Understanding and Implementing Self-Determination for Indigenous Peoples: The case of the Sami in Sweden

Author: Léon Fuchs
Supervisor: Malin Nystrand
Master’s in Peace and Development Work, 4FU41E
Department of Peace and Development Studies
Faculty of Social Sciences
Linnaeus University
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Abstract

The study focuses on the current status of the Sami indigenous community of Sweden and on the implementation of the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples, as presented by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) of 2007. Nowadays, even if the Sami community of Sweden can enjoy several political, economic, social and cultural rights, a lot remains to be done concerning the development of their self-determination because several international principles related to indigenous rights have not been implemented so far.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to explore how the Sami people of Sweden define and understand the principle of self-determination for indigenous peoples and how they would like to implement it in the future, while also focusing on what can be learned from their particular situation from a conceptual perspective. To achieve that, the research has been mainly based on a field study carried out at the end of April 2014 and at the beginning of May 2014. Several representatives belonging to different Sami political parties and Sami stakeholder’s organisations have been interviewed on the field. Moreover, two academic researchers and one public relations officer have also been contacted and interviewed afterwards to offer a different perspective on the topic.

The findings of the study indicate that the interviewees have highlighted three main issues while defining the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples: the importance of recognition and self-identification, the respect of indigenous traditions and the protection of traditional lands. Besides, many ideas mostly based on the development of the Swedish Sami Parliament have also been mentioned while thinking about the future. The study has also shown that the indigenous position in Sweden is quite paradoxical because even if the Sami people have some rights, they do not have self-determination as the current situation is still dominated by the state. Finally, another major aspect of the findings has also indicated that self-determination is mainly about changing attitudes between the states and indigenous peoples.

Keywords: Sami, Sweden, UNDRIP, self-determination, indigenous.
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Annex 1 - List of Interviewees
List of abbreviations

CERD: Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
EU: European Union
FPIC: Free, Prior and Informed Consent
ILO: International Labour Organization
IWGIA: International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PhD: Philosophiae Doctor - Doctor of Philosophy
RSÄ: Riksorganisationen Same Ätnam
SSR: Svenska Samernas Riksförbund
UN: United Nations
UNDRIP: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
UNHRC: United Nations Human Rights Council
UNPFII: United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues
UNRDC: United Nations Relief and Development Centre
I) Introduction

This is a study about the current status of the Sami people of Sweden and the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples. The Sami people are the only indigenous people of Fennoscandia. They are mostly living in the Arctic area called “Sapmi”, situated in the northernmost parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and also in the Kola Peninsula in Russia. The Sami people have lived there for at least 10,000 years and today, the population is estimated at around 70,000 people: 40,000 in Norway, 20,000 in Sweden, 6,000 in Finland and 2,000 in Russia (Sami Information Center, 2006). The majority of them works nowadays in tourism, industry or modern and public sectors but a small proportion of the population (around 10%) still earns its living through reindeer herding, fishing, hunting and other traditional activities (The Swedish Institute, 2011:1). Even if the Sami are often presented as a uniform people, it is important to mention that they also constitute a heterogeneous community with distinct interests and status represented in Sweden by eight Sami political parties involved in the Sami Parliament of Kiruna: Álbmut, Guovvsonásti, Jakt och fiskesamerna, Landspartiet Svenska Samer, Min Geaidnu, Samelandspartiet, Samerna and Skogssamerna (Sametinget, 2014). Furthermore, the Sami are also protected by two main organisations in Sweden: Svenska Samernas Riksförbund (SSR) and Riksorganisationen Same Átnam (RSÅ) (The Swedish Institute, 2014:3).

Research problem and its relevance with Peace and Development:
Nowadays, even if the Sami community is quite well represented politically and socially and that initiatives linked with their development in Fennoscandia have contributed to improve indigenous rights around the world, a lot more needs to be achieved to make sure that the Sami can strengthen their self-determination in the future (Anaya, 2011:1). Sweden, for instance, has not signed, accepted or implemented every international treaty related to indigenous rights and the Swedish legislation is therefore not totally adapted to international standards concerning the rights of indigenous peoples (Olson, 2008). As a consequence, the Sami indigenous community of Sweden seems to be more considered as a “minority de luxe” by the Swedish state than an indigenous people (Johansson, 2008). Therefore, to improve its condition, the Swedish Sami community would like to develop its right of self-determination and become more influential on Sami related matters (Sami Information Center, 2014).

This particular issue is especially interesting because it tackles a lot of different but related matters influencing the field of Peace and Development. First, it shows the importance of history and the
consequences of the past on modern societies, the Sapmi area having been nationalized by the Nordic states a few centuries ago. The study is also about post-colonial struggles and is therefore also relevant because it focuses on the application of international law at the state level and it shows that it is sometimes complicated to find a feasible way to do such a thing, especially while focusing on indigenous rights and self-determination. Finally, and this is probably another important point for Peace and Development researchers, this study has also the merit to show that development and indigenous related issues can also be found in so-called developed countries, for instance Sweden, and not only at the other side of the world.

The concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples:
Self-determination for indigenous peoples is one of the fundamental concepts of the study and has to be explained more precisely before going any further. In theory, self-determination is often divided between internal and external self-determination. Internal self-determination means to offer a voice to a specific people within the limit of the state by giving it the opportunity to have an influence on natural resources, protecting its culture and traditions and also being seen as an official partner by the state (Coon-Come, 1992:6), while external self-determination is the right of one people to decide on its particular political status and therefore being allowed to create its own states if it wants to (Hurst, n.d).

This particular study of the Sami situation in Sweden focuses especially on internal self-determination and will not question external self-determination in depth because the Swedish Sami community, at least the majority of them, does not want to create a new state and is not looking for independence (Ministry of Agriculture, 2009). Still, it is also often said that the Sami community of Sweden would like a higher degree of internal self-determination (Sametinget, 2014), but what does it mean? Because there are different aspects of internal self-determination and several ways to implement this specific right for indigenous people concretely. Internal self-determination can assume different political forms as long as the will of the people is compatible with the one of the nation state. For instance, internal self-determination can be developed through a local government, regionalism or federalism but there are also many other ways of implementing it on the ground (Chinonso, n.d). Moreover, some researchers (Barelli, 2011, Nobirado, 2012) believe that self-determination for indigenous peoples is also quite ambiguous and therefore, it can also be relevant to wonder whether the concept is in itself ambiguous or whether it is rather its implementation that is unclear.
Purpose of the study:
The aim of the study is to contribute to the explanation and the clarification of the highly debated principle of self-determination for indigenous peoples through the Sami example of Sweden, while also focusing on how they want to implement it in the future. In other words, it is also about drawing lessons from the different Swedish Sami perspectives and contributing to the conceptual development of self-determination for indigenous peoples.

Even if the debate on indigenous rights and self-determination is quite rich nowadays, there are still a lot of ambiguities about the scope and the exact meaning of the main concepts of the study. For instance, there are many interrogations about what self-determination is for indigenous peoples and what it implies, about how is it possible to implement it and also about who are actually the indigenous peoples. Moreover, there is also a gap in knowledge on the current situation of the Sami community in Sweden, especially regarding self-determination and the different possibilities for the future. Even if studies on the Sami people are growing steadily, the specific topic of the study has never been fully explored in the literature and there are several reasons for such a thing. First of all, it seems that most of the studies about the Sami people are focusing on Norway. This is certainly due to the greater number of Sami people living there and the recent study of Hagtvedt (2013) on the land rights in Northern Norway will not contradict that idea. Furthermore, the majority of the studies in Sweden may also be written in Swedish and not in English and for instance, the work of Johansson (2008) is only available in Swedish, except a short abstract and a summary translated in English. Finally, it also happens that some studies are quite old and not relevant any longer because the rights of the Sami people have also evolved quickly with time and policy changes, for example with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) of 2007. This seems to confirm the relevance of a new study on the Sami indigenous people of Sweden and the issue of self-determination.

Research questions:
The study will seek to address the following research questions:

- How do the Sami indigenous people of Sweden define and understand the concept of self-determination?
- What type(s) of self-determination do they want and how do they want to implement it concretely?
- What lessons can be drawn from the Sami situation in Sweden and to what extent can their perspectives help explaining the concept of self-determination and its implementation for
indigenous peoples?

The first question will be based on the findings of the field study and its aim will be to help structuring the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples from a Swedish Sami perspective. It will also be useful to compare the different Sami opinions and explore Sami diversity. The second question will help to go one step further and deepen the analysis by mentioning what could be done concretely in a near future to implement self-determination and improve the situation of the Sami indigenous people in Sweden. Finally, the last question will show how the situation in Sweden could influence other indigenous peoples around the world by offering a particular and concrete vision of the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples.

Methodological framework:
The study has been mainly carried out into the field but it has also taken into account several major documents on indigenous rights, self-determination and the Sami indigenous people. The main idea was to use different sources to collect distinct point of views and have a more representative result in the end.

The study is predominantly qualitative and the main approach is abductive. It is based on the highly debated concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples and the aim of the field work is to raise the voices of a particular indigenous people in an appropriate and useful manner. The interviews have been carried out in a semi-structured way and representatives of eight Sami political parties of the Sami Parliament of Kiruna and two main Sami stakeholder’s organisations of Sweden have been met and interviewed. What is more, three informants, two Swedish researchers and one public relations officer of the Swedish Sami Parliament have also been interviewed to offer another perspective on the topic.

After the field work, data have been analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2006) at different levels and from different points of views to go deeper and question the topic in various ways. Triangulation and both primary and secondary sources have also been used to balance the findings, test one source against another and increase the validity of the study in the end. Primary sources are based on the notes taken by the author during the interviews while different academic reports, articles and books concerning indigenous rights, self-determination and the Sami people represent the secondary sources. Finally, the notions of transparency, trust and reflexivity will also be further discussed in the appropriate methodological chapter.
Structure of the thesis:
The thesis will have the following structure. In chapter 2, the choices of methods will be clarified and more concrete information on the field study will also be given. In Chapter 3, the analytical approach of the study will be introduced and discussed to set the stage for the research while the related literature on the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples will also be presented in more detail. Chapter 4 will provide background information on the Sami situation in Fennoscandia and more particularly on the Sami people of Sweden. In Chapter 5, the findings of the study will be presented, explained and divided into 8 themes, while Chapter 6 will focus on the answers to the three research questions. Finally, Chapter 7 will conclude the study by summarizing the main findings and giving some recommendations.

Limitations of the study:
A main limitation of the study is, as mentioned earlier, the lack of data in English on the specific issue, even if some relevant information have also been found in the literature. It has been a real challenge to find reliable and relevant data on the different Sami voices in Sweden and it also happened that the author sometimes had to use sources in Swedish. During the field work too, it was also sometimes hard to communicate in English, the author being unfortunately not able to speak Swedish fluently. However, the author also believes that its different cultural background was a huge advantage and not only a weakness because he had no personal interest regarding the Sami situation in Sweden and was therefore more easily accepted during the field work. Finally, it was also sometimes complicated to find time and a right moment to talk, the interviewees being very busy and not always available, especially the reindeer herders.

Ethical considerations:
The notion of objectivity and ethics are highly important for the study because the position of the Sami people is currently highly sensible in Sweden. It involves an indigenous people, its history, its identity and its culture and a government, its power and its sovereignty. The aim of the study is not to judge, hurt or blame anyone but to respect every one's opinion to go one step further and discuss different possibilities for the future. The results will be based on the findings and not on the personal opinion of the author and particular attention to the sources and the references will also be paid in order to avoid plagiarism and respect the ideas and the work of the others.
II) Methodological framework

Here, further information on the methodological framework, the field work and the data analysis process will be given and explained.

A) A qualitative and abductive study

The approach of the research is mainly qualitative and based on the vision of a particular human group in a specific social context. Since the start of the study, it has been quite evident for the author to use a qualitative approach, considering the issues at stake. An important feature of the study is thus its flexibility and adaptability to ask open-ended questions and discuss different aspects while collecting evidence and exploring a specific phenomenon (Creswell, 2005). Using a qualitative approach is useful because the study is iterative and questions have been modified according to what has been learned during the data collection process (Creswell, 2005). Moreover, it is also relevant because one positive aspect of qualitative research is its capacity to textually describe what people think about a particular situation (Creswell, 2005) and finally, qualitative research has also been helpful because it has offered a broader interpretation and understanding of a particular social reality (Creswell, 2005).

