

**One Nation Spread across Four Counties: The Role of Saami
Youth Organization in Transnational Saami Nation-
Building**

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Abstract

This thesis looks at the role civil society organizations in one county play in the nation-building process of transnational nations. Do these organizations contribute to the establishment of a transnational nation, or do they only participate in nation-building activities within a segment of the nation confined by international borders? Qualitative analysis of textual documents as well as a small number of interviews were conducted to collect data from publicly available sources. The comparative analysis shows that feeling of cultural unity and a common collective identity as one people are not translated into joint mobilization, expression of solidarity or joint actions. For the most part, all three organizations choose to cooperate with similar types of actors, raise similar issues and provide comparable services. While these communalities could be a good starting point for cooperation, all three organizations focus their energy on either the cooperation or action within the state or on international political and cultural forums.

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Introduction

Indigenous nations around the world claim a right to self-determination and lobby for recognition as a nation within nations. This right is considered as a fundamental right which allows indigenous peoples to envision and pursue their own economic, social, and cultural development, dispose of the natural wealth and resources of their territory, and to shape their own future. Over the past two decades, international law has answered the demands of indigenous peoples to be recognized as “people” with legitimate claims to self-determination. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples presents milestones in the recognition of indigenous rights and formally confirm that indigenous peoples are peoples with the right to self-determination. The Declaration is focused on the state and on limiting the right to self-determination of peoples within the state, hence it does not address the needs of partitioned indigenous peoples. Despite the formal recognition of some sort of self-determination for indigenous people, it is unclear how indigenous peoples in general and transnational indigenous peoples can exercise this right in practice.

Yet, indigenous self-governance is limited to internal self-determination and implemented through the establishment of a self-governance within the states. In the case of transnational nation, internal self-governance alone does not meet their need for collective self-determination as a people and does not allow them to exist as one people without interference of the borders of the state. This thesis looks at the obstacles and challenges of transnational nations with a representative structure integrated into different states face. To exist as a nation and overcome the borders dividing them, transnational indigenous peoples have to develop the capacity to identifying as a nation,

organization as a nation, and acting as a nation. By looking at the case of claim-making of Saami youth organizations across the Nordic countries, this research provides an insight into the way civil society organization located in one segment of the nation contribute to the transnational nation-building processes. It aims to answer the research question of: **To what extent do Saami youth organizations located in one country participate in Pan-Saami nation-building processes?**

As Chapter 1 explains, indigenous nation-building is understood as identifying, organizing, and acting as a nation. Hence, to exist as a transnational indigenous nation, transnational indigenous groups have to overcome the division imposed on them by state borders. To understand the role Saami youth organizations in one country plan in Pan-Saami nation-building, the following sub-questions are asked: Do Saami youth organizations contribute to the creation and maintenance of a collective Pan-Saami identity? Do Saami youth organization take actions which benefit Saami in all countries? Whose interests do civil society organizations claim to represent? On behalf of whom do they make their claims? Who are do these organization address with their claims? Who do they cooperate with to achieve the goals? By analyzing where civil society organizations position themselves within the Saami polity, this thesis aims to find out if sub-groups of the Saami polity make-claim on behalf of their interest groups within national segment of the Saami or the Saami as a whole.

This thesis aims to understand to what extent indigenous civil society organizations located in one state participate in the transnational indigenous nation-building process by looking at the case of Saami youth organizations. The present situation of claim-making of Saami youth civil society organizations in Finland, Sweden and Norway presents a suitable case study to investigate the

disputes between the national character of indigenous nations and the transnational aspect of indigenous nation-building for several reasons. Firstly, the Saami have gained recognition as one indigenous people and it is one of the few people that are represented as one people on the international level. Secondly, the Saami are located in states that have put efforts into accommodating the Saami people on their territory and is supportive of indigenous rights. Thirdly, the national governments, regional organizations and the Saami Parliaments have been working together to homogenize Saami policies and facilitate cooperation across borders. The Saami in Russia and the case of Russia is excluded from the analysis, because Saami policies in Russia are less developed, the state is less supportive of civil society organizations, Russia has not implemented a national structure for representation for the Saami and Russia does not cooperate with the Nordic countries to facilitate Saami self-governance. While the Saami in Russia participate in transnational activities, their legal and political framework is missing the key component of national representation which excludes them from the case study.

This research focuses on a small segment of Saami civil society organization, namely Saami Youth organizations that are not directly involved in the Saami politics. By choosing these organization, the results of this research can produce are automatically limited to Saami youth organizations in Sweden, Finland and Norway. This case study purposefully does neither look at the identity and ambitions of all Saami, nor does it look at the claims about the identity and ambitions of all actors or individuals in the Saami nation. Thusly, this research does not make claims about actors or individuals that identify as Saami. It aims to understand how the Saami youth organizations currently act within the existing framework without drawing broad conclusions on the framework they exist in or the society they claim to represent. This research is offers a new approach of

looking at actors within transnational indigenous nations. Through the analysis of the case the participation of Saami youth organization in the broader transnational nation-building process, this thesis provides a starting point for additional research on other civil society actors within transnational indigenous nations. By researching the claim-making of civil society organization within the Saami, this thesis gives an insight into political and cultural mobilization within the Pan-Saami movement. It shows to what extent political mobilization is contained in the national segments of the Saami nation compared to the Saami nation as a whole. This thesis not only produce knowledge on the Saami and sub-groups position within the Saami polity, but its findings add to the pool of research on claim-making and representation within transnational indigenous peoples in general.

The case study focuses on youth civil society organizations, because civil society organization play an important role in shaping and representing the “Saaminess” independent from and parallel to the government structure. Civil society organizations are commonly defined as “non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations.”¹ As such, they can be local, national or transnational and formal or informal organizations of individuals that come together for a common purpose, work to fulfill the needs of society, and represent the interests of their followers and members. Saami Youth organizations are present in Norway, Finland and Sweden and allow the Saami civil society to come together, explore, and discuss their own needs in a non-governmental setting.

¹ The World Bank, “Civil Society - Defining Civil Society.”

Through their work in promoting and vocalizing their interests, they raise awareness and aim to fulfill the needs of the Saami Youth. They represent and consist of the current generation of Saami who grew up in a socio-political situation where their basic rights as members of an indigenous minority were acknowledged and more or less protected². The main events that led to the establishment of the Saami Parliaments and the current state of Saami self-governance occurred in the 1970s and 1980s. The Saami Parliaments have significantly changed the position of the Saami within the states and further integrated the Saami representation and claim-making into the separate states.

Data on these organizations is only collected through publically available sources published by the organizations and only in the time frame between January 2013 and May 2016. This thesis limited its analysis of the image these organizations used within this timeframe. It relies on the way those organizations choose to portray themselves, as such the inner workings of the organizations such as agenda setting, consensus building or differences in views are not accounted for. As this research aims to understand the effects of the new status quo of national representation of the Saami has on the Pan-Saami movement, it focuses on the generation that grew up with the current structure and works to shape the future of the Saami movement within the current setting.

² Refer to sources on Cultural rights, mother tongue and cultural education in public schools, revival of Saaminess.

Disposition

The first chapter critically discusses previous literature and the theoretical framework of transnational nation building. It outlines the concept of the nation in the context of indigenous nations, introduces cases of transnational nations, and discusses the challenges and aspirations of transnational nations. Additionally, it operationalizes the concept of transnational nation-building and it introduces and discusses the analytical categories used in this research.. The second chapter introduces the Saami as a nation in changing geopolitical circumstances. It provides an overview of the different geopolitical settings the Saami nation underwent from the pre-colonial Saami nation, through the partition of the Saami and the assimilation into the different states to the development of the Pan-Saami movement. The third chapter outlines the methodology used in the thesis. It introduces the research design, and explains what methods were used to collect data, how the sources were selected and how the collected data was interpreted. The fifth chapter presents the results of the analysis of the data collected on the three Saami youth organizations. The sixth chapter draws conclusion from the analysis. It connects the findings of this research to the broader field of transnational nation-building. Moreover, it reflects on the methodological choices and provides suggestions for further research.

1. Transnational Indigenous Nations

As a minority and an indigenous people, indigenous nations are “bound by rules and institutions which were created without their participation”³. As a transnational indigenous people, the Saami and other transnational indigenous peoples are bound by not only the rules and regulations of one country, but several different systems of rules and regulations. This chapter introduces and critically discusses the concepts of indigenous nations and indigenous nation-building. Firstly, the concept of the nation is critically discussed to gain an understanding of the key aspects of indigenous nations. Secondly, it highlights the particularities of transnational indigenous peoples through examples. Lastly, it critically discusses the challenges for unification of partitioned indigenous nations.

1.1 Defining Indigenous Nations

The concept of “nations” is often used equivocal, and more or less connected to the notion of people or state. It can be understood in a political sense as well as in a sociological sense, and depending on the definition, the concept of nations can very well accommodate indigenous peoples. Anderson famously defined a nation in the anthropological sense as “imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”⁴. The nation is socially constructed by its members who identify as part of a nation and foster feelings of comradeship

³ Klímová-Alexander, “Transnational Romani and Indigenous Non-Territorial Self-Determination Claims,” 395.

⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

towards other who identify as part of the community.⁵ This definition is often referenced, yet it is too vague to understand the essence of the nation in both cultural and political terms. More contemporary definitions of the nation provide a clearer understanding of nationhood usable in the context of indigenous nation-building.

The term nation is can be used in a primarily political sense. The problem here is that it is often used interchangeable with the concept of the state. For Oskal, the concept of the nation is closely connected to the concept of the state, and he emphasizes the political component of nations by dividing nations into political and pre-political. While it is possible to call a pre-political ethno-cultural community bound together by common heritage, traditions, and language a nation, the political aspect remains important. The term nation for him refers primarily to a political community that is held together by citizenship regimes, common institutions and decision-making procedures, and securing unity and stability.⁶ In this understanding, the pre-political nations can and have developed into nation-state.

The nations or nation-states in Europe were based on the ideal of ethnic and cultural homogeneity and transformed a geographically and culturally integrated population into a political community. As a result, the nation-state overarches a national society consisting of different ethno-cultural communities, unifies and stabilizes these different ethnic communities through a common political culture, and integrated them into a political community or nation. The nation then aims to provide

⁵ Ibid., 5–7.

⁶ Oskal, “Political Inclusion of the Saami as Indigenous People in Norway.”

a good life for all of its citizens based on the values and ideals of the “pre-political nation” the state is based on. Oskal points out that these nations lack neutrality as the political structure and constitutional arrangements benefit the ethno-cultural majority.⁷ This definition of the nation effectively excludes most indigenous nations, because the establishment of an independent state is neither feasible, nor desirable for many indigenous nations. Indigenous nations fit the category of pre-political nations, yet without the desire for an independent state, they would not be considered as equals within the nation. They can negotiate their position within the nation and advocate for political inclusion as ethno-cultural communities, yet they are not considered to be nation. As such, the understanding of nation is too closely connected to the concept of independent statehood to suit indigenous peoples such as the Saami.

