeland: *“The Sami, as an indigenous people, as further specified in this Act, shall be guaranteed cultural autonomy within their homeland area in matters concerning their language and culture.”* Section 5 further stipulates that the Sami Parliament shall be able to

² This area comprises the municipalities of Enontekiö, Inari and Utsjoki, and the reindeer grazing areas in the municipality of Sodankylä

deal with all issues related to the Sami language and culture and their position as an indigenous people.

In contrast to both Sweden and Norway, the authorities are obliged to negotiate with the Sami Parliament on all broad and important decisions that may either directly or indirectly influence the Sami's status as an indigenous people. Section 9 reads: "*The authorities shall negotiate with the Sami Parliament on all wide-ranging and important measures which may directly or specifically affect the status of the Sami as an indigenous people (...)*". The Sami in Finland thus have stronger statutory rights than those in either Sweden or Norway.

However, these formal rights prove not to have translated into practical political action to any particular extent. No comprehensive formal structures or meeting places of any significance have been established between the Sami Parliament and the Finnish government to ensure that the intentions of the legislation on Sami influence are fulfilled. The authorities' statutory obligation to negotiate with the Sami therefore remains a resolution with little real content. At the same time, knowledge concerning Sami affairs³ – including knowledge of Finnish statutory provisions on Sami issues⁴ – remains limited, both in the central government administration and among Finnish politicians. However, the Finnish government has an advisory body on Sami issues, on which five ministries are represented in addition to five representatives from the Sami Parliament (Sillanpää, 2002). Sami affairs fall mainly under the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

3.4 Sweden

Sweden has not formally recognised the Sami as an indigenous people in its legislation, but in connection with Sweden's ratification of the European Council's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Strasbourg 1.II.1995), and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, Strasbourg (5.XI.1992) it was stated that the Sami are an indigenous people. The status of indigenous people is not recognised in the constitution however, and the reason for this given by Swedish authorities is that the Swedish constitution's provision that ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities shall be given the

³ Heikki Hyvärinen, *Sametinget i Finland* [The Sami parliament in Finland], lecture at an IWGIA seminar in Kautokeino on 4 March 2000

⁴ Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Strasbourg, 1.II.1995), European Charter or Regional Minority Language Strasbourg (5.XI.1992)

opportunity to maintain their culture and way of life also gives the Sami constitutional protection. In Swedish Official Report (SOU) 2002:77, however it is proposed that the Sami peoples' status as indigenous people be recognised in the constitution since this status has been further strengthened by international law since the question was considered by the Swedish Sami Rights Commission. The European Convention on Human Rights has been a part of Swedish national legislation since 1995⁵, and in addition Sweden has ratified the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and thus has committed itself to complying with Article 27, etc.

With regard to ILO Convention no. 169, SOU 1999:25 discussed the conditions that must be met before the convention can be ratified. Sweden has still not ratified ILO Convention no. 169.

In 1992, Sweden adopted a Sami Parliament Act (Sametingslag 1992:1433). The law regulates the activities of the Sami Parliament and establishes the Sami Parliament as a government authority and generally to be considered a public administrative body. In addition the Sami Parliament is a body elected by popular vote by and from the Sami population. ***The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries*** is responsible for Sami affairs. Within the Ministry, the Sami and Educational Division that works with Sami and reindeer husbandry issues is also responsible for higher education and research in the field of agricultural sciences, the protection of genetic resources, genetic engineering, hunting and game management, land use policy and land use in the agricultural sector (www.regeringen.se). Responsibility for issues regarding the language and culture of the Sami lies with the Ministry of Culture, while the Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for Sami schools.

3.5 Norway

At the opening of the Norwegian Sami Parliament in 1997, His Majesty King Harald V said: "*The Norwegian State is founded on the territories of two peoples –Norwegian and Sami.*" (Hætta 1998) This had also been previously expressed in Storting Report no. 52 (1992-93) on Norwegian Sami Policy.

⁵ Act concerning the European Convention regarding protection of human rights and basic freedoms. (1994:1219)

In Norway, the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a part of internal Norwegian legislation.⁶ The Norwegian authorities also ratified ILO Convention no. 169 in 1990. Chapters 13 and 14 of the convention are of particular importance for Sami land rights. In the work preceding the completion of the convention, the Norwegian delegation proposed that right of use should be equated to property rights (Minde 1999). This was a standpoint that Norway eventually had to abandon in the negotiations on the convention since it would have weakened indigenous peoples' rights according to ILO Convention no. 107 of 1957.

In 1987, the Norwegian Parliament (Storting) adopted Act no. 56 of 12 June 1987 concerning the Sameting (the Sami parliament) and other Sami legal matters [The Sami Act]. Section 1 of the Act states that: "The purpose of the Act is to enable the Sami people in Norway to safeguard and develop their language, culture and way of life." Approximately the same formulation has been included as in Section 110a of the Norwegian constitution. Chapter 2 of the Sami Act contains the provisions on the Sami Parliament. Section 2-1 provides that "The business of the *Sameting* is any matter that in the view of the Parliament particularly affects the Sami people." Chapter 3 has provisions concerning the use of the Sami language in public bodies and delimitations, both geographical and administrative. Sami is an official language in Norway.

3.6 Russia⁷

Russia has ratified the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and, like the other countries with a Sami population, is bound by the Covenant and Article 27 thereof. The Covenant is a part of Russian law (Ravna, 2002). However, Russia has not ratified ILO Convention no. 169.

Like Finland and Norway, Russia has a provision in its constitution intended to provide protection for indigenous people which states:

The Russian federation guarantees all rights to minorities of indigenous people in accordance with generally accepted principles and standards of international regulations and international agreements that the Russian federation has agreed to. (Ravna, 2002: 154)

⁶ Act of 21 May 1999 relating to the strengthening of the status of human rights in Norwegian law

⁷ The channels of influence of Sami and indigenous peoples in Russia will not be discussed other than in this section. This is because there is relatively little written material on these matters in Russia available in either English or a Scandinavian language that could be used in this report.

Legislation on the federal or regional level is subject to the Russian federation's constitutional provisions.

On 30 April 1999 the Russian parliament adopted the "*Act guaranteeing the rights of indigenous minorities within the Russian federation*", also called "*Indigenous Minorities Act*" (Ravna, 2002). The act grants indigenous peoples rights relating to participation in areas such as consultation and control of traditional land areas and to traditional ways of life and livelihoods. The law does not provide strong legal protection but nonetheless forms a legal basis (Ravna, 2002). Despite these formal provisions concerning indigenous people's rights, the experience of the indigenous people themselves is that they are excluded from their traditional land areas by other economic interests (IWGIA, 2002). The Sami language and culture and the natural basis for the Sami culture in Russia are therefore also under strong pressure. As a small indigenous minority, the Sami generally have little opportunity of reaching the Russian authorities, either through voting or as a result of elected representatives giving priority to the Sami and indigenous people in general. Russian Sami are not represented in the regional Duma in Murmansk (Gutsol & Riabova, 2002). In 2001, however, Russian Sami cooperated with regional authorities in Murmansk County (oblast) to draft a county law concerning the status of indigenous people in Murmansk County (IWGIA, 2002). Otherwise there are few Russian Sami in important positions and they lack financial resources. They also have little experience of political mobilisation. There is one light in the darkness, however: in Lujávri (Lovozero), the Sami comprise about 20% of the population, which has made limited political success possible. According to Eriksson (1997), the Sami won three of the fifty-four seats on the local council in 1990. Russian Sami also have the opportunity to conduct a dialogue with the public authorities in Russia through the work for indigenous peoples being carried out by the Barents region cooperation group.⁸

The Russian Sami founded their first organisation, the **Kola Sami Association**, in 1989. Internal conflicts led to the foundation of a new Sami organisation in 1998, the **Lovozero Public Organisation of Saami of the Murmansk Region** (Gutsol & Riabova, 2002).

