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# Views about the Sámi Truth Commission: An analysis of public discourse in Swedish media 2008-2023

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## Abstract

This working paper studies the public media discourse that has evolved around the creation of the Sámi Truth Commission in Sweden. Since the 1990s, truth commissions have been installed in post-conflict or post-authoritarian settings to further transitional justice, though the range of situations in which they are established has multiplied over the past two decades. Most recently, settler colonial states have tasked commissions to unravel historical colonial violence and its lasting effects in the present. Canada was the first to do so in 2008 and has since been used as a model for other countries. As this move is comparatively new, there is no exhaustive research on the processes these developments may trigger or new possibilities they may open up. This prompted our interest in the arguments for or against the creation of such a commission in a given public context. Our focus is on Sweden, because it was the last Nordic state to take this step. In November 2021, likely taking the experiences from its neighbouring countries into consideration, the Swedish government decided to install a truth commission. Our aim was to identify dominant agents that influence the public discourse on the Sámi Truth Commission in Sweden, as well as to understand their demands and arguments.

## Zusammenfassung

Das Working Paper befasst sich mit dem öffentlichen Mediendiskurs rund um die Schaffung der Sámi Wahrheitskommission in Schweden. Wahrheitskommissionen wurden seit den 1990er Jahren als Instrumente der Aufarbeitung von Menschenrechtsverbrechen nach dem Ende von Diktaturen oder Bürgerkriegen eingerichtet, um den Übergang zur Demokratie und Aussöhnungsprozesse zu unterstützen. In den vergangenen 20 Jahren hat sich der Anwendungsbereich vergrößert. Die jüngste Entwicklung ist, dass Kommissionen sich in Siedlerkolonialstaaten mit der kolonialen Gewalt und deren anhaltenden Wirkungen befassen. Kanada war das erste Land, in dem es 2008 zur Schaffung einer solchen „Wahrheits- und Versöhnungskommission“ kam, was seither anderen Ländern als Vorbild gedient hat.

Da diese Entwicklung relativ neu ist, gibt es noch keine erschöpfende Forschung zu den Prozessen, die dadurch ausgelöst werden, oder zu den möglicherweise neuen Chancen, die sich bieten. Uns interessierte daher, wie in einer betreffenden Öffentlichkeit für oder gegen die Schaffung einer solchen Kommission argumentiert wird. Der Fokus liegt auf Schweden, weil es das letzte nordische Land war, das eine Wahrheitskommission ins Leben rief. Die schwedische Regierung traf die Entscheidung im November 2021 und hat dabei vermutlich auch Erfahrungen der Nachbarländer in Betracht gezogen. Unsere Untersuchung zielt darauf ab, die Akteure zu identifizieren, die den öffentlichen Diskurs zur Wahrheitskommission in Schweden bestimmten; und herauszufinden, was sie mit welchen Argumenten vertraten.

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## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

This Working Paper looks at the establishment of a truth commission investigating the historical abuse of Sámi in Sweden and studies the public discourse which has been evolving around the creation of this institution. Truth commissions, or else Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRC), were formerly installed in immediate post-conflict settings, i.e. following civil wars or large-scale human rights violations, and were tasked with organizing and managing processes of transitional justice (TJ). Although there is not *one* definition of transitional justice, the overall aim of TJ has been, on the grounds of international human rights law, to support reconciliation between perpetrators and victims of violence, and to prevent relapses into armed conflict or systematic human rights violation. In this vein, the UN emphasizes that “transitional justice aims to provide recognition to victims, enhance the trust of individuals in state institutions, reinforce respect for human rights and promote the rule of law, as a step towards reconciliation and the prevention of new violations” (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/transitional-justice>).

Over the past 15 to 20 years, the range of situations in which transitional justice has been applied has multiplied: “There is not a peace negotiation where it is not invited to the heart of the talks; no exit from an authoritarian regime without it being a part of the political agenda; no major threat nor major contemporary wound that does not have recourse to its practices, principles and dynamics – from climate change to the colonial past, to sexual abuse in the Church” (<https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/transitional-justice>). As this move towards including more forms of violence and also historical cases into the scope of the TJ toolbox is still a comparatively recent development, there is as yet no exhaustive research available on the possibilities this may open up: Can, for example, the atrocities and the lasting structures of violence that were created with colonization be tackled with the same set of institutions and procedures as a recently finished civil war? How are the involved concepts of truth, justice, or reconciliation reinterpreted in such a context, spanning generations? – These are just two out of many questions which arise with the transfer of TJ to cases beyond immediate post-armed conflict situations.

From among contemporary settler colonial states where a Truth and Reconciliation Commissions were created to address colonial violence, Canada was the first in 2008, following a class action lawsuit that dealt with the Indian Residential School system, a “coercive system which entailed forced assimilation and cultural destruction” (MacDonald & Hudson 2012: 431). Between the system’s establishment in the 1860s-1870s and the last institution closing in 1996, over 150,000 children attended residential schools across Canada (Nagy & Kaur Sehdev 2012: 67; see Mannitz & Drews 2022; Kopp & Mannitz 2022). We mention it at this point because Canada’s TRC became a model for other countries right from the start; although an evaluation of the involved processes, let alone the outcomes, was obviously impossible at the time when other countries started copying this ‘model’ of applying TJ tools to the violence embedded in coloniality.

Norway was the first Nordic country to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2017, addressing their own boarding schools, and was followed by Finland. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada served as an inspiration for both of these Nordic states. They share similar features in that the commissions do not serve to facilitate regime changes or transitions from armed conflict but occur in modern democratic states and concern matters of human rights violations, enforced detention of children, violation of cultural and religious rights, dispossession of land, rape, and different forms of collective

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1 We thank Núrel Reitz for the valuable suggestions and comments she made during the publication process.

second-class treatment (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306-308, 314; Kopp & Mannitz 2022). In 2019, the Finnish government also agreed to the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the Finnish history with the Sámi and to develop a path towards reconciliation. The process got significantly delayed in Finland due to the Covid-19 pandemic and a lack of psychological support for the individuals participating in the commission (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306-308, 317-318). Following on this track, Sweden also installed a commission that has been mandated for 2021-2025.<sup>2</sup>

The focus of this Working Paper is set on Sweden because it was the last among the Nordic states to take this step towards creating a commission, and it can thus be expected to have taken into consideration the developments, contestations, positive effects as well as drawbacks etc. in the neighbouring countries. One conspicuous difference is that Sweden installed just a Truth Commission, not a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We aim to scrutinize *inter alia* what lies behind this divergence. To this end, our research examines the public discourse surrounding the Truth Commission by conducting a focused content analysis of Sweden's media in newspaper and radio at selected time points. As the terms truth, reconciliation, ratification, rights, discrimination, trauma and forgiveness have been used to describe the motives and expectations of the Truth Commission, our research concerns the question which of these terms were used by the different stakeholders in public, and whether they used the terms in different ways or arguments (pro/against/neutral). We thus aim to identify (1) dominant agents that influence the public discourse on the Truth Commission in Sweden, as well as to find out (2) what the different agents demand from the commission and how they argue about the different concepts. This will include how the interpretation of the different terms relate to different expectations of the Truth Commission, or whether the terms used carry different connotation for the different speaker positions.

Before explaining our sampling of the analysed media and presenting the analysis itself, we will expound the context of the situation of the Sámi people, who stand in the centre of the commission installed in Sweden. This is an important prerequisite to following the recent public discourse, in its historical dimension as well as in modern Sweden, because historiographic narratives are drawn upon and contested by different actors in the present. They are used in the interest of certain positions, whether in support or opposition to the initiative aimed at unravelling the past and its lasting consequences.

## 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE SITUATION OF THE SÁMI

It is impossible to determine when the Sámi first started to inhabit the Northern hemisphere in regions of what later became (*inter alia*) Sweden. While some argue that the Sámi have been living there for 3,000 years, others date their presence in the region back to 10,000 years ago (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). The term "Sápmi" is important to know in this context: it denotes the Sámi's historical territories that span across today's Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia (Chatterjee 2021), while simultaneously standing for a cultural and linguistic community (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.), closely connected to reindeer hunting and later herding. Around 1,500 B.C., wild reindeer hunting is supposed to have become the primary means of livelihood, which created the *siida* structures (similar

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<sup>2</sup> A research project based at DIIS in Denmark systematically and comparatively studies the impact of the Scandinavian commissions on the self-conception of the Scandinavian welfare states, and "deals both empirically and theoretically with the clashes between conflicting perceptions of the past, and the importance which historiography plays to indigenous peoples and national minorities, not least in terms of demands for land and resources in Northern and Arctic Scandinavia". (<https://www.diis.dk/en/projects/trinc-truth-reconciliation-in-the-nordic-countries>)

to villages) that are comprised of around ten families who have access to designated land (sametinget 2020). The earliest document mentioning the Sámi population is from Roman historian Tacitus in 98 A.D. (samer.se n.d. a.). However, the first known report by a first-hand witness is from 800 A.D., when the Viking Ottar reported to the Anglo-Saxon King Alfred of Wessex on the Sámi lifestyle of herding domesticated reindeers – as a tax source (Blom 2023; samer.se 2018; <https://reindeerherding.org/Sámi-sweden>).

With the border expansion of the Nordic States and the colonization of the Sápmi land from 1,300 on, the Sámi have experienced a range of repression. This includes the displacement from their territories, leaving most Sámi without rights to their ancestral territories where important cultural traditions were practised, and the racist ideology and representation of the Sámi as inferior people, cultural and religious repression and forced assimilation (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307, 311; samer.se n.d.a.). Other historical abuses include forced sterilizations, non-consensual racial research, the prohibition of reindeer herders from living in their traditional residential structures, forced labour and pure persecution (Hartley 2016; Nutti 2018, 1).

### 1.1 *Land use and rights*

One of the first Swedish documents regarding the Sámi is called the Lapp Codicil from 1751, a border treaty between Sweden and Norway. In this, the customary rights of the Sámi nomads are recognized, giving the Sámi reindeer herders the right to migrate across Sweden and Norway's border. The transboundary aspect is important to consider, as the Sámi territory is divided between four states and the Sámi are traditionally nomadic people, migrating across borders. For Sámi communities, their relationship to the land and the natural environment was an essential aspect of values and beliefs whereas concepts such as land ownership and arbitrarily drawn borders have been externally imposed on Sámi culture with the establishment of the modern states (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306-307).

Colonization of Sápmi and the taxation of Sámi in Norrland began in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and was supported by Gustav Vasa. The state did not trust that the nomads would protect the state's sovereignty and encouraged peasants to settle in the wastelands, although the interest of the Swedes to move northward was weak. Taxes increased by the 16<sup>th</sup> century, as the crown's interest in natural resources grew. With the numerous wars fought by the Swedish kingdom in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the quest for natural resources became increasingly desirable. In the 1630s, the first silver was discovered by the state in Nasafjäll, on the border with Norway. This led to conflicts between the settlers and the Sámi. The latter were forcefully recruited as cheap labour for the ore transportation with the help of their reindeers. Many Sámi were pushed into poverty or fled further north as a result. The crown expressed hopes that the most Northern region of the Scandinavian landmass, Norrland, may become Sweden's own colony. With industrialization, the interest in the region's silver, forest, iron ore and hydropower grew, and the land was increasingly considered state property (DO 2008, 15-17; samer.se n.d. b.). As Herman Lundborg, who would later establish the race-biology institute in Uppsala, explained in 1919: "national prosperity and security require better utilization of the natural resources in this part of the country. These purely Swedish interests often go in a different direction than those of the nomads. It will then be the lot of the latter to bend" (samer.se n.d. b.).

Following the peace agreement between Denmark and Sweden after the Great Northern War 1721, borders were drawn and established between Sweden and Norway at the Stormstad Treaty 1751. In this treaty, the Lapp Codicil decided the rights of the Sámi people, who became divided by the borders, including their taxes and citizenship rights. While they were

permitted to continue with reindeer husbandry across the borders, they had to choose one citizenship (Sametinget 2020). In Sweden, the first Reindeer Husbandry Act was implemented in 1886 and renewed in 1928, defining the relationship between settlers and the Sámi. This act defined the Sámi as nomadic reindeer herders, in effect excluding other Sámi groups. It also gave reindeer herders permission to use the state's land, exclusively for the purpose of reindeer herding, which also meant that Sámi people lost the right to own land themselves. Additionally, reindeer herding was defined as a male occupation, with the effect that the Sámi women's rights became dependent on their husbands or fathers (in force until 1971). Through this act, Sámi became legally defined through stigmatization and racial stereotypes, and were given different rights on the basis of their assumed cultural inferiority: For example, children of different Sámi groups were allocated to special schools with varying academic standards. Following the Second World War, the Swedish state changed its attitudes towards reindeer husbandry and aimed to modernize it as one profession among other professions. The Reindeer Husbandry Act was therefore renewed in 1971. Differential rights were anchored as a measure of preserving Sámi culture, and yet thereby, non-reindeer herding Sámi continued to be excluded (DO 2008, 17-18).

### *1.2 Religion, language rights & Sámi boarding schools*

Already in 1340, Swedish king Magnus encouraged peasants to colonize the North (samer. se n.d. a.). Christian missionaries were supported by all respective Nordic governments in an effort to eradicate shamanic beliefs and forcefully expand their own cultural norms and practices. This was enforced by persecution and punishment, the collection and destruction of ceremonial drums (goavddis) and sacred sites, and the establishment of churches. Sámi beliefs were often dismissed as paganism, superstition and idolatry (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307-308). The so-called "lappmarkspräster" were priests that operated as an extended arm of the Swedish crown to "cultivate" the nomads with church duty and house interrogation (DO 2008, 16). Ethnic "Swedifying" policies primarily impacted Sámi children in specific schools (Nutti 2018, 1). The cultural repression took shape in compulsory boarding schools in the seventeenth century and lasted until 1962, separating children of reindeer herders from their homes and forcefully assimilating them (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307-308; Hartley 2016). Sámi started to organize resistance in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Large cross-border meetings were held in 1917 and 1918 to, among other things, protest nomad schools as having an inferior academic standard. Other organizations were created, such as Same Ätman 1945 and Svenska Samernas Riksförbund 1950 (Sametinget 2020).

