International Relations and Global Development - Global Refugee Studies, Master Thesis

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From one iron age to another

A fieldwork-based study on the impacts of natural resource extraction on the Sámi reindeer herding community in Norrbottens Län, Sweden

Emilie Skov Christensen (20220671) and Isabel Bjerrum Møller (20220675)

Supervisor: Caitlin McMullin

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AALBORG UNIVERSITET

Emilie Skov Christensen & Isabel Bjerrum Møller

Abstract

Through fieldwork in and around Kiruna in Norrbottens Län, Sweden, based on semi-structured interviews and observations with and among Sámi reindeer herders, this thesis explores and discusses the lived experiences and impacts of natural resource extraction, focusing on the extraction of iron ore in Kiruna.

The resource extraction is affecting the Sámi communities' ability to flourish; decreasing the possibilities to practice reindeer herding as their ancestors, the herders report of bad mental health, a feeling of detachment to their land and ancestors, and valuable traditional knowledge getting lost. Through the concepts of colonialism, we argue that this is an effect of Sweden's internal colonization of the Sápmi region, together with the exercise of green colonialism and resource colonialism. This is all made possible by the Sámi's liminal position in Swedish society, leaving them hyper visible and at the same time invisible. The thesis concludes that the impacts of natural resource extraction not only have direct and practical impacts, but also have mental, structural, and existential influence on Sámi communities.

Emilie Skov Christensen & Isabel Bjerrum Møller

1. Introduction

The increasing rise of temperature of the planet is threatening the conservation of life as we know it. Climate change and global warming are affecting the arctic three times more than the rest of the globe. It is seen on a large scale through rising sea levels and melting ice. On a local scale it influences everyday life for people, animals, and societies globally (arctic council 2024).

Therefore, states and governments around the world are looking for climate change mitigations. A lot of the efforts are aimed at keeping the same lifestyle as today, but by what is framed as green solutions by exchanging black energy with green energy. Currently, 90% of Europe's rare earth elements (REE) and 60% of its lithium are imported from China, a situation that politicians consider too fragile due to the reliance on a single country (Ritzau 2023). Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU's desire to gain independence from Russia has intensified. With the finding of Europe's largest reserve of Rare Earth Elements in Kiruna, Norrbottens Län, Sweden taps into a market gap and the European discourse of energy independence and green transition. With the possibility of extracting these REE Sweden gets closer to fulfilling the EU's aspiration for resource independence which is also profitable for the nation and LKAB; the government-owned mining company already operating in the area (Ritzau 2023).

However, Norrbottens Län is already heavily affected by a long history of resource extraction, such as mining and forestry. In Kiruna, mining employs 10% of the population yet the mining affects the land used by the Sámi communities, the original inhabitants of northern Sweden (Mörkenstam 2019; Bennett 2019), and their traditional livelihood as reindeer herding. Moreover, LKAB is currently in the process of moving the city of Kiruna because the drillings are making the ground sink (Casey 2019). As the Sámi are an indigenous people, Sweden has a responsibility to protect their rights to land and possibility to traditional livelihood (Ritzau 2023). We are curious to understand how this aligns with extracting resources from the lands where the Sámi people reside and deforesting areas where their reindeer live. While Sweden and the European Union are celebrating the outlook for resource autonomy, we aim to explore how this is affecting the local, indigenous population. Can the world's largest iron ore mine succeed in not having negative effects on its surrounding community?

Sweden has already been criticized internationally by the UN for not living up to their responsibility for securing the possibility of living a traditional Sámi life. And further criticized

nationally by human rights activists and the Sámi themselves. The critique is stating that the Sámi's rights are not being taken enough into consideration when extracting the area through clearcutting, wind power energy, and mining (Amnesty Sápmi 2024).

In this thesis we are curious to understand how the Sámi experience the impact of the extraction of natural resources in an area traditionally inhabited by them and crucial for reindeer herding.
Therefore, our research question is:

How does natural resource extraction in Norrbottens Län affect the surrounding Sami community, with a focus on the traditional livelihood of reindeer husbandry?

By answering the research question, this thesis contributes to the field of International Relations with first-hand experiences focusing on local impacts of resource extraction in the name of green transition. The study will discuss this in the light of acts of colonialism, building on an analysis of the lived experiences of Sámi reindeer herders and the political determining structures they are situated in, combined with individual agency interpreted on empirical data conducted through fieldwork.

2. Clarification of terms

In this section we will clarify and define some terms essential to the thesis.

Sámeby (Sáme village) is an economical and administrative association that organizes reindeer husbandry in a certain geographical area for the benefit of its members.