Furthermore, the study has also been based on an abductive approach built around the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples. The abductive approach – also sometimes called inference to the best explanation – has helped the author discovering, assembling and interpreting a new set of data collected during the field work, while also presenting a new combination of features about the highly debated concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples through the Sami example. Finally, the aim of the abductive approach was also to construct descriptions and explanations and to focus on a new set of data, while trying to present original ideas.

B) Presentation of the field work

The research methods are mainly based on a field study but a large literature review has also been achieved beforehand in order to prepare the ground work and academic books, articles, reports from different actors, both local, regional and international have been used. After that, a field work based on interviews has been carried out during two weeks at the end of April 2014 and at the beginning of May 2014. The aim was to discuss around the research questions with several representatives of
the Sami society of Sweden. The author used purposive sampling to find the interviewees and the necessary characteristic was to be a Member of Parliament of one of the eight Sami political parties represented in the Sami Parliament of Kiruna or to be a representative of one of the two main Sami stakeholder’s organisations active in Sweden.

The Sami political parties, as represented in the Sami Parliament in 2014 are (Val, 2013):

- Jakt och fiskesamerna: 9 seats
- Samelandspartiet: 6 seats
- Min Geaidnu: 4 seats
- Guovvsonáštì: 3 seats
- Skogssamerna: 3 seats
- Landspartiet Svenska Samer: 3 seats
- Samerna: 2 seats
- Álbumutthe: 1 seat

The two main stakeholders' organisations are:

- Riksorganisationen Same Ätnam (RSÄ), a Sami stakeholder's organization created in 1945 and aiming at developing Sami culture, especially the handicraft, hunting and fishing while focusing especially on the non-reindeer herding Sami population.
- Svenska Samernas Riksförbund (SSR), a Sami stakeholder's organization created in 1950 and aiming at protecting the interests of the reindeer herders and also Sami culture in a more general sense.

The choices of interviewees can be explained by the supposed legitimacy of those actors and their knowledge on the issue at stake. They are the official representatives of the Sami indigenous people in Sweden, especially the Members of Parliament that have been elected in 2013 by the Sami population of Sweden. Even if they are politicians, they are still close to the Sami rurality because being a Sami politician is not a full-time job and the Sami Members of Parliament still have different activities and are coming from different areas. The two stakeholder's organizations have been selected because they are the most influential Sami organizations of Sweden and also because they have different interests and symbolize Sami diversity. It is unfortunately not possible to give the exact number of members of those organizations because the memberships are based on the Sami villages and associations and not on individuals, but according to different interviewees, it is
still possible to claim that the organizations represent several thousands of Sami in Sweden. Moreover, the author also wanted to interview representatives from the Sami Council and the Sami Youth Organisation Saminuorra but it was unfortunately not possible to reach them during the field study, either because they were not available or because they could not be reached.

At least 1 person of each organization or political parties has been interviewed. The political parties and organizations have been first contacted by mail and after that, another contact was established by phone before the interviews. The interviews have been mostly carried out in Northern Sweden: in Kiruna, Jokkmokk, Arjeplog, Umeå and in Linköping in the South. The limitations were not geographical but based on the status and roles of the different stakeholders and also on their places of residence. Some interviewees were unavailable and thus, a few interviews had to be done by phone. Finally, three informants, most of them researchers, have also been interviewed after the field study to offer another perspective on the topic. One of them is called Peter Johansson and is a senior lecturer in Global Studies at the University of Gothenburg. He has written a PhD in Peace and Development on the status of the Sami people in Sweden and former Swedish Sami Policies (1986-2005)\(^1\), while Annette Löf, another informant, is a member of the Center for Sami Research of Umeå University that has just written her PhD in Political Science on the governance of Reindeer Herding in Sweden\(^2\). Finally, the last informant is Marie Enoksson, the public relations officer of the Swedish Sami Parliament.

Interviews were mainly individual and only one group interview has been organized. The main reason is that the Sapmi area is very spread and it was quite complicated to meet different deputies from the same political party in the same town or village. The group interview was organized after a meeting of a Sami political party and several persons have therefore participated. Moreover, some of the interviewees have chosen to be “anonymous” and their names will therefore not appear in the report, while others interviewees accepted to be fully named. Thus, there will be anonymous and non-anonymous quotes in the findings. Furthermore, the quotes have been selected from the different interview reports and they have also been sent afterwards by mail to the different interviewees to make sure that they really reflect what has been said. This has helped increasing the notion of transparency between the interviewer and the interviewees and it will also help improving the quality of the study. Finally, the author did not want to use a voice recorder because he did not want the interviewees to feel too much nervous or tested. The author was willing to put the

\(^2\) Challenging Adaptability: Analysing the Governance of Reindeer Husbandry in Sweden (2014)
interviewees at ease and did his best to avoid unnecessary pressure.

Thus, primary and secondary sources have been used to examine the different findings and improve the validity of the study. To summarize, the field notes of the author and the interview reports directly written on the laptop during the interviews mainly represent the primary sources, while a lot of reports, articles and books related to indigenous rights, self-determination and the Sami people, written by different researchers have been used concerning secondary sources. Besides, some other articles from the academic literature have also been helpful concerning theories and methods. The author also looked for reports released by different official and international organisations, for instance the UN (United Nations), to have a more legal point of view on the issue. Finally, a few articles written by different Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) have also been useful and offered a quite different position on the current situation. As said earlier, a few Swedish researchers have also been interviewed and are considered as informants for the study. Therefore, data coming from them are also considered as a secondary source. Furthermore, other types of documents, for instance pictures, novels, specialized journals or video documentaries have also helped to offer a better understanding of the historical and regional context, but for different reasons, they have not been directly used for the research.

C) Data analysis

After the literature review and the field study, data have been analysed with different tools. The main method used to process information is thematic analysis. It is based on the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and the goal was to identify, analyse and report patterns and themes in the empirical material. It was especially interesting for the study because it highlighted the active role of the author and increased the flexibility of the analysis by moving back and forward within data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Six steps suggested by the researchers have been followed to look at the data and do a thematic analysis: familiarisation with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, naming themes and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006:87). Moreover, a checklist based on “15 different criteria for good analysis” (Braun and Clarke, 2006:96) have also been used by the author to improve the quality of the findings. Therefore, the different themes have been identified according to the research questions and they do not only emerge directly from data. They have been selected by the author for their relevance and also because they have been mentioned many times during the interviews by different interviewees. They represent the main issues concerning the Sami situation in Sweden, as seen by the
interviewees. Finally, the notion of triangulation has also been significant because it has helped to examine the different sources, check the validity of data and the relevance of the findings by comparing the different ideas coming from the informants, the respondents and the literature review. The aim was to balance the different perspectives and overcome possible biases or gaps.

While talking about methods, it is also important to mention the concepts of transparency, reflexivity and ethics. Transparency has been needed during the interviews to establish a relationship of trust between the interviewer and interviewee. Even if the author is aware that trust cannot be really gained in such a short time, a minimum is still needed for the benefit of the interview. Moreover, it has also probably helped the interviewees to talk about their own concerns and become more interested and helpful. The concept of reflexivity needs also to be explored, especially for the field study where the author has met different peoples with different cultural backgrounds. The author had to step back, think about his own role and his own influence during the interviews, be open-minded and as objective as possible before analysing the findings in an appropriate way. In the end, ethical considerations will also have a particular role, especially the ideas of “autonomy”, “benefiance” and “justice” (Orb, Eisenhauer, Wynaden, 2001). Autonomy means that the interviewees had the choice to participate or to refuse. Benefiance implies that the author did not want to endanger or have a negative impact on the interviewees’ situations and that is also why they were given the opportunity to be anonymous. Finally, justice means that the author respects the ideas of the interviewees and their contributions to the study, while also doing his best not to make the most vulnerable more vulnerable (Orb, Eisenhauer, Wynaden, 2001).

Before summing up, it is also necessary to mention a few limitations regarding the methodological framework. During the field study, it was very hard to reach the interviewees and most of them were busy working in the mountains or in different cities than the one they live in. As a consequence, the minimal number of participants met in every political party and organization, intended at 2, had to be reduced to 1. Moreover, language was also another issue to keep in mind during the literature review and the field work. First because a major part of the literature on the specific topic was written in Swedish and also because some of the Swedish Sami representatives were not able or willing to speak English.
III) Analytical framework

Here the analytical framework of the study and the available literature on the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples will be presented and discussed to show the extent of the issue and give a precise direction to the study.

A) Presentation of the analytical framework

The analytical framework of the study is built around the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples. The aim of it is to present the key elements of the research and the starting points of discussion about the concept. Therefore, the analytical framework can be described as a model that links different concepts and ideas around a particular phenomenon. The analytical framework will also help to establish the basis for discussion and identify the main issues at stake, while focusing on self-determination for indigenous peoples and the Sami situation in Sweden. The following parts will present, discuss and criticize the main concepts of the research to grasp the full scope of the thesis. Different visions will be introduced and will show that the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples can be described as ambiguous and highly debated.

B) Description of the analytical framework


In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly accepted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The Declaration is especially interesting for the study and the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples because as it can be noted in article 3:

“Indigenous peoples have the right to self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development” (United Nations, 2008).

Therefore, indigenous peoples can determine their own development within the limit of the states and according to Pitty and Smith (2011:121), the Declaration can be seen as an tremendous victory for the indigenous community around the world. Cowan (2013:1) describes it as a very important achievement in the development of international standards related to the rights of indigenous
peoples while Préaud and Bellier (2012) go further and think that it offers a lot of power and new possibilities for indigenous peoples to oppose states and policies. Besides, they also think that the Declaration can be interpreted as a tool to support and protect indigenous futures and it is even more important and symbolic than before 2007, only the International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions 107 and 169 recognized indigenous rights internationally (Cowan, 2013:254). Concretely and as noted in Article 31, the Declaration means that indigenous peoples now have the right to decide on:

“Their local affairs, including determination of membership, culture, language, religion, education, information, media, health, housing, employment, social welfare, maintenance of community safety, family relations, economic activities, lands and resources management, environment and entry by non-members, as well as ways and means for financing these autonomous functions” (United Nations, 2008).

Therefore, the Declaration and especially its position on self-determination for indigenous peoples has been presented as a major improvement of international standards and human rights but it has also to be explained further. UNDRIP only claims that indigenous peoples have the right of self-determination but does not really explain how it should be implemented directly on the ground. Cowan (2013:247), for instance, tries to explain the right of self-determination for indigenous people in the following manner: self-determination can be seen as a people's right to have a say on its own political situation through decision-making and without discrimination. Thus, she highlights the negative effects of discrimination on indigenous peoples and the importance of cooperation in decision-making, but it is also important to think about how such a thing could be achieved concretely and what will self-determination imply for indigenous peoples and states in practice. The definition of self-determination for indigenous peoples still needs to be further explored.

2) Different understandings and criticism of the concept

UNDRIP and the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples are seen and understood from very different perspectives in the literature and even if the Declaration has been mostly welcomed after 2007, its real meaning has also been questioned and criticized for a lack of precision.

Concerning the principle of self-determination in general, it has always been interpreted in many different ways, hence transforming it into a very ambiguous and contradictory principle (Spanu,
2014). Spanu especially expresses two main concerns, first about the real content of the principle and also about how self-determination claims should be considered and answered by the states. Furthermore, the concept of self-determination does not give much precision about the different orientations of the principle: Is it external or internal? Is the content democratic? Does it promote or defeat discourses about differences? And what about statehood? Those issues have been brought up to the debate by Miller (2007). Answers are mainly lacking and even legal experts admit that they do not really know what the principle of self-determination implies, or even worse, they all know what it signifies to them (Miller, 2007). The general concept is thus very unclear and leaves the space for broad interpretations, ambiguities and imprecisions.