Another way to define nations is in a broader ethno-cultural sense. “Nation” is understood in as an ethno-cultural communities bound together by ancestral ties, common history and separated from the concept of the state. Using a sociological understanding of the term, Kymlicka defines a nation in as an “intergenerational community, more or less institutionally complete, occupying a given territory or homeland, sharing a distinct language and history”⁸. Kymlicka does not equivalent the term nation with the concept of the state, but uses it interchangeably with the term “people” and “culture”. As such, he downplays the political component that is only vaguely defined as “institutionally complete” without defining it further along the lines of statehood. What Oskal views as multicultural nation-states are multi-national states to Kymlicka. A state becomes multinational through colonization, conquest, or voluntary confederation of nations or ethno-

⁷ Ibid., 252.

⁸ Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship*, 18.

cultural communities.⁹ Even when integrated into the political community and the larger framework of state, ethno-cultural minorities remain nations and should be able to exist as distinct nations within states. It is very important for indigenous nations to live and develop as a cultural community bound by a common heritage, language, traditions and a way of life within the nation, but this also includes political agendas that allow them to pursue their vision of a good life. Kymlicka's definition of nations is broad enough to include national minorities such as indigenous people, yet the ill-defined political component does reflect the aspiration of indigenous nations such as the Saami.

A third group of theories of nationhood include indigenous peoples in the definition of nations regardless of their territorial and spatial organization as long as the indigenous people shares a political self-consciousness and aspires a form of political self-determination. Here, the definition of nation combines the ethno-cultural and political components of the previous definition, yet it clearly sets the term nation apart from the concept of "ethnic groups" and "state". Semb's definition of "nation" fit into this category; nations to her are ethno-cultural groups or peoples with "the aspirations to develop some kind of politically separate existence"¹⁰. This understanding of nation is used in this thesis, because it neatly combines the both the cultural and political aspect of indigenous nationhood that are particularly relevant to understand transnational indigenous nations.

⁹ Ibid., 10–11.

¹⁰ Semb, "Sami Self-Determination in the Making?," 536.

Three aspects of this definition of nation are particularly relevant for this particular understanding of nationhood and indigenous nationhood. Firstly, the definition as it does not wrongfully assume that decent automatically leads to political loyalty.¹¹ Individuals choose to associate and participate in the indigenous nation, and identify with the narrative at the core of the nation. Members can be simultaneously active and part of the national community and benefit from their rights as citizens and participate in the political processes of and identify with the indigenous nation. Secondly, a nation is not necessary confined by state borders or territorial boundaries, but by individuals willingness to politically associate with it.¹² As such, nationhood is not limited to a geographical territory and membership is not limited to residence on this territory. The majority of Saami live outside of what is commonly considered to be Sapmi, yet they still identify as part of the Saami nation, are able to vote in Saami elections, and feel attached to the territory in a symbolic sense. Additionally, the non-territorial aspect opens the definition nations to transnational nations and geographically diverse peoples such as the Saami. Dubois points out here that the concept of nationhood aims to create a communal self-understanding that overcomes territorial and geographical division among the members of an indigenous nation.¹³ Thirdly, this desire for a “politically separate existence” is not equivalent to the formation of an independent state, but it rather refers to self-determination and decision-making competences that secure their interests. As such, indigenous people do not have to govern a state to be defined as nation, but they do need to aim for a type of self-governance. The Saami Parliaments are institutionally secured manifestations

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 541.

¹² Semb, “Sami Self-Determination in the Making?”

¹³ Dubois, “Beyond Territory,” 5–6.

of the Saami as a separate political group within the Nordic states, yet they do not meet the aspirations of the Pan-Saami nation.

Following this definition, the Saami and other indigenous people constitute nations if they are peoples with aspiration for self-determination without the desire to create an independent state. While transnational people are included in this definition of nation, the possible implementation of their aspiration for self-determination are more complex. The question that remains is, if separate representative bodies are a step towards or away from realization of aspiration of transnational self-determination. To understand this dilemma, one what challenges transnational indigenous nations have to overcome.

1.2 Transnational Nations

Indigenous peoples and indigenous nations around the world come in different shapes and one solution for indigenous self-governance does not fit the needs and aspirations of all indigenous nations. Not all indigenous peoples or nations live in geographically concentrated areas and not all are contained within the borders of one state, yet many are minorities on their traditional lands. As such, the territorial autonomy advocated for indigenous nations within states does not necessarily work for all indigenous nations. Non-territorial autonomy, such as institutions based on cultural and self-identification, is regarded a more suitable solution for many.¹⁴ Transnational indigenous

¹⁴ Josefsen, Mörkenstam, and Saglie, “Different Institutions within Similar States,” 3.

peoples are peoples that were divided by artificial border. Some scholars such as Meyer, Erikson and Stepien define transitional or partitioned indigenous nations as separated by international borders and subject to the authority of different states.¹⁵¹⁶¹⁷ Others such as Maddison include indigenous nations divided by internal or administrative borders in the category of partitioned indigenous nations.¹⁸ In both cases, the division of transnational peoples continuously challenges to the traditional way of life, culture, identity and unity of the people.¹⁹ To exist as a nation, these peoples aspire trans-border autonomy and the existence as one nation beyond the (state-) borders.²⁰ The division of indigenous groups between states is generally a byproduct of inter- or intra-state politics, rather than a conscious political decision.²¹ As a result of the borders and the integration into the state structure, the indigenous people is partitioned between different states, and is assimilated and subordinated to said different states. Many indigenous nations around the world were divided by border and have achieved different levels of unity and recognition since then.

Numerous transnational indigenous peoples and transnational indigenous nations with varying degrees of recognition, institutionalization, and division can be found around the world. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States are home to a multitude of indigenous groups as well

¹⁵ Meyer, “Transnational Autonomy.”

¹⁶ Stepien, “Pan-Saami Cooperation: Towards a Trans-Border Polity.”

¹⁷ Eriksson, “Partition and Redemption.”

¹⁸ Maddison, “Indigenous Peoples and Colonial Borders. Sovereignty, Nationhood, Identity, and Activism.”

Stepien, “Pan-Saami Cooperation: Towards a Trans-Border Polity.”

²⁰ Meyer, “Transnational Autonomy.”

²¹ Eriksson, “Partition and Redemption.”

as indigenous nations. On the one hand, these countries are settler colonies build on the colonization of the continent and colonialization of the peoples living on and off it. A byproduct of the colonization of the in Australia, Canada or the United States are not necessarily the partition of indigenous peoples by international border, but indigenous peoples were divided by internal border, categorized arbitrarily and subjected to different administrative units²². As such, the indigenous nations were partitioned, reorganized, and face similar challenges as those who were divided by international borders, but they do not have to cooperate or negotiate their existence with two different independent states. In the case of transnational people Canada or Australia, collective identities are created by a multitude of peoples who claim or develop a common cultural, linguistic and historical ties, reject administrative borders, and reconstruct themselves as one unified nation, and politically mobilize as one nation.²³ This process can be understood as transnational nation building, because these indigenous nations (consisting of a number of nations) have to overcome similar obstacles as transnational nations. The result of these process is the construction of a new collective identity based on cultural communalities, and claims to collective nationhood as one nation. In this case, a successful new indigenous nation is still within the same country, yet it gained a new form of collective self-governance.

More clear cut examples of transnational indigenous nations are the Mapuche, the Saami, and the Inuit. The Mapuche nation is divided by the Chile-Argentinean border and claims to “be a single

²² Maddison emphasized that around 40 indigenous nations are located in the border regions and are partitioned by the international border between Canada and the United States as well as the United States and Mexico. (Maddison, “Indigenous Peoples and Colonial Borders. Sovereignty, Nationhood, Identity, and Activism.” p. 156-157)

²³ Cornell, “Processes of Native Nationhood.”

people divided by two states”²⁴. On both sides of the border, intellectuals and activist work together to create common symbols of the nation and promote their visions and lobby for their rights through a cross-border newspaper and online publications. However, the Mapuche nation and its rights are not recognized by the states Chile or Argentina, and tolerate the cultural symbols of the Mapuche people within its borders.²⁵ The Mapuche nation is based on an ethno-cultural community partitioned by an international border with a common political vision, yet it lacks support and any type of recognition by the states. Warren mentions that the incoherent attribution of meaning to common symbols is another obstacles of the transitional nation-building process in the case of the Mapuche.²⁶ The case of the Mapuche nations is just one example of many indigenous nations around the world that the support form the states they are situated in.

The Inuit are spread across Canada, Alaska, Greenland, and Russia, and are separated by international borders between those countries. Unlike the Mapuche, the Inuit have gained recognition from the states they are located in and constructed a transitional representative structure. The Inuit identify as on nation with a common language and culture distinct from the states they are situated in, and a strong relationship between their traditional homeland and culture. Similar to the Saami, they claim transnational collective self-determination, are recognized as indigenous people, maintain a transnational non-governmental organization (Inuit Circumpolar

²⁴ Warren, “A Nation Divided,” 236.

²⁵ Warren, “A Nation Divided.”

²⁶ Ibid.

Council), and participate in regional (Arctic Council) and international organizations (UN).²⁷ Unlike the Saami, the different segments of the Inuit nation form a majority on their traditional lands, pursue territorial autonomy, and regional self-governance. With the establishment of sub-national autonomous territories with an Inuit majority in Greenland and Nunavut (Canada), a new regional and civil identities are created around these political and territorial units. According to Legare, these previously ethno-cultural identities are redefined in civic terms to include all Inuit on the territory as well as non-Inuit residents. As such, a common cultural collective identity is replaced with a specific civil identity that is dominated but not exclusive to the indigenous nation.²⁸ It is unclear, however, how the development of a sub-national collective identity effects other types of collective identities such as the transnational Inuit identity promoted by transnational organizations. The question that arises from this example is whether one can still speak of a transnational indigenous nation, if this segments of the nation pursue a form of political separate existence that changes the collective identity of its members away from the pursuit of collective transnational self-determination.

As outlined in chapter 2, the history of the Saami is similar to the history of many indigenous people. Yet it is unique in the way that colonization began as early as the 13th century and progressed slowly which allowed the Saami to exist as a distinct transnational people with special rights until the 1850s. Stepien calls the transnational Saami cooperation a “good example of how

²⁷ Plaut, “‘Cooperation Is the Story’ – Best Practices of Transnational Indigenous Activism in the North.”