Sápmi is the Sámi homeland. It is the cultural region traditionally inhabited by the Sámi. The region covers the north of Fennoscandia and the Kola peninsula, covering Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia.

LKAB: Luossavaara-Kiirunavaara Aktiebolag, the state-owned company extracting iron ore in Kiruna.

Land grabbing refers to large scale acquisition of land by private or public investors, mainly for the use of producing agricultural commodities, however, in the case of Norrbottens Län the land is mostly used for resource extraction such as forestry, mining and wind energy.

Holistic: We see holistic as a worldview where all phenomenons, in this case human, animals, and nature, is part of an entity rather than separate parts. This means that everything is interconnected, that everything you do has an impact on something else, so it is essential to always consider the bigger picture.

The state: When we refer to the state it is the institution around the determined power-owner of the Swedish nation state. Thereby it is the Swedish governments throughout history, the police, and the official legislation. The notion of state is based on Gellner's conceptualization in Nations and Nationalism, where he defines the state as "*the specialization and concentration of order maintenance. The state is that institution or set of institutions specifically concerned with the enforcement of order. The state exists where specialized order-enforcing agencies, such as police forces and courts, have separated out from the rest of the social life. THEY are the state*" (Gellner 1983:4).

Global power structures: When we talk about global power structures, we refer to the relations and interactions between states, the interdependence between these states, and how power hierarchies within which these relations are shaped, structured, and changed. We see these relations as governed by patriarchal, capitalistic, and colonial tendencies and legacies.

Green transition is the process of replacing energies based on non-renewable energy with renewable energy sources.

Subaltern, as defined and popularized by Spivak, refers to groups or populations that are marginalized by being socially, politically, and geographically outside the hegemonic power structures, and lack access to political representation and voice (Spivak 1988).

2.1 Defining concepts

In this section we will clarify and define some concepts essential to the thesis.

2.1.2 Colonialism

Throughout this thesis we will point to colonial tendencies in various ways and therefore we will briefly frame what we mean with colonialism today through terms such as modern colonialism, green colonialism, and internal colonialism. Our production of knowledge is positioned within an understanding of our world today being situated around hierarchies of power structures which can be led back to colonial times.

By colonialism, we refer to established definitions that link it to land conquest, foreign empires, oppression and extinction of indigenous peoples, trade, and power (Reinhard 2011). Based on this we conceptualize colonialism through the following three aspects:

A. Domination of physical place (arms, military)

B. Reformation of mindsets: education and religion

C. Integration of local economies into Western perspective (taxes, labor market)

The term indigenous only exists because of colonialism, why it is relevant to include in our thesis about indigenous Sámi, and today the term is the best tool for claiming protection and rights (Sarivaara et.al. 2013).

The part of colonialism that is especially relevant in this thesis is how colonialism is a system of dominance. It covers having dominating legislation, land, knowledge, and culture.

Modern colonialism refers to newer and contemporary forms of colonialism. An example is green colonialism, resource colonialism, and internal colonialism. Green colonialism refers to acts of land grabbing in the name of the green transition. The term includes the idea of Western strategies creating green solutions while relying on the extraction and exploitative labor of non-Western land (Andreucci et.al. 2023).

Resource colonialism refers to the exploitation and domination of a region or country primarily for its natural resources by a more powerful external entity. This phenomenon has historical roots in the colonial era when European powers colonized vast territories around the world to extract resources such as minerals, spices, timber, and agricultural products for their own benefit (Sörlin et.al. 2022).

Internal colonialism refers to the situation where Western society and indigenous peoples occupy and inhabit the same land. The unresolved process of the wish to use and live on this land together with an indigenous resistance to the Western occupation constitutes the internal colonialism. The concept of internal colonialism contains an emphasis on the

colonies being built on land that prior to the colonization was inhabited by indigenous people. In this case the settlers are trying to exercise exclusive jurisdiction over the territories previously administered by the indigenous people themselves, and the indigenous communities continue to fight this attempt (Lawrence 2014).