### *1.3 Race ideology*

The land grab and the increasing industrialization coincided with the emergence of de-humanizing 'scientific' studies of the Sámi, representing them an "inferior race" (Hartley 2016). Growing nationalism and the increased popularity of concepts such as Social Darwinism had disastrous impacts on the Sámi people (Partida n.d.). Anders Retzius, professor at the Karolinska Institute, studied polygenism by phrenology, i.e. a theory on mental differences invented by a German physician. Retzius, like German anthropologists did in the German Empire's African colonies, conducted skull measurements on living Sámi people and on human remains from looted graves in order to categorize humans into distinct races. When these race theories became increasingly popular, researchers as well as government agencies participated in skull measurements on a large scale. In 1920, the Swedish Parliament unanimously decided to establish the world's first institute for race biology, the "State Institute for Race Biology (SIRB)" in Uppsala University (DO 2008, 16-17;



Ericsson 2021, 125). This new step gave rise to another level of discriminatory ideologies, as it institutionalized the idea of racial hierarchies and led to non-consensual studies on the Sámi people that included both adults and children (Hall 2016, 36). The declared mission was to “cleanse the Swedish race” under the direction of doctor and National Socialist sympathizer Herman Lundborg (Amnesty Sápmi 2021 b.). It was used to examine the alleged dangers of ‘race mixing’ (Ericsson 2021, 126, 130). The government-sponsored eugenics research also led to the forceful sterilization of thousands of Sámi women. Other research was conducted on indigenous skeletons, which were collected through grave robberies, excavations, and barter (Henley 2019). It was believed that the Sámi belonged to an inferior and primitive people that were doomed to go extinct, and the rule of the majority population was thus justified as being for the indigenous people’s own good (samer.se n.d. b.). It was in this context that the Reindeer Grazing Law (renbeteslagen) was implemented in 1886, which exclusively defined Sámi as reindeer herders and excluded indigenous communities of other professions from the official definition (Hall 2016, 36). Although race theory was left discredited scientifically and despite the genocidal crimes committed in Nazi Germany on grounds of exactly such theories pre-1945, these kinds of racial categorizations continued to be used within genetics and anthropology and affected the Sámi until the end of the 1960s (Ericsson 2021, 127).

## 2. THE SITUATION OF THE SÁMI PEOPLE IN SWEDEN SINCE 1977

The Sámi (also known as Saami) are the sole recognized indigenous people within the EU and are one of Sweden’s official minorities, thereby being protected by law (Council of Europe 2015, 9; sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). Several new laws were implemented post-1977, when the Sámi first became recognized as an indigenous people, such as the ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 2000 and the implementation of the National Minorities and Minority Languages Act (SFS 2009:724) in 2010. The Swedish Sámi Parliament (Sametinget) was established by the government in 1993 (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.; Kulturdepartementet 2021, 2; sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. g), but it took until 2011 for the Sámi to become recognized as a people in Sweden’s constitution. In sum, the Sámi are now recognized both as people, indigenous people, and a national minority (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). In 2018, the government revised the Minority Act accordingly (Govt Bill 2017/18: 199) (Framework convention for the protection of national minorities 2021, 2-3).

At present, the Sámi population comprises around 70,000 to 100,000 people in total, of which between 17,000 and 40,000 are living in Sweden (SI 2022; Hall 2016, 35; Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306; Council of Europe 2015, 9; sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f). Exact numbers are not available. How Sámi identity is defined has changed throughout history; from being defined through ancestry and belonging to the land, and later also through the above mentioned ascriptions made by state authorities, it is today primarily a matter of self-identification, family language and affiliation with legal rights. Self-identification today also primarily relies on kinship, cultural affinity, and communal recognition. As ethnicity is considered sensitive personal information and self-identification may change over time, it is prohibited for the State of Sweden to collect information on ethnicity in the population records (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2023 a, 17-18). The exact number of Sámi people in Sweden is hence unknown (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). The estimation of the Sámi population is instead derived from the Sámi investigation of 1975 (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2023 a, 18). In 2021, 9,226 people entered the Sámi electoral roll in order to vote in the Sámi



parliamentary election. The requirement for this is to be at least 18 years old, to be a Swedish citizen or resident for the last three years, and to either be Sámi and also speak a Sámi language at home or to have at least one grandparent or parent who still speaks or has spoken a Sámi language at home (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). In 2023, the Public Health Agency of Sweden collected information on 17,348 Sámi individuals ranging in age from 19 to 84 (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2023 a, 24). In the following, we focus on the situation of Sámi people within the Scandinavian countries and pay particular attention to Sweden, from where the debates around the Truth Commission will be studied in detail.

As a result of the colonization of the Sámi people, most of their languages are extinct, their cultural identities and histories have become distorted, their religious beliefs have been forgotten, and trust in the central governments has become very limited (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307, 311). For example, around 40 people in Sweden speak PiteSámiska and only 10 speak Ume Sámiska (minoritet.se n.d.). As stated by Per-Olof Nutti in 2018, President of the Swedish Sámi Parliament, Sámi people still carry generational trauma, which also leads to divisions among the Sámi people. The trauma is reproduced by continuous discrimination and disrespect of indigenous rights (Nutti 2018, 1). Today, Sámi skulls and bones can still be found in museums, while some have been returned to the communities and buried. The human remains are preserved in several government institutions, such as the Karolinska Institute, Uppsala University, and the Swedish History Museum. The Swedish Sámi Parliament has been asking for their return since 2007, in order to rebury the remains of their ancestors (Hartley 2016). The Swedish Sámi Parliament has found that continuous racism is perpetrated against Sámi people in the form of bullying, verbal abuse, threats of violence, and attacks on reindeers (Nutti 2019, 2). Sámi organizations have thus entered into dialogues with the Minister of Culture and Democracy, Amanda Lind, and State Secretary Karin Strandås in 2021. Strandås is responsible for matters relating to human rights and discrimination on a national level (Amnesty Sápmi 2021 a.). In 2016, when the Swedish government had presented a national plan against racism, it in particular concerned racism perpetrated against Roma, Jews, LGBTQ+ people, and others but did not address racism against the Sámi people (Amnesty Sápmi 2021 a.).

### *2.1 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples & ILO Convention 169*

In 1977, the Swedish Parliament officially declared the Sámi as an indigenous people for the first time, which, according to international law (Govt Bill 1976/77:80), gave them the right to special cultural treatment (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.; Kulturdepartementet 2021, 2). As an indigenous people, they have a right to self-determination, in accordance with Article 3 of the UN Declaration, as established by the UN Human Rights Committee (OHCHR) (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). This includes economic, social, and cultural development (Sametinget 2020). Additionally, indigenous peoples have the right to autonomy and self-government in issues concerning internal and local affairs, as well as to strengthen and maintain their distinct legal, social, economic, political, and cultural institutions (United Nations 2007, Article 4, Article 5).

However, it is disputed whether the recognition of the Sámi people as an indigenous people had any significant consequences in Swedish laws, as these are based on the recognition of the Sámi as one of Sweden's five minorities rather than as an indigenous group. It seems that government investigations into Sámi rights from 1986 to 2006 have not seriously considered their indigenous rights (OD 2008, 19; OD 2016, 3; Sametinget 2020). In the same vein, the amendment of an important ILO convention also still awaits ratification in Sweden: The International Labour Organization (ILO) has renewed the "C107 – Indigenous and

Tribal Populations Convention, 1957 (No. 107)” and adopted new international standards in 1989 on indigenous and tribal people, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other previous declarations. According to Article 1, the convention applies to indigenous people that have inhabited the region at the time of conquest, colonization, or the establishment of current state borders and have their own economic, social, political, and cultural institutions. This is fundamentally based on the principle of self-determination. Article 7 includes:

“The peoples concerned shall have the right to decide their own priorities for the process of development as it affects their lives, beliefs, institutions and spiritual well-being and the lands they occupy or otherwise use, and to exercise control, to the extent possible, over their own economic, social and cultural development. In addition, they shall participate in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of plans and programs for national and regional development which may affect them directly.” (ILO 1989, Art. 7)

Although Sweden has signed the convention, it has not yet ratified the ILO Convention: C169 – Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (ILO n.d.; UPR 2020, 3). The Swedish Church announced their support for a Swedish ratification of the ILO 196 in 2015 (minoritet.se 2015).

## 2.2 *Swedish Sámi in politics and Sametinget*

Organized political work by the Sámi people in Sweden began in the 1950s and was united by the common goal of increased autonomy, eventually leading to the creation of the Swedish Sámi Parliament (Sametinget) in 1993. It functions as a government agency as well as a popularly elected body. Its tasks include the allocation of funds within the financial framework decided by the Swedish state for Sámi organizations and Sámi culture. It also monitors Sámi languages and matters concerning Sámi interests. At its establishment, the emphasis was on matters concerning reindeer husbandry and on an objective authority (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306, 310; DO 2008, 19). However, the Sámi Parliament of Sweden has the weakest constitutional position compared to the respective Sámi Parliaments of the other Nordic countries, by merely concerning questions related to indigenous culture and social life. The Swedish Sámi Parliament is not a body intended for self-government and cannot compete with the Swedish Parliament or the municipal council (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 310; DO 2008, 19; Human Rights Committee 2009, 9). By 2008, the Swedish Sámi Parliament was limited in areas such as participation in decision-making, veto rights in administration, co-determination rights in legislative matters, or as a mandatory referral body in Sámi matters (DO 2008, 19). Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2021, the Act on Consultation in Matters of Special Importance to the Sámi People (2022:66) has applied to matters such as language, nutrition, culture, or the status as an indigenous people in order to assure the inclusion of Sámi people in the decision-making processes. The consultation has to involve the Sámi Parliament and may additionally consult relevant Sámi organizations or a sameby (‘Sámi village’). From 2024 on, the Act shall also include municipalities and regions (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2023 b.; CERD 2023, 29).

## 2.3 *Land rights and professional occupations*

While they are mostly associated with the culture of reindeer husbandry, the Sámi practice a vast variety of professions, such as offshore fishing, coastal fishing, sheep herding, Duodji (applied artwork and handicraft), and fur trapping. Additionally, Sámi have also come to

work in all other sectors of society. Today, approximately 2,500 to 3,500 Sámi in Sweden rely on reindeer husbandry for meat production, and a total of 4,600 Sámi are reindeer owners (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307; sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. f.). While reindeer husbandry is a protected profession for Swedish and Norwegian Sámi, granting that they operate within large family structures (*siida*), this and other professions have been disappearing and are mainly replaced with occupations within the tourism sector. Today, only about 10% of Sámi rely on reindeer husbandry as a form of livelihood (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307).

While Sámi land rights are recognized in Sweden's jurisprudence, they are seen as controversial and frequently disregarded or threatened through extractive industries and tourism (Minority Rights Group International 2018). The Human Rights Committee (2009, 10) expressed concerns about indirect discrimination in legal disputes over land ownership, where the burden of proof is placed wholly on the Sámi people who – because of their sustainable ways of using the land – have traditionally not left particular marks that could serve as proofs. In 2020, after a 30-year court case, the Supreme Court decided to give the Sámi exclusive rights to hunt and fish in certain parts of their ancestral lands (SI 2022; Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306, 310). Land conflicts today mostly concern the Arctic regions, as those are rich in natural resources, mainly found, or expected to be, in the mountains as well as in and under the sea. For example, foreign companies test drill in Sápmi in search of ore (samer.se n.d. b.). Lawrence and Larsen (2017, 1165) therefore argue that internal colonization is continuously practiced in Sweden for resource extraction, where mining laws remain lax.

Today, the green transition in Sweden is often carried out in disregard of Sámi rights, as hydropower, wind power, forest for biofuel, and minerals and metals for batteries are predominantly extracted or established on Sámi territory, impacting reindeer husbandry, biodiversity, fishing, and hunting. It has led to an increase in infrastructure and mining in Sápmi, while historically Sámi have contributed the least to Sweden's climate change impact and could instead be seen as a knowledge resource and inspiration for ecological and sustainable operations (Sametinget 2022 a.). Considering the minimal impact indigenous ways of living have had on the planetary climate, the knowledge of indigenous peoples should be recognized as an important factor to preserve biodiversity. According to the Sámi perspective, all matters are environmental issues, as the environment is deeply intertwined with all aspects of life. Sámi are therefore directly impacted by climate change. Thus, the Sámi Parliament has created an environment program called "Eallinbiras" to strengthen Sámi culture and nature relationship in the future (Semtinget 2022 b.; Sametinget 2021 a., p.1, 9-10). The current Reindeer Husbandry Act (1971:437) has also been revised by the Reinland Committee to propose new reindeer husbandry legislation, which would change the circumstances for Sámi people who practice hunting and fishing (Kulturdepartementet 2021, 3).

#### 2.4 Church of Sweden

Following the 2011 Ságestallamat conference in Kiruna, the Church of Sweden started a several-year long process of investigating the injustices committed by the church against the Sámi in the past. In 2016, the Swedish Church published the White Book, in which information on the boarding schools for Sámi reindeer herders is detailed (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307, 321; Hall 2016, 3; Jukka 2021). 2021 also marks the year that the Church of Sweden officially apologized for the historical abuses committed against the Sámi people, followed by several public remarks (SI 2022). The apology was expressed in Uppsala's cathedral, with live broad-

casting, and in a Sámi conference in Luleå. The Swedish Church archbishop Antje Jackelén argued that this was an important step for the reconciliation process, which the church will work on in the following 10 years (2022 to 2031). For this process, eight commitments were developed in close dialogue with all the dioceses and the Sámi Council of the Church of Sweden. These include proclaiming the gospel in Sámi languages and in a way relevant to the Sámi people; visibly integrating Sámi tradition, and spirituality in theology; increasing respect and knowledge for Sámi rights; increasing Sámi participation; and influence and promoting Sámi church life across borders. For this project, the Church Board allocated 40 million Swedish crowns. The official apology is based on the Sámi Council's demand for the church to take part in the truth and reconciliation process. The Sámi Council believes that the apology can lead to renewed relationships between the church and the Sámi people and argues that Sámi faith traditions and spirituality will enrich the Church of Sweden (Jukka 2021 a; Jukka 2021 b).