²⁸ Legare, “The Construction of Inuit Collective Identity: From Cultural to Civic. The Case of Nunavut.”

the trans-border cooperation and integration of partitioned people can be achieved”²⁹. This is partly because of their location in the Nordic states which cooperate well and are willing to facility as well as funded Saami representatives bodies within and across borders.³⁰³¹ The Saami parliament further integrated to Saami into the structure of the three Nordic states and gave the Saami an official organ in each country to negotiate and cooperate with the individual states. Before the establishment of the Saami Parliaments, interest groups, non-governmental organizations on the local and national level, as well as transnational organizations were regarded as opponents of the states. Since the institutionalization of the Saami Parliaments, many agents of political mobilization such as interest groups developed into political parties that now compete for seats in Saami Parliaments or local municipalities. The lobbying efforts of political Saami groups and interest groups are now directed towards the central governments to gain influence within the states separately.³² Consequently, the establishment of special representative bodies within the governance structure of Norway, Finland and Sweden can be seen as part of a transnational structure. At the same time, it also refocused the attention of Saami groups towards cooperation with the individual states and further integrated them into the separate structures of three independent states. Nonetheless, these common institutions are based on the partition and aim to mitigate it rather than to overcome it. Efforts have been made to homogenize the polices and sign an international treaty developed and negotiated between the Saami, Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Nonetheless, the Saami are still subject to the laws of different states and they are politically firmly integrated into three different states.

²⁹ Stepien, “Pan-Saami Cooperation: Towards a Trans-Border Polity,” 251.

³⁰ Stepien, “Pan-Saami Cooperation: Towards a Trans-Border Polity.”

³¹ Heininen, “The Saami as Pan-National Actor.”

³² Eriksson, “Partition and Redemption.”

One thing all partitioned indigenous nation have in common is their division between states, the integration into different state systems, and the challenges that arise from them. Eriksson claims that the partition of the people causes long term harm to the unity of the groups. Though the subjection to different governments, the different segments of the portioned ethnic group have to adjust to separate legal, political and administrative systems, and thereby drift apart. Studies on divided peoples after decolonization shows that the different political and cultural patterns developed through the adjustment to different state remain active even after the segments of the groups were reunited.³³ Juxtaposed, Meyers claims that transnational people base their identity on common descent, cultural affinity with a common homeland, shared cultural characteristics, and a shared experience of victimization.³⁴ The experience of the partition can be understood as both obstacle to a common identity or part of a common identity as shared memory of injustice and victimization.

Nation-building in transnational indigenous nations is based on the same general principle processes and pursue similar goals as indigenous peoples contained within the state, but they face different challenges. The goals of indigenous nations vary between nations, yet the overall goal is a form of self-determination. This often includes the desire to be recognized and organized as a politically and culturally distinct people in charge of their own cultural, political, social, and economic development. However, the process of nation-building for transnational nations has to

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Meyer, "Transnational Autonomy."

include the mitigation of the challenges imposed by the borders. As such, partitioned indigenous nations have to overcome international borders, the integration into different legal, social and political systems, as well as the cultural differences between segments of the nation to exist as one nation.³⁵ On the one hand, the successful creation of a trans-border nation depends on characteristics of the nation such as a strong common identity, feelings of belonging to one nation, common institutions and organizations, and commitment to common goals. On the other hand, it relies on the states willingness to tolerate or encourage the transnational nation-building process.³⁶ Some are in a more privileged situation and further along the process of integration as one nation than others. The Saami are in a better situation than most other partitioned indigenous nations.

1.3 Operationalizing Transnational Nation-Building

To relate the theoretical concept of transnational indigenous nation-building to empirical case of Saami youth organizations, it has to be operationalized and broken down into analytical categories. The nation as defined above is the result of and maintained by nation-building processes. Cornell crystalized three distinct processes of indigenous nationhood that are essential for indigenous nation-building. To build and maintain a nation, indigenous peoples have to a) identify as a nation, b) organize as a nation, and c) act as a nation.³⁷ This set of key nation-building mechanism is assumed to exist in every indigenous nation. Building on the existing literature and research on the

³⁵ Eriksson, "Partition and Redemption."

³⁶ Stepien, "Pan-Saami Cooperation: Towards a Trans-Border Polity."

³⁷ Cornell, "Processes of Native Nationhood."

topic of indigenous nation-building, these processes are critically discussed and transformed into analytical categories in the understand to what extent the Saami Youth organizations are part of the Pan Saami nation-building process.

1.3.1 Identifying as a Nation

As mentioned above, the nation is based on a community with a collective identity bound together by common cultural, linguistic, historical, or traditional ties, and the perception of belong to a nation is a pre-requisite to nation-building. The self-understanding of an indigenous nation as a collative and distinct entity is the fundament of the nation, a pre-requisite to political organization, and a legitimization of the nation. For Legare, collective identity is constructed and reconstructed to allow the group to understand themselves as distinct and unique in relations to others. An important of the collective identity are symbols that celebrate, communicate, and legitimize the existence of a common identity³⁸ Cornell describes three types of identities development of nations, namely the continuity of a long-standing collective identity, the revival of old identities, and the development of a unprecedented collective identity based on those ties.³⁹ As such, collective identities are not necessary consistent within a group for generation and are adoptable to social, political, and economical changes. Collective identities are continuously contracted and manifest themselves through symbols such as rituals and celebrations, flags, clothing, food and anthems, and names for peoples, territory and goods.

³⁸ Legare, “The Constrtuction of Inuit Collective Identity: From Cultural to Civic. The Case of Nunavut.”

³⁹ Cornell, “Processes of Native Nationhood,” 9–10.

The focus of Pan-Saami nation is on the creation unity in terms of collective identity as well as self-governance (representation, agenda setting and decision-making). Non-governmental actors continue to shape and influence nation-building within and beyond the official governing structure. Saami Youth organizations play an important role in creating and maintaining a common Saami identity, because they motivate young Saami to engage with their identity as Saami. These organizations are run by young Saami in each state and claim to encourage other young Saami to discover and form a positive Saami identity through education and cultural events. In the case of civil society organizations in general and Saami youth organizations in particular, these organizations have the opportunity to defined a part of the nation as the group they claim to represent and develop an identity limited and promoted by the member of the group. The question here is what type of identity these youth organizations activate. One indicator for this is the use of the concept of the Saami as a community within the borders of the state or a transnational community of one nation whose members live in different states. The questions here are how do the organizations define the group their claim to represent? Do they claim to represent the interests of all Saami youth or the Saami youth within the borders of the state they are position in?

1.3.2 Organizing as a Nation

Organizing as a nation refers to the nations ability to transform the collective identity to an organizational structure with the capacity to govern and exercise self-determination as a nation. The organizational structure of the indigenous nation has to be able to respond to the needs of the nation, make and implement decisions on behalf of the nation, create consensus and unity within

the nation, and sustain productive relationships with others.⁴⁰ In order to exist and pursue political goals as one nation, the segments of a transnational people have to find a way to cooperate with one another and create a common decision-making process across borders. For Cornell, the way a nation is organized is particularly important, because it shows that boundaries of a nation in terms of membership and jurisdiction, it structures the nation, and it defines the relationship between the nation and others.⁴¹ The official organizational structure of a nation is often not decided by the nation itself, but by the central government the nation or segments of the nation are situated in. In some cases, the organizational structure separates the segments of the nation into individual self-governing entities which may or may not cooperate on the transnational level. In other cases, the segments of the nation emphasize their desire to create a common governance structure. This case of the Saami, both can be observed and will further develop in the future.

The national Saami Parliament are neither the only representative of Saami interests, nor the only forum for claim-making and participation. Koutouki and Farget's research concludes that the institutionalized forum of participation, the Saami Parliament, exist next to independent non-governmental organizations and judicial activism. A multitude of institutional and emerging forums offer opportunities for participating and contesting the decision-making process.⁴² Civil society organizations such as Saami Youth organization are actively involved in the decision-making process related to the Saami directly through participation in political forums such as the

⁴⁰ Ibid., 15–16.

⁴¹ Ibid., 12.

⁴² Koutoiki and Farget, "Contemporary Regulation of Public Policy Participation of the Saami and Roma: A Truncated Process."

Youth Council of the Saami Parliaments. Additionally, Saami youth organizations can freely choose to also cooperate with other actors to provide services to their members and to lobby for common concerns. Looking at the way these organizations interact with others provides us with an insight into the patterns of interactions and alliances of apart from the official organizational structure. This provides information on the types of cooperation (joint events, joint political statement, political actions), levels of cooperation (local, national, transnational, international), and types of actors they ally themselves with or make claims against (centralized government, Saami Parliaments, non-governmental actors). Moreover, this gives an indication of who they direct the claims against and who do they hold responsible for the change they would like to see. The key questions here are: With what type of actors do Saami youth organizations cooperate with? Who do they address with their claim?

1.3.3 Acting as a Nation

In order to act as a nation, a nation has to be organized as such to be able to take decisions on joint goals and to have the capacity to achieve those goals. For Cornell, the most important aspects of acting as a nation involve the acceptance of responsibility, the capacity to deliver outcomes, the ability to provide services, and to productively engage with others on behalf of the nation. Services provided by the nation to its members such as can include cultural revitalization, education, resource management, representation, education, or even a justice system.⁴³ As indigenous nations are part of states, it is not only up to the nation to actively provide all services as many services are provided and enforced by the state.

⁴³ Cornell, "Processes of Native Nationhood," 17.

As civil society organization, Saami youth organizations consist of, represent and advocate for the Saami youth. They provide a multitude of services to young Saami and encourage young people to engage with their Saami identity. The services provided should be seen as part of the nation-building process as they are actions that allow the organizations to achieve their goals and the goals of the segment of the nations they claim to represent. Services that the youth organizations provide include meeting spaces, educational events such as lectures or language courses, sports or cultural events as well as raising awareness of issues of importance to the group. The goals of Saami youth organizations include the empowering young Saami, revitalization of Saami culture and promotion of the rights and interests of the Saami youth. The key aspect here is who has access to the services provided by the organizations. If an organization only provides services to young Saami who are members of the organization or from their national community, the groups it claims to represent is effectively limited. In order to be considered part of a broader, transnational setting, the organizations would have to be able to provide some services to Saami from other countries or encourage their member to take advantage of services provided by others. To understand for whom, the organization takes (partial) responsibility and acts on behalf of, the following three questions will be answered: Do these organizations provide services only to member of the organization, to young Saami in their country or to all young Saami? Do they raise awareness of the interests of Saami within their country or also of Saami in the other countries? Whose interests do they raise awareness of?

2. Pan-Saami Nationhood: A Historical Continuity or a Modern Invention?

To understand the modern Pan-Saami movement and the Saami nation, one has to understand the process of partition, fragmentation, and unification. The Saami are a diverse people with linguistic, economic and cultural differences between groups and individuals which open up questions about the legitimacy of transnational claims. Many scholars have questioned the feelings of belong and unity of the Saami throughout history and characterize the Pan-Saami movement as an entirely new phenomenon. In the following, it is shortly outlined how the geopolitical changes affected fragmented and partitioned the Saami as a group and how the modern Pan-Saami movement started to organize to overcome the fragmentation of the polity. It shows how the Saami adopted and reorganized to survive, be recognized and maintain their identity as one people.