2.1.3 Sustainability

There is no universally recognized definition of 'sustainability' but the closest is from the Brundtland Report, 1987, which states that sustainability must be: "*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*" (United Nations (A)). However, throughout the fieldwork for this thesis it has become very clear to us that the Swedish state and the Sámi reindeer herders have very different perspectives on sustainability. In the literature review 'The Sámi reindeer herders' conceptualizations of sustainability in the permitting of mineral extraction – contradictions related to sustainability criteria' (2020) Jääskeläinen explores how indigenous communities and extractive industries have differing understandings of 'sustainability'. Through the paper she shows how the view, points, and knowledge of Sámi people in Fennoscandia and the Kola-peninsula are being ignored by the respective states and extractive industries. Comparing different studies, she has found that reindeer herders have a more holistic definition and view on sustainability where they extract natural resources through a 'partnership logic' with the surrounding environment. Not only is the extraction based on a relationship of reciprocity, but also on an interdependence with the social environment. On the other side, the state and companies have a logic based on a utilitarian logic, where humans are considered the owners and controllers of nature, and where economic interests are the main priority.

Overall Jääskeläinen shows a dissonance between indigenous perspective on sustainability and the extractive industries' perspective on sustainability: Sustainability criteria for the permission of extracting natural resources are based on the developer's view, discarding, mischaracterizing, or ignoring indigenous accounts of a holistic sustainability. (Jääskeläinen 2020)

3. Backdrop

To understand our thesis in a broader context, we will introduce some perspective of the Sámi relationship to the Swedish state.

Further we will comment on the existence of Kiruna as a city established due to the mining of iron ore in the mountains Luossavaara and Kirunavaara and lastly, we will give an overview of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the Convention of Indigenous, and Tribal Peoples' Convention No. 169 from the International Labor Organization (1989), and the right to property, which is essential for indigenous peoples' land rights.

This backdrop is based on a selection of elements which we deem relevant, yet we are not offering a comprehensive historical backdrop.

3.1 Kiruna

The findings of iron ore in Kirunavaara and Luossavaara are the reason the city of Kiruna was established. The creation of Kiruna is one example of settlement in Sápmi organized by the state and big companies. To have enough workers in the industry the state had to make it advantageous for people to move to the area, and with the industry growing more workers had to come (Sámediggi (A)). Around the mid 1880s the first iron drillings took place in Kirunavaara, and as the mining proved itself to be very profitable the city, and the attention on the area grew (Isaksson 2020). In 2023 Kiruna city had a population of 23.000 inhabitants, yet geographically it is the second largest municipality in all of Sweden, bordering both Norway and Finland (Kiruna in Swedish Lapland).

3.2 Historical foundation for contemporary Sámi-state relation

First, we want to highlight some aspects of the past that are still affecting contemporary Sámi-state relations. Sámi people lived in Sápmi long before the creation of nation states, which divided the area into what is today Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. They conducted their traditional livelihoods, fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding, on the land and territory before it was separated into four different nation states with each a national legal framework (Lassila 2018). A report from Samiskt Informationscentrum states that "*The first written documents about the Sami date back to 98 AC"* (Samiskt Informationscentrum

2018:4). The report further describes different challenges the community has faced, as the colonization that happened already in the 14th century and the later colonization that followed the division of Sápmi into different nation states acted out in different ways through attempts to assimilate the Sámi population through language, tax system, Christianity, and legislation.

A part of the coercive christening of Sámi people was done by taking away traditional, religious artifacts like the drum, which in Sámi religion and culture is perceived to have non-human powers. These were defined as witchcraft, why the rulers of the time demanded them burned, and people who used them would get punished or killed (Holloway). Following this was attempts to assimilate the population, and get sovereignty of the land, which have caused an inherent existence of battle for justice among the Sámi communities. This has led to many court suits and legal battles. An example of this is the case about hunting and fishing rights in Girjas from 2009, which ended in the supreme court in 2020, where the Sámi won the recognition of the exclusive right of hunting and fishing in the area (Högsta Domstolen 2020). Also, racism and discrimination through legislation and by the non-indigenous residents is something that have been a part of the communities throughout history (Samiskt Informationscentrum 2018).

3.3 External definitions of what is 'Sámi'

An example of the non-indigenous community interfering with Sámi ways of life, is when the state was engaged in defining who is Sámi and who is not, and what traditional livelihood is. The wish for these definitions didn't come from the Sámi themselves, but from the non-indigenous part of society. Therefore, it was a very limited and narrow discursive definition of 'true' Sámi people and culture, which only included the reindeer husbandry profession. First of all, this excluded women and others, not represented in reindeer husbandry, of being included in the external definition of Sámi people. Secondly, this imposed a paradox on the Sámi: they needed to maintain their nomadic lifestyle to be acknowledged as an indigenous people, but at the same time past politics made it impossible for them to stay nomadic, thus making it difficult for them to prove their indigenousness and enjoy their rights of being indigenous people. The Swedish state defined that you are only 'true Sámi' if you live a traditional, nomadic life: "*only nomadic Sami can claim the right to Sami 'privileges'; if a Sami abandons a nomadic way of life, he should have the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens*" (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2007:32).