Regarding the specific right of self-determination for indigenous peoples, the concept can also be perceived as quite vague and not precise (Nobirado, 2012:481). Nobirado believes that the Declaration has also developed a lot of controversy as it can lead to several interpretations. Barelli (2011:413) develops the point that two issues related to the content of the Declaration have always been unclear: first, what does “people” mean, and then, what does self-determination imply concretely? His questions are relevant and demonstrate the lack of precision of the Declaration from a different point of view. As a part of the answer, it can be said that the Declaration is the first international document that allows sub-national groups to develop their own self-determination (Barelli, 2011:422), and as a consequence, indigenous peoples now have a specific status and are no longer considered in the international law as only minorities. Then, it is also important to clarify one more time the meaning of self-determination in this particular context to avoid misunderstandings. UNDRIP concerns mostly internal self-determination and does not encourage external self-determination, unless exceptional situations that require remedial secession and a new repartition of territory (Barelli, 2011:422). Therefore, based on traditional international principles, the Declaration does not give indigenous peoples a right to independence (Barelli, 2011:422) and anyway, it is also important to make clear that most indigenous peoples do not want to create their own states (Cowan, 2013: 268). As a consequence, unless otherwise noted, the word “self-determination” will only mean “internal self-determination” for the rest of the study.

Another important issue about UNDRIP is its non-binding aspect and the Declaration can simply be ignored by the nation states as it does not contain any compulsory mechanisms (Stavenhagen, 2009:151). Thus, even if indigenous peoples have new international rights reasserting their self-determination, at least from a legal point of view, they are far from experiencing the amelioration in concrete terms (Burger, 2013:340). The states are not obliged to implement self-determination for
indigenous peoples and even if they have signed the Declaration, they do not have to implement it domestically. There is a huge difference between what international and legal standards mean and the current situation being developed in the field (Burger, 2013:340).

Another criticism about UNDRIP and self-determination for indigenous peoples is, according to Zardo (2013:1055), its lack of protection for individuals within indigenous territories. She thinks especially about gender inequalities and wonders what the aim of a right of self-determination is if it is only seen from a collective point of view and does not protect individuals. Finally, she also asks the following question: how could it be possible to combine individual and collective indigenous rights? (Zardo, 2013:1061). Some other authors also question the Western and liberal aspects of the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples and others may present it as an alien imposition on indigenous traditions (Zardo, 2013:1057). Besides, some also believe that current indigenous requests cannot be developed within existing international standards (Cowan, 2013:258).

More generally, and it is not something directly related to UNDRIP but it is also relevant for the study, the notion of independence is also influential because some states are sometimes reluctant to self-determination for indigenous peoples because they fear a loss of sovereignty. This is an idea that needs to criticized and even if self-determination can be seen by some as a way of going away from, rather than developing its influence within the state structures (Murphy, 2008:185), it is not always justified to be afraid of indigenous peoples requests of self-determination (Minde, 2008). Therefore, the states should also realize that better working relationships with indigenous peoples could also support democracy, increase the stability of their territories and finally also strengthen their sovereignty in the long-term (Cowan, 2013:310).

While questioning the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples, the author also tried to look for particular indigenous visions of UNDRIP and self-determination, but it has been very hard to find relevant data on this particular aspect of the issue. One reason may be that the concept is quite new and that indigenous peoples did not really have time to step back and express their thoughts concerning the specific issue. This could have been for instance very interesting to compare different indigenous thoughts with the Sami ones but nowadays, even if many states are thinking about implementing UNDRIP on the ground, only two countries around the world - Ecuador and Bolivia - have included it in their constitution. It has been realized that even there, indigenous communities did not always feel satisfy with their rights (Johnstone, 2011).
To sum up, it can be said that with regard to the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples UNDRIP is definitely a very important achievement. Still, it lacks specificity and does not explain clearly how the concept should be used in practice.

3) How to implement it?

As mentioned earlier, UNDRIP does not give any precise details about the concrete implication of the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples but some authors have already thought about this particular aspect and gave some suggestions: how is it possible to exercise these rights in any meaningful and fruitful way and overcome ambiguity? (Barelli, 2011:430)

Barelli (2011:430) tries to answer his own question and claims that it is primordial to hear, listen and consult the indigenous communities in a respectful way. He also mentions the importance of participatory rights and the need of a broader cooperation between the states and the indigenous communities, based on the notions of partnership and mutual respect. He also believes in Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and argues that decisions directly influencing indigenous communities should always be done with their approval. Portalewska (2012) also believes in the role of FPIC and according to her, “Free” means no manipulation, coercion and intimidation; “Prior” means that information should be given in advance and that there should be the time necessary to make a decision; “Informed” means that all information on the issues have been provided objectively and “Consent” means agreement from the indigenous community involved.

While Zardo (2013:1083) highlights one more time the importance of gender equality and claims that decisions should always be done within indigenous communities, she also would like to involve women in the debate as often as possible. Lino (2010) brings forward the idea of non-domination between the states and the indigenous peoples and Murphy (2008:200) goes on to say that there is a need for governing by consent rather than by force and developing indigenous influence through democratic arenas could be another relevant idea. He also argues that indigenous peoples need an effective voice and increase their influence inside and outside the state structures. Pitty and Smith (2011) also believe that there is a need to modify the current political tools in which the states control the indigenous populations, for example by developing discussion forums where indigenous peoples could express their needs.

Minde (2008) wonders whether it is more relevant to have an indigenous majority at the local level
or an indigenous minority at the national one. He also puts forward the importance of knowledge, which is seen as a source of power and an advocate for changing the position of the indigenous community. Nobirabo (2012:516) mentions different forms of possible political participation and questions the integration of indigenous communities into political party systems. He brings forward some suggestions aiming at improving the political access for indigenous communities: reducing the eligibility threshold for accessing parliament, facilitating indigenous registration of party, modifying constiuencies or helping to finance indigenous political development. In the end, he also introduces the idea of local government and presents three kinds of autonomy: “personal”, “functional” and “territorial”. Moreover, it is also important to explain that indigenous peoples can increase their political participation through the state institutions, develop their own political system or mix the two possibilities (Cowan, 2013:262).

In a nutshell, there are different ways and different challenges to face while implementing self-determination for indigenous peoples but the main concepts to remember are probably about finding cooperation, decision-making and relative autonomy in a sustainable and respectable way, while also not forgetting that decisions should be made case-by-case. Still, those ideas are interesting but remain quite vague. They do not really explain concretely how the implementation of the right of self-determination for indigenous peoples can be done but they only give several general advices. They need to be further developed and this will be done hopefully by focusing on the situation of the Sami indigenous people in Sweden.

What is more, while trying to understand self-determination for indigenous peoples and while realizing its ambiguity, the author has also thought about the following questions: Is it the concept that is ambiguous or is it its implementation that is unclear? Where does ambiguity come from? It is from the legal content of the principle or is it from its political interpretation on the ground? And what are the links between the definition of the concept and its implementation? How do they influence each other? Therefore, the author will also reflect on these particular aspects while focusing later on the particular Sami case.

4) Who are indigenous peoples?

But before that, the meaning of the term “indigenous” has also to be defined to know more about who can actually claim self-determination, as presented by UNDRIP. Who are actually indigenous peoples and what does it mean to be indigenous today?
The International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA, n.d) claims that the definition of the concept, as the one of self-determination, is quite ambiguous too. The concept is also unclear but some other authors think that there are several good reasons for such a thing. It is not easy to reach a solution and there is in fact a sort of dilemma with the definition (Corntassel, 2003:75). On the one hand, Corntassel believes that a too precise definition of the concept may exclude some groups and mask the diversity of indigenous peoples around the world, while on the other hand, he thinks that a too broad definition would also allow other groups to present themselves as indigenous.

Therefore, instead of an official and rigid definition that may cause a lot of issues, a broader understanding of the concept with particular characteristics has been highlighted (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d). According to the UN, the criteria to be recognized as indigenous are as follow: self-identification; historical continuum with pre-settler communities; particular relation to traditional territories and natural resources; different social, economic or political structures; own language and traditions; represent a non-majority part of the country; want to protect and develop their ancestral ways of livings (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d). In other words, indigenous peoples are also often seen as the heirs of those who have inhabited an area before the arrival of different peoples and the creation of modern states (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d).

As a consequence, around 370 million indigenous peoples are still living nowadays around the world. They are divided into 5,000 distinct groups and live in 90 different countries (Cultural Survival, n.d). Indigenous peoples also represent 5% of the world's population but 15% of the poor (Cultural Survival, n.d). Furthermore, the term “indigenous” can have a negative connotation and words such as “native”, “first people”, “tribal”, “aboriginal” can be used instead of “indigenous” to avoid unnecessary troubles (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d). Finally, Corntassel (2003) also believes that there is a need for a more flexible understanding of the concept. His argument is that an unambiguous definition of the concept would facilitate the implementation of indigenous rights, especially self-determination, and therefore help avoiding misunderstandings.

According to the aforementioned criteria, it is also possible to present the Sami people as indigenous, especially because they have inhabited the Sapmi area before the establishment of state boundaries during the 16th and 17th centuries (Eira, n.d) and because they mostly comply with the UN requirements. This point will be further explained in the next chapter.
IV) Background chapter

*Here the notion of self-determination for indigenous peoples will be questioned from a Sami point of view, while some background information on the indigenous situation in Fennoscandinavia will also be given to contribute to the discussion.*

A) The Sami situation in Norway and Finland

1) One people living across four states

Even if the study focuses on the particular vision of the Sami indigenous people of Sweden, it is also relevant to mention the regional context and the situation of the indigenous peoples in the neighbouring countries: Norway, Finland and at a lesser extent Russia. The main reason is that, as Henriksen (2008:27) says, the Sami consider themselves as one particular indigenous people living across four different states. As such, they have developed a particular identity based on their own history, culture, livelihoods, traditions and languages. Therefore, the Sami in the Nordic countries have a lot of things in common, they influence each other and they also work together from time to time. How is their situation today regarding self-determination and what may need to be improved? The focus will be especially on Norway and Finland, the situation in Russia being more different and therefore less representative.

Historically, the first Sami institution was created in 1956 and was called The Sami Council. It was presented as a gathering of Sami organizations coming from several countries (Anaya, 2013:5) and its aim today is to promote Sami human rights internationally. According to Hagtvedt (2013), Sami activism started after that in the 1960s and 1970s in the Nordic countries and the request for self-determination followed with time.

Even if Norway is the only Nordic country that has implemented ILO Convention 169 in 1990, whose aim is to protect traditional lands nationally (ILO, 2014), different Sami parliaments have been implemented in three Nordic countries: in Norway in 1989, in Sweden in 1993 and in Finland in 1995 (Josefsen, 2010). Their status and roles differ between the different countries but the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples is the basic idea. Moreover, the different Sami Parliaments also have different financial powers and in 2007, for instance, the budget of the Sami Parliament in Norway was evaluated at 44,1M$, the one in Sweden at 19,6M$ and the one of
Finland at 3, 6 M$ (Henriksen, 2008:32). The difference of financial means is considerable between the different Nordic countries and could symbolize the different degrees of self-determination between them. It is also important to mention the fact that the Sami Parliaments are mainly financed by the states and the national budgets. On top of that, a Sami Parliamentary Council was created in 1998 and its function was to bring the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish Parliaments together (Henriksen, 2008). Today, the Council aims at working with Sami developmental issues, for instance language, research, education, but its objective is also to raise the Sami voice internationally (Anaya, 2011:5).

What is more, Norway, Finland and Sweden are often considered nowadays as examples for indigenous rights around the world (Anaya, 2011:19). They have worked a lot at the international level to improve human rights and another important aspect to mention about the position of the Sami indigenous people is that they are not threatened by major issues usually affecting the development of indigenous populations around the world, for instance famine, health issues or pauperism (Anaya, 2011:5). Furthermore, Anaya, the Special Rapporteur on the rights on Indigenous Peoples (2011:20) adds that therefore, the Nordic states should be able to deal with other issues concerning the status of the Sami people and set precedents for the development of indigenous rights internationally.

2) An example for indigenous peoples?

But even if the situation seems quite positive at first sight, a lot of issues concerning self-determination for indigenous people still need to be tackled in the Nordic countries. The first concern is about the Sami Parliaments because some representatives of the Sami community in Norway and Finland think that the Sami institutions cannot be defined currently as tools of self-determination (Kuokkanen, 2011:40). The Sami Parliaments of Fennoscandinavia are not politically independent and therefore, they may need more internal autonomy to have a real influence on decision-making. Moreover, some Sami local people also argue that the different Sami Parliaments lack of legitimacy and add that the concept is inappropriate to the Sami society (Kuokkanen, 2011:52). Finally, others even think that the different Sami Parliaments did not help to develop Sami self-determination (Kuokkanen, 2011:51) and this point also has the merit to confirm the diversity of opinion that can be found in the different Sami communities.