2.1 Pre-Colonial Saami

Saami have been present in Sapmi⁴⁴, a territory that is now part of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, for around 10.000 years and are considered the first inhabitants of this area. Their culture, way of life and livelihood is closely connected to the territory they traditionally inhabited and

⁴⁴ The term Sapmi refers to the traditional territory of the Saami spanning from Central Norway, through the north of Sweden and Finland to the Kola region of Russia. This territory does not have clearly defined borders or a special status, but it does have a special significance as point of reference for Saami within and outside of it. Sapmi is used throughout the thesis to refer to this territory, because it is used by the Saami themselves and it is simpler to use than the long explanation of the territory.

relied on the ability to move freely and use land across the vast region. Between the 9th and the 12th century, the people and states in the south started to slowly advance and to trade with the Saami. The Saami were traditionally organized in a system of small, self-sufficient units called Siida that cooperated through an assembly consisting of one member of each family. The assembly regulated hunting and fishing rights among the Siida, distributed the surplus among the poor, and acted as a judicial authority⁴⁵. The Saami can be understood as a nation, as the different siida units of the Saami were part of a broader economic, social and political structure.

Like other indigenous peoples, the Saami were regarded as non-self-governing and their territory was considered terra nullius.⁴⁶ Sweden-Finland, Denmark-Norway and Russia fought over Sapmi as common and uncultivated territory, and tried to claim authority over the territory and the people with missionaries and taxation in the 12th century. Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland converted the Saami to Christianity through missionaries, encouraged settlers to move to the Saami territory, and started to collect taxes from the Saami. The increasing and often overlapping taxation forced the Saami to specialize their livelihoods into fishing, agriculture, and reindeer herding to meet the new demands which caused division within the Saami society.⁴⁷⁴⁸ As illustrated on the map, the Saami fragmented into Southern Saami, Lulea Saami, Northern Saami, and Eastern Saami with a variation of the Saami language and dialects and continued to exist across state borders.

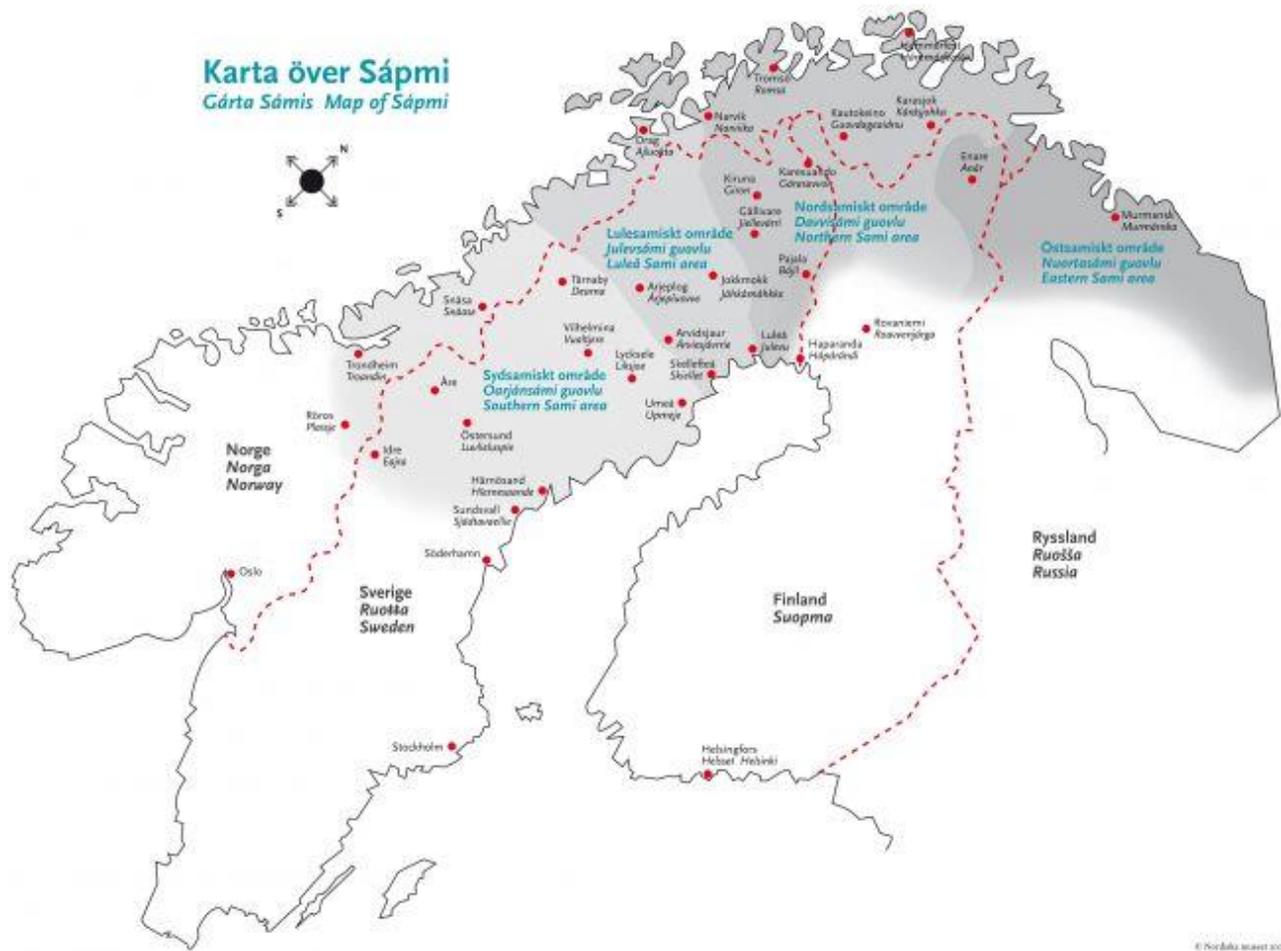
⁴⁵ Dixon and Scheurell, *Social Welfare with Indigenous Peoples*.

⁴⁶ Oskal, "Political Inclusion of the Saami as Indigenous People in Norway," 236.

⁴⁷ Dixon and Scheurell, *Social Welfare with Indigenous Peoples*.

⁴⁸ Lantto, "Borders, Citizenship and Change," 545.

Map of Sapmi⁴⁹



2.2 Dividing the Saami

The Saami nation and the territory it inhabited was progressively divided by different international borders which interfered with the life of the Saami to varying degrees. In 1751, the first border agreement was signed between Denmark-Norway and Sweden-Finland which divided the the territory and integrated it into the two different states. With the border agreement, the Lapp Codicil

⁴⁹ Nordiska Museet, "Sapmi. On Being Sami in Sweden."

was signed through which Saami receive the right to choose and change their citizenship, use land on both sides of the border, move freely across the border, and continue to conduct cross border reindeer herding, fishing and trade.⁵⁰ Through a series of great wars, including the Napoleonic wars, which induced the political and territorial reorganization of Scandinavia and the states established on it. The Union between Norway and Denmark broke up, Norway was forced into a Union with Sweden, and Sweden lost Finland to Russia. Along with the geopolitical changes, Saami territory, the Saami were incorporated into the territory of different states, and the social organizational structure was altered.⁵¹ Despite the reorganization and reallocation of the territory they inhabited, the Saami maintained freedom of movement, political neutrality and political autonomy within and across states, and maintained special rights to their livelihoods until 1850s. As such, the Saami were able to exist as a distinct group within the state.

This situation changed as closed borders were established, all states entered a period of centralization, and promoted national unity through nationalism. The borders were closed between Russia and Norway in 1826, between Norway and Finland in 1856, between Sweden and Finland in 1889, and between Finland and Russia in 1917. Instead of respecting the autonomy of Saami as a nation within the nation, the new border agreements re-divided the territory and for the first time partitioned the Saami people. The Saami became citizens of different states and lost most of their border crossing privileges.⁵² All in all, the Saami were allowed to exist parallel to the core society

⁵⁰ Lantto, “Borders, Citizenship and Change.”

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 545–447.

⁵² Lantto, “Borders, Citizenship and Change.”

with special legal protects as a people until the borders between the states were closed and new citizenship regimes were introduced.

2.3 Assimilating the Saami

As tensions between the settlers who were sent to cultivate the North and Saami populations increase, the special status of the Saami within and between the states became problematic. By the 1860s, the Nordic states increased colonization efforts and introduced citizenship regimes to assimilate the Saami into the political processes and the core society of the state.⁵³ Norway and Finland promoted agriculture as proper industry in the North, while Sweden established tight control over the Reindeer industry. In Sweden, Saami were defined as nomadic reindeer herders who were not allowed to settle or cultivate or own land. Saami children received a basic education in nomadic schools. The non-reindeer herders were seen as obsolete to the progress of the state and were assimilate to their Swedish majority.⁵⁴ In Norway a policy of Norwegianization aimed to assimilate all Saami into the Norwegian society, denied the Saami to learn or speak their native language in school, sent students to boarding schools and prevented anyone who did not speak Norwegian from owning land. Finland did neither officially protect, nor discriminate the Saami, but the Saami were pressured to assimilate to the majority society.⁵⁵ As a result, the Saami and their territory were integrated into different states, the Saami were forced to assimilate into

⁵³ Lantto, “Borders, Citizenship and Change.”

⁵⁴ Lantto and Mörkenstam, “Sami Rights and Sami Challenges,” 29–32.

⁵⁵ Jernsletten, “The Development of a Saami Elite in Norden,” 147–148.

different societies, and the Saami were heavily discriminated against and their culture looked down on.⁵⁶ The Saami lost their freedom of movement, several Saami languages went extinct, many Saami had to abandon their traditional way of life and adapt to the core society. The consequences of the assimilationist policies such as a negative image or the lack of knowledge of Saami culture, lack of Saami language skills among Saami, or the political division between reindeer herders and non-reindeer herding Saami are still present today.

2.4 Saami Mobilization and the Pan-Saami Movement

The modern Saami mobilization started in the beginning of the 20th century with the establishment of local and later national Saami interest groups during the assimilationist period. The first Saami conference was organized in Norway in 1917 which included Saami from Sweden and later become the Saami national day. While this conference was followed by three conferences in Norway (1921) and Sweden (1918 and 1937), the idea of an area designated to the Saami was not discussed until the 1950s.⁵⁷ The political mobilization of the Saami as one people spread across four countries based on their common culture, history, heritage, way of life and traditions started in the 1960s. The Saami Council was founded as an independent transnational NGO which started to enhance and maintain the unity of the Saami, develop a common policy strategy, and sent representatives to give voice to the Saami in international organizations and working groups. This organization created a platform to address Saami issues, to revitalize Saami culture, and to

⁵⁶ Dixon and Scheurell, *Social Welfare with Indigenous Peoples*.

⁵⁷ Jernsletten, "The Development of a Saami Elite in Norden," 149–152.

advocate for for Saami rights and interests.⁵⁸ With the growth of the global indigenous movement, the Saami movement adopted the rhetoric of indigenous rights and the Saami Council became part of international indigenous organization such as the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples and gained permanent status in other UN organizations.⁵⁹ The early Saami conferences as well as the Saami Council played an important role in the political mobilization and cultural revitalization of a Pan-Saami nation. They framed and represented the Saami as one indigenous people with with common symbols such as ta national day, a flag, and common identity as a distinct people among the Saami.