### 2.5 *Education and health*

In 2010, the National Minorities and Minority Languages Act (SFS 2009:724) was implemented in Sweden, creating new opportunities and providing financial resources to protect Sámi culture, languages, traditions, and religion. This also meant the introduction of Sámi history in primary school and the inclusion of Sámi-speaking staff at institutions such as nursing homes (SI 2022; Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 306, 310; sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. g.). With the Swedish ratification of the Council of Europe's Minority Language Convention in 2000, the Sámi language, along with others, has been officially recognized as a minority language (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. g.). However, discrimination in schools and neglect or even opposition by municipalities to mother tongue education was a reoccurring problem (OD 2008, 20). To tackle this, in 2018, the government revised the Minority Act (Govt Bill 2017/18:199) and obliged municipalities to follow the guidelines regarding minority policy work and strengthen the right to minority language pre-schools and elderly care (Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 2021, 2-3).

Research on Sámi health has been scanty, which comprises an investigation in 1997-1998, a data acquisition of all national minorities in 2014, and a comprehensive survey in 2023. According to the health survey from 2023, Sámi people have an overall physical health similar to the general population but are more prone to suicidal thoughts (15.3% compared to 13.5%) and suicide attempts (5.9% & compared to 4.4%). These are most common among reindeer herders. They also report more incidents of offenses (26% compared to 18%) and racial discrimination (Folkhälsomyndigheten 2023 a, 7, 17-18, 48-49; Folkhälsomyndigheten 2014; Södra Lapplands Forskningsenhet 2009, 7). There is also a lack of trust in Sweden's primary care and psychiatry institutions among reindeer herders, which leads to some Sámi seeking healthcare in Norway rather than in Sweden (Stoor 2015, 26). A general lack of trust has also been reported among Sámi towards Swedish state institutions on the local, regional, and national levels, such as the police and courts, resulting in, among other things, a lack of reports on hate crimes committed against the Sámi (CERD 2023, 31).

### 2.6 *International attention*

Sweden has ratified a wide range of international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. It also ratified regional treaties such as the European Convention on Human Rights (CERD). The ratification of such treaties en-

ables the obligations to be binding under international law. However, incorporation into Swedish law has continued to lag behind (Hunt 2007, 7-8; Regeringskansliet n.d.). The United Nations has repeatedly criticized Sweden for the situation of the Sámi people and continuously requests the government to ratify the C169 – ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (Hall 2016, 3, 37; ILO Ratifications for Sweden; Hunt 2007, 7).

In 2007, Paul Hunt, the UN's Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of psychological and physical health, published a report after a visit to Sweden. In it, he concluded that the Swedish government ensured top healthcare both at a national level and in terms of development assistance according to the Millennium Development Goals. The Special Rapporteur also welcomed Sweden's commitment to ensure healthcare on equal terms for the whole population. Yet Paul Hunt also accused Sweden of hypocrisy, because while it mainstreamed human rights into its international policies, the right to health was not developed in Sweden's domestic policy. He also criticized Sweden for the lack of a national health policy for the Sámi people, including healthcare designed for Sámi occupational hazards and lack of healthcare information in Sámi languages (Sametinget 2016; Hunt 2007, 2, 9-10, 15).

The Council of Europe has also pointed out Sweden's recurring shortcoming in defending indigenous' rights and protecting the Sámi people from discrimination (Hall 2016, 37). International observers have suggested a possible correlation between increased popularity for the far-right party, the Sweden Democrats, since 2002 and an increasingly polarized debate on race and assimilation. Generally, awareness of the Sámi situation seems to be insufficient compared to knowledge of other indigenous peoples like, e.g. the Native Americans (Hartley 2016). In 2018, CERD<sup>3</sup> Committee expressed concerns about increased hate speech by state parties and the presence of extremist and racist organizations in Sweden, in contravention of the Convention (art. 4). In regard to the Sámi people, the committee particularly criticized the lack of legislation to guarantee informed and free consent by the Sámi to the extraction of natural resources and projects for development and industries. It also accused the government of differential treatment of some Sámi groups before the law, a lack of compensation for damages caused to reindeer herders, and a lack of investigations and prosecutions on hate crimes committed against Sámi people (CERD 2018, 2-3).

### 3. DEVELOPMENT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRUTH COMMISSION

#### 3.1 *Establishment of a Truth Commission in Sweden*

A Sámi youth group called Sáminuorra first demanded the establishment of a Sámi Truth Commission by the Swedish state in 2008 (Hartley 2016; sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. a.; DO 2016, 3). This is the same year in which the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created as the first commission of this kind in a settler colonial context. A motion to establish a Truth Commission in Sweden was submitted to the Sámi Parliament in 2012 and was unanimously adopted by the Sámi Parliament's plenary meeting in 2014 (minoritet.se 2021; DO 2016, 3). In 2014, the Swedish Sámi Parliament, together with Vaartoe<sup>4</sup> and the Equality Ombudsman (DO), reached a decision on the necessity of the formation of an independent Truth Commission, in order to reveal past and current injustices (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 321; Nutti 2018, 2; Jackelén 2015). Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, the UN's

3 The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) was among the first human rights treaties to be adopted by the United Nations, i.e. in 1966.

4 The Centre for Saami Research at the University of Umeå, Sweden

special rapporteur on indigenous rights, announced the approval of these developments in 2015 (Hartley 2016). Until 2016, the Swedish Sámi Parliament collected information on the significance of Truth Commissions by referring to cases in Canada, Australia, Guatemala, and other South American countries. The Church of Sweden also pushed for an independent Truth Commission, for the state to share the burden of the colonial past and to work towards reconciliation (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 307, 321; Hall 2016, 3). A two-day roundtable debate on this issue took place in October 2016, with the participation of six international experts on Truth Commissions, and which was followed by a public seminar. The three issues discussed were (1) the establishment and mandate for a Truth Commission; (2) the methods; and (3) the objectives and results. Several months later, in another meeting, Sámi parties' and organizations' representatives appointed a working group that included every party of the Sámi Parliament, with the objective of developing further steps towards a Truth Commission (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 321; Nutti 2018, 2-3).

The working group's results included a global report and SWOT analysis that identified opportunities, weaknesses, strengths, and threats for the establishment of a Truth Commission in Sweden. After the parliamentary elections in March 2018, the larger group met again, together with the new members of parliament, to discuss the working group's results (Nutti 2018, 3). The working group particularly reviewed other Truth and Reconciliation Commissions between states and indigenous people, including those in Canada, Greenland and Australia (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. c.). In concrete terms, the resulting demands by the Swedish Sámi parliament were as follows:

- The preparation and implementation of a Truth Commission on the Swedish State's abuse of the Sámi people and the Sámi's human rights must be financed by the state.
- The state must ensure long-term funding and mechanisms for any unforeseen needs that may arise during the Commission's operations.
- The funding must be independent of other Sámi policies that the state may take.
- The Commission should have a strong and independent mandate.
- The members of the Commission should be greatly trusted by both Swedish and Sámi society.
- The process should be solidified in Sámi society in order to reach the different Sámi groups within this community with a diversity of experiences, so as to avoid further dividing the Sámi society.
- Mechanisms ensuring social and psycho-social support should be established early on in the process.
- Cross-border exchange of knowledge with ongoing processes in Norway and Finland should be maintained.
- The Commission should review the experiences of international commissions.
- The Sámi Parliament should organize public meetings/hearings in all of Sweden so that the commission's work is solidified in the Sámi community and, based on the results, develop the Truth Commission's mandate.
- When completed, the work of the Truth Commission should be followed by a reconciliation process, on condition that the recommendations of the Commission are fulfilled. (Nutti 2019, 3)

At a ceremony for the repatriation of Sámi skulls in 2019, Swedish Minister for Culture Helene Öberg officially announced the intention to commence dialogues between the gov-



ernment and Sámi representatives on the establishment of a Truth Commission (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 320-322). In 2020, the Swedish government then granted 1.2 million Swedish crowns for laying the groundwork for the establishment of a Truth Commission, which was to run between 2021 and 2025 (SI 2022; Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 320; Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 2021, 21). In preparation, a steering committee with seven members, a project member, and a reference group were selected to solidify the commission among the indigenous people. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, several of the meetings in Sápmi got cancelled or exclusively took place online, which made attendance more difficult for some Sámi. Therefore, the steering committee distributed a survey to give participants the possibility to submit their views and opinions through an additional platform. The survey was distributed through various channels, such as Sámi organizations, the Sámi electoral roll, Sámi associations, and Sámi parliamentary organizations. As this process was more time-consuming and the hearings were impossible to implement during the pandemic, the whole process was delayed (Junkka 2020). The Swedish Sámi parliament handed over a report on this preparatory work<sup>5</sup> to the Minister of Culture and Democracy Amanda Lind on the 27th of April 2021. The report is largely based on the views collected through video meetings, dialogue meetings, survey responses, e-mails, and telephone calls. On the 3rd of November 2021, the Swedish government announced the decision to establish a Truth Commission (minoritet.se 2021). The members of the Truth Commission were appointed in June 2022 (sanningskommissionen.se n.d. a.). The first conversational meetings were held in Jokkmokk in February 2023 (sanningskommissionen.se n.d. g.).

### 3.2 *The mission of the Sámi Truth Commission*

As stated in 2018 by the President of the Swedish Sámi Parliament, an official in-depth and comprehensive compilation of the different forms of abuse that the Swedish state committed against the Sámi people is necessary in order to make real change possible. The independent Truth Commission is meant to both investigate these historical accounts and suggest future measures for Sweden's Sámi policies (Nutti 2018, 1, 4). Regarding the latter, there is a clear expectation that political change is needed, which goes beyond the symbolic act of an apology (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 321). The Truth Commission is hence expected to make visible, map, review, and analyze the consequences of the historical and current policies of the Swedish state against the Sámi people. It must also increase public awareness and spread knowledge of historical and current injustices in forms of public debates and informational and educational activities (minoritet.se 2021). The main mission is three-fold: to (1) "survey and examine the policies pursued towards the Sámi and the actions of relevant actors in the implementation of those policies; (2) highlight the experiences of the Sámi; and (3) analyze and shed light on the consequences of the policies pursued towards the Sámi with regard to the living conditions, health, and social life of the Sámi people as a whole and as individuals, and the ability of the Sámi people to preserve and develop their own culture and community life." (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. b.).

The Swedish commission draws on the experiences of the commissions in the Nordic countries and Canada as sources of insights, offering lessons on how best to proceed and what to avoid. For example, great emphasis is placed on the importance of the mental well-being of the individuals who choose to share their traumas; professional health care and psychological competence should be granted (Nutti 2019, 2). Mental health is an important aspect of the Truth Commission because the reconciliation process in Sweden, ac-

5 The Förberedelser inför en sanningskommission om statens övergrepp mot det Sámiska folket



ording to Öberg, aims to achieve healing in the long run (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 322). Ultimately, the objective of the Truth Commission is to achieve reconciliation and justice (Nutti 2018, 1, 4), and this does not only concern the relationship between the state and the Sámi people but also the reconciliation between different Sámi groups (Nutti 2019, 1). Additionally, it is hoped for that a Truth Commission and increased historical awareness can help prevent similar atrocities from being repeated in the future. The Swedish Truth Commission is not focused on a specific time period but includes all of history until the present day. This includes not only the government but also the municipalities and the Church of Sweden. Although the latter will only be looked at until January 2000, since this is when the church became independent from the state. The commission must finalize its work by the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2025 at the latest (Kulturdepartementet 2021, 1, 3).

### *3.3 The structure and the compounds of the commission*

The resolution on the right to truth was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2013, encouraging states to establish mechanisms that complete existing legal frameworks, such as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The Truth Commission is a tool to investigate the truth of events during which gross human rights violations occurred (sanningskommisionensamer n.d. e.). The general characteristics of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission entail that it is an extra-judicial and independent temporary body, usually authorized by a state. The commissions usually concentrate on a historical time period to examine patterns of violations and abuses, and are concluded by a report that contains conclusions and recommendations (Szpak & Bunikowski 2021, 313).

The Sámi Truth Commission is a government inquiry and an autonomous and independent body. It interprets and carries out assignments as stated and instructed by the Swedish government (sanningskommisionensamer.se n.d. a.). In 2022, eleven members and commissioners were appointed by the government, in consultation with the Sámi Parliament, with the Minister of Justice as chairman. These members are responsible for the proposals of the commission and meet every six to eight weeks. Further, six secretaries and interviewers were appointed (Jukka 2022; sanningskommisionensamer.se n.d. a.). The secretariat is responsible for administering the work and preparing the decision of the commission. This includes investigative work, conducting personal interviews, and arranging meetings (sanningskommisionensamer.se n.d. d.). In 2023, the Truth Commission also established an official website to provide access to information as well as to create a way of contacting the commission and contribute testimonies. The commission started conversation meetings to collect testimonies in Jokkmokk in February, visited Stockholm and Uppsala in March, and will continue in this form until 2024 (Skoglund 2023). The meetings are informal and meant as an opportunity to reflect and create dialogue about the commission. It also provides people with the opportunity to have individual interviews (sanningskommisionensamer.se n.d. d.).

For the most part, the Truth Commission is using surveys to examine historical policies and their consequences for the Sámi people. The four main areas covered are: (1) land and natural resources; (2) forced displacement; (3) reindeer husbandry rights; and (4) racial biology, the “Lapps should be Lapps” policy, and the dispersal of Sámi cultural heritage including school and language policies (sanningskommisionensamer.se n.d. c.).

#### 4. RESEARCH INTEREST AND METHOD

As mentioned above, the mission of the Truth Commission is to increase public awareness and historical knowledge on injustices committed against the Sámi people over time, ultimately to prevent future atrocities from occurring (minoritet.se 2021). Unlike similar commissions, the Truth Commission in Sweden does not include the term “reconciliation” in its name. At the same time, however, the Sámi Parliament has pointed out at the Commission’s petition that a reconciliation process is intended to follow the completion of the Truth Commission, provided that the recommendations proposed by the Commission are met (sanningskommissionensamer.se n.d. a.). The fact that no “reconciliation” is appealed to is interesting and suggests that this concept is met with scepticism, reservation or opposition – whereas it is at the same time invoked by the Sámi Parliament. We want to study this field of positions, or tensions in empirical detail.