Another issue, according to Kuokkanen (2011:39) is that even though the principle of self-
determination has been discussed for years within the Sami communities of Norway and Finland, there are still a lot of inaccuracies regarding to how Sami self-determination could be developed on the ground. The only thing than can be claimed is that Sami self-determination is not about secession. There are no separatist movements in the Sami communities of Fennoscandia and the main reasons are that the Sami are not really familiar with the nation-state concept and moreover, the creation of a Sami state is not considered realistic from a political and economic point of view (Henriksen, 2008:38). Finally, there is also a lack of knowledge and a lack of public dialogue within the Sami society in Norway and Finland and this is of course another important problem concerning the development of Sami self-determination (Kuokkanen, 2011:62).

What is more, in Northern Fennoscandia, where the Sami indigenous people are from, a lot of other peoples are living there nowadays. There is thus, at least, two different peoples living in the northern parts of every of these states - The Norwegian and the Sami in Norway, The Swedes and the Sami in Sweden, The Finnish and the Sami in Finland - and that is something to remember while talking about self-determination. In this case, it should even be necessary to talk about several self-determinations.

B) Indigenous self-determination in Sweden

1) The role of Sami Parliament

To start with this particular topic, it is relevant to repeat that the situation in Sweden is quite close and also related to the other indigenous examples of Fennoscandia, except for some practical details. In this particular area, the Swedish Sami Parliament has a central position and it will also have a quite important role for the study. Its status and functions will be discussed and criticized, and it will also be shown that it may not be the only important Sami organisation of Sweden. Moreover, further information and major aspects of the Swedish Sami Policy will be presented to offer a better understanding of the context.

As said before, the Sami Parliament of Sweden was created in 1993 and its aim is mainly to highlight Sami culture and to decide over the allocation of state funds available for the Sami organizations (Henriksen, 2008:34). The Sami Parliament of Sweden is also responsible for Sami schools, languages, reindeer husbandry and access to land and water, but it has no decision-making power. The Sami Parliament of Sweden is financed by the Swedish government and the aim of it is
to protect, regulate and improve Sami interests (The Swedish Institute, 2011:3). The 31 elected members of the Sami Parliament meet three times a year in different places around Sweden to discuss and express their opinions concerning different topics (The Swedish Institute, 2011:3).

However, the main difference with the Sami Parliaments of Norway and Finland is that the Sami Parliament of Sweden is a state authority and therefore, its aim is mostly to deal with administrative issues linked to reindeer husbandry (Henriksen, 2008:34). As a consequence, the Sami Parliament in Sweden is less independent and the Swedish government mainly perceives it as a part of the Swedish administration (Josefsen, 2010:22).

Thus, the role of the Sami Parliament in Sweden is quite limited and it affects negatively the self-determination of the Sami people there. The Sami Parliament has a weak political influence and a limited role (Josefsen, 2010:22). It is still important because it can raise the voices of the Sami parties and the Sami organisations to the Swedish Parliament and the state, but its role is above all symbolic and it is lacking of real and strong power.

2) The Swedish Sami Policy and its impact

What is more, it is also important to explain several main aspects of the Swedish Sami Policy mentioned so far. The Sami people have suffered a lot from different decisions made by the Swedish state through time and they have been exposed to different policies of colonisation, assimilation and segregation during the last centuries (Kvist, n.d: 206, 209, and 215). Even nowadays, many observers think that the Sami are still affected by structural discrimination which stigmatises them in relation to the majority, limits their possibilities and creates negative conceptions of their identity (Brodin and Pikkarainen, 2008:11). The Swedish Sami policy has evolved with time and has had many different characteristics. One main aspect of this particular policy has been closely linked to reindeer husbandry and different Reindeer Husbandry Laws have been developed during the last decades.

According to Forrest (1997), the aim of one previous law of 1886 was to solve emerging conflicts between the reindeer herders and the farmers in the North of Sweden but it has also developed a new Sami ethnicity based on a particular economic activity. Because the policy was aiming at separating people into two distinct forms of livelihoods, it has caused long term effects and helped dividing the Sami community into two different groups: the reindeer herders and the non-reindeer herders (Forrest, 1997). Later, this separation was confirmed in the 20th century by two new
Reindeer Husbandry Laws (1971, 1993) that offered some rights and some freedom to some Sami but not to all of them (Samenland, 1999).

Therefore, nowadays, some Sami belonging to 51 Sami villages have access to reindeer husbandry and at a lesser extent to land and water. There are currently 3500 reindeer-owning Sami and around 900 reindeer businesses (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2013) and moreover, the aim of the current Swedish Sami policy is to develop reindeer husbandry, to safeguard Sami livelihoods and to offer a greater form of self-determination (Mänskliga Rättigheter, n.d), but another major aspect of the current Swedish Sami Policy is that the Sami rights can only be exercised by the members of the Sami villages and the reindeer herders. Therefore, many others Sami who do not have reindeers are not recognized and cannot enjoy the same rights as the members of the Sami villages. The reindeer herders have different rights and are treated differently by the Swedish state and this is an important issue to understand while talking about the current Sami situation in Sweden. In other words, the Sami in Sweden already have limited rights and only the reindeer herders and the members of the Sami villages can in reality enjoy these particular Sami rights (Zeldin, 2011).

The question of the electoral body is also important because according to Beach (2007:5), all the Sami are not seen in the same way. Thus, it is probably also relevant to ask who is allowed to vote in the Swedish Sami Parliament, who is considered as Sami and therefore, who could enjoy self-determination. Another question is to ask what “self” means in the case of Sami self-determination in Sweden (Beach, 2007:4). “Samihood” and Sami identity are based on both subjectivity and objectivity in Sweden because to be able to vote in the Swedish Sami Parliament, one must recognize itself as a Sami (subjectivity) and one must also be able to speak Sami or have had a parent or grandparent that used to speak Sami at home (objectivity) (Beach, 2007:11). Moreover, Sami that are willing to vote have to register themselves on a voluntary basis. There are thus several repercussions of such a system (Beach, 2007:12): What about the one who did not register? What about Sami people living in the Southern part of Sapmi, where the language decline is the most pronounced? What about a stranger being able to speak Sami but without Sami ancestry? Thus, there are emerging issues while looking for a clear definition of what is a Sami and these cultural and identical questions must also be discussed while developing self-determination (Beach, 2007:19).

Politically, the Sami diversity issue is also very tricky and it is hard to explain the differences (especially for a non-Sami author) between the different Sami parties and organisations because
Sami politics is not a question of right or left: “It is not about political ideologies but more about people and Sami questions” (Marie Enoksson, Public Relations Officer, Sami Parliament). According to the majority of the interviewees, the main difference within the Sami people in Sweden is thus between the reindeer-herders community and the non-reindeer herders community (Factor X). Furthermore, some are closer to the Sami villages, while others are more familiar with the Sami Parliament. Some may also be more conservative and traditional than others that seem to be more modern (Factor Y). Even if differences are not directly about geography, some parties or organisations are more active in the South or in the North of Sapmi than others (Factor Z). Moreover, there are also different Sami areas in Sweden, the main differences being between the Sami coming from the mountain, the Sami from the forest and the Sami living in the cities. A lot of issues are thus intertwined and influence each other: “It is hard to say it is only about X, Y or Z because in reality it is more a mix between X, Y and Z” (Jonsson Håkan, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna).

3) International criticism

Therefore, another very important issue for the Sami people of Northern Sweden is the access to land and water, which is also seen as one of the most crucial points in the debate on self-determination there. According to Johansson (2008:293-303), Sweden refused to implement the ILO Convention 169 because of issues related to land rights. ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal People was created in 1989 by ILO and it is aiming at protecting the native peoples within the nation states (Hanson, 2009). It establishes a minimum standard of rights for indigenous peoples (Hanson, 2009) and wants to highlight the notion of cooperation, negotiation and consent concerning the state-indigenous relations (Barsh and Russel, 2010). Besides, ILO Convention 169 is also specific because it mentions indigenous right to use and influence traditional lands (Barsh and Russel, 2010) but however, ILO Convention 169 becomes only legally binding once ratified at the state level and up to now, only 21 countries have implemented it so far (Barsh and Russel, 2010). Therefore, ILO Convention 169 seems less important than UNDRIP for the study for two main reasons. First of all, they do not have the same legal status because ILO Convention 169 is a treaty while UNDRIP is an international declaration (ILO, n.d). This means that while ILO Convention 169 is not directly binding and is ratified only by willing states, UNDRIP represents the general view of the UN and influence directly its member states. What is more, ILO Convention 169 tackles fewer areas than UNDRIP which is therefore more general and broader (ILO, n.d). Finally, it is also important to say that they are both very influential for indigenous peoples because they are
complementary and constantly influencing each other (ILO, n.d).

In Sweden, therefore, there are a lot of land conflicts and it is very hard to establish land rights for the Sami indigenous people there. To become the official owner of a traditional land, the Sami have to prove 90 consecutive years of presence on the particular area but this condition is particularly complicated to fulfil because the Sami tradition is to do its best to leave no physical traces on the land (Anaya, 2011:14). Moreover, legal processes to acquire traditional land are very expensive and the Sami do not always have enough financial means to pursue their land requests (Anaya, 2011:14). And even if the Sami people of Sweden have some access to land and water, especially thanks to the 51 different Sami villages that allow a few of them to reindeer husbandry, fishing and hunting (Ministry of Agriculture, 2009, 33), the current Sami rights do not reach the minimal standards supposed by ILO Convention 169 (Johansson, 2008:293-303). Furthermore, despite some legal protection, especially for the reindeer herders, new problems have been encountered because of emerging industrial projects taking place on traditional lands (Anaya, 2011:16).

Finally, the legal status of the Sami community has also been questioned a lot and Johansson (2008) believes that even if in 1977, the Parliament of Sweden has recognized the Sami people as indigenous on a legal basis, the Swedish state still has some difficulties to adapt its policies on the ground and it seems easier to implement minority rights than indigenous rights. Being treated as an indigenous people instead of a minority would especially help the Sami to have a greater influence on land, water and natural resources. Thus, it can be said that the Swedish state should start considering the Sami as indigenous not only in theory but also in concrete terms, therefore adapting its policy to international law so as not to jeopardize its image of human rights champion in the future (Johansson, 2008:293-303).

Sweden has already been criticised by several international agencies, for instance by the UNHRC (United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2009) concerning Sami land rights or the Council of Europe regarding the development of Sami languages, especially in Southern areas (Regeringskansliet, 2007). Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme also criticized the current Sami political rights in Sweden and their lack of self-determination (UNDP, 2010), while the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD, 2008) has also highlighted several concerns and recommendations concerning Sami discrimination in Sweden. In other words, the Swedish Sami Policy is not fully adapted to international human rights standards concerning indigenous peoples and further changes are expected by the international community in
the coming years because the Sami are lacking of protection and recognition in many areas.

Therefore, accepting a deeper degree of self-determination for the Sami community would be an important and symbolic step, but how would it be possible to do it concretely? How is the concept understood into the field by the Sami community, and how could self-determination be implemented on the ground in a relevant manner? The answers to these questions will also help to clarify the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples in a more general way and bring new and concrete proposals to the debate on the implementation of self-determination at the state level.
V) Findings

*Here the findings of the field study will be presented and categorized between eight different themes identified through the analysis of the interviews. They will be used to give more details about the current situation of the Sami in Sweden and explain how the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples and its implementation are perceived by different actors within the Sami community.*

A) Presentation of the identified themes

The findings section will be divided into 8 different themes based on the voices of the interviewees. They will also be separated into 3 distinct levels: the impact of history, the current situation and different possibilities for the future. Therefore, the findings will focus on the main causes and consequences concerning the current status of the Sami indigenous people of Sweden, while also exploring different alternatives for the future. As explained in the Methodological Chapter, the themes have been selected according to the research questions and based on the main concerns expressed by the interviewees.