By the 1990s, the Nordic states implemented their own model of democratically elected, national based institutions for indigenous self-governance and indigenous representation, namely the Saami parliaments. These parliaments are generally regarded as role models for the incorporation of indigenous self-governance into the state structure, yet the efficiency and functionality of the parliaments vary among the Nordic countries.⁶⁰⁶¹ The institutionalization of the Saami Parliaments changed the relationship between the Saami and the state, and enhanced the influence and recognition of Saami claims within the states. In addition to the Saami Parliaments, joint political

⁵⁸ Jernsletten, “The Development of a Saami Elite in Norden.”

⁵⁹ Heininen, “The Saami as Pan-National Actor.”

⁶⁰ Stepien, Petretei, and Koivurova, “Sami Parliaments as the Institutionalization of Indigenous Self-Determination and Autonomy? Legal Framework and Practice.”

⁶¹ Different understanding of the Saami Parliaments, their role within the state, and their limitations exist within the existing literature. For a detailed discussion of the Saami Parliaments see: Josefsen, *The Saami and the National Parliaments.*; Stepien, Petretei, and Koivurova, “Sami Parliaments as the Institutionalization of Indigenous Self-Determination and Autonomy? Legal Framework and Practice.”; Semb, “Sami Self-Determination in the Making?”; Broderstad, “Political Autonomy and Integration of Authority.”

bodies, the Saami Parliamentary Council and the Saami Parliamentary Conference, are funded and facilitated by the Nordic states to enhance the cooperation between the Saami parliaments.⁶² As a result, the three Saami parliaments are elected by the Saami within each state to cooperate with the different government on behalf of the Saami. This can be seen as both a step towards the goal of a unified Saami nation and a step away from collective self-determination across borders and the existence of the Saami as one nation unaffected by the borders of the states.

⁶² Stepien, “Pan-Saami Cooperation: Towards a Trans-Border Polity.”

3. Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design used in this thesis, explains and reflects on the methodological choices and sources, highlight how data was collected and analyzed, and it reflects on the challenges of the research and limitations of this research. This thesis aims to understand to what extent indigenous civil society organizations located in one state participate in the transnational indigenous nation-building process by looking at the case of Saami youth organizations. To do so, a qualitative comparative case study of the claim making of Saami youth organizations is conducted. Data on whom the organizations claim to represent, whom, how they interact with other political actors, who their claims are directed against, and who these organizations provide services to. Data on this is collected and analyzed through both content and discourse analysis of textual documents published by organizations as well as interviews with representatives of organizations.

3.1 The Research Design

This research uses a comparative qualitative and predominantly inductive approach to gain an understanding of claim-making of civil society organization that part of a transnational polity and a national self-governance structure. The benefit of the inductive approach is the ability to formulate generalizable assumptions based on the findings in one case study which can provide explanations of broader phenomena.⁶³ As such, the assumptions on claim-making of the Saami

⁶³ Babb, *Empirical Political Analysis*.

organization derived from the study of specific Saami organization are assumed to form hypothesis that can be test in the broader Saami civil society sector and give a tentative explanation of the relationship between a national organizational structure of indigenous nations and the transnational nation-building. To answer the research question and the sub-questions developed in the previous chapter (section 1.3), data was collected through two qualitative methods. The sources were used to increase the generalizability and validity of the findings: texts and documents such as mission statements, programs and action plans published by organizations and semi-structured interviews with a small number of representatives from different Saami youth organizations.

A qualitative textual analysis is conducted to collect data on the goals, claims, strategies, actions, and relationships of Saami civil society organization, to provide a window into the organizations participation in the nation-building process. By looking at the wordings and content of documents published by the organizations, information is gathered on the identity the organizations promote, the way the organizations position themselves within the broader society, and the actions these organizations take to achieve their claims. This answers the questions of who organizations want to represent, what they want to achieve, to what extent they are cooperation with other organization across borders, who they address with their claims, how they aim to make their claims heard, and if they are part of a segment of the Saami youth or the Saami as a whole. The benefit of this method is that it allows the researcher to uncover hidden meaning of texts.⁶⁴ In addition to the textual analysis, interviews with long term and senior members of Saami youth organizations were conducted. These provide an understanding of views, perceptions and understanding of the topic

⁶⁴ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 500.

that would have not been available in any other form, and give an additional and personalized understanding of Saami civil society organizations. The benefits on interviews, or how Babb defines them “elite interviews”, is the in-depth understanding of anticipated and not anticipated aspects of a specific phenomenon based on the knowledge and experiences of “elites”.⁶⁵ These interviews help us to understand the motivations of individuals to become active in a Saami organization, their personal understanding of transnational unity and national divisions of the Saami and their ideas about transnational governmental and non-governmental cooperation.

The combination of both approaches offers a more holistic and in-depth understanding of the issues, compared to simply relying on interviews or published documents.⁶⁶ Due to the qualitative approach, this case study can be replicated, but is unlikely to achieve same results in settings that are too different in terms of legal-political circumstances. What it lacks in external validity and generalizability, it makes up for in detailed understanding of claim-making of Saami Youth Organization. The assumption formulated based on the findings of this research might be generalizable to very similar legal-political situations like the wider Saami population, and add to the existing pool of ideas and theories of transnational people.

⁶⁵ Babb, *Empirical Political Analysis*, 301.

⁶⁶ Bryman, *Social Research Methods*; Babb, *Empirical Political Analysis*.

3.2 Sources and Sampling

3.2.1 Textual documents

Data was collected in form of textual documents published by Saami organizations and analyzed through content and discourse analysis. To understand the claim-making of the organizations as propagated by the organizations', documents, statements, and action plans by the organization are an excellent source of information. In the selection of documents published by organizations, the selection was limited to organizations that maintain an online presence, identify as Saami Youth organizations, and have been continuously active since 2010. Based on these criteria, one organization was selected per country. The organizations selected were homogenous in identification as "Saami organization", involvement in transnational activities, and claims to represent the interest of the Saami, but heterogeneous in regard to size, location, and their relationship to the Saami Parliament to ensure generalizable results. The following three Saami Youth organizations were selected, because they fit the criteria outlined above and are the most prominent Saami Youth organization in each country:

Suoma Sami Nuorat (Finnish Saami Youth) defines itself as a Saami youth advocacy group since its establishment in 1991 in Utsjoki in northern Finland. This organization pursues a political agenda and raises awareness of indigenous rights, but it is not associated with the Finnish Saami Parliament.⁶⁷ The organization is led by a board of directors that is democratically

⁶⁷ There are no political Saami Parties in Finland as individuals and not parties run in the Finnish Saami Parliament elections.

elected by its members at the annual meeting. According to their website, the organization has about 130 members and is financed by the central government, membership fees and project related grants. It is dedicated to strengthening the Saami identity of young Saami, promoting a positive image of the Saami culture, fostering Saami languages and providing a meeting point for young Saami. This is done through the cultural, sports, and educational events for all Saami, not just from Finland. The organization maintains a website as well as social media presences on Facebook and twitter where it frequently published events, news, and statements in Finnish, English and two Saami languages.⁶⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat appears to be the only Saami organization run by and dedicated to Saami Youth in Finland, and it is frequently mentioned by other Saami youth organizations as well as the local and national news in Finland.

Saminuorra⁶⁹ (Saami Youth) is the oldest and biggest Saami youth organization established in 1963. Since the 1980s, it is an independent and partially political organization run by and for all Saami youth. As such, the organization wants to strengthen a positive Saami identity, promote the opportunities, interests and rights of young Saami, and create an inclusive platform for young Saami. The organization is run by an annually democratically elected board and is subdivided into five regional chapters throughout Sweden that organize meetings and events for local Saami youth. Next to cultural, political and educational events, this organization also runs specific long term and award winning projects on Saami mental health, Saami LGBT community, a Saami Youth magazine (now independent), and an annual concert. This organization published

⁶⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat, “Tietoa SSN:Sta.” accessed: May 20th 2016. <http://www.ssn.fi/>

⁶⁹ It would have been extremely interesting to interview a member of Saminuorra for this research, but the time of the research coincided with the annual meeting and it was impossible to reach anyone by phone or e-mail for weeks.

information about events, Saami youth issues, and ongoing projects on its website and social media presences in three Saami languages and in Swedish.⁷⁰ Unlike the other Saami youth organization, Sáminuorra is involved in the Swedish Saami Parliament as initiator and participant in the Parliament's Youth Council. No information on its funding or number of members are available, but the range of activities and projects organized by the organization indicate a sizable number of members.

Noereh! (Youth) defines itself as a politically neutral Saami youth organization on the Norwegian part of Sapmi. Established in 2009, it is the youngest of all Saami youth organizations and it aims to provide a politically neutral and nation wide alternative for Saami youth.⁷¹ The organization is annually funded by the Norwegian Saami Parliament with 125000 NOK, but it is otherwise not involved with the Saami Parliament. It maintains a website as well as social media presence in one Saami language as well as Norwegian. Projects and events organize by this organization are mostly focused on cultural revitalization and cultural mobilization.

All three Saami Parliaments have established Youth Councils that act as watchdog organization, represent the interests of the youth and aim to include young people in the political decision making. While it would have been interesting to review the actions and interaction of these

⁷⁰ Saminuorra, "Saminuorra. För Och Med Samisk Ungdom." Accessed: May 25th 2016. <http://www.saminuorra.org/>

⁷¹ Norway has an extensive party system and most bigger parties such as the NSR (Norske Samers Riksforbund) or NBR (Norwegian Reindeer Herder's Association) also have a youth wing. According to a member of Noereh, the organization sees itself as a politically neutral and party independent alternative to those youth organizations. (Interview 3)

Youth Committees, they do not maintain their own web presence and do not publish enough information about their work. For the same reasons, the youth wings of parties were excluded from the selection.

The key criteria for the selection of documents was relevant to broader research topic and published on the organizations Facebook page, blog or website between January 2013 and May 2016. The following types of documents were selected: mission statements; the work and history of the organization; assembly announcements; statements made by the organizations; articles and opinion pieces written by the organizations; announcement and reports about cultural, educational and political events organized and promoted by the organizations; news reports shared by the organizations; and interviews with national news papers. The main obstacle for the researcher here is the language barrier as the websites and Facebook pages provide information in one or more Saami languages as well as the national language (Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish), but rarely in English. Only documents published in Norwegian, Swedish, English or Finnish were selected and documents published in a Saami language were left aside, due to the lack of Saami language skills.

When analyzing the data collected from the organizations' online presences (Facebook Pages and the organizations' website), the following key themes were searched for: mentioning of events; projects; cooperation with other organizations; meetings between members of the organization with others; interaction between the organization and other organizations within and across the national borders; the situation of and issues related to Saami youth within the borders and on the other side of the border; political and cultural identity.