Further, the Swedish state identified a need for civilizing the Sámi community, which added on to the idea in mainstream society about "*Sámi as being nomads equaled being 'uncivilised' in official discourse, which implied that the Sámi were incapable of handling their own affairs. These were better left to 'experienced men with the mandate of the government".* This included denying Sámi schools, and instead requirements of Swedish language (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2007).

Already in the 1930s reports showed that due to the policies from the Swedish state, the profession of reindeer herding would soon go extinct. After World War II, though, reindeer herding conditions improved somewhat due to increased awareness of minority rights. Further the Sámi started to organize themselves and started the first national Sámi organization in Sweden (1950) called Svenska Samernas Riksförbund, SSR. Later recognition of the Sámi as indigenous people brought awareness of their right to live under conditions similar to their ancestors (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2007).

Considering the discovery of iron ore and other minerals, a dilemma arises: this issue extends beyond national politics concerning Sámi rights to global geopolitics. The Swedish government views the natural resources in Norrbottens Län as a means for profit and independence from Russia and China, while also bearing international obligations to protect the people living in the same area.

3.4 Legal frameworks

Through a 'taxed lands' system, operating up until the mid-19th century, the people in Sweden, both Sámi and non-indigenous, had what we today would consider ownership over their land. This land could be inherited, sold, bought, and leased (Lawrence 2014). From the mid-19th century more awareness of resources in the area started to change the approach to the land from the Swedish state from an empty space to an area rich in resources. The state saw potential for growth in the area and this view became the dominating one and was institutionalized through legal reforms which had a huge impact on Sámi rights. The aim of extracting the resources required settlers which complicated reindeer herding even more. Yet the dominating policy did not take Sámi ownership of land into consideration: "*Saami ownership of land and waters became an obstacle in the way of exploitation of the natural*

resources of Lapland - iron ore, forest and waterpower. It therefore became increasingly necessary to overlook, or ignore, Saami rights" (Lawrence 2014).

Swedish Sámi policy has shifted over time, particularly regarding land rights, often challenging Sámi culture and self-determination. These policies have restricted Sámi ways of living, drawing significant international criticism from the UN (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2007). This is the case when projects regarding new infrastructure and use of land have forced people to move, which have made it impossible for Sámi people to live in their traditional way.

3.4.1 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

In 2007, 144 countries ratified the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations (B)). The declaration states the rights of indigenous peoples, and seeks to maintain and strengthen their own culture, and to pursue development in respect to their own wishes (United Nations 2007).

From the UNDRIP indigenous peoples enjoy different rights, such as the right to property, the right to non-discrimination, the right to self-determination, and the right to free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) (United Nations (B)). Even though the UNDRIP is not a legally binding declaration and does not have the status of customary international law, like e.g., the UN declaration of universal human rights, many of the articles have been recognized as reflecting customary law. Sweden is a signatory to the UNDRIP but hasn't implemented all the articles into the domestic legislation (Mörkenstam 2019).

3.4.2 ILO Convention no. 169

In 1989 the International Labor Organization created the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. It establishes a set of minimum standards for the protection of the rights of indigenous and tribal people, including their rights to land, resources, participation in decision-making processes, cultural integrity, and more. These rights are protected under international law, and ratifying countries are required to adhere to them.

This convention is legally binding to those states who have ratified it (ILO (A) 1989:169). Of the 24 countries that have ratified the convention, Denmark and Norway are the only Nordic countries (ILO (B) 1989:169).

Article 14, 15, and 16 of ILO emphasize the importance of recognizing and protecting indigenous peoples' rights to their traditional lands and natural resources and ensuring their participation in decisions that affect these rights. Article 14 concerning the rights of indigenous peoples to the land they traditionally occupy. Article 15 outlines the procedures through which indigenous peoples' rights to their lands should be recognized and protected. Article 16 concerns the right of indigenous peoples to participate in the use, management, and conservation of the natural resources found on their lands.

Although Sweden has not ratified ILO 169, it has implemented some of its principles, such as recognizing Sámi rights to traditional land through designated grazing areas for reindeer husbandry.

3.4.3 The reindeer husbandry act

The practice of reindeer husbandry in Sweden is regulated through the reindeer husbandry act (SFS: Rennäringslag (1971:437)). Due to its economic and cultural significance, the act mandates that reindeer husbandry must be economically, ecologically, and culturally sustainable. In other words, reindeer husbandry in Sweden should be conducted in a way to give a reasonable number of entrepreneurs a good living (ICR). The reindeer husbandry act regulates matters of economy, grazing rights, and who can practice reindeer husbandry (SFS: Rennäringslag (1971:437)).