Our research examines the recent public discourse surrounding the Truth Commission by conducting a focused content analysis of Sweden’s media in newspaper and radio.<sup>6</sup> As the terms truth, reconciliation, ratification, rights, discrimination, trauma and forgiveness have been used to describe the motives and expectations of the Truth Commission, our research concerns the question which terms are used by the different stakeholders in public, and whether they use the terms in different ways. We thus aim to identify dominant agents that influence the public discourse on the Truth Commission in Sweden. Additionally, we seek to find out what the different agents demand from the Commission and how they argue about these different concepts. This includes investigating how the interpretations of the different terms relate to different expectations of the Truth Commission, or whether the terms carry different connotations for the different speaker positions.

In this paper, a dynamic case comparison is used, as the focus of our research lies on the (potential) changes in media discourse over time. This will be done by first providing a rough overview of the total case universe. The rough overview concerns overall trends in

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6 Underlying the term ‘discourse’ is the idea that language has a structure, which can vary and take different patterns depending on the different domains of social life, such as ‘political discourse’. Based on the theories of structuralist and post-structuralist hermeneutics (within the field of social constructionism), discourses do not objectively portray the world, social relations or identities, but instead have an active part in creating and changing them. Michel Foucault shaped the understanding of discourse analysis, by defining discourse as a limited group of statements, belonging to the same discursive formation, defined by a group of conditions and thereby constituting a fragment of history. That is, although in theory individuals have infinite possibilities to construct statements, statements within a specific domain tend to be similar and repetitive, where certain statements would never get uttered or accepted as meaningful. The understanding that the subject is created through discourse is also based on Foucault, opposing the notion of the subject as a sovereign and autonomous being. The starting point of discourse analysis is to discover the meaning behind the statements, while reality cannot be detached from discourse and therefore, discourse in itself becomes the object of analysis. Rather than identifying true from false statements, discourse analysis is interested in the statement itself, exploring patterns in and across statements and to identify social consequences of the discursive representation of reality as portrayed in the statement. Although discourse analysis is not the same as content analysis, as the former concerns how something is said, whereas the latter concerns more what is said (Schreier 2012, 48), the theories of structuralist and post-structuralist hermeneutics apply to the latter as well.

Content analysis can be used to derive quantitative and qualitative data from oral, written and visual material, including their location, word count, similarities, counts, and so forth. The material can entail both primary and secondary sources and traditional as well as electronic communication. Newspaper, both print and online, are the most common written source used for content analysis for historical events. Radio programs can be used as a form of oral sources, which portray social, political and cultural values. Quantitative content analysis often requires strict coding based on a previously formed research hypothesis (Brancati 2018, 248, 250-259) but content analysis can also be used to derive qualitative data. Qualitative content analysis is an appropriate option when some level of interpretation of less standardized or of latent meaning is necessary, as the words in itself have no inherent meaning, but meaning is constructed and attributed to words. Within qualitative content analysis, coding remains flexible in that concept- and data-driven coding frames are applied rather than a standardized coding frame, so as not to only ensure reliability but also validity (Schreier 2012, 2, 7 15).

the changes in the discourse, including striking accumulations of publications, emergence of new aspects, and significant differences or similarities between cases. These cases are coded by time of publication, publisher, media outlet and overall attitude on the Truth Commission. The overview will be divided into six different timeframes according to major historical events or decisions taken. These include:

- the letter by Sáminuorra in 2008,
- the unanimously adopted motion on the establishment of a Truth Commission within the Sámi Parliament in 2014,
- the finalization of a compilation of the importance of a Truth Commission by the Sámi Parliament in 2016,
- the publication of the SWOT analysis in 2018,
- the publication of the preparation report by the Sámi Parliament and the decision by the Swedish government to implement the Truth Commission in 2021,
- and finally the last timeframe is set with the first conversational meetings in 2023.

The overview is followed by a qualitative content analysis that focuses on ‘telling cases’, which are strategically sampled, based on their content being either particularly representative of the discourse or comparably unique.

#### 4.1 Data collection

Our case universe is made up of the media coverage about the Truth Commission from Swedish newspapers and radio. The selection is based on our specific research interest, but is also influenced by accessibility. Control and confounding variables are applied to ensure that the media outlets are comparable (see Brancati 2018, 200 for methodological issues). These include the publishing/release date (January 2008 - April 2023), the search term “sanningskommission” and “Sámi\*” or “same\*” and that it is in the context of the country of Sweden. The timeframe decision is based on the first time a Sámi Truth Commission was demanded (DO 2016, 3) and major discursive events in the time since then. All articles and audio broadcasting also needed to be available online. This is no limitation in terms of a potential exclusion of particularly relevant sources given that online availability has become a standard and is also a means to reach audiences in sparsely populated regions like those inhabited by many Sámi. On this basis, the case universe was made up of 150 different newspaper articles and broadcasted media. The newspaper format is defined by a regular news coverage and public policy opinion formation, with at least one issue published per week, written in Swedish and distributed within Sweden. It is published under its own name and has its own editorial content that constitutes at least 55% of its total content (Riksdagsförvaltningen 1990).

The newspapers included in our analysis are the four most read newspapers in Sweden, calculated in a total net reach (of individuals) per day (Ocast n.d.); Dagens Nyheter (DN) with 457,000, Aftonbladet with 339,000, Svenska Dagbladet (SvD) with 288,000 and Expressen with 281,000 total net reach per day. Dagens Nyheter (DN) was established in 1864 and is an independent liberal daily morning newspaper that is published in Stockholm (Nationalencyklopedin n.d. a.). Svenska Dagbladet (SvD) was established in 1884 and is an independent moderate conservative daily morning newspaper that is published in Stockholm (Nationalencyklopedin n.d. b.). Aftonbladet was established in 1830 and is a social democratic evening newspaper in Stockholm (Nationalencyklopedin n.d. c.). Expressen was established in 1944 and is a liberal conservative evening tabloid paper (Nationalencyklopedin n.d. d.). The included audio broadcasts are Sveriges Radio AB (SR), which in-

cludes P1 (Sveriges Radio Program 1), P2 (Sveriges Radio Program 2), P3 (Sveriges Radio Program 3), P4 (Sveriges Radio Program 4) and Sameradion. Sveriges Radio is broadcasted since 1993 as a state-owned public service radio in Sweden (Nationalencyklopedin n.d. e.). The archive of the Sveriges Radio includes both articles and audio clips, which are both included in the analysis.

The cases sampled for the qualitative content analysis were strategically selected from the case universe that was screened. Six main agents will be identified, based on the case universe, which will therefore be considered in the strategic sampling method. Also, a variety of article publication and broadcast dates are considered, as well as the richness of data. Diversity in media outlets will be taken into account; however, as the media outlets vary significantly in the number of relevant publications, this criterion is not applied strictly. The cases sampled include one broadcast by a Sámi (2015), one article of the Church of Sweden (2016), one article about the statements from the Swedish Parliament (2018), one article by a Non-Sámi organization (2020), and one broadcast by a Sámi (2021). The article from 2015 by a Sámi agent is selected as an early example of a typical case on the commission and contains rich data. The article from the Church of Sweden (2016) is selected as an example of a typical case for this agent. The article from 2018 is selected as an overview of the variation within the government and different parties over time. The article from 2020 is selected as a deviant case for the agent. And the broadcast from 2021 is selected as a typical case for the agent and time period. For the sake of this research, the term 'article' and 'broadcast' have been used interchangeably.

#### 4.2 Variables and operationalization

The two main variables are 'agent' and 'attitude'. 'Agent' is the independent variable and is operationalized as the perceived spokesperson in the article or broadcast. The agent is determined by the affiliation/identity of the author or speaker, but it can also be filtered through the perspective of an interviewee or statements from a secondary agent, i.e. if the newspaper/broadcast is reporting on someone else's opinions. The agent must be identified in the same source. If an article/broadcast has several spokespersons, the spokesperson who mentions the Truth Commission will be used to operationalize. If an article/broadcast has several spokespersons on the topic of a Truth Commission, it will be categorized based on the affiliation of the spokesperson who receives the largest proportion in the article/broadcast, i.e. over 50%. This variable is further categorized into six categories, including: Sámi voices, Church of Sweden, Non-Sámi organization, Equality Ombudsman (DO), government and Other. 'Sámi voices' includes both Sámi individuals, organizations, parties, and the Sámi Parliament. The 'Church of Sweden' includes any representative of this church. 'Government' includes any parliamentary party of the Swedish Parliament or its representatives. 'Non-Sámi organization' includes both organizations and non-parliamentary parties that are not primarily based on the Sámi identity. 'Other' includes agents whose affiliation/identity is not identified, or agents that do not affiliate/identify with any of the categories above.

'Attitude' is the dependent variable and is operationalized as the overall attitude towards a Sámi Truth Commission that are further categorized into: positive, mixed, negative and neutral. Where 'positive' is clear support of the commission, 'mixed' indicates the existence of mixed attitudes, e.g. existence of positive and negative attitudes, and 'negative' indicates an opposition to or strong critique of the Truth Commission. 'Neutral' indicates that no clear stance in support or opposition to the commission can be identified.

Within the qualitative content analysis section (5.2.), both variables will be identified

more precisely. The open-coding method has led to the following seven codes: reconciliation, truth/historical acknowledgment, rights, rectification, forgiveness, discrimination, and health. 'Reconciliation' (försoning) concerns whether and how the agents discuss or mention any sort of reconciliation process. 'Truth/historical acknowledgment' (sanning/historisk granskning) concerns whether and how the agents discuss or mention the concept of truth and historical acknowledgment, or whether the agents argue for a relevance of historic heritage. 'Rights' (rättighet) concerns whether and how the agents discuss the concept of legal rights. 'Rectification' (upprättelse/åtgärder) concerns whether and how the agents discuss or mention possible consequences of the commission in terms of measures, compensation, etc. 'Forgiveness' (förlåtelse/ursäkt) concerns whether and how the agents discuss or mention the concept of forgiving, forgiveness, and apology. 'Discrimination' (kränkningar/diskriminering) concerns whether or how the agents discuss or mention the role and concept of insults, offense, racism and/or discrimination. 'Health' (hälsa/läka/trauma) concerns whether and how the agents discuss or mention health related issues, such as trauma, but also how they use medical language such as 'healing'.

## 5. RESULTS OF THE MEDIA ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Overview

This subchapter concerns a rough overview of all the extracted data from the complete case universe. These are categorized into six timespans, according to significant historical events, as mentioned previously: 2008-2013, 2014-2015, 2016-2017, 2018-2020, 2021-2022, 2023. The data collected primarily concerns the media outlet and agent. The overall attitude and length of the articles will also be briefly considered. The data is illustrated with the help of a table, to visualize the amount of media coverage per media outlet and agent within the respective timeframes. The case universe has a population of 150 different articles and broadcasted media, out of which 14 are from Dagens Nyheter (DN), 9 are from Svenska Dagbladet (SvD), 3 from Expressen, 15 are from Aftonbladet, and 11 are from Sveriges Radio (Sweden's Radio).