3.2.2 Interview Sampling

The initial idea was to strategically chose a sample that represent and reflect the variety of Saami Youth organizations and conduct interviews in person with members of Saami organizations. Due to the lack of positive responses to interview requests via e-mail and phone, this approach changed significantly. To overcome this difficulty, the initial approach was changed to a convenience sample where interview candidates were selected through the snowball sampling. This method of sampling is common in qualitative research despite concerns about generalizability of the findings. Through snowball sampling, the issue of non-response and inaccessibility was overcome and interesting understanding of claim-making in a national setting were achieved ⁷². The selection criteria for interviews remained the same: self-identification as Saami, and continuous activities and affiliation with a youth organization working on Saami issues. The three interviewees are originally from the Norwegian side of Sapmi, but moved to Oslo for their education. Interviewee 1 is a senior member of the youth wing of a political party. Interviewee 2 is an environmental activist active in an environmental youth organization as well as a Saami youth organization. Interviewee 3 is a senior member of a Saami youth organization and a member of a political Saami Youth organization. All interviews were rather flexible and semi-structured consisting of a set of standard questions on the interviews background, general views and understanding of “Saaminess” and view on the Saami parliament and a possibility of transnational unified Saami parliaments⁷³. A set of additional themes and topics were more specific and modified to the individuals’

⁷² Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 183.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 438–439.

experiences and activities within the Saami organizations, their views on impact of these organizations, most important claims, and channels of influence used to make claims heard. Through the interviews, clarification questions and additional questions were asked, the interviews were encouraged to go off topic, and enough flexibility was ensured to replace questions and topics irrelevant to interviews experience with more interesting questions. All interviews were conducted in English with the promise of anonymity and confidentiality. A total of three interviews was carried out with leaders of Saami youth organization situated in Norway. The first interview was conducted in person in Oslo in the first week of May and lasted 60 min. The other two interviews were organized as in person interview for the same week in Oslo, but they had to be rescheduled due to sudden changes in the participants' travel schedules. These interviews were conducted via skype in the following week and lasted 40 min and 60 min. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. The data was color coded and analyzed for themes and key terms that were developed during the textual analysis. The goal here was to find individual perceptions that contradict, expand or confirm the information extracted through the textual analysis. Additionally, the interviews provide an insight into broader issues not addressed by documents published by the organizations. This includes views on the prospect of unified Saami governance, the interactions between the organizations with the Saami Parliaments, and views on the cultural and political unity of the Saami.

3.3 Limitations

As any research, this research has limitations due to its narrow focus on a small number of Saami youth organizations. Particularly the number of interview used in this thesis limit the

generalizability of the results. Due to the lack of interviewees from Sweden and Finland, interviews were only conducted with a small number of representatives of youth organizations in Norway. Thereby, the data collected from the interviews is not comparable between countries. The in-depth analysis of these organizations provide an in depth understanding of the action, image and networks of these organizations and provides an evaluation of the work of these organizations. The findings collected of the data provide generalizable results and enhance the knowledge on the claim-making of these organization within the broader nation-building process. It does not give a complete or comprehensive overview of all civil society organizations within the Saami nation, nor does it offer a comprehensive analysis of the youth organizations as such. It can not provide conclusive results on the participation of other actors in the transnational nations-building process opposed to the integration into the national segment of the nation. However, it does give an indication of how organizations cooperate and interact within one another within and across borders. The study can be reproduced in other partitioned indigenous peoples which is necessary to test the validity of the conclusions drawn form this small case study in other settings. This would generate more information on the similarities and particularities of different models of collective identity formation and maintenance as well as organizational patterns within and across border.

4. Analysis

This Chapter provides a comparative analysis of the activities of the youth organization and it discusses the findings of the research, answers the research question and sub-questions raised in Chapter 1 (section 1.3). Saami youth organizations play an important role in the overall nation-building process as they provide a space for young Saami to engage with their “Saaminess” and mobilize young Saami. To answer the research question of to what extent these Saami youth organizations are part of the national or transnational nation-building process, the results are organized in three broader categories. Firstly, the organizations create and communicate a certain type of Saami identity and promote this identity among its members. Here, the use of Saami symbols and the term Saami is analyzed and compared. This gives an indicator to what extent they engage with the Pan-Saami movement or a Saami identity within the borders of the state they are located in. Secondly, the analysis looks at the way the organizations collaborate and engage with other actors. Here, it is outlined whom these organizations collaborate with to achieve their goals, how they position themselves within the broader claim-making structure, and whom they address with their claims. It is summarized to what extent these organizations interact with others within the borders of the state and across the borders of the states. Thirdly, the Saami youth organizations take actions to promote their goals and interests they claim to represent. These actions include sharing and raising awareness of the issues they are interested in, the participation in grassroots protest, and the facilitation of events. It is discussed whether these actions are contained within the borders of the state or used to act jointly beyond borders.

4.1 Collective identity

All three organizations aim to strengthen the Saami identity, increase contact between the young Saami, and contribute to a positive sense of awareness of Saami culture. As such, they contribute to a positive Saami self-understanding and motivate young people to identify as members of the Saami community. In all three mission statements, the term “Saami Youth⁷⁴” is used to define the target group of the organizations, but they further narrow it down in different way. The Norwegian and Swedish youth organizations use the term “Saami youth” without qualifiers or reference to a certain location, region or country, and emphasize that the organization is open to all Saami youth.⁷⁵ While Saminuorra declares to work inside and outside of Sapmi, Noereh locates itself to the Norwegian side of Sapmi without clearly limiting itself to this region.⁷⁶ Only the Finnish Saami youth organization takes it further and clarifies that their primary target group are Saami in Finland.⁷⁷

The interviews with representatives from Norway showed a similarly undifferentiated view of the Saami. All three interviewees emphasized that the Saami are one people whose cultural unity is uninterrupted by state borders. They all state to feel a sense of community when speaking to Saami

⁷⁴ Samisk ungdom in Norwegian, samiska ungdomar in Swedish, and saamelaisnuoret in Finnish

⁷⁵ Noereh, “Noereh. Om Noereh.”, accessed May 21st 2016, <https://noereh.wordpress.com/about/>

⁷⁶ Saminuorra, “Saminuorra. För Och Med Samisk Ungdom.”, accessed May 25th 2016, <http://www.saminuorra.org/>.

⁷⁷ Suoma Sami Nuorat, “Tietoa SSN:Sta.”, accessed May 21st 2016, <http://www.ssn.fi/>.

from other countries in a Saami language.⁷⁸ Accordingly, the narrative of a collective transnational people is present in mind of the representatives of the organizations and Saami culture is promoted as one common culture by the organizations. None of the organizations specifically excludes any young Saami from their target group or mentioned a country specific idea of Saami identity.

Symbols and the use of symbols are important tools to unite the members of a nation and to communicate the vision of the nation to others. Some of the symbols used by Saami youth organization are exclusive to the organizations such as Noereh's own Yoik (type of Saami song). Other symbols are created, celebrated and strategically used to communicate their belonging to the Saami nation. The most obvious example is the use of symbols common to all Saami such as the Saami flag, Saami languages, Saami national day, or the Saami national dress. All organizations post pictures of their members in national costumes at meetings, maintain their web presence in at least one Saami language (in addition to the state language)⁷⁹⁸⁰, celebrate the national day, use the Saami flag, and refrain from using term such as Finnish/Swedish/Norwegian Saami. Additionally, one organization tries to establish new holidays and new ways to celebrate old holidays. As such, it invented Gakti⁸¹ day in 2014 and lobbies to make the National Saami Day a holiday for Saami

⁷⁸ Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 3.

⁷⁹ Noereh, "Noereh's Facebook Page.", accessed May 22nd, <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1121543734534382>.

⁸⁰ Suoma Sami Nuorat and Noereh use the most popular Saami language, Northern Saami, as their main Saami language. Saminuorra uses Lula Saami, and Southern Saami in addition to Northern Saami.

⁸¹ Gakti is the traditional costume or the traditional type of clothing of the Saami. The Gakti used to be everyday clothing of all Saami groups with design differing between communities. These costumes are handmade for each individual and include indicators about the personal story of the individual such as marital status, place of origin, native language or religious affiliation. Today,

in all three Nordic Countries. The idea behind Gakti day is the re-establish traditional Saami dress as everyday clothing. All Saami around the world are encouraged to wear their “Gakti” or other Saami clothing items to school or to work that day, and share pictures to win prizes.⁸² After its third year, Gakti day is already celebrated by individuals all over Sapmi and promoted by other Saami organizations.⁸³ It represents a tool to integrate Saami symbols into everyday life and to strengthen a collective Saami identity.

In summary, all organizations use the existing symbols of the Pan-Saami movement, create new symbols to express a collective identity, and refer to all young Saami in their mission statement. The organizations do neither openly advocate a state specific understanding of Saami identity, nor specifically use the Saami as one people. As such, they neither deny nor confirm a collective Saami identity in their statements. The interviewees, however, regard the Saami as one people with a common cultural identity and a sense of kinship. The organization all claim to work for and with all young Saami, one with a particular focus of the Saami in Finland. All three organization subscribe to the rhetoric of one Saami people, refrain from using terms qualifiers or clear definitions of who is Saami. From this alone, it is difficult to say who these organizations claim to represent and if young Saami from other countries are included in this claims. However, it is

these costumes are still used by young and old Saami at celebrations, high holidays, conferences, cultural happenings or political events. (Interview 3)

⁸² Noereh’s Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/880132495342175>

⁸³ Suoma Sami Nuorat’s Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/552108164929418>

apparent that all organizations use the symbols of the transnational Saami nation and use the terms Saami and Saami youth in a broader sense.

4.2 Claim Making and Cooperation of Youth Organizations

Juxtaposed to the Pan-Saami symbols and references to cultural unity used in the mission statement, the Saami youth organizations are firmly integrated into a state specific claim making structure on the national, transnational and international level. All the organizations address the central government of the state they are located in with the claim they make of young Saami. Saminuorra addresses and calls out the Swedish state on the lack of funding for Saami schools⁸⁴, the need for a Saami health center⁸⁵, discrimination of Saami in the legal system⁸⁶, and mining in Swedish Sapmi.⁸⁷ Suoma Sami Nuorat heavily criticizes the decisions made by the central government of Finland, compares the Saami rights situation in Finland to other countries around the world, and asks the international community to put pressure on the Finnish state on their

⁸⁴ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1054080684664880&id=183484001724557

⁸⁵ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1016190151787267&id=183484001724557

⁸⁶ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=970856239653992&id=183484001724557

⁸⁷ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1054080684664880&id=183484001724557

behalf.⁸⁸⁸⁹ Additionally, both organizations occasionally mention the other Nordic states as good or bad example in comparison to their own central government. For example, Saminuorra point at the Norwegian Saami health care centers as to be copied by Sweden as a good practice, at Norway's "oil-stained" environmental policies as an area where Norway could rise above Sweden policy wise, or at Finland leading role in Saami education. Noereh does not only address the Norwegian government with its claims, but it calls out non-governmental actors such as companies to change their actions directly.⁹⁰ No instance was found of an organization asking for the support from other Nordic countries to put pressure on the government central government. While the claim making of all three organizations is state-centric, only Noereh appears to be the only organization that does not addresses the state exclusively.