3.5 Reindeer husbandry's significance in Sámi culture

Despite being the measurement and a symbol for the discourses defining the Sámi communities, and basement for the legal framework for the Swedish State, the reindeer husbandry also has a significant value within the Sámi community. The seasonal year is centered around happenings regarding the reindeer, and celebrations and subjects for gathering the people of the community are also linked to these events as earmarking the animals, when they migrate, and when they calve (Axelsson-Linkowski et.al. 2020). Many words in the Sámi languages are linked to reindeer husbandry, such as names of mountains, rivers, different forms of snow, and place names, reflecting the deep integration of reindeer herding into their cultural and environmental understanding. The holistic relationship between the animal, humans, and nature is expressed through language and behavior. When Sámi people migrate with reindeer in the same areas as their ancestors, they feel a connection to their heritage and traditions (Axelsson-Linkowski et.al. 2020). There is a strong

connection between livelihood, social relations, language, and the environment in the traditional knowledge of the Sámi communities. Therefore, if the reindeer husbandry is threatened the entire Sámi community is at risk. Every place and piece of land has unique characteristics, and Sámi livelihood, cultural continuity, and land are linked to activities, stories, songs, myths, and memories. This forms an experience of what constitutes 'home' and 'identity,' passed down through generations via work and practical experience, intertwining the past, present, and future (Lassila 2018).

Focusing on reindeer herding thus gives us insights in much more than just a profession due to the central meaning that reindeer herding has in the Sámi community both when it comes to traditions and when it comes to the understanding of the Sámi people among non-indigenous people in Sweden.

This backdrop does not intend to position the Sámi and the Swedish state as opposing entities fighting over land rights, nor does it suggest how either ought to act. Instead, we aim to investigate how global power dynamics impact local communities, specifically Sámi reindeer herding, within the context of repeated acts of colonialism.

4. Literature review

In this section, we review literature on natural resource extraction in indigenous areas. We include case studies (section 4.2) from other contexts than that of reindeer herding in the Sámi community in Sweden to broaden our scope, incorporating studies, scholars, and information beyond our focus. Finally, we situate our study within the existing body of knowledge.

The focus on the relation between indigenous peoples' rights and the environment is not a new area of study. Several cases and studies, especially in South America, are concerned with how protection of the environment and indigenous people's rights goes hand in hand (Girad et.al. 2022; Larsen 2015). Through court suits indigenous communities have been acknowledged in having their rights violated when their environment and culture has been harmed (Tigre 2021). Governments are torn between encouraging the extractive industry to mine and harvest natural resources, and the need to uphold their international obligation on protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. The facing of conflicting values can be

described through the conceptual framework of organized hypocrisy. In the case of Sweden Mörkenstam argues that while Sweden with one hand ratifies internal legislation for the protection of Sámi rights, the actual effects are minimal (Mörkenstam 2019). Despite growing international recognition of indigenous rights to both traditionally and historically used territories, including land taken without consent, Sweden lags in implementing this recognition in its domestic legislation. Åhren and Lawrence (2017) highlight how this lack of recognition of Sámi rights is no surprise, as Sweden, through the largely rejected 'saltwater theory', does not see itself as a colonizer.

Out of 15 metal mines, 12 are situated on Sámi land, however Sámi reindeer herding communities have very limited influence on the permit process. A consequence of this is that the intersection of indigenous rights and mining-related development in Sweden has become an increasingly contested socio-legal space. The weak opportunities for Sámi communities' possibilities to impact the permit process is caused by the fact that the Swedish state believe that reindeer herding, and mining can co-exist, that cumulative impact assessments is generally weak, and that reindeer herding is not sufficiently recognized as a 'property right' in relation to the right to land use. Therefore, if Sweden wants to fulfill its international obligations and protect the rights of their indigenous population, they need to undergo legal reform (Raitio, et.al. 2020).

4.1 The right to property

Among the most prominent indigenous rights concerning resource extraction is the right to property, the right to culture, and the right to self-determination (Åhren 2014).

The right to property has undergone a development through three time periods: Classical colonial international laws position on indigenous land rights, the second period is prior to the emergence of a new understanding of peoples and equality, and the third period being the time subsequent to these developments.

In the first period 'peoples' were defined not by culture and ethnicity, but whether or not they resided within the same national state. Further, the legal system was created to uphold European imperialism. The idea that, due to primitiveness of indigenous culture, they had not succeeded in establishing sovereignty over their territories, is usually referred to as *terra nullius:* no man's land. (Ibid.)