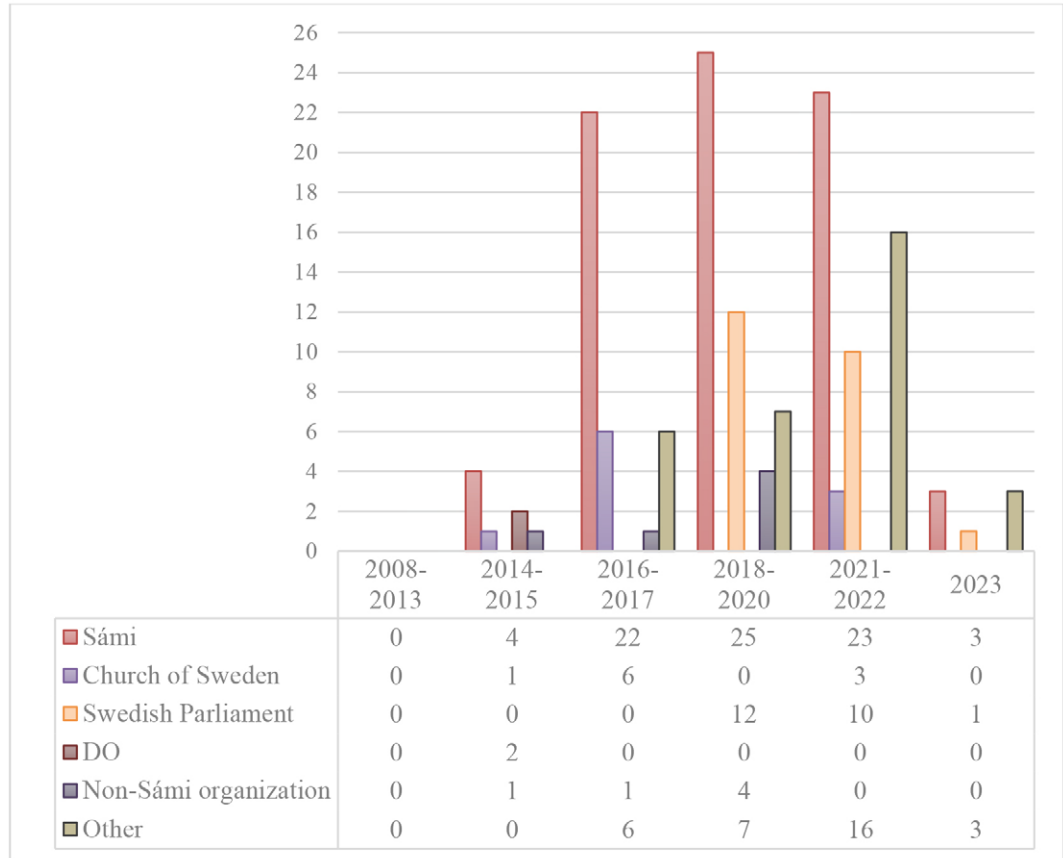


Table 1 Agents per timeframe

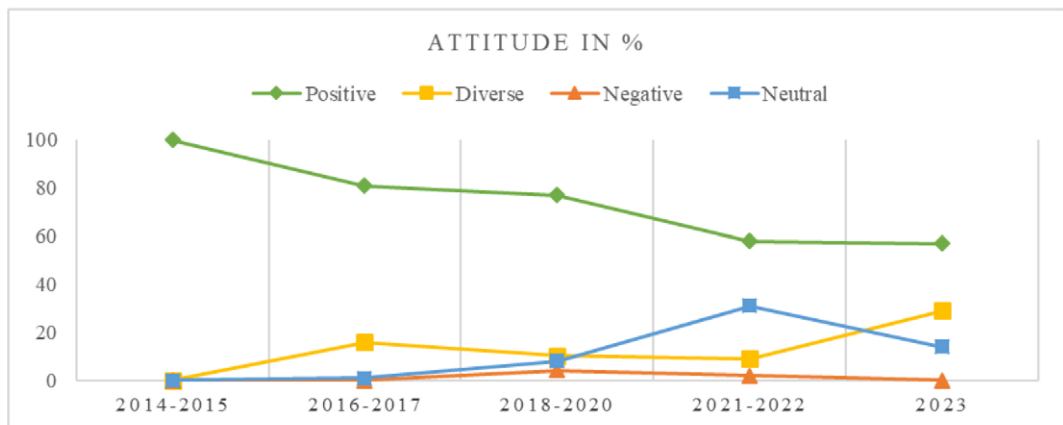


Table 2 Attitude in percentage

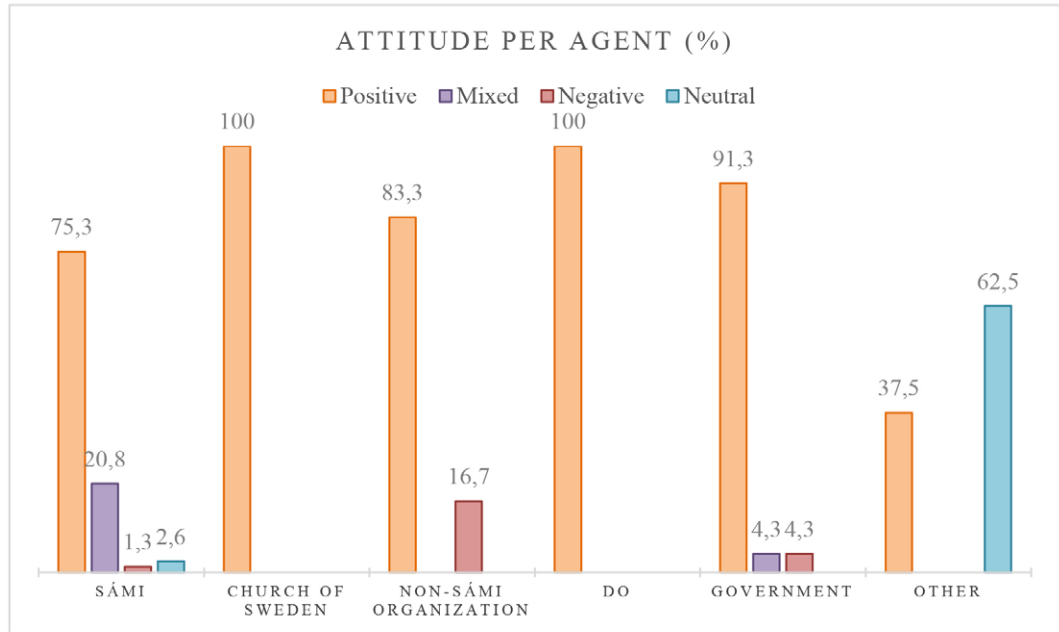


Table 3 attitude per agent in percentage

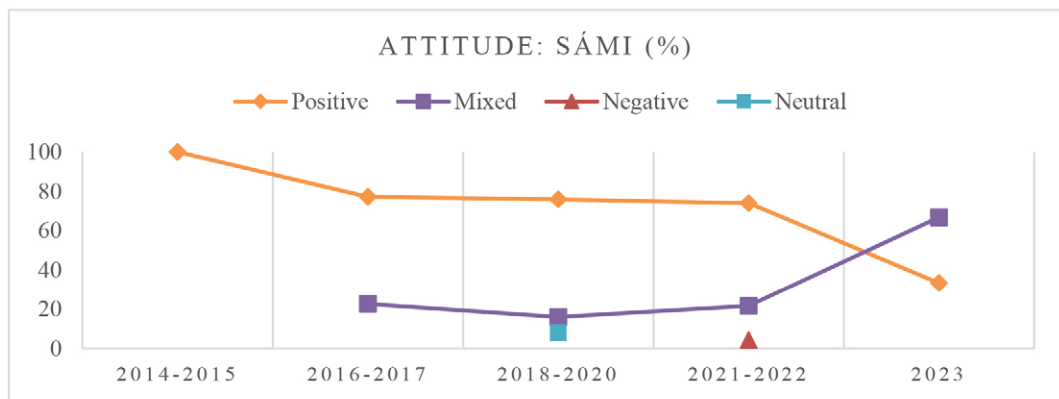


Table 4 attitude of "Sámi" over time in percentage

### 2008-2013

No data on media coverage of a Truth Commission in relation to the Sámi people is available. The Truth Commissions mentioned are mainly about Roma and Sinti, the Swedish King, war on terror, and other countries.



2014-2015

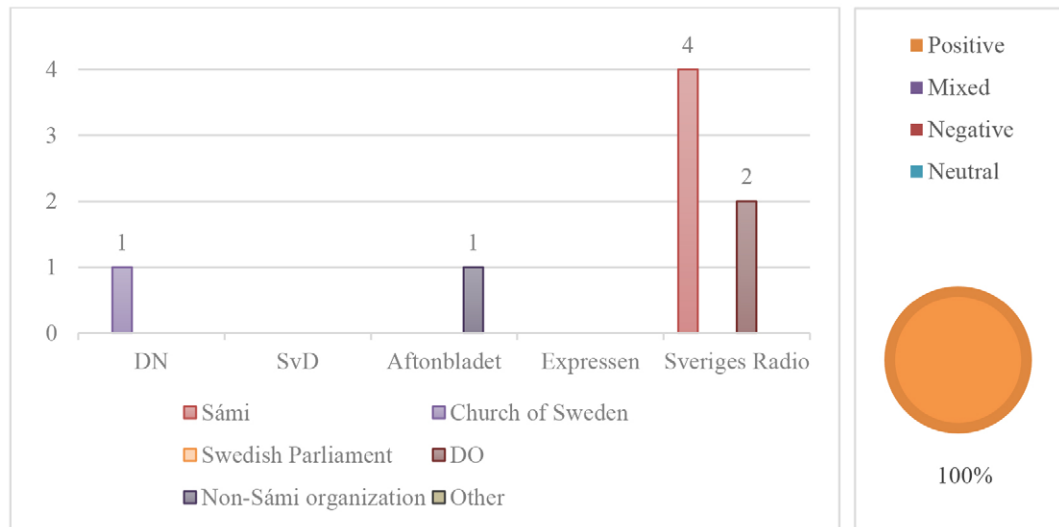


Table 6 number of publications/broadcasts by agents per media outlet

Table 5 attitude in percentage

The 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2014 marks the date on which the first media outlet mentioned the Truth Commission in relation to the Sámi people in Sweden. This was an article from a Sámi reporter, Ann Catrin Stenberg Partapuoli (2014), which mentioned the Sámi Parliament's demand for a Truth Commission to disclose the state's wrongdoings. Another article was published the same year, interviewing the Sámi party "Landspartiet venska samer" about the Truth Commission proposal and about the youth organization "Sáminuorra" (Rydenfalk 2014). These are followed by six further articles in 2015, published by DN, Aftonbladet and Sveriges Radio. DN's first article mentioning the Truth Commission in relation to the Sámi people was a debate article by the Swedish Archbishop Antje Jackelén (2015), as a representative for the Swedish Church. In it, she makes five specific demands to the Swedish government to "ensure respect for the Sámi's human rights", including the establishment of a Truth Commission to take responsibility for its colonial history, as inspired by Canada. Aftonbladet also published a debate article by 51 different non-governmental organizations, which demanded the new feminist government also adopt an anti-racist ideology. They call for the government to establish a Truth Commission to recognize "the discrimination against the Sámi and [adopt] comprehensive measures to repair its damages" (Afrosvenskarnas riksförbund et al. 2015). The Sveriges Radio published four articles/broadcasts, two of which were written from the perspective of the Equality Ombudsman (DO), demanding a Truth Commission for the Sámi people. Sveriges Radio also broadcasted an interview with a member of the Sámi parliament. All eight articles and broadcasts had a positive attitude towards the idea of a Sámi Truth Commission.

2016-2017

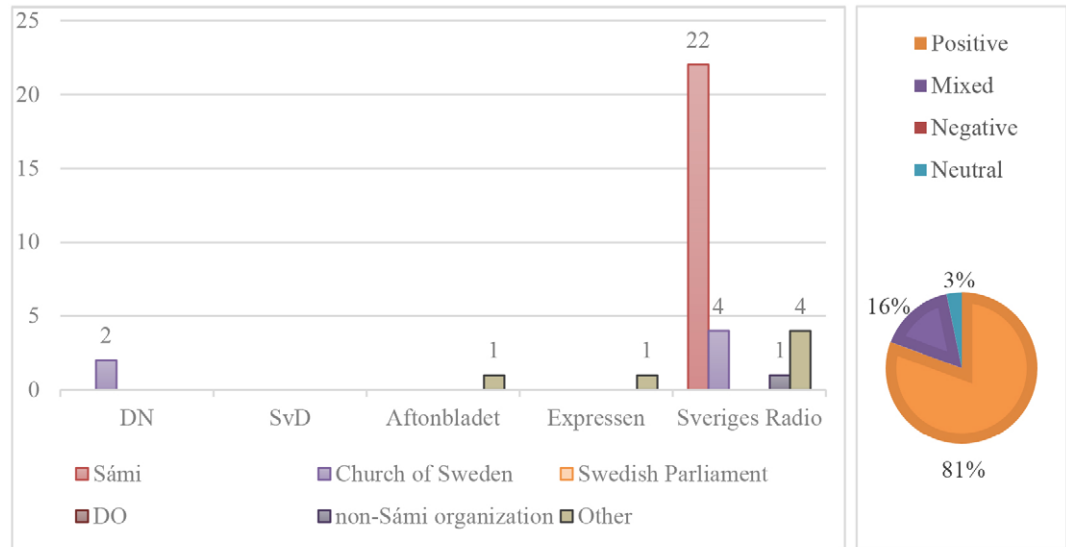


Table 8 number of publications/broadcasts by agents per media outlet

Table 7 attitude in percentage

Between 2016 and 2017, DN published two articles, one written by Antje Jackelén and Sylvia Sparrock, as representatives of the Church of Sweden, and one about the White Book published by the Church of Sweden. Both urge the government to take accountability for their part in Sweden's colonial past and to establish a Truth Commission as a step towards that goal. Expressen published their first article mentioning the Sámi Truth Commission in 2017, which is a theatre play review. In the article, the author describes herself as a "Non-Sámi mountain lover" (Edström 2017). Aftonbladet also publishes an article the same year, concerning the mental health situation of reindeer herding Sámi, arguing that a Truth Commission is the least the government could do for the Sámi people (Swedenmark 2016). The author's identity or affiliation cannot be clearly identified. Most articles, including broadcasts, were published by Sveriges Radio, which include 30 articles/broadcasts in total. 22 of these are documented from a Sámi perspective, four from the perspective of the Swedish Church, three are published by agents in the category "other", one by a Non-Sámi organization, and one is a factual article.

Four broadcasts interviewed representatives of the Church of Sweden, ranging from 1:00-4:09 minutes, where two broadcasts are identical but published on different dates, one in Sameradion and one in P4. In all of them, the representatives urge the state to implement a Sámi Truth Commission. Both audio broadcasts in the category "other" concern the arts (15:00 and 59:00 minutes), where both discuss a Sámi theater production about a Truth Commission. The third article in this category is an interview with Marie Wilson, who was a member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, discussing possibilities of establishing a similar commission in Sweden. The article by a Non-Sámi organization agent is from the perspective of the Swedish National Association of Tornedalians, suggesting a shared Truth Commission for the Sámi people and the Tornedalians. The factual article declares upcoming round table discussions for a possible Truth Commission. Until 2017, all articles and broadcasts from a Sámi perspective discussed the possible Truth Commission in a positive light, urging the government to establish them. The 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017 marks the first time where an article on Sámi agents (216 words) discusses disagreement with and opposition to the Truth Commission. It is followed by four other articles/broadcasts that document mixed attitudes towards the commission. These take, for example, the form of debates on radio. One argument used by the Swedish Sámi National

Confederation (SSR) as criticism against the commission is the idea that a little minority would not have a significant impact on the state or the world (Niia & Påve 2017).

2018-2020

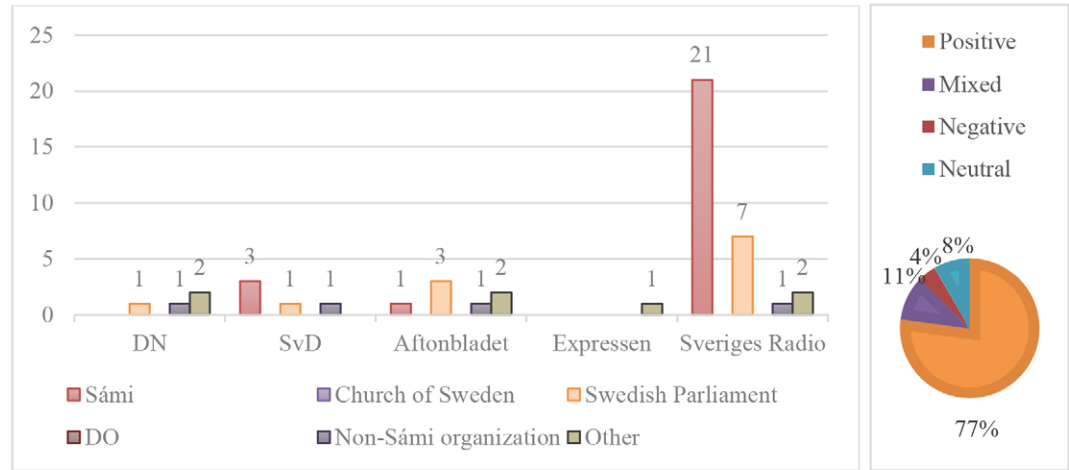


Table 10 number of publications/broadcasts by agents per media outlet

Table 9 attitude in percentage

2018 marks the year SvD published an article related to the Sámi Truth Commission. Within this timeframe, SvD publishes five articles, three of which are from a Sámi perspective, one is from a Non-Sámi organization (Amnesty), and one is on the government’s perspective. All of them have a positive attitude towards a possible Truth Commission. The article by Amnesty and the two articles from the Sámi perspective only mention the commission briefly and focus more on how Sámi’s trust in the government is impacted by Löfven (S) not wanting to give a position on this matter. In contrast, the one article from the government perspective, Lind (MP) mentions the commission as one of her demands towards reconciliation. DN includes four articles: one article about the government (MP pushing for the government’s involvement); one article from a Non-Sámi organization (Härjedalsspartiet) opposing an exclusively Sámi commission; and two historical articles about the Sámi people. The latter two and the article about MP only briefly mention the commission. The article from the Non-Sámi organization focuses on the commission throughout the article, arguing that a Truth Commission for the Sámi would only lead to the “falsification of history” (Larsson 2020). Expressen published one article about media representation, mentioning the commission briefly. Aftonbladet published seven articles, the majority of which are about the government (3), one article from a Non-Sámi organization (Amnesty), two articles about race biology from non-identified agents, and one article from a Sámi perspective. Two of the government articles document the Green Party’s (MP) demand for a Truth Commission and one documents the Centre Party’s (C) demand for a Truth Commission.