4.2.1 Cooperation within the States

All three organizations largely focus on cooperating with governmental and non-governmental actors within the border of the state, yet they differ in types of actors with ally themselves with. The Saami Parliaments provide a channel for direct participation and representation in the political processes in each country, but not all organization choose to cooperate with the Saami Parliaments or other governmental organizations. Young Saami have to opportunity to participate in the

⁸⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/564101397063428>

⁸⁹ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/560417037431864>

⁹⁰ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1123771297644959>.

political process of the Saami Parliament through membership in Saami parties, lobbying, as well as the Saami Youth Councils of the Saami parliaments.⁹¹

Out of the three organizations analyzed, only Saminuorra chooses to take seats in the Youth Council of the Swedish Saami Parliament⁹², participate in meetings of the Swedish Saami Parliament, and take part in a Saami Council conference.⁹³ All three Saami youth organization receive funding from the national Saami Parliaments and neither one of them criticize the decisions or actions of the Saami Parliament.⁹⁴ Next to their actives within the Saami Parliament, Saminuorra frequently mentions meetings with member of the central government where the organization lobbies for its interests⁹⁵, and takes part in meeting with Swedish and Swedish-Saami political parties⁹⁷. Additionally, the organization took office in committees of the Nordic Council of

⁹¹ None of the organization used in this research is part of a political party or openly affiliated with a Saami Party. It is also important that the Saami Parliaments have very different policies. In Norway, Saami and non-Saami parties are allowed to run for the Saami Parliament, Sweden only accepts Saami parties, and Finland only allows the nomination of individual.

⁹² Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 26th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1045436215529327&id=183484001724557&substory_index=0

⁹³ Staffansson, "Saminuorra's Blogg: Sami Raddis Konferans I Murmansk."

⁹⁴ Norwegian Saami Assiciation, "Noereh På Fast Post!"

⁹⁵ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1034669743272641&id=183484001724557

⁹⁶ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=968308026575480&id=183484001724557&substory_index=0

⁹⁷ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=890464097693207&id=183484001724557

Ministers⁹⁸, an official inter-governmental body of the Nordic countries. As such, the organization positions itself within the governmental structure and seeks support for their claims directly from members of the central government of Sweden and the Swedish Saami Parliament in person.

Situated in the country with the biggest Saami population, Noereh is only one of about four Saami youth organization and sets itself apart from these organizations as politically neutral. The organization does not mention any type of cooperation or meeting between representatives of Noereh and any type of political actors, yet it takes pride in being recognized by them⁹⁹. Nonetheless, it often shares the opinion pieces written by Saminuorra, reminds young Saami of the importance of voting, congratulates those, and raises awareness of new initiatives of the Saami Parliament and the Youth Council.¹⁰⁰¹⁰¹ When asked about the organizations political activities in the interview, a representative of Noereh states that the organization itself is apolitical, many of its members are active in the biggest political Saami party in Norway. To separate those two groups, the organization is very careful who they cooperate with.¹⁰² As a result, Noereh cooperated with non-profit Saami organizations¹⁰³, joined forces with national youth and environmental groups¹⁰⁴,

⁹⁹Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/10202526509996257>

¹⁰⁰ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/10152856332215476>

¹⁰¹ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/929177680437656>

¹⁰² Interview 1.

¹⁰³ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1121543734534382>

¹⁰⁴Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1077925855562837>

and share events organized by other youth organizations within Norway¹⁰⁵. The young organization is still a part of the political discourse without directly lobbying or cooperating with the Saami Parliaments or political parties. However, it consciously chooses to work together with Saami and non-Saami organization in Norway to achieve its goals.

Suoma Sami Nuorat often joins forces with other Saami organizations and environmental organizations in Finland to make their voices heard. This primarily includes joint petitions to different ministries and individuals of the government of Finland and the participation in public debates.¹⁰⁶¹⁰⁷ The organization shared an advertisement for the Youth Council of the Finnish Saami Parliament, but they did not publish the result or mention that someone from Suoma Sami Nuorat was elected.¹⁰⁸ Like Noereh, Suoma Sami Nuorat closely and continuously cooperates with a Saami and non-Saami non-governmental organization to facilitate their meeting, political campaigns, and events.¹⁰⁹¹¹⁰ Although the organization is not involved in the Finnish Saami

¹⁰⁵Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/10152296761351063>

¹⁰⁶ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016,
<https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/538618856278349:0>

¹⁰⁷ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016,
<https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/698884356918464>

¹⁰⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016,
<https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/593598407447060>

¹⁰⁹ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016,
<https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/538618856278349:0>

¹¹⁰ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016,
<https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/563194407154127>

Parliament¹¹¹, it cooperates with others and participates in the political processes through informal channels. Like the other two organizations, Suoma Sami Nuorat mainly cooperates and joins forces with Saami organization within the country opposed to from other countries.

4.2.2 Transnational cooperation

The three Saami youth organizations do neither formally cooperate with each other, nor report on meetings with other non-governmental Saami organizations outside of the border of the state there are situated in. However, the Saami youth organizations take part in international political forums such as the UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) and the young reindeer herders congress. In these forums, member of the individual organizations get a chance to represent the Saami youth from their state and engage with representatives from other Saami organizations, indigenous organizations, and governmental organizations. The UNPFII and its sub-committee are important meeting places for representatives of indigenous nations and every year, a large delegation of Saami from Finland, Norway and Sweden participates including representatives from Saami youth organization. Suoma Sami Nuorat is particularly vocal about their participation in the UNPFII, they send multiple representatives and blog about their activities in great detail. For them, it is a place to raise awareness of the interest of the Finnish Saami, discuss the interests of the Saami youth with different Saami representatives, receive guidance from senior members of Saami institutions such as the Saami Parliaments, the Saami Council or the Permanent Mission of

¹¹¹ The Finnish Saami Parliament is quite different from the other two parliaments as candidates and not parties run for office. As such, there are no Saami parties in Finland and only a small number of Saami interest groups and organizations.

Finland.¹¹² Additionally, it is a place for representative of the Saami youth organization cooperate with one another, speak about the issues in their respective countries in front of a big audience, and take office in sub-committees of the UNPIIF. While the Saami organization are send to this forum as representatives of the Saami within the state, Suoma Sami Nuorat insinuated their representatives also speak up for young Saami in Norway and Sweden who were underrepresented in that year.¹¹³

Gávnnadeapmi¹¹⁴ is a second example of a transnational forums of Saami youth organizations from more than one country. The conference is organized by Suoma Sami Nuorat, Saminuorra, and the Norwegian reindeer herders' association youth organization¹¹⁵ for young reindeer herders from all of Sapmi.¹¹⁶ During the multi-day event, young reindeer herders from all of Sapmi come together to learn about the challenges of other parts of the region, discuss strategies to overcome and prepare for those challenges, and discuss common issues such as indigenous rights, climate change, and exploitation.¹¹⁷ Consequently, this conference is a transnational event that strengthens

¹¹² Suoma Sami Nuorat, "PYSYVÄN FOORUMIN 14. ISTUNTO."

¹¹³ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/704907699649463>

¹¹⁴ Gávnnadeapmi is a conference for young reindeer herders in Barents region. The conference will work for empowering youth and will be a meeting place for indigenous youth to discuss current situation and how to prepare for the future. Topics of the conference are climate change, exploitations, indigenous peoples' rights, and how to make a difference.

¹¹⁵ Noereh does not participate in the event, because young reindeer herders from Norway were represented by a youth organization that consist of young reindeer herders.

¹¹⁶ Saminuorra's Facebook page, accessed May 30th, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=960423937363889&id=183484001724557&substory_index=0

¹¹⁷ Suoma Sami Nuorat, "GÁVNNADEAPMI 2 LÄHESTYY!"

the connections between Saami from different parts of the country, develop a common strategy, and advocate for their interests related to reindeer husbandry collectively. The participation in international political forums is particularly important, because it is the only place where organizations from all three parts of Sapmi come together and organize themselves under a common goal.

The way the three organizations interact with others show that the state borders continue to divide the Saami as a polity on the civil society level. Organizations make claims on behalf of the Saami youth within their state to the central government of the state. They interact with one another in international forums and the possibility of future cooperation between the organizations is mentioned, yet most of the networking of the Saami youth organization happens with different governmental and non-governmental actors within the state. Strengthening the position of Saami youth within the state is an important part of nation-building as it mobilizes and integrates the young generation into the cultural and political nation. The organizations, however, mainly interact and cooperate with actors within the state opposed to transnational actors. They contribute to a state centered advocacy structure and the construction of state specific networks that occasionally interact and co-operate on the transnational level. As a result, the organization are part of the national organizational structure than the Pan-Saami organizational structure.

4.3 Acting as a nation

The Saami youth organization provide services to the Saami youth in form of sharing news about Saami issues, informal meetings to connect with others, political initiatives, and events such as workshops and lectures to enhance their knowledge and skills related to Saami and indigenous issues. All three youth organizations aim to raise awareness of the issues of young Saami and stand up for the rights of Saami in general and Saami youth in particular. All Saami youth organizations regularly spread news on issues Saami of relevant to them via social media, write opinion pieces, and give interviews for national newspapers to share their views with the broader community. The analysis of the content published on these platforms between January 2013 and May 2016 showed that all three organizations voice common complain about the lack of funding or closure of Saami education, industrial development in Sapmi without Saami consent, and the lack of environmental protection in their respective state. Nonetheless, the organizations only raise awareness about the situation in their country and do not join forces for the most part.

4.3.1 Political mobilization

One way to raise awareness of the interests and achieve their goals is through grassroots initiatives. Political campaigns such as protests, petitions, and civil disobedience are strategies for political mobilization all three organizations are involved in. As mentioned above, Suoma Sami Nuorat frequently signs petitions to protest the violation of Saami rights in Finland together with other

Finnish Saami organizations.¹¹⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat also co-organized a protest against drilling in the arctic regions with Greenpeace Finland, and a protest against Finland's decision not to ratify the IL 169.¹¹⁹¹²⁰ Noereh organized a similar event in Oslo to protest the development in the North of Norway.¹²¹ Only one instances of political initiatives were found where Saami organizations from more than one country were involved. To stop the mineral extraction plans of a British company (Beowulf Mining) in Kallak (Gállok in Saami), Sweden, a civil disobedience campaign was organized and the site was occupied in 2013. The protest itself was supported by Noereh through visits to the site, promotion of the art projects related to the protests, and they organized a protest in Oslo in solidarity with the protest as well as a media campaign to stop the persecution of the activist involved in the protest.¹²²¹²³¹²⁴ Saminuorra participated in the Gallok protest in Stockholm, and co-organized a a protest art exhibition.¹²⁵¹²⁶ While all Saami youth organization

¹¹⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/588079817998919>

¹¹⁹ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/580153285458239>

¹²⁰ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/538698652937036>

¹²¹ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/628845173804241>

¹²² Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1054644394557650>

¹²³ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1077925855562837>

¹²⁴ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/628845173804243>

¹²⁵ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=573160286090258&id=183484001724557

¹²⁶ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed May 27th 2016. https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=550950968311190&id=183484001724557

have a set of common interests and use the same methods for political mobilization, only the Gallok protest attracted actions from more than one organization.