The 8 themes developed in the findings section will be:

1. Impact of Swedish Sami History and different Swedish Sami policies
2. Sami identical issues and division between reindeer herders and non-reindeer herders
3. A limited Sami Parliament and a lack of self-determination
4. A lack of financial resources
5. Land issues and different threats to traditional livelihoods
6. Thoughts and suggestions for the future
7. The importance of education and knowledge
8. International support and cooperation

Themes 1 and 2 will explore the influence of the past while themes 3, 4 and 5 will focus on the current situation of the Sami people in Sweden. Finally, themes 6, 7 and 8 will highlight different possibilities aiming at offering a different future to the Sami indigenous community of Sweden.
B) An introduction to the Sami definitions of the concept

Before going deeper into the explanation of the themes, it is also important to explore how the Sami people of Sweden understand the principle of self-determination for indigenous peoples and how they relate to it. This will help introducing the findings section and explaining how they view the concept before focusing on their current situation through the 8 themes of the findings. Finally, this section will also help explaining why the Sami people of Sweden want self-determination and what are their main priorities while defining the concept.

Therefore, according to many interviewees, one of the most important things with self-determination is probably that the Sami community should determine itself its future. This means that the Sami should have a say on their future and that the Swedish state should not decide about everything. According to the majority of interviewees, the main problem is that the current situation is not about what the Sami want but it is only about what the Sami received. This is an important point and the state should not forget to ask concretely what the Sami want. This is confirmed by many interviewees, both respondents and informants:

“The most prominent thing with self-determination is that we should decide what is important for us. We should not let the others tell us what is important for us.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Skoggsamerna*

What is more, self-determination can also be seen by some interviewees as a way of protecting its heritage and its specific traditions. Therefore, self-determination can also be understood in the following way:

“As a Sami, I want to fish and I want to hunt as my ancestors have done. As a Sami, I want to have the possibility to do what my parents and my grand-parents have done”.

*Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna*

Moreover, the idea of consideration and the notion of recognition are also important for some interviewees while defining self-determination for indigenous peoples because they think that the state does not see them in the right way. Therefore:

“Self-determination is also about recognition because we are only considered as a minority
by the state. We are not considered as indigenous and therefore we feel like we are not very important in Sweden”.

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti*

The following quote also suggests the importance of indigenous self-identification because if the indigenous community wants to be seen as indigenous by the state, they first have to define themselves as indigenous at the individual and collective levels. Furthermore, another interviewee has also highlighted another important aspect of the definition and seems to understand self-determination as a feeling and a state of mind, not only a specific right:

“Self-determination is about controlling our livelihoods and our culture, but it is also about having the feeling of controlling our livelihoods and our culture”.

*Peter Rohde, President of the Riksorganisationen Same Ätnam (RSÅ)*

Finally, even if the few different views highlighted so far have been helpful to understand how the Sami understand the concept of self-determination and why they want to implement it, Sami self-determination could also be defined in a more academic way, for instance:

“Self-determination concerns the development and the industrialisation of Samiland. It should take into account what the Sami want and how do they want to pursue it”

*Annette Löf, researcher from Umeå University*

What is more, while trying to define the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples, the author also realized that self-determination can be seen as a real target and a cause for hope for some interviewees. Self-determination has always been defined in a positive way and even if the Sami of Sweden do not have self-determination yet, or only a very limited form of it, they view it as something they want to have in the future. They may have different definitions, different priorities and different visions of self-determination, they all see it in a positive way and would like to further implement it in the future.
C) Eight themes focusing on yesterday, today and tomorrow

After introducing different Sami views on the concept of self-determination, the following sections will focus on the current situation of the Sami in Sweden, while also explaining how it is influenced by the past and what could be changed in the future.

1) Impact of Swedish Sami History and different Swedish Sami policies:

The relationship between the Sami community and the Swedish government is particularly important concerning the topic of the study and the attitude of the Swedish state has been questioned several times during the interviews. The following part will show that the importance of history and the consequences of the past are still highly influential nowadays. Even if things have changed, the Sami remain in a quite weak position and they have difficulties to influence the state:

“We have the feeling of perpetual repetition. We always have to face the same issues and it does not get really better for us. Sweden does not listen to us”.

Member of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet

This first quote is particularly interesting because the interviewee mentions “Sweden” instead of the Swedish state or the Swedish government. What does it mean? Is Sweden, both its population and its state, considered and seen in the same way by the Sami? Moreover, the interviewee also claims that “Sweden does not listen to” the Sami people. It is probably linked to many unanswered requests expressed by the Sami community in the last few years, for example the implementation of the Nordic Sami Convention[^3]. Furthermore, many Sami also feel helpless and would like the state to be less influential and less paternalistic. And even when the state officially gives more power to the Sami, the latter remain doubtful and quite suspicious because of historical issues:

“Sweden only gave us the Sami Parliament to look nicer but it is definitely not enough”.

Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti

Therefore, the state is often seen in a negative way and its attitude is mainly criticized by the Sami people. Still, it seems also that things are slowly getting better for the Sami in Sweden and that it

[^3]: A new international Convention aiming at improving the Sami situation in Fennoscandia
becomes slightly easier to talk and communicate than before:

“Today, it is easier to talk and to protest. We are not afraid any more, we dare to say we are Sami and we want to make our voices heard. Today is different, we become more angry than sad and we are more outspoken than the past generation”.

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Skoggsamerna*

The quote is also important because it suggests that the Sami community of Sweden has always been peaceful and has never tried to use violence while fighting for their rights. This point has later been confirmed by many other interviewees and is very significant. But even if things are definitely changing in the right direction nowadays for the Sami in Sweden, for instance because they can express what they want and are less excluded from the society than before, there are also different views concerning the future. Some seem to be quite positive:

“A lot has changed since 1993⁴ and therefore, I'm quite optimistic for the future”.

*Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna*

However, others respondents think that it will take a lot of time before the Sami can enjoy further political rights, as supposed by international principles related to indigenous peoples:

“Even if I can see things changing with my own eyes, we still need a lot of time before enjoying a higher level of self-determination. Rome was not built in a day.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Landspartiet Svenska Samer*

Finally, even if the general situation seems a bit better for the Sami in Sweden, there is still a long way to go for a Swedish Sami community which still feels pressured, not really respected and not really recognized by the state. The impact of the past and the concept of attitude are important because remaining tensions between the different actors will not help reaching any agreement and work together for a different future.

2) *Sami identical issues and division between reindeer herders and non-reindeer herders:*

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⁴ The Sami Parliament was created in 1993 in Sweden.
Furthermore, the situation of the Sami in Sweden is also tricky because of internal conflicts within the indigenous community. According to many respondents and as explained earlier, most divisions within the Swedish Sami people are due to history and previous Swedish Sami Policies. Therefore, the influence of history on the current situation seems even more important and these internal issues can also jeopardize the progress of their self-determination:

“The Sami in Sweden have to deal with very hard identity questions. It is sensitive because it is about who you are, where you are from and also about the history of your family. It is in everyone's heart and it is complicated in many ways for us to discuss about it”.

Member of the Sami parliament, Guovvsonásti

The question of the Sami villages and the particular status of the reindeer herders are one of the main problems within the Swedish Sami community. Thus, some respondents would like to change the system, while others would like to protect it:

“The legislation on the Sami villages is very debated nowadays, some non-reindeer herders want to change the law and therefore also benefit from the system. It could be very bad for the reindeer herders because there is already a lack of space in the Sami villages”.

Member of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet

These differences of status between the reindeer herders and the non-reindeer herders within the Sami community are very hard to talk about. According to some interviewees, the Sami division can limit the development of Sami self-determination because the Sami are not able to make decisions together. But even if the Sami are divided regarding some questions, they still try to understand everyone’s position and work together to fix things and improve the situation:

“The reindeer herders are fighting for their rights and their animals. The others parties understand that but they also want to be considered as Sami, even if they do not have reindeers”.

Gunnel Heligfell, Member of the Sami Parliament, Samernas

Furthermore, even if they have difficulties negotiating about their Sami rights and their identity, it is also important for them to be seen as one people and to do their best to become more united as
soon as possible. Therefore, some interviewees think that the different Sami groups should also try to become closer:

“We are different but we have the same roots and we all want to protect our culture. United we stand, divided we fall. A consensus within the Swedish Sami community is needed”.

Member of the Sami Parliament, Skoggsamerna

In a nutshell, the Sami have internal issues nowadays and many of them think that they should find a way to talk about it together, even if it is very sensitive. It is also important to remember that even if it has been hard to talk to one another about some particular topics:

“Sami diversity can also be good and should be seen as an advantage, not a weakness. We need to raise the level of the debate. We can have different ideas and discuss them, of course, but we cannot fight anymore”.

Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna

Finally, the Sami feel particularly concerned about these issues of division and some interviewees believe that a more united Sami community in Sweden could become more powerful and therefore also have a more important degree of self-determination in the future.

3) A limited Sami Parliament and a lack of self-determination today:

The current situation and the role of the Swedish Sami Parliament are being discussed in the following part and more attention will be given to the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. Even if the role of the Sami parliament and the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples are seen in many different ways, it can be said that most of the interviewees think that the current situation is negative and mention the fact that there is no self-determination for the Sami in Sweden, or only a limited form of it:

“We do not have so much self-determination. We can only improve it.”

Stefan Mikaelsson, President of the Sami Parliament Assembly, Min Geaidnu

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5 A reference to previous internal tension and political instability of the Sami Parliament, mainly due to Sami internal division between herders and non-herders members of Parliament.
The role of the Sami Parliament, which is considered as the main tool of self-determination for the Sami in Sweden, has been one of the most discussed topics during the interviews. On the one hand, some respondents are quite negative and highlight the lack of influence of the institution:

“The Sami Parliament is quite hybrid and it is hard to see who can do what. It has been very unstable and was not able to give concrete responses to the Government. It has been disorganized during the last years.”

_Lars Anders Baer, former president of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet_

On the other hand, some respondents want to put the positive aspects of the Swedish Sami Parliament in the limelight and seem to be a bit more satisfied:

“The Sami Parliament is a good system based on the individual⁶, it is progressing but we have not used its full potential yet”.

_Lars Paul Kroik, Member of the Sami Parliament, Albmut_

What is more, some other respondents do not understand why the Swedish state does not accept to give the Sami people a stronger Parliament and a deeper degree of self-determination, as supposed by international standards:

“We are politicians that cannot make laws. We are politicians that cannot decide. Sweden always want to take care of us and decide what is good for us, but why can we not do that by ourselves? It does not make sense.”

_Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna_

Therefore, some interviewees think that self-determination is something they logically should have because of their particular indigenous status. They do not see self-determination as a privilege but they only see it as a basic indigenous right. Many of them are not satisfied with their current status. Finally, even if the Sami Parliament does not help to develop Sami self-determination because its powers are limited, some others members of the parliament also try to step back and they are more positive about the situation:

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⁶ The members of the Sami Parliament are directly elected by Sami voters. It is based on individual voting.
“The Sami Parliament in Sweden is still new, it has only been created a few years ago. We are still in the beginning of the process and we have a good basis for the future.”

Member of the Sami Parliament, Skogssamerna

Therefore, it can be said that the majority of interviewees are not satisfied with their current rights and with the actual form of self-determination they have. Their suggestions to change the current situation will be highlighted later and several reforms are expected by them in the next years.

4) A lack of financial resources:

Another important aspect concerning the current situation is, as highlighted by a majority of interviewees, linked with a relative lack of money for the Sami Parliament. According to them, the Sami Parliament needs to develop its financial capacity and its financial autonomy to become more independent and enjoy a more important form of self-determination. It is also important to say that the Swedish government is the main source of income for both the Sami Parliament and the Sami political parties. Therefore, from a political point of view, the different Sami parties are financed mainly by funds coming from the Swedish state and transiting through the Sami Parliament:

“We receive different amounts of money according to how many mandates we have in the Sami Parliament”.

Lars Paul Kroik, Member of the Sami Parliament, Almbut

Moreover, the Sami Parliament itself receives also some money from the Swedish state, but according to many interviewees, there is a lack of financial autonomy:

“We cannot use the money that we receive as we would like to. When we get it, Sweden has already decided how we should use it. It is very limited”.

Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna

The problem is the same concerning cultural issues, even if an important amount of money from the Swedish state is actually destined to Sami culture and the Sami civil society:

“We receive money from Stockholm for our cultural projects but while receiving money we also receive financial directions and therefore, we can only decide a bit on how we should
use money. Moreover, money is ear marked and has not increased for 20 years.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Skogssamerna*

What is more, it seems also that some Swedish municipalities also lack efficient means to implement specific minority laws at the local level.

“One municipalities do not have money to implement Sami local rights concerning language and education. Even if we do have rights, sometimes they cannot be enjoyed because of a lack of financial capacity. This is very sad”.