The second period, post-World War II period, is characterized by the introduction of human rights frameworks in the international legal systems. A consequence of this was the discarding of the principle of *terra nullius*. This indicated some kind of awareness that the indigenous use of the land substituted a form of right to property. Even though this was in principle accepted, it didn't mean that it was played out in reality: indigenous communities today are still struggling with getting acknowledged for their traditional use of lands (Åhren 2014).

Åhren (2014) explains that due to rejection of the principles of *terra nullius,* it became established that indigenous communities' traditional use of land would establish the right to property, however as the term 'traditional use' is not a term of art it was difficult to establish when this was the case for different communities. To establish property rights, the communities must have used the land 'intensely, continuously and exclusively', but as these terms are not a term of art either, and also defined by a cultural context, it can be very difficult for the reindeer herders to prove their 'intensely, continuously and exclusively' usage of their traditional land. As Sámi reindeer herders are traditionally nomadic, they have a different understanding of what it entails to 'intensely, continuously and exclusively' use a land which may not satisfy the established legal systems' understanding.

The rigid interpretation of 'equality,' applying legal criteria uniformly without context, meant states were not required to adapt land use criteria for cultural relevance. Scandinavian courts, using agricultural standards for 'intense, continuous, and exclusive' land use, excluded reindeer herders' practices (Åhren 2014). As it was the criteria of Scandinavian agricultural usage and definition of intensity and continuity that the courts were ruling by reindeer herders use of land could not be deemed within the criteria (Åhren 2014).

In the third period the 'right to non-discrimination' was developed from 'treating all cases equally' to an obligation of states to 'treat different situations differently'. In education, this means indigenous people are entitled to education in their mother tongue and own cultural context, just as children from the majority society are. Understanding this in terms of land rights means that a state should, according to the right of equality, adjust the criteria 'intensity, continuity, and exclusivity' to the culture of the people whose property rights over lands and natural resources are being examined. (Åhren 2014)

This development of property rights is also evident in international instruments on the rights of indigenous peoples. UNDRIP article 26 states that:

" *Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired [and] have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of ... traditional occupation or use...*" (Åhren 2014:30).

And in the ILO 169 article 14 states that indigenous people hold property rights over territories traditionally used. Åhren concludes that given this development an international customary norm has been established that indigenous peoples hold property rights over land traditionally used by them. The right to property, based on the right to equality, thus means that an indigenous community when it comes to the extraction of natural resource on their territory can give or deny consent to third parties, this includes both the state and private stakeholders, the right to extract on their territory (Åhren 2014).

Overall Åhren concludes that the most important right of indigenous peoples in terms of natural resources is the right of property. Further, Åhren links human rights with resource extraction, as the places where natural resources most often are within areas traditionally inhabited by indigenous peoples, leaving negative consequences and impacts on the culture, tradition, and livelihood (Ibid.)

4.2 Cases

In the following, three case studies regarding natural resource extraction and its influence on Sámi livelihood will be presented. The first case study we want to present is "The impacts of mining on Sámi lands: A knowledge synthesis from three reindeer herding districts" (Kløcker et.al. 2022) from Sweden. The second is "Green colonialism in the Nordic context: Exploring Southern Saami representations of wind energy development" (Normann 2019) from Norway, and the third one is "Mapping mineral resources in a living land: Sami mining resistance in Ohcejohka, northern Finland" (Lassila 2018) from Finland. Kløcker (2022) identifies three impact categories of mining on Sámi reindeer herders in Sweden: land and reindeer, economic, and social and cultural. Further, they show how migration routes of the reindeer are being disturbed and that the natural or traditional behavior of the reindeer are changing. The impacts on the land and the impacts on the economy combined are leading to

a decline in human well-being. Kløcker et al. report declining mental health and loss of traditional knowledge within Sámi communities. The necessary changing habits of the reindeer herders make their traditional knowledge less applicable to contemporary herding. Also, the herders report being subject to racism, physical violence, and discrimination as a response to their protesting against the mines (Kløcker et.al. 2022).

In our second case, Normann (2019) argues for an inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the decision-making process of natural resource extraction. In the paper 'Green colonialism in the Nordic context: Exploring Southern Saami representations of wind energy development' she explores how large-scale wind power industrial sites are implemented in Norway and experienced by the Indigenous Southern Sámi community. One interesting argument she makes is the paradox of wind energy being regarded as a sustainable energy source but at the same time it might endanger the sustainable life system and violate human rights. This leaves the reindeer herders at risk of their traditional livelihoods' resilience being significantly reduced.