⁸ A news report on Sami Radio's website (Samiweb.org) dated 24 April 2003 announced that Anna Prakhova, one of the Russian Sami representatives in the Barents Region Working Group on indigenous affairs, together with representatives from two Sami organisations in Russia, had met with the Russian Ministry of Justice. In addition to discussing the economic and social situation of indigenous people in the Murmansk region, and a

The position of the Russian indigenous peoples in the Arctic Council (where the Russian indigenous people's organisation: the Association of Indigenous Minorities of the North, Siberia, and the Far East of the Russian Federation (RAIPON), has the status of permanent participant⁹) can contribute to a general strengthening of the position of Russia's indigenous people as a whole. Russian Sami are permanent participants of the Saami Council, which also has the status of permanent participant in the Arctic Council, and their voices are heard through this forum.

The Sami in Russia have increased their influence through participation in various Non-Governmental Organisations while their political participation in formal public structures, political and administrative, is limited.

For the Sami in Russia, it is also important that the Sami in the Nordic countries show solidarity and utilise all possibilities that may open to them of influencing Russian politics and politicians in a positive way, in terms of both social rights and indigenous people's rights.

4. THE DIRECT CHANNEL

The direct channel refers to systems that regulate the composition of and participation in national elected bodies. The fundamental principle is an electoral system in which every citizen of the state has one vote with exactly the same weight and decisions are made on the basis of a majority vote. In such a system, Sami have the same formal right to vote and to be candidates for elections to the national parliaments as the rest of the population.

In Western democracies, ideological differences are organised into national parties. In this system Sami issues have to compete for attention with issues that are of national interest. Sami issues also have to be fitted into these systems, which are pervaded with the majority's cultural and social perception. The Sami's use of the direct channel has differed in the three

Sami Centre in Murmansk, the question of increased influence over the Sami's own affairs was discussed. It was stated that the long-term goal was the establishment of an elected Sami parliament.

⁹ The status of permanent participant confers the same formal rights on representatives of indigenous peoples as representatives of the nation states with the exception of the right to vote. This means that they shall be informed and consulted, have a right to propose suggestions for new items on the Council's agenda and have the right to participate in all meetings and at all levels of the Arctic Council.

countries. In Sweden, the Sami have a history of refusing to join the national parties as a relevant means of promoting Sami political issues. In Norway, however, there has been a closer connection between national institutions and the Sami. This difference was already apparent at the first all-Sami meeting in Trondheim in 1917, when the Swedish Sami had “an overwhelming majority for a policy independent of party politics” (Minde 1996: 3). Finnish Sami participate in national parties to a greater extent than Swedish Sami but are less aggressive in promoting Sami policies within these forums than the Norwegian Sami. The fact that Sami in Finland, Sweden and Norway have made different use of the elective channel can be explained at least partly by the fact that central government Sami policies have been different in the three countries, as has the development of the Sami communities in these countries.

Sami representation in the national parliaments has occasionally been proposed, but the issue has thus far not been seriously considered in Finland, Sweden or Norway. Nor have the Sami organisations placed it high on their list of policy demands. However, there are examples in other countries of indigenous peoples having direct representation in elected national parliaments: the Danish constitution has a provision to the effect that Greenland shall be represented in the Danish parliament (NOU 1984:18). In New Zealand, the Maori have had permanent representation in the national assembly since 1867 (McGill 1996-97).

4.1 The direct channel in Finland

General elections to the Finnish parliament (*Suomen Eduskunta*) are held every four years and all citizens over 18 have the right to vote. Those who wish to be elected to the Eduskunta must have the right to vote in a parliamentary election. The President can call new elections. The country is divided into 15 electoral districts, and the size of the population determines the number of representatives to be elected from each district. Altogether, 200 members are elected to the Eduskunta.

Elections in Finland are based on proportional representation, and at the same time the voters can influence which candidates are elected. Lists of candidates can be nominated by a party, by an electoral list, but the candidates are not ranked on these lists. People vote for a list and for a person on the list. This personal vote is counted as a vote for the party, and the total number of votes for candidates from each party determines how many mandates each party

wins in each district (Heidar & Berntzen 1993). The number of personal votes for each candidate determines who receives the mandate won by the party.

4.1.1 The Sami and the direct channel in Finland

The Sami population in Finland is not represented in the Eduskunta (Aikio 1993). Since 1978, however, the parliamentary committees have held hearings with representatives from the Sami Parliament. The Sami Parliament Act of 17 July 1995 states in Section 9 that the authorities are obliged to negotiate with the Sami Parliament.

The Sami Parliament's administration in Finland has stated that none of the Finnish parties have adopted special programmes of policy on Sami affairs. But Sami members have influenced the parties, especially the Centre Party (Centerpartiet). This influence is difficult to see, however, because the parties have not included Sami issues in any organised way in the work of the party nor formulated clear political goals regarding the Sami. On the contrary, the term "Sami policy" is seldom used because Sami politicians do not wish to "irritate" the Finnish majority (Eriksson 1997). Nevertheless, Finnish Sami are elected to municipal councils as representatives of Finnish parties in the Sami municipalities in North Finland. In Utsjoki municipality, the Sami List has run for municipal elections for the last ten years. The Sami List is independent, without connections to any party.

4.2 *The direct channel in Sweden*

General elections to the Swedish parliament (*Riksdagen*) are held every four years. Local government elections are held on the same day as the federal elections. All citizens over 18 years of age have the right to vote. The country is divided into 29 electoral districts for elections to the Riksdagen. With few exceptions, electoral districts coincide with counties. 349 members are elected to the Riksdagen.

Those who wish to be elected to the Riksdagen must have the right to vote in parliamentary elections. Candidates must also be nominated by a political party or political group. The list of candidates is ranked.

4.2.1 The Sami and the direct channel in Sweden

The Sami and the right to vote

General suffrage was introduced in Sweden in 1908-1910 for men and in 1918-20 for women.