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti*

Modelled on the current situation regarding self-determination and the Sami Parliament, different financial issues have been mentioned by the respondents. For instance, many of them claimed that the budget of the Sami Parliament has not increased for 20 years. Therefore, even if they have access to some financial help from the Swedish government through the Sami Parliament, many interviewees want more financial capacity and financial autonomy. This point is particularly interesting for the study because it may show that the implementation of self-determination could also cost a lot of money.

5) **Land issues and different threats to traditional livelihoods:**

Moreover, the Sami representatives have also raised a lot of concerns about traditional lands and access to natural resources. This is a very important issue for them because as indigenous, the Sami have a different relationship with nature than others Swedes:

“Our culture is closely connected with nature. Everything has a specific name and a particular sense for us. It is about tradition and familial memories. Also sometimes about religion. Every single place has its history and its meaning.”

*Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna*

A main problem today is that the Sami people of Sweden do not own their own land and many of them have to face several threats. They only have a limited access to land and water through the...
Sami villages but they are not the legal owners of these lands. This particular aspect is developed in the following quote.

“We pay taxes but we do not have any official land ownership. We can use a place but we do not own it. It is both good and bad because that is how we used to live but nowadays in modern life people need to own something.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti*

Moreover, the Sami have to face increasing pressures on their lands. Therefore, some of them fear of losing their semi-traditional livelihoods:

“Our land has been under pressure for a long time now. We have to face mining projects, wind energy and forestry industries. The smaller the land gets, the more difficult it becomes for us.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Skoggsamerna*

Thus, some Sami still live in the semi-traditional way in Sweden, for instance with reindeers and according to some respondents it is also important to protect traditional livelihoods. And because of urbanisation and industrialisation, it has become more and more complicated to live with reindeers or from others semi-traditional activities. Therefore, some Sami have difficulties to protect their traditions and their livelihoods:

“Nowadays, it is very hard to work with reindeers. It has become very stressful and many things are affecting us. For example, there are a lot of roads, a lot of traffic and climate change is also influencing our activities in a negative way. The last winter has been very hard and it was very expensive to feed the reindeers almost every day.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet*

Even if the government helps them financially, many respondents feel that it is not enough and that they should have more aid and possibilities to live from semi-traditional activities for the ones willing to. And as indigenous and according to international standards, the Sami also want to have some access to land and water because they cannot control the development of different industrial projects implemented on their traditional lands. Therefore, many respondents want to have more rights and change the current policies, for example thanks to veto rights or financial compensations,
but the main important thing for them may be the following one:

“ILO 169 is not negotiable. It is our right as indigenous and it is the duty of Sweden to implement it as soon as possible. They cannot joke and they cannot only send the police when we ask for more rights and a different mining policy”.

_Stefan Mikaelsson, President of the Sami Parliament Assembly, Min Geaidnu_

As explained in the background chapter, ILO 169 is seen by many researchers and also by many interviewees as a possible way to increase Sami influence over their traditional lands but Sweden has not decided to implement it so far. It is also important to say that ILO 169 was the most mentioned international principles during the interviews.

What is more, many interviewees would like to have a right to say “no” concerning these industrial projects. In return, they could also propose possible alternatives to show their good will if needed. The main reason is that a mine or any other projects could be problematic in one area but maybe not in another. Finally, many interviewees also would like these different industrial companies to clean up the area before they leave the region.

6) **Thoughts and suggestions for the future:**

Therefore, the Sami in Sweden and the interviewees are also concerned a lot about the future and they have many ideas to improve their current situation. These ideas will be mentioned in the following part and particular attention will be given on who should decide, which areas are considered as priorities and which attitudes should be adopted. Moreover, it is also important to explain again the link between the Sami Parliament and self-determination. Thus, the Sami Parliament can be defined as the main tool of self-determination of the Sami people in Sweden and the majority of them would like to develop their self-determination through the Sami Parliament in the next years.

As mentioned earlier, the respondents want to decide themselves on how their situation should look like in the future, or at least they would like to be more listened to by the Swedish state. This is not the only thing that could help them reaching more self-determination and another important progress for them would be to clearly define who should be considered as Sami in the Swedish law. There are different ideas concerning the problem at stake. Currently, the members of the Sami
villages enjoy collective rights that others Sami do not have. Therefore, some Sami think that a new law based on individual aspects should be developed:

“We need a new policy for the Sami in general that is not only focused on the reindeer herder group. We need a right based on individuals, not on the members of the Sami villages. We see self-determination as a way of recognizing itself as a Sami, of being recognized as such by the Sami community and also by the Swedish state”.

*Lars Paul Kroik, Member of the Sami Parliament, Albmut*

As a direct answer to this particular point, it can also be said that:

“We want to protect our traditional culture and we need to protect reindeer herding, that is why we also need a specific legislation”.

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti*

Even if they do not agree on everything, the different interviewees have still highlighted many common ideas. Therefore, according to a majority of them, the Sami Parliament must become more important and be able to make real laws to deal with these particular issues. Many different and concrete ideas have been brought up to the debate during the interviews:

“The Sami Parliament should improve its communication within the Sami community and it should also have the final word. It should become stronger and the most important Sami institution in Sweden because it is a democratic one.”

*Lars Paul Kroik, Member of the Sami Parliament, Albmut*

Furthermore, having more full-time politicians would also probably help to break the deadlock and speed up the political process:

“The Sami Parliament needs more full-time politicians and more real power from the Swedish government.”

*Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna*

The idea of changing the current role and structure of the Sami Parliament has also been mentioned as a relevant possibility to offer more autonomy to the Sami people:
“Separating the administrative tasks from the politically elected Sami body could be a relevant idea.”

Annette Löf, researcher from Umeå University

Such a thing could have several advantages, one of them being that:

“Changing the structure of the Sami Parliament could for instance help developing the Sami Parliament outside the government’s structure.”

Peter Johansson, researcher from Gothenburg University

More concretely, the Sami interviewees have also different ideas on which strategies they should use to become more influential in Sweden. Some seem to be quite pragmatic and want to process forward step by step:

“Maybe we should start with minor issues and increase our power with time. It has to start somewhere and we should also not forget that self-determination depends on the issue at stake. We should work at different levels and be as flexible as possible.”

Member of the Sami Parliament, Skoggsamerna

Others have different views and would like to move forward in a much faster way:

“The best way would be to plan everything and to work with targets. This is an experience, we have to try and open up a process for the future. We need to show to everyone that they can trust us and that we are also able to make relevant decisions.”

Håkan Jonsson, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna

Finally, concerning the relation with the Swedish state, it would also be easier if attitudes could be different and more respectful. Both parts need to talk to each other, discuss and negotiate in a different way:

“We need more meetings with the Swedish government and we also need to know who to talk with. It is a bit unclear and we really need to discuss with Sweden in a different way.”

Member of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet
The main reason for such a change is that:

“Self-determination is first of all a political process and it is also mainly about changing attitudes. There is a need to open up a dialogue between the state and the indigenous population.”

*Peter Johansson, researcher from Gothenburg University*

The idea is particularly relevant and could also be linked to the concept of FPIC. Furthermore, another possible way to improve the situation would be to work together, take common stands and be influenced by different new concepts:

“There is a need to re-open the discussion with the Swedish government. For instance, we should discuss the ideas of transformative mediation, comanagement, negotiation, conflict resolution and power sharing”.

*Lars Anders Baer, former president of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet*

Different interviewees also mentioned the idea to implement a reconciliation process between the state and the Sami people, but it has not been further developed because the interviewees did not see it as really possible. Finally, working at different levels could be another feasible solution and the Sami politicians could also develop their links directly with Stockholm and the Swedish government:

“A solution for us would be to have an office in Stockholm and work directly with the government there. Maybe we could also have some Sami deputies in the Swedish Parliament in the future”.

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Skoggsamerna*

What is more, the Swedish government is often criticized and many interviewees feel that the state is still promoting a paternalistic position towards the Sami. However, others feel that the Sami could also work in a different way:

“Of course, Sweden has made mistakes but we cannot only blame Sweden. They have opened doors and they are waiting for our suggestions. We also need to take our responsibilities.”
As a conclusion, it can be said that the interviewees have had many ideas for the future and even if they have different perspectives, the main propositions are about increasing the power of the Sami Parliament, defining who is Sami and who can enjoy self-determination, giving more power at the local level and also being more listened to by the state.

7) The importance of education and knowledge:

In Sweden, an important lack of knowledge on the Sami situation has also been highlighted by several interviewees. The point is even stronger because it has been mentioned by both the respondents and the informants of the study. Therefore, the Sami indigenous people feel that the Swedes do not know much about them and this is probably another important aspect of the issue. If the Swedes would knew more about the Sami, it would probably be easier to talk about the problem and find more relevant solutions.

“The Swedes know more about the North American Indian People than about the Sami. In the South they don’t know that we live and they do not know how we live. It is very sad because they have not studied it in school.”

Member of the Sami Parliament, Landspartiet Svenska Samer

Moreover, some interviewees also think that the Sami also lack of knowledge concerning some particular issue at stake:

“The Sami are not always well informed about their rights, therefore there are a lot of misunderstandings.”

Lars Paul Kroik, Member of the Sami Parliament, Albmot

However, others interviewees do not agree and believe that the Sami are well aware of their rights, especially concerning international concepts:

“The Sami probably know enough about their rights and the concept of self-determination. It has been highly debated since the 1970s”.

Lars Anders Baer, former president of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet
Many interviewees also highlighted the importance of the civil society and the increasing role of the media within the Sami community:

“We organize Sami cultural events because there is need to open new arenas of discussion with scientists, politicians, researchers and ordinary people. We need to talk and promote our culture.”

Representative of Svenska Samerna Riksförbund, SSR

Nowadays, according to some interviewees, even if Sami knowledge is increasing and that some cultural events are taking place, it is still complicated to highlight Sami culture and Sami history because there is a lack of interest and a lack of means of education for the Sami. Thus, education remains a sensible issue. For instance:

“Sami teachers have to buy language books in Norway. There is nothing for us in Sweden. It is unfortunate because education is the key to everything”.

Gunnel Heligfell, Member of the Sami Parliament, Samerna

Politically, of course, education is also mainly important, both for the Sami and the Swedes. A real effort should be done for a better understanding of the situation.

“From a political point of view, we are like new-borns. We are not used to politics and the current system. We have to learn a lot of things and be able to find new tools. The situation is especially complicated for the reindeer herders because they do not always have time to attend school. They have to be where the reindeers are”.

Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti

Furthermore, education could also help making things clearer and avoiding unnecessary troubles sometimes created for different reasons:

“It is important to avoid clichés and prejudices like, for instance, “the Sami want to kick out the Swedes”. Politicians often develop exotic knowledge leading to conflicts. There is a need for a better understanding of the issues at stake and there is also a need for neutral knowledge.”

Lars Anders Baer, former president of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet
Everything leads us to believe that there is still a lack of education and a lack of information on the Sami indigenous community of Sweden, based on the thoughts on the interviewees, both respondents and informants. Things could probably be easier with a better knowledge on the issues at stake and therefore, education and information can be also presented as possible solutions for the future.

8) **International support and cooperation:**

Finally, as a people living across four states, the Sami have also a particular international vision. An important number of the interviewees have mentioned the importance of the other countries and the need for asking different international organisations for help. Norway has especially been referred to because it is seen nowadays as a sort of model. The Norwegian Sami Parliament is more influential than the Swedish one and some municipalities there are even ruled directly by some Sami politicians, in particular in the Finnmark area. It is a real example for the Swedish Sami representatives and therefore, the Norwegian situation has been mentioned several times and always in a positive way:

“Nowadays, Norway is seen as our big brother, while Russia is a bit our little brother. We try to influence and help each other by working with other parliaments and other international organisations.”

*Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti*

Some interviewees have also referred to the European Union (EU) and they hope the EU can help them reaching a better situation in the future:

“I think it would be a good idea if the Sami people of Sweden and Finland could have a lobby office in Brussels in the future”.

*Representative of Svenska Samerna Riksförbund, SSR*

Working more at the international level could also be an alternative for the Sami people and the idea has also been raised during the interviews. It is seen in a positive way and considered as an important tool:

“We always try to work with the UN agencies and we always try to promote international
human rights. They provide a basis for our future and could help us reassessing Swedish power.”