Sveriges Radio published and broadcasted 31 articles, the majority from a Sámi perspective (21), 7 articles from the government’s perspective, two factual articles and one from a Non-Sámi organization (Amnesty). Among the government articles is one article with a negative attitude towards the commission, where the government declined the motion for a commission, marking the first article with a negative attitude. Two articles document mixed opinions among the parliamentary parties and the remaining four articles illustrate the MP’s demand for a commission. The articles with a Sámi perspective debate the best

methods for the commission, where four articles illustrate mixed opinions, discussing strengths and weaknesses of a Truth Commission, concerning practical and logistical problems.

2021-2022

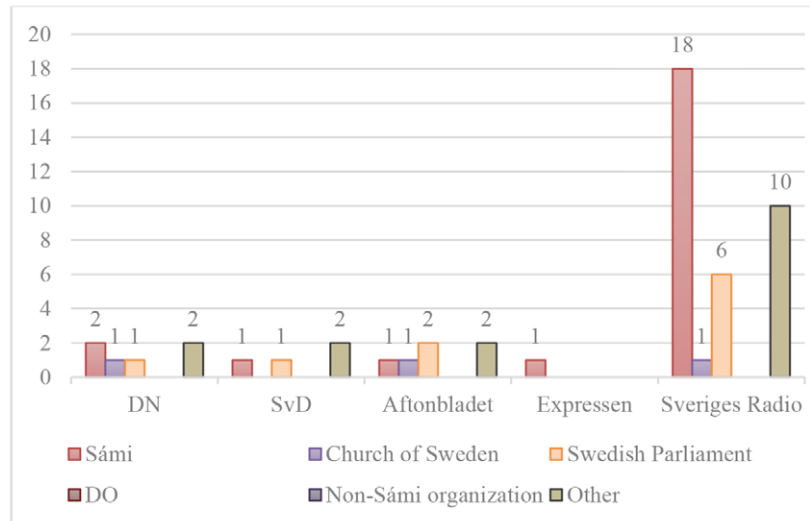


Table 12 number of publications/broadcasts by agents per media outlet

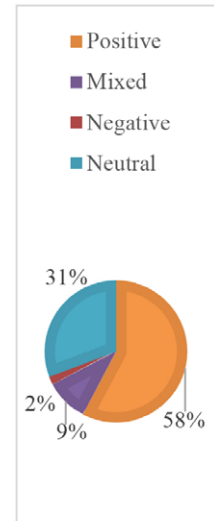


Table 11 attitude in percentage

DN published six articles between 2021 and 2022: one about the Church of Sweden's point of view, two from a Sámi perspective, one from the perspective of the government, and two factual articles. All the articles, excluding the factual articles, portray a positive stance on the Truth Commission. The government perspective is from the perspective of the MP. SvD published four articles, including one from the government perspective, one from a Sámi perspective and two factual articles. Apart from the factual article, all articles portray a positive stance towards the commission. Expressen published one article from a Sámi perspective with a positive attitude on the Truth Commission. Aftonbladet published six articles, including two factual articles that are identical with the factual articles in DN and SvD. The other four articles portray the Truth Commission positively. Two of those are written from the government perspective, one from the Church of Sweden, and one from a Sámi perspective. The Sveriges Radio published the majority with 35 articles, including the only article that has a negative attitude towards the Truth Commission during this timeframe, written from a Sámi perspective. In total, Sveriges Radio published 18 articles from a Sámi perspective, the majority (12) with a positive attitude, with five articles portraying mixed attitudes towards the commission. The articles from the government (6) and the Church of Sweden (1) perspectives all portray a positive attitude towards the Truth Commission. Sveriges Radio also included nine factual articles and one article from an agent in the category "Other" with a neutral stance.

2023

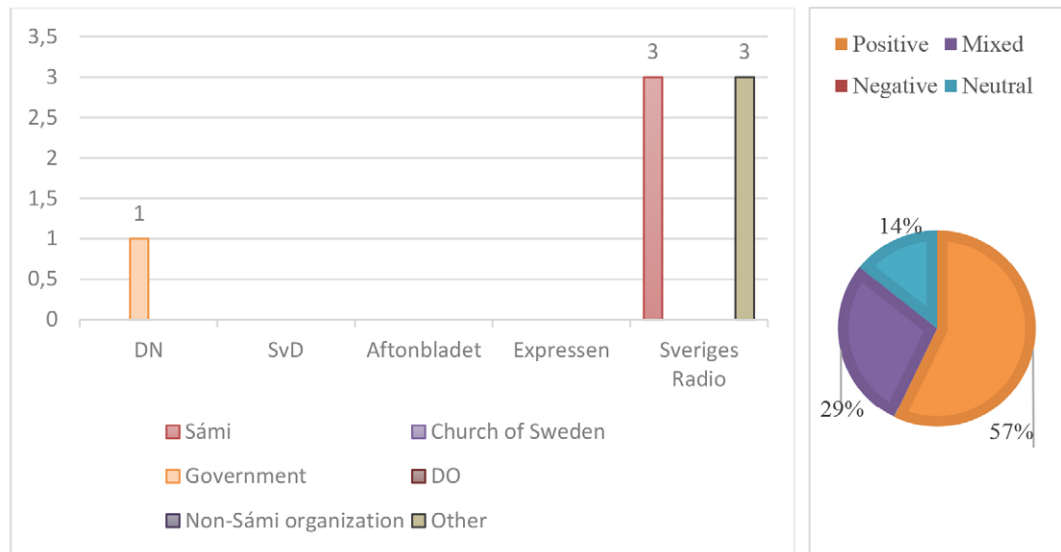


Table 14 number of publications/broadcasts by agents per media outlet

Table 13 attitude in percentage

From January to April 2023, seven articles were published, the majority within Sveriges Radio (6) and one in DN from the government's perspective. Sveriges Radio published two articles from agents in the category "Other" with positive attitudes towards the commission, and one neutral and factual article. The three articles from a Sámi perspective have mixed attitudes towards the commission and concern the work of the commission.

## 5.2 Qualitative content analysis

This subchapter offers an in-depth qualitative content analysis on five cases for a systematic comparison over time. As mentioned above, the cases that are sampled are: Sámi (2015), Church of Sweden (2016), Swedish Parliament (2018), Non-Sámi Organization (2020) and Sámi (2021).

### *Sámi agent (2015)*

Marie Persson, as a representative of Sametinget, was interviewed in Sveriges Radio to discuss Sametinget's demand for a Truth Commission. The agent explains that the reason for the commission's current relevance, seven years after the proposal by Sáminuorra, is a movie screening concerning the Sámi people and an upcoming hearing of the UN Human Rights Council. The concept of *reconciliation* is not mentioned by Persson, neither are the concepts of *forgiveness* or *discrimination*. Instead, her 10-minute interview focuses on the concepts of *historical acknowledgments*, *rights*, and *rectification*. The commission is contextualized in a historical perspective, outlining a persistent state-led colonization-policy that has clear impacts on the current generation. In this argument, the concept of "making invisible" the Sámi (Persson 2015, 03:26) and the ideology of race biology are used to explain problems both among Sámi people and between Sámi and Swedes. This becomes apparent in the debate on mines, for example, which is one of the few areas where Swedes acknowledge Sámi people as an indigenous people within the public discourse.

As Persson argues, there is still a significant lack of knowledge and acknowledgement of the Sámi people's situation in Sweden, and the Truth Commission could be an important measure to create understanding between Sápmi and Sweden. Understanding the history

is hoped to lead to a new awareness and approach. While historical acknowledgment is described as a major objective of the Truth Commission, the agent argues that there is a significant difference between a Truth Commission and a White Book (as proposed by the Left Party). The former is supposed to be all-encompassing, include all Sámi people, and hold the state accountable, instead of creating a product that can be used as an excuse to move on. Thereby, the commission is hoped to provide an opportunity for substantial rectification, such as compensation and change in legal frameworks. Persson hopes for harsh critique by observers in the hearing of the Human Rights Council but believes that the Truth Commission will be the driver to push the government to modernizing its national laws. However, according to the agent, the Sámi people “don’t only fight for their rights but their existence” (Persson 2015, 06:28-06:36). Additionally, the concept of *health* is another important aspect of the Truth Commission, both in the commission’s goal (healing generational trauma) and in its challenges, as this is a challenging and painful process. The broadcast has a clearly positive attitude towards the Truth Commission, strongly arguing for the establishment of such a commission.

#### *Church of Sweden (2016)*

The article in DN is published by the archbishop of Sweden, Antje Jackelén, and the chairman of the Sámi council within the Church of Sweden, Sylvia Sparrock. They argue for the state’s need to establish a Truth Commission for the Sámi people. The Truth Commission is mentioned twice within the subheading, once as a “Truth Commission” and once as a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission”. Within the subheading, the article argues that such a commission needs to be designed and directed by the Sámi people themselves, rather than by the state. *Reconciliation* is mentioned nine times in total, two times as a potential form of commission for Sweden, and once in reference to Canada, which served as an example of what this commission could entail. Further, the article focuses on a theological approach to reconciliation and the church’s “task to stand in the service of reconciliation or the diaconia of reconciliation, as it is called by the apostle Paul”; whereas the state’s task “for reconciliation is derived from human rights”. Additionally, a reconciled relationship is described as the ultimate desired goal of any measures undertaken between the state/church and the Sámi people (Jackelén & Sparrock 2016).

The aspect of *truth* and *historical acknowledgment* is also discussed in the article. The historical context is described as a “colonial past” already in the title. Two paragraphs (196 words) exclusively describe historical events and the church’s role in them. The focus lies on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and includes segregation, categorization, nomad schools, loss of language and culture, and race biology. It describes the role of priests as “facilitators” for other state and academic institutions, in the form of boarding schools, by using their authority to permit racial examinations, and by perpetuating stereotypes. This historical heritage is strongly linked to the present, arguing that this history has had consequences on the Sámi people that last until today. They also raise questions for further discussion, such as “Why do we need to take responsibility for wrongs committed by those who have gone before us?” whilst arguing that Sámi life and experiences are still “invisible” today. The concept of *rights* is another major component of the article, in the form of international human rights, including indigenous rights and national rights. The need to ratify the ILO-convention 169 is discussed as a necessity to “move on”. Both concepts of *reconciliation* and *historical acknowledgment* are connected to the concepts of human rights, where human rights create the state’s responsibility for reconciliation and where historical acknowledgement is a pre-condition for respecting human rights. Furthermore, they accuse the Swedish state of hypocrisy by highlighting Sweden’s role in pushing other countries to respect international

rights, while not acknowledging their own “historical debt” towards the indigenous population in the country (ibid.).

The concept of *measures* and *rectification* are mentioned twice in the article, as “it also requires rectification in word and deed” by correcting everything that is possible. The concept of *discrimination* is mentioned four times, in the form of forced conversion, desecration of Sámi objects of worship, deprivation of Sámi identity, and so on. The concept of *health* is mentioned twice in the sense of healing relationships. And the concept of *forgiveness* is mentioned twice within a paragraph, discussing that an apology by the perpetrator is not enough, as both the church and the state have issued apologies that did not have the right impact. In conclusion, the agent of this article clearly expresses strong positive attitudes towards the possibility of a Truth Commission (ibid.).

#### *Swedish Parliament (2018)*

The article published by Sveriges Radio reveals the perspectives of 6 parliamentary parties on a Sámi Truth Commission, including the Centre Party (C), the Liberals (L), the Moderate Party (M), the Swedish Social Democratic Party (S), the Swedish Democrats (SD) and the Left Party (V). The Green Party (MP) and Christian Democrats (KD) are also briefly mentioned. The concept of *reconciliation* is mentioned once, that is by the Liberals, who argue that a continued reconciliation process needs to be enabled through policies. The concept of *historical acknowledgement* is briefly mentioned three times by the Centre Party, the Moderate Party and the Social Democratic Party. The first argues that a Truth Commission should investigate the state’s abuse against the Sámi people; the second argues for the need to put right the “dark history regarding Sweden’s treatment of the Sámi”, and the third argues for the necessity to “get clarity and shed light on the Swedish state’s actions towards the Sámi throughout history” and expresses being prepared to listen to the experiences of those concerned (Heikki & Lindström 2018).

The concept of *rights* is only mentioned by the Centre Party in the sense of the state violating international human rights. It is also the only party, together with the Liberals, that mentions the concept of *rectification*: the Centre Party would accept “proposals for appropriate measures” and the Liberals argue for the need of rectification. The concept of *forgiveness* is mentioned by the Liberals, referring to the state’s public apology in 1988 as an important but insufficient step. The concept of *discrimination* is not mentioned by any party, and the concept of *health* is mentioned by the Centre Party in the form of “historic trauma”. According to the article, the Green Party, the Moderate Party, and the Left Party assess the possibility of a Truth Commission as a very good idea. The Liberal Party, the Centre Party, the Christian Democrats, and the Social Democratic Party assess it as a good idea. However, the Liberals do not want to commit themselves to the framework of a commission. The Social Democratic Party and the Moderate Party want to wait for the Sámi Parliament to finalize their proposals. The Swedish Democrats are the only party that assess the idea of a commission as less good and express concerns about the financing of such a commission (ibid.).