Through the term 'green colonialism' she argues how the discourse on the green transition can actually reproduce colonial legacies: due to the fact of the continuous struggle in all four countries with Sámi population for self-determination, colonial power structures are present and still happening to this day. She then goes on to highlight the epistemic violence (EV) the southern Sápmi population of Norway is being exposed to. This EV is played out by controversy of when and where their traditional habitat is. As with mining, the presence of large-scale wind power will have a negative effect on the herding of reindeer, as it needs infrastructure, people and generates a lot of noise (Normann 2019). The term green colonialism helps us understand the nexus between exploitation in the name of the green transition and violations of indigenous rights.

Lastly, we include Lassila's studies. Even though she is examining the social movements and protest, we argue that the relevance of her study for our thesis is the understanding of the power of mapping, and the ontological battle between local and indigenous communities on the one side, and the state and extractive companies on the other. In her article Lassila argues that there is an ontological conflict between the 'outside' mapping an area as mineral rich and the local people's knowledge and experiences of an area as 'a lived place'. She argues how maps can have the power to define realities, thus when mapping an area as mineral rich it ultimately is being reduced to a mere site for resource extraction. These maps,

delineating land, and resources, can be seen as a divide between nature and culture. This divide, she argues, is inherent in modern, capitalist societies, which view nature as a commodity and external to humans.

Mapping land as resource-rich fuels environmental conflicts and influences decisions on extraction, significantly impacting life in these areas. This practice, rooted in expansion colonialism and early capitalism, commodifies natural resources for state-capital benefit, rendering local and traditional knowledge invisible (Lassila 2018). In the case of Ohcejohka two different ontologies of the land exist: one is from a capitalist state that maps areas investible for extraction, the other is from a pluralistic, relational perspective, where the land is alive with ancestral and social meanings.

Combining these three studies, based on cases, broadens our understanding of different perspectives regarding resource extraction in areas with indigenous people.

4.3 Our position in the field of knowledge

In this section we want to articulate where and how we position our study in relation to the above selection of literature and studies about Sámi people. Building on these we see a need for more studies about the contemporary conditions which is where we aim to contribute (Lawrence 2014; Kløcker et.al. 2022). Based on Lawrence, understanding the Swedish-Sámi relationship through a colonial lens is essential for full comprehension, which is why we have incorporated this perspective into our study. Furthermore, more recent research of natural resource extraction focuses on environmental consequences, thus not the social impacts of the reindeer herders (Kløcker et.al. 2022). It is in this gap of knowledge we participate with our thesis; providing a contemporary study of how resource extraction impacts Sámi communities, focusing on traditional livelihoods such as reindeer husbandry, combined with a colonial perspective on the interactions, impacts, and realities of the lived experiences of Sámi people. In this way, our study provides a localized glimpse of the present, while at the same time connecting it to past and contemporary notions of colonialism, focusing on the experience of the herders, rather than on the motives of the state.

5. Methodology

In the following section, we will present our methodological choices, thoughts, and considerations regarding the methodological framework of the project. First, we will present our theory of science, followed by the project's qualitative research design related to our grounded theory approach. Next, we will present our considerations regarding our choice of methods, here fieldwork consisting of interviews and observations. We will discuss our use of methods both prior to the fieldwork by stating how and why we prepared the fieldwork, and after by stating how we conducted, coded, and analyzed our data. Lastly, we will present our research participants and the field of research. This part of the project aims to ensure coherence between our research objectives and methodology, guaranteeing we investigate what we intend to. Additionally, it ensures transparency in how we answered our research question.

5.1 Theory of science

This thesis operates within the framework of social constructivism, which posits that knowledge is not inherently true or objective, but rather true in the manner it is perceived and accepted by people's individual and collective positions. Societies, along with the truths within them, are socially constructed by historical, social, and cultural processes. Consequently, knowledge about the world emerges through social interactions among people (Pedersen 2012).

Moreover, the social constructivist approach involves challenging established understandings and norms to uncover the underlying power structures that shape and determine which truths and perceptions of reality are periodically dominant and universally accepted. Social constructivists aim to identify the power dynamics, interests, and perspectives held by different actors to comprehend their views on a given truth and reality (Ibid.).

It is essential to emphasize that social constructivism does not see the perception of reality as unimportant or uninteresting. On the contrary, these perceptions are central to the approach, as they are produced and reproduced through social interactions, which social constructivists seek to investigate.