*Stefan Mikaelsson, President of the Sami Parliament Assembly, Min Geaidnu*

The respondents hope that these different organisations can influence the Swedish government and also make pressure on it because as explained in the background chapter, the state has not implemented every international laws related with indigenous peoples rights, for example ILO 169 or UNDRIP.

“Sweden cannot work indefinitely against the UN and international legislation, it has to follow the rules and therefore, we hope the state will eventually give us more rights”.

*Lars Paul Kroik, Member of the Sami Parliament, Albmut*

Therefore, many Swedish Sami representatives would like to work more at the transnational, European and international level to get more help from different organisations and become more influential. Finally, the Sami Parliamentary Council and the Arctic Council have also been mentioned by a few interviewees and they are also seen as other possibilities aiming at improving the Sami status in Sweden.
D) Explanatory scheme of the findings

The aim of the scheme is to summarize the findings section by showing the links between the main themes in a deeper way and also trying to understand how they influence one another.

Future:

International support and cooperation

Thoughts and suggestions for the future

The importance of education and knowledge

Today:

A lack of financial resources

A limited Sami Parliament and a lack of self-determination

Land issues and different threats to traditional livelihoods

Past

Sami identical issue and division between reindeer herders and non-reindeer herders

Impact of Swedish Sami History and different Swedish Sami policies

The purpose of the scheme is to explain the links between the different themes while also summarizing the section. As explained before, the diagram is divided into three main parts called “past”, “today” and “future” and different causes, consequences and possible solutions have been presented to offer a deeper explanation of the findings.

First, the diagram shows that the impact of history is still important concerning the current Sami situation in Sweden. According to the interviewees, the different Swedish Sami Policies mentioned in the Background Chapter have influenced the current situation in different ways and they have
especially divided the Sami people into two separate parts: the reindeer herders and the non-reindeer herders. The consequences of those policies are still visible within the Swedish Sami community nowadays and they a negative influence on the current rights and status of the Sami people in Sweden. Moreover, strong words such as “colonisation”, “assimilation” and “dislocation” have also been mentioned by some interviewees and show that previous choices made by the Swedish state are still very contested by many interviewees. The topic is therefore also related to self-determination because the division within the Sami community of Sweden has also had a negative impact on the Sami Parliament in the last few years. According to many respondents, the division of the Sami people in Sweden between reindeer herders and non-reindeer herders can also be visible in the Sami Parliament and internal tension concerning Sami rights has been noted by several interviewees. It has limited the dialogue between the different Sami political parties in the Sami Parliament and because the Sami Parliament is the only tool of self-determination that the Sami have in Sweden, it has had a very negative impact on their political influence in the country.

Therefore, the Sami people of Sweden do not have self-determination or only a very limited form it, according to the majority of the interviewees. This is confirmed by the following quote: "The Swedish interpretation does not reflect the essence of self-determination for indigenous peoples as presented by UNDRIP" (Annette Löf, researcher from Umeå University). The Sami are not as influential as they want to because they cannot have a real say on Sami related matters. Even if they can work within the Sami Parliament, debate and express their thoughts, the majority of the interviewees are not satisfied with their current rights. The Swedish example of indigenous self-determination is therefore very narrow and may also show what should not be done according to international standards. Furthermore, according to other interviews, the Sami Parliament is lacking of financial capacity and the Sami would like to develop their financial autonomy because they feel that the Swedish state still limits and controls their financial means. For instance, according to them, the funds granted by the government for the budget of the Sami Parliament have not increased for 20 years. Thus, the lack of financial capacity may also limit the development of the Sami Parliament and the influence of the Sami people in Sweden. Moreover, according to some of them, the weak form of self-determination and the limited Sami Parliament also have a negative impact on land issues because the Sami cannot protect their traditional lands as they would like to. In a nutshell, many interviewees have expressed their concerns about the current situation for the Sami in Sweden and according to some of them, the role of the Sami Parliament, its limited financial capacity and the land issues all have a negative impact on the development of self-determination.
The interviewees have also proposed several suggestions to change the current situation. As explained earlier, they have mentioned many ideas aiming at developing the role of the Sami Parliament and their self-determination through it in the future. Moreover, they have also highlighted the importance of the international level and many of them would like to increase Sami influence internationally in order to become more supported and potentially stronger. Finally, some of them also expressed several proposals concerning the development of education and think that increased knowledge on their situation could also indirectly help them improving their influence in Sweden. Therefore, several ideas aiming at changing the current Sami rights in Sweden have been explored and it can also be said that many of them seem quite realistic at first sight. The main reason is that they are based on international principles and another relevant point is that the interviewees would like to develop their claims through the Swedish system, not against it.

To sum up, the findings of the study have been divided into 8 themes at 3 different levels. It has been noticed that the Sami views of the concept of self-determination were mainly influenced by the past and the current situation, while ideas concerning the implementation of the concept were mostly linked to the future. The findings have also shown that the implementation of self-determination may be more ambiguous than the concept itself because there are many different ways to develop it in practice, and all these different means are all influenced by particular political contexts. The interviews have shown that while there may be a few different Sami definitions of the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples, there are very different understandings on how it should be implemented in practice. These particular points will also be further discussed in the following analysis part.
VI) Analysis

Here the findings and the different themes of the study will be further analysed while the research questions will be answered, developed and criticized one after the other.

A) How do the Sami indigenous people of Sweden define and understand the concept of self-determination?

The Sami interviewees met during the field study have expressed different definitions and understandings of the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples. However, three major approaches of the concept have been mentioned more than the others. They will be further developed in the following part.

Based on the thoughts of the interviewees, the first important aspect of self-determination for the Sami indigenous people of Sweden is linked with recognition and self-identification. The concept of self-identification is seen by many respondents as the basis of self-determination in the sense that indigenous peoples should see themselves as indigenous and claim their particular identity within the state structure. Therefore, it seems important for them that individuals are aware of their particular identities to be able to develop it at the community and state level. According to some other respondents, another important step concerning self-determination is also linked with the idea of recognition. The latter implies that the state should recognize the indigenous peoples as such and should not consider them as simple national minorities. Even if seeing them as minorities could be something positive from a pragmatic point of view, it is necessary to perceive them as indigenous because they are the native peoples of the country and not descendants of migrants coming from other geographic areas. Therefore, having a deeper degree of self-determination may help the Sami community of Sweden to develop, protect and promote their particular identity and being recognized by both their peers and the state.

The second important feature of the Swedish Sami definition of self-determination for indigenous peoples seems closely linked with indigenous traditions and livelihoods. Therefore, developing self-determination could help the Sami to do what their ancestors have done and live in their traditional ways if they want to. Certainly, it does not mean that all indigenous should live according to their traditions just because they have a native origin but it means that they should all have the possibility to do it if they want to. In other words, according to the interviewees, self-determination for
indigenous people is also about deciding on its own life and having the possibility to continue its traditional way. This aspect of the definition also means that the Sami want to develop self determination to protect their way of livings, transmitting it to the next generations and avoid being assimilated by the majority. Therefore, self-determination could also offer indigenous peoples the possibility to determine their own lifestyles (whether traditional, modern or mixed) without any foreign influence.

What is more, self-determination is also perceived by the Sami in Sweden as a possible way to protect its traditional lands from industrial projects linked with mining, wind energy and forestry projects. Surprisingly, many interviewees directly mentioned the land issues while trying to define the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples. The third and last important aspect of the Swedish Sami definition of self-determination is thus linked with traditional areas that need increasing protection, according to them. Therefore, being self-determined implies to have a say and an influence over land, water and natural resources. This is confirmed by the fact that ILO Convention 169, which aims is also to protect indigenous land rights nationally, was the international principle that has been the most demanded during the interviewees. It has been even referred to more often that UNDRIP or any other international concepts and it may confirm the importance of land in the Sami definition of self-determination for indigenous peoples.

Furthermore, the different Swedish Sami definitions and understandings of the concept of self-determination help explaining many things about the essence of the concept. They also help to see how the concept can be perceived directly into the field by a particular community.

A major point is probably that even if the particular Swedish Sami vision of the concept is based on international principles, they are also strongly influenced by a particular social and political context. Therefore, the idea developed here is that the Sami in Sweden define the concept in reaction to what they need and based on their priorities. It is quite related to personal issues and a particular indigenous context. It is influenced by a specific history and by the current status of the Sami people in Sweden. Then, they may also tend to forget rights they already have or do not mention them because they do not need to claim them any longer. There are also different Sami interpretations because there are different needs within the community. The point is probably the same at the international level and there may be several visions of the concept because of – or thanks to – indigenous diversity. Every one may define and understand self-determination in reaction to its own perspectives and will be first of all influenced by its own situation. Of course, it
does mean either that the vision of one particular indigenous people will not be interesting for another one because they still have a lot of common interests.

Thus, the particular visions of the Sami in Sweden can also be linked with the political, economic, social and cultural development of Samiland. Moreover, the different Sami visions can also be related to UNDRIP and its definition mentioning that indigenous peoples are allowed to have a say on their political, economic, social and cultural development. Therefore, politically and based on the interviews, the Sami can understand self-determination as a way to improve their influence on Sami related issues while also being further considered as an indigenous people by the Swedish state. Economically, self-determination could be presented as a mean of helping the Swedish Sami community to protect, develop or modernize their traditional activities, especially reindeer herding, fishing and hunting. Socially, self-determination could be defined as a mean of being more listened to by the Swedish government and the other inhabitants of the country within the development process. In other words, it could also be seen as an opportunity to make their voices heard and address their needs to the majority. Finally, from a cultural point of view, self-determination could be perceived as an opportunity to protect and promote Sami heritage and knowledge, while also transmitting it to the next generation.

Another lesson to remember from the different Sami visions is also the positive view and the positive connotation around the concept. Self-determination is something determinant for indigenous peoples and the Sami are aware of the importance of the concept for them in Sweden. Therefore, self-determination is perceived in a quite positive way by the respondents and it is understood as something they should have in the future, even if they have only a very weak form of it nowadays. And even if some different priorities concerning self-determination can be developed within the Sami community in Sweden, the essence of the concept still creates unanimity and it is probably a point that should also be remembered.

Finally, it is also necessary to claim that defining such an important concept was not an easy task for the interviewees and it was probably easier for them to develop simple and concrete ideas than a proper definition of the concept. It seems also hard for indigenous peoples to propose possibilities for the future because they do not really know how much power they will have tomorrow. The reason is mainly that future is not based directly on their decisions and power will probably stay in governments hands until further orders.
B) What type(s) of self-determination do they want and how do they want to implement it concretely?

After identifying and presenting the different Sami definitions and views of self-determination for indigenous peoples, it is now time to discuss a possible development of self-determination in Sweden. What are the possible alternatives to the current situation and what are the main propositions highlighted by the interviewees? Before that, it is also probably necessary to make clear one more time that the most important thing, according to international standards, is that self-determination is based on what the Sami want and it should not be about what the state wants the Sami to be. In the following part, the aim will be to go one step further and propose concrete possibilities aiming at changing the Sami situation, according to the interviewees and based on international law.

Being the main tool of self-determination for the Sami people in Sweden, the role of the Sami Parliament is at the heart of the problem and particular attention must be paid concerning its status in the future. Generally, the interviewees want the Sami Parliament to become more powerful and more influential both at the local and national level. It means that the Sami parliament should develop its power within the Sami community but also concerning the relationship with the Swedish government.

Thus, many interviewees also want the Sami Parliament to become able to make laws and develop its decision making possibilities. Another idea to increase its influence could be to give it the final word in Sami related matters and considering it as the most important Sami institution in Sweden. The Swedish Sami Parliament could also modify its structure and be constructed in a different way. For instance, separating the administrative tasks from the Sami political forum could be a possibility. Such a thing would offer more autonomy to the Sami deputies and it could also help offering some more political space to the Sami representatives. Another idea mentioned by the interviewees was to increase the number of full-time politicians because the current number seems quite low.

Furthermore, according to many interviewees, the Sami Parliament needs to increase its financial capacity, not only concerning the amount of money but also concerning how expenditures are decided. They think that the budget has to become more open and Sweden's influence on decision making should become increasingly weaker with time. The Sami Parliament would like to see its
financial capacity becoming more influential but it would also like to see its financial autonomy becoming greater. Therefore, this is not only about how much money it should get, this is also about who decide how the money should be used.