#### *Non-Sámi organization (2020)*

In the article published by DN, the chairman of the Härjedalspartiet, Olle Larsson (2020), argues against the establishment of a Sámi Truth Commission. In the article, the concepts of *reconciliation*, *forgiveness*, *rectification*, *discrimination*, and *health* are not discussed. Instead, the article focuses on the concepts of *rights* and *historical acknowledgement*. Larsson argues that giving the Sámi people their own Truth Commission could risk distorting the truth. Only a commission including all historical ethnic minorities of the North would



be “based on actual history”. According to Larsson, the land in northern Sweden has been inhabited by humans for the last 4,000 years, and the Sámi people have inhabited the land in the last 2,000 years – “despite that, only the Sámi are classified as indigenous people in Sweden”. Larsson argues that the earliest ethnic groups are intentionally forgotten, despite the available facts. Here, Larsson differentiates between a ‘native Sámi’ and the ‘Northern Sámi’, also described as the ‘reindeer herders.’ The latter supposedly immigrated in the 1850s from Russia and Finland, with the support of the Swedish state, and to the disadvantage of the “native users of the lands”, that are Kväner and the native Sámi. This expansion, which Larsson argues continues until the present day, led to the regression of national rights for mountain farmers, “who were robbed of their land and opportunities to practice their livelihood, culture and manage their cultural heritage”. Therefore, Larsson argues, calling the land mass Sápmi is a “falsification of history”, which risks getting perpetuated through an exclusively Sámi Truth Commission. In this understanding, Sámi people have historically benefited from the state’s oppression of other minorities’ rights, and a Truth Commission could be a first step for other ethnic minorities to “demand their historical rights”.

#### *Sámi agent (2021)*

In an almost 15-minute debate section on Sveriges Radio, eight Sámi parties discuss the role of the upcoming Truth Commission prior to the Sámi parliamentary elections. The debate starts with a pre-recorded interview of a voter, who expresses confusion over the possible role of a Truth Commission and sees it as a waste of money, which could potentially create more conflicts rather than any tangible benefits. According to an opinion poll by Sameradion SVT Sápmi, only 1% of the Sámi electorate think the Truth Commission is the most important issue for the Sámi parliament to work on. The voters prioritize ten other policy areas before this commission, while seven out of the eight parties present in the debate think that a Truth Commission is an important priority. The concept of *reconciliation* is mentioned twice (by two parties) as a possible outcome of such a commission, where one argues that the commission lays the groundwork for discussions on reconciliation, and another argues that a reconciliation process could be the second stage following the commission. However, all parties agree on the commission’s role in *historical acknowledgment*, although to different extents. The New Sámi Reform Party stands out: they argue that improving historical insight is never wrong, however, it is not very useful given that the most affected are already dead, and this process may only serve as “a band-aid on the wound of those who are very old” (Sarri 2021, 09:25-09:30). Nevertheless, all other parties place a strong emphasis on the importance of historical acknowledgement for the current and coming generations, describing it as understanding the “relationship between cause and effect” (ibid. 02:09-02:13). Historical examples mentioned include the assimilation process, segregation, forced displacements, colonization policies, silencing policies, boarding schools, and the reindeer herding act. The idea of *truth* is more deeply discussed by the Hunting and Fishing Sámi (JF), arguing that historical narratives are skewed and that “truth has many roots” (ibid. 05:19-05:33). The historical acknowledgment is hoped to increase awareness among the Swedish society, the state’s representatives, and also among the Sámi people themselves. Two of the parties also recognize that historical acknowledgement can be a challenging process for the Sámi people, as many do not want to face the history and relive it: “Because we still do not tell the complete history to our children [...]. I think we do not want to realize what we went through ourselves” (ibid. 08:45-08:59). To document the Sámi history is a goal in itself, but also to avoid similar events to reoccur in the future.

The concepts of *rights* are mentioned three times, as international human rights, indigenous rights, and children's rights. Following the concept of historical acknowledgment, the concept of rights is the second most significant for the parties, especially in the context of *ratification*, where hopes of legal measures include the right to co-determination and consent on issues impacting Sámi lives (Free, Prior and Informed Consent FPIC), such as the exploitations of resources. Other legal measures include a change in the reindeer herding act and education legislation, whereas some argue that the reindeer herding act should not be mixed-up with the commission, as "it will not give any results, but will lead to delays" (ibid. 13:01-13:11). Through an educated public and with the help of state representatives with historical awareness, the idea is that "decision-makers will have a better understanding of our requirements and what we expect from society" (ibid. 03:35-03:42). The measures are expected to be finalized in the second phase of the commission, post the hearings and collection of experiences.

The concept of *discrimination* is mentioned once, where it is claimed that Sámi have been individually and collectively discriminated against for a long time, but many are not aware of it even among the Sámi people. While the concept of *forgiveness* is not discussed in the debate, the concept of *health* plays a much bigger role. Both, as a reason for the need of such a commission for people that are experiencing generational trauma, and as a goal of the commission, where the reconciliation process is described as a healing process. However, it is also perceived as a challenge for the commission, considering the possibility of reliving trauma through the commission and thus, also as a reason as to why Sámi people may oppose the establishment of a Truth Commission.

Agent	Reconciliation	Historical acknowledgment	Rights	Rectification	Forgiveness	Discrimination	Health
Sámi (2015)		X	X	X			X
Church of Sweden (2016)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Swedish Parliament (2018)	X	X	X	X			X
Non-Sámi organization (2020)		X	X				
Sámi (2021)	X	X	X	X		X	X

Table 15 QCA: comparison of variables

## 6. DISCUSSION OF THE DISCOURSE SURROUNDING THE TRUTH COMMISSION

### Overview: Agents

The data strongly suggests that 'Sámi' are the most predominant agents in the discourse on the Sámi Truth Commission from 2014-2023, making up 51.3% of the total data. The second-largest percentage of the total discourse is the agent 'Other' with 21.3%, followed

by the 'Government' with 15,3%. There has been a strong and consistent increase in the total articles and broadcasts published throughout the timeframes until 2021-2022, peaking with 52 articles/broadcasts in this timeframe, which equates to 34.7% of the total data. Sámi agents published most articles/broadcasts in the timeframe 2018-2020, with 25 articles/broadcasts (32.5% of all articles/broadcasts by Sámi agents). The government published most articles/broadcasts in 2018-2020, with 12 articles/broadcasts (52.2% of all articles/broadcasts by the government), while the Church of Sweden published most articles/broadcasts in 2016-2017 with 6 articles (60% of all articles/broadcasts by the Church of Sweden). 'Other' published most articles/broadcasts in 2021-2022 with 16 articles/broadcasts (50% of all articles/broadcasts by Other). The least number of articles/broadcasts were published in the timeframe 2023 with (4.7%) and 2014-2015 (5.3%), excluding the timeframe 2008-2013.

The timeframe 2023 is the shortest timeframe, spanning only four months (January-April), compared to the other timeframes that span over a minimum of two years. This is likely a factor in the low number of published articles/broadcasts. The fact that the hearing of the commission had already begun could also constitute a factor as to why there was less coverage and debate about whether a commission should take place – although this would not impact the coverage on the commission's hearings and process, which five out of seven articles/broadcasts focus on.

The public discourse about the Sámi Truth Commission in Sweden clearly erupted in 2014, in correlation with the unanimously adopted motion within the Sámi Parliament to the establishment of a Truth Commission. Prior to this date, no mention of these phenomena can be found within the five media outlets selected, suggesting that it did not have a particular importance for the public before the adoption of the motion in the Sámi Parliament. This finding is supported by the qualitative content analysis of the first case (Sámi 2015), in which the role of the previous letter by Sáminuorra is described as important for the internal process of the Sámi Parliament but not as a relevant factor for the wider public. Instead, important factors in the public are said to be art (i.e. a film-screening) and the attention and norms of international organizations (i.e. United Nations, ILO). The earliest agents covering the commission include the agents Church of Sweden, Non-Sámi Organization, Sámi, and DO.

The timeframe 2014-2015 marks the only period in which articles/broadcasts were published by the DO, suggesting that the DO might have played a role in initiating a discourse about the commission, but has had little to no decisive public role in developing or driving the discourse further. The Swedish Church has been one of the first agents to express the demand for a Sámi Truth Commission and has also been continuously involved in the discourse, although not as one of the most dominant actors. Similarly, Non-Sámi organizations have taken part in the discourse about a Truth Commission from 2014-2020, as a minor agent. Overall, the clear majority of voices discussing the Truth Commission from 2014-2023 are Sámi voices. The Swedish Parliament and government parties first join the discourse in 2018, with the publication of the related SWOT analysis, but have since been active in the discourse throughout the timeframes. The agent 'Other' will be discussed in the next section ('attitude').

Sámi agents have been the most dominant within the discourse throughout the timeframes, making up 51,3% of the total articles/broadcasts published. They are primarily published and broadcasted on Sweden's Radio channels, especially on Sameradion. This is clearly over-dimensional compared to the size of the Sámi population in Sweden. The data hence suggests that the discourse has been most prevalent for and among the Sámi people, which is in line with the idea that the commission should be organized, designed, and executed by the Sámi people themselves. Hence, Sámi agents need to be included and at the

forefront of the discourse surrounding its creation. On the other hand, this finding can also indicate a lack of interest and concern for the commission and for Sámi issues at large in the majority of Swedish society. According to an international expert, this could work against the commission's aims: examples such as Canada have shown that a successful commission requires the understanding that the commission concerns everyone (Nutti & Sunna, 2016).

#### *Overview: Attitude*

Notably, every single article/broadcast in the timeframe 2014-2015 had a positive attitude towards a Sámi Truth Commission! This could be due to the situation, that at this early stage the only people writing about the commission were people who wanted to push forward the demand. Potential critics might not have heard about the demand yet, or the idea of a commission might not have received sufficient attention to incentivize critics to make the effort to express negative concerns. The 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2017 marks the first time that disagreements about the Truth Commission were voiced in public among the Sámi agents.

Within the timeframe 2016-2017, several articles/broadcasts with mixed attitudes occur, all of which are from the perspective of Sámi agents. Thereby, the Sámi people are both the agents that contribute most to the discourse in total, while also being the ones most openly critical towards the commission. There could be several reasons for this. Since the commission is a bigger topic of discussion among Sámi people, it is more likely that, due to the number of articles/broadcasts, some of them will also express concerns (mixed attitude). Sámi agents might also consider that their being critical towards the commission as legitimate, while non-Sámi agents may not. As 'the Sámi agent' – in terms of our research analysis – is, of course, a heterogeneous group, consisting of a diverse set of actors, it is likely that there is contestation, political competition etc., between different parties and organizations, leading to a more critical discourse in this section. The Sámi are also the primary group that will be affected by a commission and might for that reason also be more skeptical of the commission, or have fears that it could have negative impacts on them.

Positive attitudes among the Sámi agent decrease in the following timeframe (from 77.3% to 76% positive attitudes among Sámi), in correlation with the round table and SWOT analysis. And there is a significant increase in neutral attitudes held, with 8% compared to 0% in all other timeframes. This could be an effect of internal discussions held among the Sámi people, in which concerns have been addressed. At the same time, less public demand of the Sámi people needs to be emphasized with the publication of the SWOT analysis, as the analysis takes over that function. However, the mixed attitudes within the Sámi agent rise again in 2021-2022 (21.7%), reaching almost the same level as prior to the round table discussions (22,7%). There might be several confounding and control variables that have an impact on this data. For example, the Sámi parliament election 2021 (Sametinget 2021 b.) may have generated more discourses in the form of debates, thereby also highlighting the mixed attitudes towards the commission. Within this timeframe, the first and only article/broadcast was published by a Sámi agent with an outspoken negative attitude towards the commission, where the agent expresses discontent over the party-political nature of the commission (Gaup 2021).

In 2023, the majority of Sámi attitudes expressed in the articles/broadcasts are mixed (66.7%), compared to 33,3% of positive attitudes expressed by the Sámi agent. This could be due to several reasons, such as that the Truth Commission has already started its work, which also means that there is no longer the same necessity to push for a commission, as in earlier timeframes. There would therefore also not be the same necessity for the Sámi

agent to express strong positive attitudes towards the commission. Instead, it is more likely that articles/broadcasts express concerns towards the structure and practiced methods adopted by the commission. Another reason could be the short amount of time within this timeframe, which is a limitation for our research, as the data might not be fully comparable from this timeframe to the other studied periods.

The Swedish Church was one of the first agents to express the demand for a Sámi Truth Commission and, throughout the timeframes, has expressed exclusively positive attitudes towards the commission. Similarly, the DO expressed exclusively positive attitudes, however, the data is very limited. The Swedish government and parliament representatives largely expressed positive attitudes towards the commission (91.3%). However, there are a few exceptions with mixed (4.3%) and negative attitudes (4.3%), which are expressed in the timeframe 2018-2020. This correlates with the reception of the SWOT analysis but also with the Swedish general election in 2018 (Valmyndigheten 2018). Non-Sámi organizations express positive attitudes in the majority of articles/broadcasts (83.3%); however, they also have the highest proportion of negative attitudes (16.7%) compared to other agents. As the data is limited, one should note that 16.7% corresponds to only one article/broadcast. While the agent 'Other' poses a minority in positive attitudes (27.5%), it has a majority in neutral attitudes (62.5%), and no articles/broadcasts could be identified as expressing mixed or negative attitudes towards the commission. This could be due to the fact that most of the non-identifiable agents followed a factual report, in which attitudes were not explicitly expressed. Positive attitudes expressed by the agent 'Other' were highest in 2016-2017 (83%), but decreased constantly throughout the timeframes, down to 66.7% in 2023. The neutral attitudes increased from 16.7% in 2016-2017 to 100% in 2021-2022, and 33.3% in 2023. This is signaling a shift from a discourse in support of the commission towards a neutral, factual coverage on the development of the commission, in correlation to its establishment.