Rolf Sjølin has carried out an historical study of Sami political participation in Sweden (Sjølin 1996, 2002). Before 1910, the right to vote was linked to property ownership and payment of taxes. Swedish policy at that time was in principle that Sami reindeer herders should be segregated and all other Sami assimilated. This meant that Sami who were settled and had property or steady, taxable income had the same formal rights as the Swedish population, including the right to vote. Sami reindeer herders did not pay taxes, however, and therefore did not formally have the right to vote, although this rule was practised differently from one municipality to the next.¹⁰

After 1910, all Sami men enjoyed general suffrage on an equal footing with the rest of the population. The right to vote continued to be restricted, however, if a Sami had not paid taxes, had not completed military service, or received poverty assistance. During the period 1910-1924, Sami participation in elections was extremely low, even among those who fulfilled the voting requirements. “In several Sami municipalities, there was actually no Sami participation in elections at all. Thus, there was a very considerable difference between Sami and non-Sami participation.” (Sjølin 1996: 35) This difference was greatly reduced in the 1960s due to improved communications and better developed media, and also to the fact that Sami with reindeer increasingly had permanent residences.

Sami representation on elected bodies

No Sami have been elected to the Riksdagen since general suffrage was introduced (Sjølin 1996). Proposals for Sami representation were presented to parliament in both 1920 and 1930 by the president of the parliament, C. Lindhagen. In 1940 he proposed a motion to establish a “Lapp parliament”, which among other things would appoint a Sami member to the Riksdagen. (Sjølin 2002: 51-56). Since this last motion, no written demands have been

¹⁰ The Sami in Jämtland County were a special exception. Jämtland Sami were not included in the ordinary census in the municipalities but in their own “Lapp assemblies” (Lappforsamlinger). Thus they did not formally belong to a municipality, nor did they have the right to vote. This applied to both Sami reindeer herders and non-nomadic Sami living in the county. The Sami who owned property were an exception; they were included in the municipal census and had the right to vote. The political status of the Jämtland Sami was only normalized in 1940. (Sjølin, 1996)

submitted for Sami representation in the Swedish Riksdagen. The Swedish authorities funded two Sami meetings in 1937 and 1948, in order to obtain Sami reactions to bills being debated in the Riksdagen (Sillanpää 1994). This could be interpreted as a desire on the part of the Swedish authorities to hear Sami viewpoints. However, these were just two isolated events against a background of government repression and denial of the Sami's rights as a people. This was expressed as recently as 1974: "The State was a poor protector of the Sami in matters in which the State itself was an interested party. Today, it is the State that inflicts the greatest incursions on the Sami." (Dahlström 1974: 109)

Party participation

At the first all-Sami meeting in Trondheim in 1917, the Swedish Sami had already rejected the idea of any cooperation with national parties. The same happened the following year 1918, in Östersund, at the first national meeting for Sami in Sweden, where a majority was against engaging in mainstream party politics.

One of the main reasons for this rejection of party politics may lie in the historical conflict between reindeer herding and other means of livelihood. The Swedish national parties were not considered natural alliance partners in regard to this conflict. On the contrary, they were considered as spokesmen for and allies of agricultural and forestry interests. Another explanation may be that the Sami wished to follow a neutral line with regard to party politics, so that they could have more freedom to influence the existing decision-making processes without being bound to individual parties (Sjølin 1996).

Since the Sami had chosen a neutral strategy in regard to party politics, there were seldom any Sami on the candidate lists, or candidates with a knowledge of the Sami's situation. One explanation for the limited Sami participation in elections may therefore be that, "(...) among leaders and among candidates on the lists there were seldom people they knew and whose positions on Sami issues were known." (Sjølin 1996: 64) The consequences of this were perhaps reflected when the Riksdagen, in its debate on the Sami Report SOU 1989:41, revealed an "obvious lack of insight into and expertise on Sami affairs." (Nystø 1993b: 48)

Parliamentary debate on Sami affairs revolved largely around the reindeer husbandry industry, without viewing it within the context of Sami politics as a whole. National Swedish Sami policy has thus been focused on reindeer husbandry right up to the present time, and a

connection with this industry was regarded as the objective criterion for Sami ethnicity (Mörkenstam 1999).

Before the establishment of the Sami Parliament, no Sami lists were submitted for municipal, county, or national parliamentary elections. After the Sami Parliament began to function and the Sami organisations had established their own Sami parties as extensions of these organisations, several of these parties submitted lists for municipal elections. In Jokkmokk municipality, for example, representatives of the Sami Welfare Organisation (Samenes Vel) party were elected for the period 1997-2001. In Jämtland County, the representative for the Environmental Party (Miljøpartiet) was Sami. This was the only county to elect a Sami in this election period. Another development in recent years has been that several Swedish parties have approved their own Sami programmes. This applies to the Liberal Party (Venstrepartiet), Environmental Party (Miljøpartiet), and Social Democratic Party (Sosialdemokraterne).

4.3 The direct channel in Norway

Elections in Norway are based on proportional representation. General elections to the Norwegian parliament (*Storting*) are held every four years and all citizens aged over 18 have the right to vote. The country is divided into 19 electoral districts for general elections, and 165 members of parliament are elected.

Those who are elected must have the right to vote in a parliamentary election. Candidates must also be nominated by a political party, an electoral list, or an approved list. Candidates on lists are ranked.

4.3.1 The Sami and the direct channel in Norway

The Sami movement up to 1945

In 1906, Isak Saba of Finnmark County was the first Sami to be elected to the Storting. He was a member of the Norwegian Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet) and was elected on the basis of two programmes, one a Sami political programme.

The North-Sami mobilisation that laid the foundation for Isak Saba's parliamentary mandate was to a great extent a mobilisation of the Coastal Sami, the background to which was the Norwegian assimilation policy and the economic decline of this group (Drivenes & Jernsletten 1994). However, it turned out that on the whole Saba was alone in

parliament with his attempts to stop the Norwegianisation of the Sami. Nor did he receive any support from fellow members of the party for his cautious campaigns. The broad political agreement on Norway's policy towards both the Sami and other minorities showed no sign of change until after 1945.

A rise of consciousness also occurred among the South Sami. Like the Swedish Sami, they were motivated by the need to defend Sami reindeer interests, which were under severe pressure from the authorities. The fact that livelihood interests and conflicts were central and that the South Sami population was so small made it very difficult to form any alliances with the Norwegian parties (Drivenes & Jernsletten 1994; Minde 1980). However, this led to the formation of strong internal bonds among the South Sami, with the result that most South Sami organisations survived the 1930s-1940s.

In about 1920, the Sami movement in North Norway tried, like the South Sami in Norway and the Swedish Sami, to keep out of Norwegian party politics. In 1921 the Sami movement in Finnmark County submitted its own lists for the Storting elections, as did Nordland County in 1924. However, these lists won far fewer votes than were required for a Storting mandate. These two attempts, together with the fact that the Norwegian Labour Party added a Sami policy supplement to its election programme of 1924, ended the Sami mobilisation directed at participation in parliamentary politics for several decades to come. Any members of the Storting with a Sami background who received a mandate from this period and up until the 1990s were not elected on a Sami political platform, and did not take any significant initiatives of a Sami political nature (Minde 1995).