The question of the Sami villages is highly sensible and therefore, according to many respondents, it is important to talk about it within the Sami community. The specific status of the Sami villages has been questioned by many of them and there is a need to debate the problem in a democratic and respectful way. Even if the Sami Parliament should increase its power, it does not necessarily mean that the Sami village should become weaker and thus jeopardized. There is a need to discuss and to find a solution able to satisfy every different Sami groups. According to some of the interviewees, the solution should help the reindeer herders protecting their way of living, but also satisfy the other Sami representatives. Power should be divided equally and a consensus which everyone can agree on should be reached as soon as possible. As difficult as it may be, the different Sami representatives could therefore break the deadlock and move forward together to become more influential and develop self-determination for everyone.

Concerning land issues, many ideas have also been proposed. A suggestion has been mentioned several times and concerned the implementation of the ILO Convention 169. Even if Sweden has already worked on the topic a few years ago, the specific law has never been implemented officially by the Swedish government. Different alternatives have also been considered and could help giving the Sami people more influence on the development of industrial projects on their traditional lands. One of the main demands was about being able to say no and in return proposing different alternatives. The Sami want to have a say on the location of the different projects and also becoming more influential concerning land management. Finally, if some projects are finally implemented, many interviewees would like the government to send some money back and give the Sami a financial contribution. Moreover, pollution risks and the need for cleaning up have also been highlighted concerning land issues and traditional areas.

Furthermore, the interviewees have also mentioned the need for working at different levels from the local community to the international level. Implementing a flexible and multilevel form of self-determination is an interesting idea and this could help them expanding their influence at different levels. Therefore, in addition to what has been proposed earlier, some Sami politicians would like to develop their influence directly in Stockholm, the Swedish capital. Even if it seems complicated nowadays, a possible idea could be to have an office there and start working in collaboration with
the Swedish government. Also, some Sami Members of Parliament could also join the Swedish Parliament from time to time. This would help them communicate their needs at the national level and this could also help them developing different relationships with the state. Furthermore, others also proposed to work more at the international level and several institutions have been mentioned: the EU, the Sami Parliamentary Council, the Arctic Council and the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The implementation of the Nordic Sami Convention has also been demanded several times. Finally, another idea proposed by the interviewees was to develop events putting Sami culture in the limelight, both at the regional, national and the international level.

C) What lessons can be drawn from the Sami situation in Sweden and how can their different perspectives help explaining the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples?

The third and last research question focuses on which lessons could be drawn from the Sami indigenous example of Sweden. Of course, the Swedish example is not a guideline to follow step by step by other indigenous peoples or states around the world, but it can still be useful in many ways.

First, it is important to realize that the current rights of the Sami people have been decided by the Swedish state and decisions have not really taken the claims of the indigenous community into consideration. According to many interviewees, the Swedish example of self-determination is in this sense very narrow and limited. The Sami people have been mostly excluded from the political process and this is definitely not what self-determination for indigenous peoples is about. Therefore, the current situation is about what the Sami got and not really about what the Sami wanted. Even if they have rights, the Sami people of Sweden do not have self-determination because they have not been deeply consulted and listened to by the state. Many interviewees have expressed their concerns about the issue and feel that the State is not ready to debate in a different way with them. Of course, this is not how self-determination should be developed for indigenous peoples according to UNDRIP and the concept of FPIC who highlight the ideas of negotiation, respect and recognition. Therefore, the Swedish example is first of all paradoxically interesting because it shows what should not be done, according to international standards.

The main reason is probably that self-determination should be considered as a process and it is not a set of laws prepared in advance. Self-determination for indigenous peoples should be decided step by step on the ground and should not be seen as a rigid and static target. This point also means that self-determination implies a lot of patience and a lot of time may be needed before reaching a
satisfactory solution. Therefore, the Swedish example also indirectly shows that self-determination should be more about flexibility and adaptability. A dialogue between the states and the indigenous people is needed to explore different possibilities. What is true for some is not always true for others and thus, different systems should be debated between the states and the indigenous peoples around the world. The Swedish case is interesting in this sense because it may be understood as quite rigid. The power of the Sami indigenous people is quite narrow compared to what international principles suggest and some interviewees have felt like the Swedish state just does not want to talk about the issue.

Besides, the Swedish example is also relevant because it shows that self-determination is also mostly about adopting new attitudes. The Swedish state and the indigenous community need to find a way to develop different working relationships because the current situation is not satisfactory enough. The Sami population feels that the state is not listening to them and therefore they cannot make their voices heard. Different ideas able to help changing attitudes could be developed and improve the situation. First of all, an official reconciliation process could be very helpful in the sense that it could appease tensions and also help talking about a quite dark past. Even if the state has already apologized for some past mistakes, this is still complicated to talk about this particular part of history. Therefore, according to some interviewees, further efforts have to be done. Moreover, transformative mediation could also be interesting and it could help improving mutual recognition and a relative form of trust between the different actors. Besides, this could also help them dealing with other historical and identical issues before going any further into the political process. Finally, the concept of negotiation is also relevant because the state and the indigenous community have to negotiate together about different sensitive topics. There is a need to listen the indigenous community in a better way and there is also a need to respect them while giving more consideration to their ideas. Thus, the Swedish example shows that the state and the indigenous representatives should improve their current relationship and work on an equal footing, according to international standards and also the informants of the study.

The Sami community is also very helpful to understand how indigenous can behave while asking for self-determination. Two main things can be learned from their situation. The first one is probably that indigenous populations should be as united as possible because as cliché as it is, they will become stronger if working and standing together. Therefore, negotiating and debating with more respect could also help them fixing their internal issues. Moreover, and this is also something important that should be remembered, the Sami community of Sweden is probably a quite good
indigenous example regarding political activism. According to the interviewees, the Sami have always expressed their needs in a peaceful way while also trying to promote their particular culture. They have never tried to use violence and they have always used the legal and political system to make ends meet. In this sense, they are a very good example for other indigenous communities around the world, at least from a democratic point of view.

Moreover, the propositions highlighted during the interviews seem also quite realistic for different reasons. First of all, the Sami politicians seem to know their rights quite well and their ideas are based on human rights and international standards. Even if everyone would probably not agree, it seems that the Sami are aware of what they want and they do not promote unrealistic goals. For example, they do not want to radically change the existing system and they base their propositions on the current Swedish system. They try to find solutions and want to break the political deadlock of the Sami Parliament by adapting their claims of self-determination to the current Swedish political system and this is, at last, another important thing showing that the ideas of the interviewees, of course not all of them, seem quite relevant. It does not mean that all of them should be implemented but this means that they should be respected and discussed between the different actors as soon as possible to try changing the situation and offering a more developed kind of self-determination to the Sami indigenous people of Sweden.

Finally, the Swedish example of self-determination could also show that instead of the concept of self-determination itself, this is first of all its implementation on the ground that is quite ambiguous. Therefore, it could even be said that the legal concept is clearer than the political application of it. The wording of UNDRIP is not as ambiguous as expected because the interviewees seemed to understand the meaning of the concept quite well and they did not question the concept of self-determination in itself. They all knew what self-determination for indigenous peoples meant and they did not see it as unclear. However, the implementation of the concept seemed to be seen in a more ambiguous way because it is influenced by different interests and a particular context. The implementation of the concept seems therefore more unclear because it is politicized and influenced by many different things. In other words and based on the interviews, the ambiguity of UNDRIP and self-determination for indigenous seems to come more from the practical implementation than the concept in itself.

In a nutshell, the example of the Sami community in Sweden can be helpful for the states, the other indigenous peoples around the world and also for the conceptual development of self-determination.
From an indigenous point of view, it has shown that the different indigenous communities should never give up and always try to fight within the legal system by claiming their needs, asking relevant questions, protesting peacefully and organizing events. From a state point of view, the Swedish example has shown that states should open up new processes and change their attitudes. The different states should not see the indigenous populations as a threat but they should see them as possible strength for the country. In this sense, increasing knowledge on indigenous traditions could also be very relevant to help knowing and understanding one another better. For example, nowadays, while climate change is taking place, receiving advice from and discussing with indigenous peoples that have always had particular relationships with nature could probably be a good idea and an interesting example of how indigenous could also be helpful within the states structures.
VII) Conclusion

The aim of the study has been to help narrow the research gap on the understanding of the concept and the implementation of self-determination for indigenous people by focusing on the current situation of the Sami people of Sweden. In order to do this, interviews with different Sami representatives have been used to help define and explain the concept and its development while also discussing new ideas for the Sami future in Sweden.

While trying to define self-determination for indigenous peoples, the Sami interviewees have highlighted three particular characteristics: the importance of self-identification and recognition from both the indigenous community and the state; the right to do what their ancestors have done and the possibility to protect their traditional lands from industrial projects. Their ideas are particularly interesting because they show that indigenous visions of the concept are tightly related to their own situations.

Concerning the possible development of the right of self-determination for the Sami indigenous people of Sweden, the main ideas mentioned were about increasing the influence of the Sami Parliament by separating the administrative work from the politically elected Sami body; offering the Sami Parliament the possibility to make laws or to say no concerning Sami related matters while also increasing its financial capacity and its financial autonomy. Moreover, Sami self-determination could also be developed by implementing ILO Convention 169, using veto rights concerning the access to land and water, promoting the concept of co-management at the local level, limiting pollution risks or sharing revenues coming from natural resources. Furthermore, continue working at different levels from the local to the international could also be an interesting proposition for the Sami people in Sweden while developing knowledge on their history, culture and traditions could also help creating interest among Sweden. Finally, the most important thing to remember is probably that the Sami should take part in the political process and be listened by to more the government. There is a need to open up a dialogue and let the Sami speaking out on over their political, economic, social and cultural development.

Moreover, the Sami example is interesting because several lessons can be drawn from it. First of all, it helps to realize that self-determination for indigenous peoples is a process based on positive attitudes and mutual recognition. The current situation for the Sami people in Sweden does not reflect the essence of the concept but it is still interesting because it can show what its possible
limitations on the ground are. The Swedish example is also paradoxical at a certain level because even if the Sami community have different rights and different tools to express their thoughts nowadays, at least from a legal point of view, it cannot be called self-determination because the Sami people of Sweden have not freely determined their status and the current situation is not about what they really want. Therefore, there is a need to change attitudes at both the local and national level and major concepts such as mediation, negotiation and reconciliation should be further developed to decrease tensions and start on a new basis.

Finally, the particular case has also shown that indigenous peoples know their rights quite well and are able to claim their needs in a peaceful and democratic ways. The Sami are aware of what they want and what they can actually get and this shows that the concept of self-determination for indigenous peoples is finally not as ambiguous as expected. Rather than the concept that seems eventually quite clear, the implementation of self-determination is very ambiguous because there are very different ways of doing it. Therefore, there are different visions of self-determination for indigenous peoples and different possible implementations. The main reason is that indigenous peoples have different priorities and different needs. It seems to confirm the fact that the implementation of the concept should be done case by case, step by step and always based on what the indigenous need and want.

Concerning the specific Sami example of Sweden, things could slowly change after the general election of 2014 but nothing is sure. Different indigenous situations, for example from Ecuador and Bolivia where UNDRIP is already implemented in the Constitution should help the Sami people of Sweden hoping for the future. UNDRIP and self-determination for indigenous peoples are not unreachable and in some case, the majority of one country can be ready to recognize and protect its indigenous community, on the condition of course that they are aware of indigenous needs. So, why not in Sweden, a country often presented as a human rights champion?
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Annex 1 - List of Interviewees

Respondent

Member of Sami political parties:

- Baer Lars Anders, former president of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet
- Heligfjell Gunnel, Member of the Sami Parliament, Samerna
- Jonsson Häkan, President of the Sami Parliament, Jakt och Fiskesamerna
- Kroik Lars Paul, Member of the Sami Parliament, Albmut
- Member of the Sami Parliament, Guovvsonasti
- Member of the Sami Parliament, Landsdpartiet Svenska Samer
- Member of the Sami Parliament, Samelandspartiet
- Member of the Sami Parliament, Skogsgamerna
- Mikaelsson Stefan, President of the Sami Parliament Assembly, Min Geaidnu

Representative of Sami stakeholder's organisations:

- Representative of Svenska Samerna Riksförbund, SSR
- Rohde Peter, President of the Riksorganisationen Same Ätnam, RSÄ

Informant

- Enoksson Marie, Public Relations Officer, Sami Parliament
- Löf Annette, Umeå University
- Johansson Peter, Gothenburg University