We are aware of the limitations of this research in identifying both agent and attitude: An agent can be identified implicitly or the same article/broadcast can express the attitudes of several agents at the same time. Also, the agent 'Other', as mentioned above, oftentimes goes hand in hand with the attitude 'neutral'. At the same time, attitudes might also be implicit. There also needs to be a clear distinction between the opposition to the commission as such (negative attitude) and the critique on individual mechanisms adopted by the commission (positive attitude to the commission). The latter might oppose certain issues related to the commission and still support the existence of a commission in general. However, in reality, this distinction can be difficult to spot. That said, the analysis of the changes in the sampled media discourse surrounding the Truth Commission in Sweden does reveal an interesting interplay between the creation of a tool to tackle past human rights violations and the public grappling with what this entails in the present.

Generally speaking, most articles express a positive attitude towards the commission, while the critical voices mostly came from within the Sámi community. The control variables, that is the specific selected search terms, could also have had an effect, as critical articles towards indigenous rights and the Sámi community in general might not use the term "sanningskommission" (Truth Commission). Swedish social norms can also have an impact on how and if people express open criticism. Thus, withholding attention could also be its own form of criticism, in line with the silencing/invisible-making policy as mentioned above. This becomes apparent in an article included in the analysis, which takes the form of a reply to a previous article, in which the author argues that Sámi people are demanding unfair privileges over the rest of the population (Arpi 2018; Riksorganisationen Same Ätnam et. Al. 2018). In fact, as most of the current controversies concern questions of land use, rights to entertain mines and exploit resources, the relationship between the Truth

Commission and Sámi rights to control resources or hamper green energy policies might still be too fuzzy to fuel a public debate with more distinct positions.

### *Qualitative Content Analysis*

*Reconciliation* is used as a concept in three out of the five cases, that is by the Church of Sweden (2016), the Swedish Parliament (2018), and the Sámi (2021). Interestingly, reconciliation was not a relevant concept in the case made by Sámi (2015), whereas the Church of Sweden used the term Truth and Reconciliation Commission to describe the demand. Thus, there seems to either be confusion about which terms to use to describe the commission's goals or a diversion of understandings. In that case, it could be that the church places the commission within their theological framework of reconciliation. This agent has the strongest focus on the concept of reconciliation, referring to it nine times, and describing reconciliation as the ultimate goal for any measures taken in regard to Sámi and state/church relations. However, according to the Sámi agent, the focus of the commission was foremost on truth, rather than on reconciliation, both early on and throughout the discourse. Even in the other three cases studied, reconciliation is not mentioned as a primary motive of the commission, but the commission is rather placed in a larger reconciliation-process context. The Liberal Party argues for the need to pursue further reconciliation-policies, which do not necessarily need to take the shape of a commission. Thus, for the Liberals, the Truth Commission is not a necessary component of a reconciliation process, and the reconciliation process as such is preferred to the Truth Commission. Sámi parties (2021) argue that reconciliation can only become an outcome of the Truth Commission if the commission lays the groundwork for a possible reconciliation process. Thus, the Sámi agents (2016 & 2021) prefer to focus on the Truth Commission, rather than on the reconciliation process, but without rejecting the idea of a longer-term goal of 'reconciliation'.

According to all five cases, at least one of the main objectives of the Truth Commission is *historical acknowledgement*. Sámi (2015), Non-Sámi organization (2020), and Sámi (2021) clearly state that it is the most important objective. The two Sámi cases emphasize the lasting consequences of the historical injustices committed against the Sámi people and thereby highlight the commission's relevance for the current generation, in seeking to educate people and reveal the "truth" that had been made invisible. This is more thoroughly discussed in the latter case, where mixed attitudes are expressed concerning the concept of historical acknowledgment. Both a Sámi individual and the New Sámi Reform Party argue that historical acknowledgment will not bring significant benefits to the Sámi people, as those who were directly impacted are either very old or deceased. The Sámi individual also emphasizes that focusing on the state's wrongdoings will only increase further conflict between the state and the Sámi people. However, all other parties present in the debate strongly emphasize the importance of historical acknowledgement, both to understand the history and to deal with the future. The parties recognize that historical acknowledgment is a challenging process, both psychologically and conceptually, as historical truth can present many different narratives. The Non-Sámi organization (2020) argues similarly, although with a negative attitude towards the commission. The agent argues that the commission's main objective should be to reveal the truth of historical injustices, but that by focusing on the Sámi alone, it would falsify history. This position demonstrates how historical narratives are drawn upon to substantiate notions of justice in the present, both for supporters and opponents of the commission.

Similarly, historical acknowledgment plays an important role for the Church of Sweden, although not more than does reconciliation. The two concepts are closely tied together in



the crucial article discussed here, where truth is one component of the overarching reconciliation process. Historical acknowledgment is also seen as a precondition for respecting human rights. The agent takes a clear self-critical stance, outlining its own role in the oppression of Sámi people, and using terms such as “colonial past”, “historical debt” and discussing its role as “facilitator” for institutionalized violence. It also strongly emphasizes the importance of historical acknowledgment for the current generation. In the last case, three out of eight parliamentary parties mention the role of historical acknowledgment in revealing the state’s treatment of the Sámi people. However, none of them go into any historical detail, nor do they emphasize the relevance in society today. Compared to the Church of Sweden, the parliamentary parties keep the role of the commission short and vague.

The concept of *rights* is present in all five cases and is an important component in all discussed articles/broadcasts. In the case of Sámi (2015), the concepts of rights and laws are discussed as motivators in creating the commission in accordance to international human rights, but even more so as objectives for the commission on the level of national rights. Similarly, the Church of Sweden (2016) mentions three forms of rights: international human rights, indigenous rights, and national rights. According to this agent, the concept of rights is what constitutes the state’s obligation for a reconciliation process, in contrast to the Church, which draws its responsibility from theology. In Sámi (2021), the concept of rights is further expanded compared to the previous cases, including specific laws. The objective here is that the commission would lay the groundwork for an increased awareness of the Sámi situation in decision making. The concept of rights is the second most important, following historical acknowledgment, and goes hand in hand with the concept of ratification, as discussed below. The three cases show the importance of rights and laws, both on national and international levels, where the international rights are mainly seen as guidelines and inspiration, while the national rights are seen as direct authority on the Sámi existence. It can also be observed that the rights in question get more inclusive and more specific in the later cases. Although there is no clear consensus on how (or if at all) these specific rights will be impacted, the idea that the commission plays an important role in the right’s concerning the Sámi people is increasingly emphasized.

In contrast, the Swedish Parliament (2018) only mentions the concept of rights once, in the context of respecting international human rights. This brief reference does not reflect the idea expressed by the Church of Sweden (2016), that the state’s reconciliation attitude is primarily grounded in the respect for international human rights. This might be due to the fact that the Swedish parliamentary parties expressed their attitudes prior to the commencement of the commission, and therefore did not yet have specific expectations concerning the results. Another reason could be the sensitive nature of national laws concerning children, land rights and education legislation, where even just one statement could have an impact on votes. Instead, the only comment is a vague and avoids promises concerning national law-making. Also, the Non-Sámi organization (2020) mentions the concept of rights; however, it does so in the form of a critique of the commission, in which Sámi rights are depicted as a threat to other minorities’ rights. The starting point seems to be an imagined competition among minorities in favor of the state.

The concept of *rectification* is present among all cases, except for the Non-Sámi organization (2020). Sámi (2015) defines rectification in the form of compensation and laws. Similarly, as mentioned, laws and rights remain strongly connected to rectification for Sámi (2021). The Church of Sweden (2016) does not give specific ideas on the form of rectification other than being expressed “by words and deeds”. Similarly, the Swedish Parliament (2018) does not clearly describe the form of rectification other than calling for “appropriate measures”. The finding that it has been mostly the Sámi agents who have presented possible forms of



rectification may be explained by idea that any demand for rectification must necessarily be formulated and put forth by the Sámi people themselves, based on the results of the commission. Thus, the Swedish Parliament and the Church of Sweden might want to hold back on their expectations on the outcome, while also avoiding empty promises that could polarize voters. Although the form of rectification is not clearly defined by the Sámi agents, it is apparent that rectification is a central concept for the Truth Commission, and has been from early on in the discourse.

The concept of *forgiveness* has solely been mentioned in one case, i.e. the Church of Sweden (2016). This can very well be due to the theological framework adopted by the church, in which forgiveness is a common component in the reconciliation process. Although this agent mentions this concept, it also acknowledges that forgiveness cannot be expected or demanded from the Sámi people. The concept of *discrimination* is also mentioned by the Church of Sweden (2016), as well as by the Sámi (2021). In both, discrimination is used in the description of historical injustices but is not discussed as a central concept, whereas *health* is discussed as a central concept within all the cases, excluding the Non-Sámi organization (2020). Health issues have already been discussed as an incentive and a challenge for the commission in Sámi (2015). They also remain the dominant aspect in Sámi (2021). However, the Swedish Parliament (2018) and the Church of Sweden (2016) use terms associated with health in a more abstract way, e.g. when discussing historical violence (historical trauma) or a path for reconciliation (healing relationships). This shows the comparatively more practical approach adopted by the Sámi agent in comparison to a more theoretical or abstract approach adopted by the Swedish Parliament and Church of Sweden.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, clear trends can be found both in the overview of the case universe and in the qualitative content analysis of the five selected cases. These include a positive attitude early on in the discourse, which decreased throughout the timeframes, as the commission took more concrete shape. Especially among the Sámi agents, mixed attitudes increased significantly in correlation with the round table discussions and the Sámi Parliament election. The Sámi agents correspond to the highest number of mixed attitudes (20.8%) in total. One could argue that the predominance of positive attitudes between 2014 and 2015 may be owed to the fact that only those who were convinced by the idea of a commission were willing to give it attention and write about it. With the implementation of the commission, agents might not have felt the same necessity to push for the commission as such and, instead, agents who were/ are unsatisfied with the way it operates became more willing to express their attitudes. There was also an increase in neutral attitudes after the decision to establish the commission, reporting factually on the process of the commission – with the exception of 2023, which saw a decrease in neutral attitudes. Negative attitudes were very rarely expressed in the studied media material, which might be due to the selection criteria adopted for the case universe but may also be due to the choice of the control variable “sanningskommissionen” (Truth Commission) as an object of discussion and search term: the opposition may express their attitudes more indirectly. The largest percentage of negative attitudes out of all attitudes as expressed by one agent can be found among the agent ‘non-Sámi organization’ with 16,7%, representing one negative article. The corresponding article/broadcast was identified as a deviant case. Other than that, one article expressing a negative attitude can be found with the agent ‘Sámi’ and ‘government’ respectively.

The agent DO was found to solely have had significance in the initial stage of the discourse. The Church of Sweden was also significant in this initial stage, but remained present in

the discourse throughout most of the timeframes. The Swedish Parliament joined the discourse later, in conjunction with the SWOT publication. This agent has expressed altogether positive attitudes; however, in larger debates, in which with more parties present, negative and mixed attitudes are also voiced. Overall, there is a conspicuous lack of non-Sámi agents compared to Sámi agents' representation, suggesting that it is left up to the Sámi to push for an uncovering of human rights violations, which a majority in Swedish society would prefer to ignore. In the same vein, most Sámi agents get published on Sveriges Radio and Sameradion in particular, whose articles/broadcasts are directed towards in-groups, rather than the total population.

One result of the qualitative content analysis is that the concepts used by the Sámi agent did not change significantly from 2015 to 2021 but became more developed and specific. They did come to include concepts of reconciliation and discrimination, but both concepts remained insignificant. Thus, the role of the commission was already relatively developed when the public discourse took shape six years after Sáminuorra's proposal, suggesting that a closed discourse had already taken place before this. In contrast, the Church of Sweden (2016) referred to the commission as a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and placed it in the context of a larger reconciliation process, deriving its concepts both from theology and international law. This agent is unique in both its focus on reconciliation as a concept and its pervading positive attitude towards the commission. It is also one of few agents that discusses the concepts of asking for forgiveness and forgiving. The Swedish Parliament (2018), similarly to all other cases, is focused on historical acknowledgment as the primary objective of the commission. Although it discusses other concepts as well, such as reconciliation, rights, rectification, and health, it remains vague and abstract. This could be interpreted as a way of leaving the decisive space concerning the construction of the commission to Sámi agents, while at the same time refraining from expressing polarizing statements prior to a parliamentary election. It could, however, also denote a tendency to drag one's feet as long as possible. The non-Sámi organization (2020) illustrates a negative attitude towards the commission. This position can be summarized as an objection based on the expectation that the Sámi would receive undeserved benefits. Interestingly, this is guised in a historical argument, which pits ethnic minorities against each other: The Sámi Truth Commission would falsify history with its clientelist mission and thereby privilege the Sámi people over other disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

When reviewing the process of the establishment of the Truth Commission in Sweden through the studied media coverage (2008-2023), one of the most striking findings is the absence of substantial public debates concerning issues of colonial abuse, parallels found in the neighboring Nordic countries, lessons learned from the TRC in Canada, or questions pertaining to possible ways of de-colonizing present relations between Swedish majority society and the Sámi or other ethnic minorities. On the one hand, positions became more nuanced over time, also including a rise of more skeptical voices within segments that were in favor of the creation of a Truth Commission. On the other hand, more neutral positions were also noticed. Both tendencies are probably reflections of the institutionalization process itself: Depending on the stakes which the different agents hold in the process, the commission's work on unpacking and mediating positions raise a spectrum of reactions, from relief to reluctance. This shows that the creation of the commission itself moves the discourse to another level.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C	Centralpartiet (Centre Party)
CERD	The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
DN	Dagens Nyheter
DO	Equality Ombudsman
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	The International Labour Organization
JF	Jakt-och fiskesamerna (Hunting and Fishing Sámi)
KD	Kristendemokraterna (Christian Democrats)
L	Liberalerna (Liberals)
M	Moderaterna (Moderates)
MP	Miljöpartiet (Green Party)
NGO	non-governmental organization
OHCHR	UN Human Rights Office
P1	Sveriges Radio Program 1
P2	Sveriges Radio Program 2
P3	Sveriges Radio Program 3
P4	Sveriges Radio Program 4
S	Socialdemokraterna (Swedish Social Democratic Party)
SD	Sverigedemokraterna (Swedish Democrats)
SIRB	State Institute for Race Biology
SvD	Svenska Dagbladet
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TJ	Transitional Justice
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
V	Vänsterpartiet (Left Party)

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