The new Sami movement

After 1945, there was a new wave of Sami mobilisation, this time through the establishment of national Sami organisations. "The Sami in Sweden showed the way in the 1950s and 1960s. The breakthrough came in Finland, where an elected Sami Parliament was established in 1973. In Norway, a major change occurred in public opinion about the Sami situation during the 1980s" (Magga 1994). The conflict between the Sami and the Norwegian state over the construction of the Alta/Kautokeino dam created a political crisis regarding the legitimacy of the Norwegian authorities that improved the political climate for raising Sami issues.

Seeking power through participation in the *national* electoral system was a phenomenon found largely among the Norwegian Sami during this period. The Norwegian Sami Movement made it possible to submit Sami lists once more. This happened for the first time since 1945 when a Sami list was submitted for the Storting election in Finnmark in 1969 (NOU 1984:18). The reason for this list was that none of the Norwegian parties in Finnmark had nominated Sami for safe seats. Since then, Sami lists have been submitted in Finnmark, Troms, and Nordland counties for municipal, county, and Storting elections. Sami who have worked actively in Sami politics have also been elected through Norwegian party lists at municipal and county elections, especially since 1980.

Sami in the Storting parliament again

In 1993, two Sami women from Finnmark, Johanne Gaup from the Centre Party and Mimmi Bæivi from the Norwegian Labour Party, were elected to the Storting. Both women took political initiatives on Sami issues both before and after their election (Minde 1995, footnote 11).

Johanne Gaup says that it was no problem for her to take up Sami political issues in parliament on behalf of her own party¹¹. The Storting is organised into committees with responsibilities for different sectors. The Sami political sphere is wide and has to be included in most committees to a greater or lesser degree. The parliament's overarching Sami policy is the responsibility of the Municipal Committee. Gaup says that she sat on another committee during her period in parliament but that she tried to have a comprehensive overview of the Sami political issues that were being discussed, especially in the Municipal Committee. She could thus contribute to the work of her party's committee members. Other members of the Storting also consulted her. On the one hand, she says, it was a difficult task to keep abreast of the complex of Sami issues in the different committees. On the other hand, her expertise on Sami issues resulted in an informal position of power that made it easier for her to gain support for the initiatives concerning the Sami that she took.

The Sami People's Party was recognised as a national party in 1999, and one of its goals is to work for the Sami's collective rights to land and water. The party submitted a list of candidates for the parliamentary elections in 2001 and also submitted lists of candidates in

¹¹ Telephone conversation with Johanne Gaup on 4 December 1999.

some constituencies for the elections to the Sami Parliament that same year. The party also submits lists of candidates to run in municipal and county elections.

Direct Sami representation in the Storting has been proposed several times. In 1969, when a Sami list was submitted in Finnmark county for the Storting election, it was said, for example that, “it is now time to change Norway's Constitution so that the Sami's right to representation in the Storting becomes law” (NOU 1984:18: 479). In 1974, the Liberal Party proposed an amendment to the Constitution providing for the Sami in Norway to elect two of their own representatives. The demand for direct representation in the Storting has never been a central issue for the Sami organisations in their struggle. “In the post-war period, the idea of Sami representation in the Storting has never had any broad support among the Sami.” (NOU 1984:18). The demand put forward by the Sami with a view to strengthening their democratic rights was a demand for their own elected body.

5. THE INDIRECT CHANNEL

The Sami channel, or *the indirect channel*, consists of the popularly elected Sami parliaments. The elections occur by means of direct ballot and on the basis of the Sami electoral roll. Inscription in the electoral roll is voluntary. The Sami parliaments were established with the awareness that the Sami will always be a minority in the national political system, and that the ordinary (direct) electoral channels cannot effectively ensure that Sami voices will be heard.

The establishment of an indirect or Sami channel began with the establishment of the national Sami organisations after World War II. The forerunners were local Sami associations and organisations with their roots in the non-Sami community, in which a large number of members came from academic circles whose work was related to Sami language and culture.

The Nordic Sami Council was established in 1956 as a coalition of the Sami national organisations in Sweden and Norway and the Sami Parliament in Finland. When the borders to the East were opened and Russian Sami could participate as members, the name was changed to the *Sami Council*. The Council receives annual funding from the budget of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The election procedures of the Sami parliaments are very largely modelled on the electoral procedures that apply in the respective countries. This means that there are some structural differences between the three Sami parliaments.

The Sami parliaments of Finland, Sweden and Norway established a common Nordic forum: the *Sami Parliamentary Council*, in 2000. The Sami Council and Russian Sami have observer status in the council. The Sami Parliamentary Council is to be a body that protects Sami interests and strengthens Sami cooperation across national boundaries. The Sami Parliamentary Council also aims coordinate the Sami voice internationally and especially in relation to other indigenous people of the world. The Sami Parliamentary Council gives high priority to work in connection with the matter of the low number of women elected to the

three Sami parliaments. This is apparent from the overview below of women elected in relation to the total number of seats.

- Sami parliament in Finland, from 2000 to 2004: 6 women of a total of 21 representatives.
- Sami parliament in Sweden, from 2001 to 2005: 8 women of a total of 31 representatives.
- Sami parliament in Norway, from 2001 to 2005: 7 women of a total of 39 representatives.

5.1 The Sami channel in Finland

5.1.1 The Sami organisations

The **Society for the Promotion of Sami Culture** (*Lapin Sivistysseura*) was established in 1931. The initiative was taken by non-Sami bureaucrats and academics whose work was related to Sami language and culture. The members were also mostly non-Sami (Jernsletten 1995; Sillanpää 1994). For many years, this was one of the most influential organisations in the Nordic countries, its objective being to focus attention at Sami culture.

In 1945, the Sami established their own organisation, ***Saami Litto*** (the Sami Union). However, this organisation never became a strong national Sami pressure group in relation to the Finnish authorities (Sillanpää 1994).

Since Finnish Sami do not have an exclusive right to reindeer herding¹², a strong Sami reindeer organisation never developed in Finland. Sami reindeer owners comprise a minority in the Finnish reindeer organisation, ***Paliskuntain Yhdistys***.

At a joint meeting of *Lapin Sivistysseura* and *Sami Litto* in 1947, a memorandum was drawn up which listed the initiatives that were necessary on the part of the Finnish authorities in order to ensure the Sami's future. This meeting led first to the appointment of a commission for Sami questions in 1949 and then to the establishment

¹² Even though Sami in Finland do not have an exclusive statutory right to reindeer herding, it is estimated that a larger number of Sami in Finland are connected to reindeer husbandry in one way or another (approx. 25-30%) than is the case in Norway or Sweden. Contrary to the situation in Norway and Sweden, where it is almost impossible for other Sami than reindeer herding Sami to enter the industry, Sami in Finland have a real possibility of beginning reindeer herding as long as they are resident in a reindeer grazing district. (Sillanpää 2002)

of the Sami parliament in 1972, which was one of the main proposals of this commission (Sillanpää 1994).