Furthermore, the participation in international political forums such as the UNPFII and Gávnadeapmi encourages the development of joint strategies and statements. For example, two joint statements were released by Suoma Same Nuorat, Saminuorra and the Saami Council on Finland's violations of the rights of Saami people in Finland, and the lack of mental healthcare services for young Saami reindeer herders across Finnish and Swedish Sapmi as part of the 2015 UNPFII.¹²⁷¹²⁸ A joint declaration is developed and signed by the participants of the young reindeer herder conference about the goals and claims of the young reindeer herders every year.¹²⁹

All three Saami youth organizations have organized their own political initiatives, promoted and participated in the initiatives of other organizations within the border of the state. Here it is noticeable that all three organizations chose similar types of political initiatives, namely protest in front of the Parliament and petitions to representatives of the central government. They also protest similar issues such as industrial development in Sapmi, yet the organizations only rarely participate in or promote political initiatives across the border. The Gallok protest against mining on the Swedish

¹²⁷ Suoma Sami Nuorat, "JOINT STATEMENT ON YOUTH, SELF-HARM AND SUICIDE BY SÁMINUORRA, SUOMA SÁMI NUORAT AND SÁMIRÁÐÐI."

¹²⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat, "STATEMENT BY SUOMA SÁMI NUORAT, SAAMI COUNCIL AND SÁMINUORRA. ITEM 7: HUMAN RIGHTS B) DIALOGUE WITH THE SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES."

¹²⁹ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/616050835201817>

side of Sapmi was the only political initiative where both an organization from Sweden and Norway got involved on separate occasions. This clearly shows that the Saami youth organizations take political actions to make their claims heard, yet only to support the causes within the borders. The only time the organization actually cooperate and release joint statements is in the context of international meetings. Thusly, international forums facilitate joint actions and encourage the individual organization to take actions for common causes.

4.3.2 Cultural mobilization

To achieve their goals of strengthening the Saami identity, empowering young Saami, and revitalizing the Saami language, the youth organizations frequently organize events or promote events by others. The most important event for all organizations is the organizations' annual meeting where all the members get together to elect the board of the organization, get to know each other, and discuss the future of the organization.¹³⁰¹³¹ Additionally, local meetings are organized by the regional chapters of the organizations. These meetings strengthen the unity of the organization, enhance the contact between young Saami, and create consensus within the organizations. None of the organizations mentioned a similar meeting where the organizations get together to discuss or exchange strategies amongst one another outside international forums or the three joint projects mentioned above. In an interview, a representative of Noereh pointed out that

¹³⁰ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/10152221380141063>

¹³¹ Saminuorra's Facebook page. Accessed June 5th 2016.
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=872496749489942&id=183484001724557

more joint projects and meeting between the organizations are in planning, but difficult to organize due to funding issues of the other organizations.¹³²

Next to the annual meetings, all three organizations organize social and cultural events for their member and encourage them to participate in the educational or cultural events within the country as well as in other countries. For example, Suoma Sami Nuorat send out reminders for the multicultural festivals in different locations in Finland and participated in the Saami Championships in 2014.¹³³ Saminuorra has booths on Human Rights fairs and cultural Saami festivals.¹³⁴ Noereh frequently promotes Saami cultural festival and lectures on indigenous rights and Saami languages Norway, and runs a project to translate popular books and movies into Saami languages.¹³⁵ Some events that could strengthen ties between the overall Saami community are limited to the Saami of one country. For example, the Saami floorball championships are limited to Swedish Saami participants, and the “Saami of the Year” is elected in Finland by collection of Finnish Saami organizations.¹³⁶¹³⁷ These are just a few examples of the numerous cultural,

¹³² Interview 3

¹³³ Suoma Sami Nuorat’s Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/593201844153383>

¹³⁴ Saminuorra’s Facebook page. Accessed June 5th, 2016, https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1034669743272641&id=183484001724557

¹³⁵ Noereh’s Facebook page, accessed, June 21rd, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/619963394692421>

¹³⁶ Saminuorra’s Facebook page. Accessed June 3th, 2016 https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1055949531144662&id=183484001724557

¹³⁷ Suoma Sami Nuorat’s Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/596774250462809>

educational, and sports events organized by Saami youth organizations. However, these are representative of the trend that Saami youth organizations mainly provide cultural and educational services to its members and predominantly encourage the participation in the events organized by other organizations within the same country.

The examples of events that include young Saami from more than one country are the Queering Sapmi project, Saami festivals and international workshops. Queering Sapmi was started by the Swedish Saami youth organization, spread across the borders and became a transnational project. The project is founded and organized by a variety of LGBT, Saami, Youth and cultural organizations from four countries. All three Saami youth organizations advertise the events such as the Saami pride parade, a book on gender roles in Sapmi published by the organization, and workshops on gender equality.¹³⁸¹³⁹ In addition to the Saami pride parade, other annual events that attract Saami from all over the region include festivals such as Riddu Riddu¹⁴⁰ or the Saami film festival. Workshops that are advertised to young Saami from all over Sapmi worth mentioning are the Nordic language writing workshop¹⁴¹¹⁴²¹⁴³, the Saami composing workshop offers the

¹³⁸ Suoma Sami Nuorat's Facebook page, accessed, June 3rd, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/suomasaminuorat/posts/570889036384664>

¹³⁹ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/624821404206620>

¹⁴⁰ <http://www.riddu.no/en/info-1>

¹⁴¹ Suoma Sami Nuorat, "KUTSU: KURSSI 15-18-VUOTIAILLE KIRJOITTAVILLE NUORILLE!"

¹⁴² Suoma Sami Nuorat, "Queering Sapmi Jalkimietteita."

¹⁴³ Noereh's Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016 <https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/1060318927323530>

opportunity to young Saami to work on their creative skills in a minority specific environment.
Opportunity to participate in an international human rights training program¹⁴⁴¹⁴⁵

As such, the organizations do provide a meeting space for their members to reflect on their identity on the local or national level, yet many of these meetings are limited to the Saami within the state. This makes sense and is understandable for events that are hold in the national language that Saami from other countries would not understand. Nonetheless, this also includes events that are hold in Saami languages or would not necessarily require explicit language skills like the Saami floorball championships. To sum up, all Saami organizations organize and promote cultural events to young Saami, but not all of them are accessible or interests for young Saami from other countries. The exemption to this rule are international conferences, multi-day festivals, and workshops. These are often advertised by all organization to their followers, but the events are often not Saami specific and also include other national minorities and indigenous peoples. These events offer the opportunities for young Saami to engage with other young Saami from across the region as they are explicitly marketed to all young Saami.

¹⁴⁴ Suoma Sami Nuorat, “UNITED NATIONS OHCHR, INDIGENOUS FELLOWSHIPS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING PROGRAMME 2015.”

¹⁴⁵ Noereh’s Facebook page, accessed, June 1st, 2016
<https://www.facebook.com/noereh/posts/732526870102739>

5. Conclusion

The comparative analysis shows that feeling of cultural unity and a common collective identity as one peoples are not translated into joint mobilization, expression of solidarity or joint actions. The three organizations analyzed in this thesis all claim to represent the interests of the young Saami and contribute to the collective identity of the Saami. They all use the rhetoric of human and indigenous rights as well as the symbols of the Pan-Saami nation. The organizations broadly define their target group as “Saami youth” without limitations to their country of residence. Noereh, the Norwegian Saami youth organization, actively invents new Saami holiday and new ways to celebrate old Saami holidays. As such, one could argue that the Saami youth organization contribute to the spread and visibility of the Pan-Saami collective identity.

These feelings of cultural unity and a common collective identity as one peoples do not translated into joint mobilization, expression of solidarity or joint actions. For the most part, the three organizations are quite similar. The Swedish organization is significantly more active in the Saami Parliaments youth council and frequently meets with representatives from the central government. On the other end of the spectrum is Noereh which aims to be politically neutral, frequently addresses non-governmental actors such as companies and film studios to make their claims heard. Apart from these two extremes, all three organizations choose to cooperate with similar type of actors, raise the similar issues and provide comparable services. The three organization, however rarely join forces or cooperate with one another outside of international forums. All three organization focuses their energy on either the cooperation and action within the state, as such they

are more active within the borders of Sweden, Norway or Finland than across these borders. The exception to this rule are international conferences, international workshop, or international cultural events.

All in all, Saami youth organization are beneficial to the nation-building process as they enhance visibility, raise awareness of new issues and in cooperate young Saami into the Saami nation. This generation is the first one that grows up with the opportunity to learn a Saami language in school, fast communication and cheap travel throughout the region, and regular funding for cultural and political Saami initializes. It was surprising to see that the Saami youth organizations did not take more advantage of this and contain their activities within the country. While the content and discourse analysis of textual document did provide the information necessary for the reach conclusions, it would have been very beneficial to talk to representatives form Finland and Sweden as well. This, however, was not possible as one organization heavily involved with their annual meeting and the other one on their way to the UNPFII. Compared to the transnational nations mentioned in chapter 1, this seems less surprising. The examples outlines here showed that it is still difficult for transnational indigenous nations to overcome international borders and the negative side effects cause by them.

On a broader level, a proclaimed goal of the Pan-Saami movement is the establishment of a joint governing body for all of Sapmi. First steps have been taken to achieve this through joint intuitions, yet many remain skeptical. When asked about the joint Saami governance, all three interviews hinted that this is seen as neither likely nor beneficial¹⁴⁶. The Saami are culturally united and part

¹⁴⁶ Interview 1, Interview 2, Interview 3

of the Saami people, yet the political boundaries continue to exist. Two interviews declared that it is best if the Saami deal with the state they are located in, because the joint action for all Saami issues would be too difficult to organize.¹⁴⁷ This attitude is noticeable in the way each Saami organization forms alliances with other Saami and non-Saami organizations within state borders, and primarily focuses on the developments and rights violations within their respective state.

Nonetheless, transnational conferences and some joint projects allow the different Saami youth organizations to exchange ideas and develop joint political statement.

Further research has to be conducted to test the finding of this research in different geopolitical settings. In the long run, it would be interesting to quantitative research on civil society organizations as actors within the nation-building processes of transnational nations. Even more importantly, more research has to be done on the effects of a representative structure for each segment of the nation if beneficial or harmful for the development of transnational nation. Alternatively, different way to enhance and facilitate transnational activities within the civil society of transnational nations without representative bodies such as the Mapuche.

¹⁴⁷ Interview 1, Interview 2.

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