The establishment of the Finnish Sami Parliament caused Sami activists to change their focus from political mobilisation to negotiations with the government. “Most non-governmental political organisations eventually died, and with them also critical and ‘irresponsible’ voices. This is an important explanation for the comparatively quiet and weak opposition of the Finnish Sami.” (Eriksson 1997: 98)

With the establishment of the national organisation, *Suoma Sámi Guovddássearvi*, in 1996, the Finnish Sami again had an organisation catering for all Sami. However, this organisation is struggling with very limited financial resources. The organisation carries out most of its work through funds for earmarked projects. Without reasonable funds for running expenses, it will never be able to develop into a strong political organisation.

In answer to the question of who has driven the Sami cause forward in Finland, Sillanpää states, “In some ways, the Finnish state has been the instrumental force in the mobilisation of a collective Sami political identity when, by means of a Cabinet Decree in 1973, it created the Sami Delegation (or ‘Sami Parliament’).” (Sillanpää 1994: 58) This shows that political developments relating to Sami in Finland are special. The progress that was made in the 1980s and later can be interpreted as indicating that: “pro-Sami bureaucrats in the ministries may have had a significant influence in bringing about reforms.” (Jernsletten 1994).

5.1.2 The Sami Delegation (1972-1995)

The first elections to the *Delegationen för sameärenden* (Sami Delegation) took place as a trial arrangement in 1972. The first regular elections were in 1975, and the first ordinary Sami Delegation convened at the beginning of 1976. The delegation had 20 representatives and also represented the Finnish Sami in the Sami Council. After the establishment of the Sami Delegation in 1972, it became the unifying body for the Finnish Sami. It also took initiatives on the part of the Sami in relation to the authorities. “In response to lobbying efforts by Sami activists in Finland, the Constitutional Committee of the Eduskunta has, since 1976, issued a number of statements (...)” (Sillanpää 1997: 206). The Sami Delegation was replaced by the Sami Parliament in 1995.

5.1.3 The Sami Parliament in Finland

In 1995, the Eduskunta officially passed a Sami Parliament Act (no. 974) to establish the Finnish Sami Parliament. Section 1 establishes the Sami's status as an indigenous people. This was an important change of status for the parliament and for the Sami people of Finland.

The parliament has 21 representatives and four alternates. The Finnish Sami Parliament Act stipulates that the Sami parliament shall be headed by a speaker and two deputy speakers (Section 11).

At least three ordinary representatives and one alternate shall come from each of the municipalities within the Sami homeland area (Section 4). Elections to the parliament are held every four years. The whole of Finland is one electoral district. Elections are based purely on votes for individual candidates, where “Family, friends, and neighbours seem to be the electoral basis” (Eriksson 1997: 140). To be able to run for election, candidates must be nominated by three other persons.

5.1.4 Party membership and the Sami organisations

As stated above, elections to the Sami Parliament in Finland are based on votes for individual candidates. Members of the parliament are thus not organised into parties. Since there is only one, relatively established national Sami organisation in Finland, the parliament can be expected to almost reign almost supreme in the Sami political arena for some time to come.

5.2 The Sami channel in Sweden

5.2.1 The Sami organisations

The first national Swedish Sami organisation, the National Association of Samiland (*Same Ätnam*)¹³ was founded in 1945. The main objective of this organisation is to promote Sami interests that are not connected with reindeer herding. In 1950, the National Union of Swedish Sami¹⁴ (*Svenska Samernas Riksförbund - SSR*) was founded. It was largely concerned with Sami reindeer herders. Both organisations have been represented on

¹³ www.same.net/~same.atnam/index.htm

¹⁴ www.sapmi.se/ssr/index.html

government committees dealing with Sami issues. In addition, the **Swedish Sami Youth Association** (*Saminuorra*) was set up in 1963, and the **Swedish Sami Union** in 1980. Since then the national Sami organisations the Reindeer Owners' Association (*Renägarförbundet*) and the Sami parliamentary party *Samerna* have also been founded.

Same Átnam and SSR submitted a demand for the establishment of a Sami parliament in Sweden in two letters to the government in 1981. However, the background to the Swedish government's willingness to establish a Sami parliament can be found in international developments involving minority and indigenous peoples, as well as the judgements in the Skattefjäll case¹⁵ and, in part, the Alta conflict in Norway (Nystø 1993a).

5.2.2 The Sami Parliament in Sweden

Examination by the Swedish government of the Sami question in Sweden resulted in legislation creating a Sami Parliament. Other Sami demands were not met, such as constitutional recognition of the Sami's status as an indigenous people or the ratification of ILO Convention no. 169. It was also emphasised that the Sami Parliament would be a body of the Swedish authorities, subject to the Swedish government, and not a Sami self-rule body. The first president of the Sami Parliament summarised the situation thus: "All those good intentions to acknowledge the Sami as a people and provide them with a kind of self-determination got no further than the introduction of the Sami Assembly Act, the purpose of which is merely to regulate the Sami Assembly." (Åhren 1994: 37)

The Swedish Sami Parliament opened for the first time in 1993. Thirty one representatives are elected every four years. The whole of Sweden constitutes one electoral district. The government appoints a speaker proposed by the parliament (Sami Parliament Act Section 2) because "The general rule is that the leader of a central government administrative authority is appointed by the government" (Prop. 1992/93:32 Annex 1: 45). The parliament itself appoints a board of up to seven representatives and seven alternates (Section 4) who are responsible for the day to day work. The Sami cabinet of the Sami Parliament is elected for the whole period and cannot be dismissed, even if it has only minority support from the Plenary. Plenary meetings are normally held three times a year.

When the Swedish Sami Rights Commission presented its proposal, the emphasis was on practical, political recommendations. However, if the commission had wished to do so, it could have interpreted its mandate in broader terms and proposed an in-depth examination of Swedish Sami policy (Korsmo 1993).

The government's proposition of 1992/93:32 states that the Sami parliament should not be a self-rule body. The Swedish state decided, in the Sami Parliament Act (1992: 1422), Section 1, to establish a Sami parliament “with the primary task of watching over issues concerning Sami culture in Sweden”. Chapter 2, Section 1 of the Act lists the tasks of the Sami parliament, which include distributing state funds to Sami cultural programmes and organisations, appointing the Sami School Board, leading on in Sami linguistic work, contributing to community planning, and ensuring that Sami needs are taken care of – including the interests of the Sami reindeer herders – and finally disseminating information about the Sami situation to the wider society. The listing of specific tasks in the Sami Parliament Act emphasises and makes visible the fact that the Sami Parliament is a state administrative authority. But at the same time it is also an elected Sami body.

5.2.3 Party membership and the Sami organisations

Sami organisations in Sweden decided early on that they did not wish to run for election through Swedish political parties. Instead, the Sami have established their own parties, either on the basis of the Sami organisations or in connection with elections. Registration of parties, groups, or other organisations that wish to submit lists, is carried out by electoral boards. In the 1997-2001 election period, ten Sami parties were represented in the parliament, while in the election period 2001-2005, nine parties are represented¹⁶.

5.2.4 The inner life of the Sami Parliament

The Sami Parliament in Sweden has had problems functioning as an opinion-creating and decision-making body. The situation between the Sami parliament's Plenary and its Board became increasingly tense during the 1997-2001 election period because the Board's support in the Plenary diminished to a minority, while there were no clear rules for how the

¹⁵ The Swedish Supreme Court established, in its ruling in the Skattefjäll Case, that the right to conduct reindeer husbandry is an agricultural right based on age-old custom and that it is a right in both commercial and property terms. www.icj-sweden.org

¹⁶ www.sametinget.se

parliament should handle the situation. The Board remained sitting, while the opposition had a majority and could effectively block all the Board's proposals in the Plenary. As a consequence, the parliament was more or less paralysed.

Eriksson has pointed to several possible causes for the parliament's problems, such as the Swedish state's traditional division between Sami who herd reindeer and those who do not, the Sami parliament's role both as a Swedish government authority and as an elected Sami body, the relationship between the Sami parliament and its Board, and a shortage of Sami leaders (Eriksson 1998).

The Sami parliament's dual and contradictory role is part of the external regulatory framework created by the Swedish authorities with the Sami Parliament Act. In it, the Sami Parliament is defined as a state administrative body, which means that the Plenary is subject to the same rules as other government councils and committees. "It is undoubtedly an impossible situation. If a Parliament representing an ethnic minority is to enjoy any legitimacy and to show any kind of power, it is obvious that it cannot at the same time represent its major opponent, in this case the state" (Eriksson 1997: 162).

The time aspect, i.e. the time between the Riksdagen's adoption of the Sami Parliament Act on 17 December 1992 and the opening of the parliament on 26 August 1993 could also be a contributing factor for the parliament's later development. In the course of one year, under circumstances of limited experience of electoral politics and no tradition of party politics, a party system was to be put in place, election lists drawn up and an election held. In addition, each group was to develop a specific policy that was to form the basis for the constitution of the Sami parliament.

The absence of administrative structures at the beginning may also have played a part. Unlike the Sami parliaments in Finland and Norway, the Swedish Sami Parliament had to build an administration up from nothing. The Sami parliament in Finland had its roots in the Sami Delegation. The Norwegian Sami Parliament took over the administration from the Norwegian Sami Council, which was a state-appointed advisory body for the Norwegian authorities. The starting point for the Sami parliament in Sweden was the worst possible: they did not even have a telephone. To build up an administration and

establish sound administrative routines and systems takes time, and this influences how structured the political debate and proceedings can be in the preliminary phases.

The above are only a few of the possible explanations for why the Swedish Sami Parliament has had problems learning to function properly. Internal as well as external factors, such as the lack of both political and administrative structures, appear to have contributed to setting the standard for how the parliament functioned. Such standards can take a long time to change.

5.2.5 A new government position?

The problems that emerged in due course made the need for a broad review of the Swedish Sami Parliament apparent. A new report, SOU 2002:77, considers the parliament's independence with regard to the right to representation, budgetary freedom and the government's right to instruct the Sami parliament. The report proposes that all the Sami parliament's responsibilities are laid down in the Sami Parliament Act as is the case today for Swedish municipalities. It further proposes that the Sami's status as an indigenous people be included in the Swedish constitution. In addition, the Sami parliament's internal organisation is discussed with regard to the relationship between the Plenary and the Board and the distinction between the parliament's role as a popularly elected body and as an administrative body. It is also proposed that the Sami parliament's organisational form be regulated by law in such a way that the composition of the Cabinet and committees is proportional.

The Swedish Sami Parliament supported most of the proposals made in this report, but when it comes to internal organisation, the parliament is of the opinion that it should decide on its own organisational form. The parliament also suggests that a new formulation be included in the Sami Parliament Act to the effect that the under-represented gender should receive not less than a third of the seats. (Sametinget 2002, Sametingets Records 2003:1).

5.3 The Sami channel in Norway

5.3.1 The Sami organisations

The first national organisation, the Sami Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway¹⁷ (*Norske Reindriftssamers Landsforbund*) was established in 1948 and is the organisation of the Norwegian Sami reindeer herders. In 1968, the National Association of Norwegian Sami¹⁸ (*Norske Samers Riksforbund*) was founded. This organisation embraces all Sami, and has promoted Sami rights since its inception. Demands for an elected Sami body and for Sami land rights have been central to the organisation's work. The Norwegian Sami Union (*Samenes Landsforbund*) was founded in 1979 in connection with the Alta conflict. This organisation has opposed all claims concerning historic Sami rights as well as the establishment of the Norwegian Sami Parliament. The Sami People's Federation¹⁹ (*Samenes folkeforbund*) was established in 1993 by dissenters from the Norwegian Sami Union who wanted to participate in the Sami parliamentary elections.

The Alta conflict forced the authorities to place the Sami question on the agenda as a result of several major reports on Sami culture and legal rights. Both the Reindeer Herders' Association and the National Association played key roles in this process.

5.3.2 The Norwegian Sami Parliament

The Norwegian Sami Parliament was opened in 1989 and has 39 representatives elected every four years. The country is divided into 13 electoral districts with three representatives from each district. The Sami parliament is composed of representatives from the national Sami organisations, Norwegian political parties, and local lists. The day-to-day work of the parliament is led by the President and Sámidiggi Council (parliamentary council) which is selected from the current majority in the Plenary. The Plenary is led by the Presidium.

5.3.3 Party membership and the Sami organisations

From the election of the first Sami parliament, Sami members of Norwegian political parties have submitted lists under their parties names. Most of the parties that are represented in the

¹⁷ www.nrl-nbr.no/

¹⁸ www.nsr.no/

¹⁹ www.samene.no

Storting have also been represented on the various lists for Sami parliamentary elections. Up to now, Sami representatives from three Norwegian parties have been elected.

All Norwegian parties with representation in the Storting, except for the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*), have a Sami policy programme. However, there is great variation in how the parties' work with respect to Sami policy is organised.

The Norwegian Labour Party (*Det norske Arbeiderpartiet*) has had representatives in the Sami parliament since the first election period. The party has drawn up rules for its work with Sami issues that regulate, for example, the party's nomination procedure for the parliament and the work and areas of responsibility of the party's "Sami Policy Council"²⁰. This Council has the mandate of advising the party's Storting group and, where relevant, executives in the ministries as well as the party's group in the parliament. The party's Sami Political Manifesto is adopted at the Labour Party Congress. If the chairman of the Sami Policy Council is not a member of the Labour Party's National Executive Board, he or she is granted the right to attend meetings on Sami issues.

The Centre Party (*Senterpartiet*) has been represented in the Sami parliament since the 1993 election. It has also established a formal structure which takes account of Sami issues through a "Sami Policy Council"²¹ and through decisions regarding this council in the "Centre Party's laws". The Sami Policy Council is represented on the National Executive Board and is summoned to attend the Party Congress. The council is responsible for drawing up an election programme for the Sami parliamentary elections.

The Conservative Party's first representative to the Sami parliament was elected in 2001. The party has not established any formal structures in the party to follow up on this.

The fact that Norwegian political parties have submitted lists for the Sami parliamentary elections has contributed to making the Sami question more noticeable within the parties, mobilising the Sami members, and also motivating the parties to draw up Sami policy programmes. One of the national parties in the Storting that has presented a Sami policy

²⁰ www.dna.no

²¹ www.senterpartiet.no

programme, the Socialist Left (*Sosialistisk Venstreparti*), has not so far participated in elections to the Sami parliament.

6. WAYS OF EXERCISING INFLUENCE

Although Sweden, Finland, and Norway may appear to be relatively homogeneous countries when viewed from the outside, there are historical and cultural differences between them. Such differences are also found in the public sphere, with regard to both political and administrative traditions.

Sweden and Finland have not yet had an in-depth social debate on the relations between the Sami and the nation state. The crisis of legitimacy that arose between the Norwegian Sami and the Norwegian state in connection with the conflict over the building of the Alta/Kautokeino dam forced this debate to the surface in Norway and compelled the Norwegian authorities to undertake a fundamental re-evaluation of the government's Sami policy. The Sami in Sweden and Finland have failed to confront the national authorities in the same way.

6.1 *National parliaments, parties and the Sami*

Sami influence on decision-making in the national elected bodies depends on a series of factors. One of these is the degree to which the national parties are concerned with Sami issues and to some extent how far they have committed themselves to adopting Sami programmes. Another is Sami involvement in the national parties, and how active members are in placing Sami issues on the party's political agenda. Related to this is the question of whether Sami are nominated and elected to the national parliaments on the basis of the Sami policy position adopted by the parties. These variables come under what we have referred to in this study as the *direct channel*.

Sami influence can also be exerted through the elected Sami parliaments, referred to here as the *indirect channel*. This influence is structural, taking place through direct election of Sami representatives to the Sami parliaments. It is the formal frameworks within the respective nation states and the Sami parliaments' own ability to create spheres of influence in relation to the national authorities that decide how effective this type of influence will be.

Historically, the Sami in the three Nordic countries have had similar experiences with regard to exerting *influence* on the national parliaments through national parties. During the last 20-

30 years, however, developments have taken different directions. The Sami in Norway, especially, have secured more central positions in several parties.

The parties have also committed themselves with respect to Sami policy by approving Sami political programmes to varying degrees in Finland, Sweden and Norway. This is a definite advantage, because the Sami then have an opportunity to exert direct influence on the parties' viewpoints. The inclusion and development of Sami policy in relation to the political ideology of the various parties may in turn inspire political debate in the field of Sami policy. At the same time, it must be remembered that Sami members of national parties will always be in the minority. The decisions of the party's majority will determine the political platform that Sami party members are also bound by. This may create problems, especially in cases where the majority's priorities are in conflict with Sami interests. Sami members can end up as "hostages", legitimising a Sami policy that is not in line with the Sami's overall interests.

The Sami in Sweden and Finland have not become involved in the national parties to the same extent as the Sami in Norway. The Swedish Sami have directed their efforts towards the Riksdagen through the Sami organisations, while the Finnish Sami have used the Sami parliament.

Different development patterns have also emerged for the Sami parliaments in Sweden, Finland, and Norway. This will probably have an influence not only on future Sami political developments in the three countries but also on the Sami parliaments' possibilities of influencing the national parliaments.

6.2 The Sami and channels of influence to the national parliaments

The three models below show the relationships between the Sami and the national parliaments.

The Sami organisations in Finland do not have the financial resources to operate as effective pressure groups. As the figure below shows, no local or national Sami organisation has an official connection through the electoral channel to the Sami parliament.

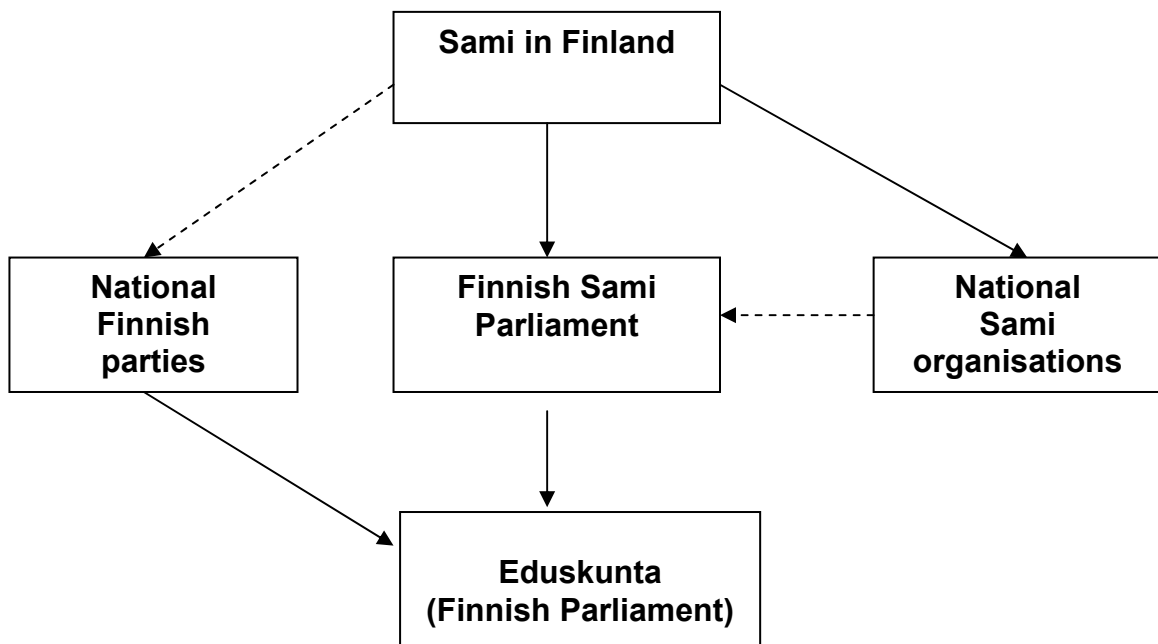


Figure 1. The Sami and the Eduskunta

Elections to the Sami parliament are organised purely as elections of individuals. As a consequence, candidates are not bound by any electoral programme, nor are they accountable to any member organisation. In addition, the Sami in Finland have not as yet challenged the Finnish parties to clarify their political position on Sami issues. As a result, the parties are under no strong obligation to function as channels for the Sami to the Eduskunta. The Finnish Sami parliament therefore faces great challenges in terms of protecting Sami interests in relation to the Eduskunta.

The Swedish Sami have a weak connection with the national Swedish parties. The parties have very few or no Sami members who are working actively and in a structured manner with Sami politics. Several parties, however, have agreed on Sami programmes to which they are politically committed.

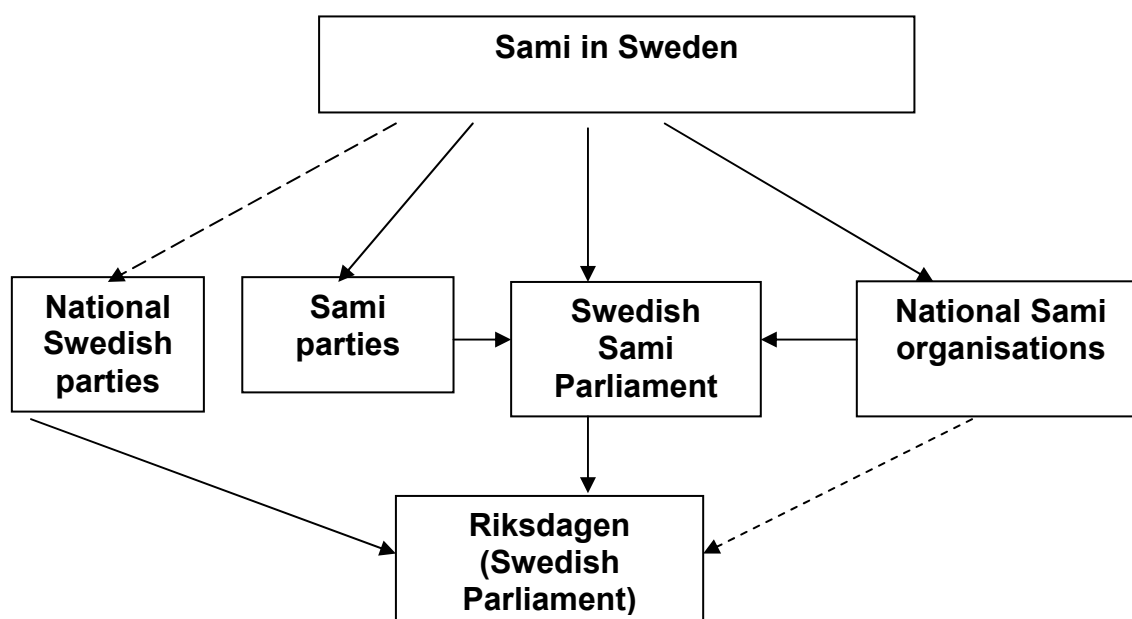


Figure 2. The Sami and the Riksdagen

The Swedish Sami organisations have a tradition of working with the Swedish authorities, both through lobbying and through negotiations. Their position is assumed to have been weakened since the establishment of the Sami parliament, with the exception of the reindeer herding organisations. At the same time, the organisations participate in the Sami parliament through their own Sami parties.

The main line of influence for the Swedish Sami is therefore expected to be the Sami parliament. However, the Swedish Sami Parliament has had a relatively tight formal framework for its political scope of manoeuvre since the Swedish authorities have defined it as primarily a government administrative body.

As shown in the figure below, the Sami in Norway have several ways of reaching the Storting.

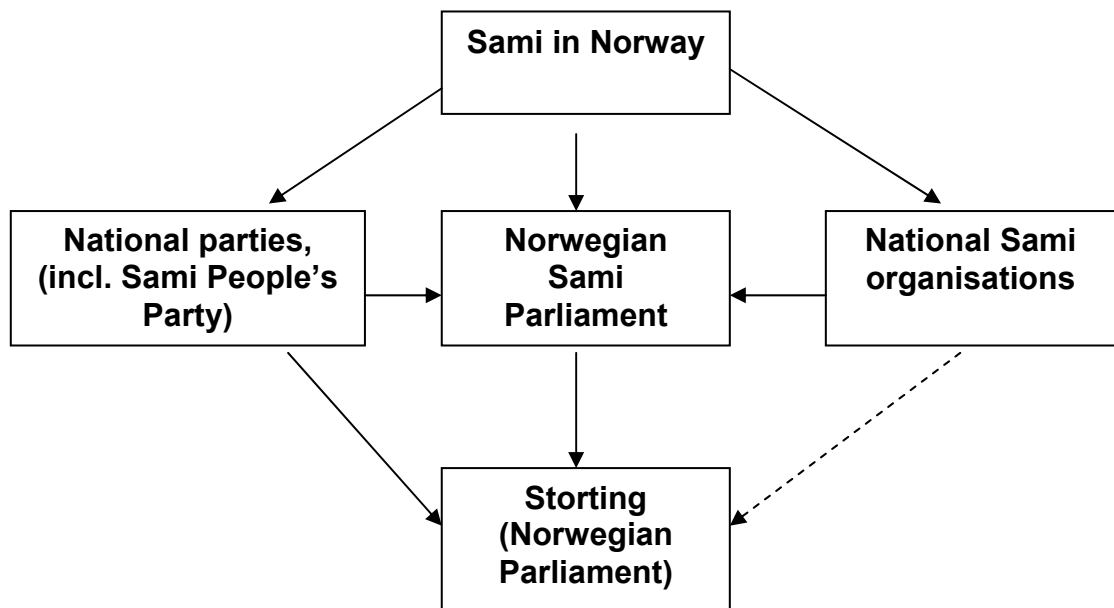


Figure 3. The Sami and the Storting

Before the establishment of the Norwegian Sami Parliament, the national Sami organisations were the most important channel. Their role has since been greatly reduced, with the exception of the business organisation, the Sami Reindeer Herders' Association of Norway, which is the state's negotiating partner in questions related to reindeer herding.

The Norwegian national parties are an open channel that has developed rapidly since the establishment of the Sami parliament. The advantages of such a channel are that it creates more arenas for the development of Sami politics, and that Norwegian party politicians can be held accountable to a greater extent. However, a system where Norwegian parties are represented in both the Sami parliament and the Storting also has its disadvantages. For example, the parties in the Storting may take greater heed of the views of their party's Sami parliament members on a particular issue than to a decision adopted by the majority in the Sami parliament. Such a development could have an impact on the Sami parliament's legitimacy and political clout.

7. CONCLUSION

By focussing on national parliaments, one fails to capture all the channels of influence open to the Sami in the political and administrative sphere at regional and local level. There are more channels of influence than merely the election of Sami representatives to the national or Sami parliaments. The Sami participate to a varying degree in local and regional elections, both by voting and by standing as candidates for election. Sami participation is strongest at the local level, however, probably because it is easiest to achieve a position at this level. The municipal councils also offer a great deal of power and the possibility of exerting influence. There are several examples of representatives on Sami lists winning a position in which they have been able to tip the balance of power and thus make far greater demands than their number of representatives would normally allow. The Sami also have the opportunity of exerting influence through administrative positions in central, regional, and local administration, and through appointments to various public councils and committees. However, this is a subject that lies outside the scope of the present study.

National influence depends on many factors. Historically, a new situation was created following World War II. During the 1980s and 1990s in particular, there were positive developments in Sami participation in various political and administrative arenas. The national governments have shown growing acceptance for cultural pluralism and for the idea that groups within the population should have real influence over their own situation.

This report has shown that the Sami have both a direct and an indirect channel. The conditions for participation in these channels and the manners in which the channels function nevertheless vary, which means that Sami influence also varies.

This report has covered the descriptive aspects of the current situation. Within the scope of this report, however, it has not been possible to examine how real Sami influence actually is.

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