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From a social constructivist standpoint, a constructed truth holds equal validity and efficiency as what other sciences may term as objective truth. The focus lies in studying power relations and social interactions and their influence on individuals and societies. With this approach it is never the aim or goal of a social constructivist to uncover or decide whether a perception of reality is true and objective (Pedersen 2012).

According to the epistemology of social constructivism, there can never be one objective truth or knowledge within a given research field. Observation is inherently influenced by one's perspective, and there is no neutral standpoint. The ontology of social constructivism asserts that there are multiple constructed truths, each gaining significance through specific perspectives, values, and social, historical, and cultural contexts (Pedersen 2012). This thesis adopts the ontological position proposed by Finn Collin (1949), suggesting that certain phenomena possess an ontological objective characteristic. While physical phenomena exist independently of our perception, their significance is attributed through our conceptualization, creating a hegemonic understanding. The existence of a phenomenon is inseparable from our understanding of it (Pedersen 2012).

Since this project investigates how resource extraction in Norrbottens Län, with a point of departure from the Kiruna mine, affects the surrounding Sámi communities, particularly focusing on reindeer herding, within the social constructivist framework, the aim is to understand the different perceptions on the influence of the mine in the communities. The focus in this project is on the perceived influence of the Sámi communities. In this thesis we are focusing on Sami reindeer herding, which means that we will treat reindeer not only as a physical animal but also look for which values, narrative, and significance is appointed to them. Through this we believe we will gain an in-depth understanding of the influence of resource extraction, and in addition how this perception and narrative is created through power battles and structures concerning obtaining the hegemonic power to define a periodically and universally true reality.

During our fieldwork, various encounters and perspectives will be approached with equal respect and validity, aiming to understand individuals' perspectives and the reasons behind their understanding of truth. Therefore, we are not looking to understand what the *actual* impact of the mine on the Sámi communities is, rather we want to investigate how they

experience and regard this impact and look for social and cultural aspects that might explain why they see the reality the way they do.

Our thesis does not aim to propose solutions or recommendations, as social constructivism does not see this as the role of producing knowledge (Pedersen 2012). Instead, we aim to uncover power structures that create hegemonic or periodic truths and investigate how individuals participate in the creation of what they regard as the truth and political decision making. From a social constructivist perspective, all decisions are political, not based on objective science (Pedersen 2012). Thus, hegemonic truths must be understood in a political context. This is relevant to our project, as the framing of the mine varies with political agendas and perspectives, influencing its understanding and existence. The official framings of the mine shapes its understanding and existence, providing a basis to investigate various agendas and personal agency within the battle of defining the impact of the mine on the surrounding communities and reindeer herding; "*Constructivists argue that agency and structure are mutually constituted, which implies that structures influence agency and that agency influences structures*" (Theys 2017:37).

Furthermore, "*Another central issue to constructivism is identities and interests. Constructivists argue that states can have multiple identities that are socially constructed through interaction with other actors. Identities are representations of an actor's understanding of who they are, which in turn signals their interests. They are important to constructivists as they argue that identities constitute interests and actions … concerned with dominating global political, economic and military affairs.*" (Theys 2017:37) Since the mine in Kiruna is state-owned, it is in the Swedish state's interest to maintain a positive reputation for the mine and to uphold the hegemonic truth that the mine is necessary and valuable.

Regarding fieldwork, the project´s social constructivist approach acknowledges that no truth can be experienced independently or objectively by observers. Researchers' views, perspectives, and understandings significantly influence the data collected and conclusions drawn (Pedersen 2012). The views, perspectives, and understandings that we bring with us in the field has a significant influence on our data collection, analysis, and conclusions. From this scientific approach, it is viewed as inevitable, not problematic; "*The way we perceive phenomena is historically and culturally determined: we are born into a world where it is already decided what is beautiful and ugly.*" (Pedersen 2012:195) Yet, as researchers we will

need to be aware of our own influence on the field, and always be mindful of how we pass on the experiences and perceptions of the people we interact with, and not just our own perceived reality.

Finally, because everyday life shapes values and meanings, interaction in everyday settings is central to understanding different truths (Pedersen 2012). From this perspective, we argue that it is imperative for us to spend time in the field we are investigating. Becoming a momentarily part of everyday life in Kiruna gives us insights into the values and meanings behind the perceived truths we will encounter through our fieldwork. From our theory of science, we know that it is vital for us to understand these truths and structures to accurately interpret the perspectives we are studying.

Our thoughts upon this and how we aim to conduct our fieldwork will be presented in the following sections.

5.2 Qualitative research

Following our theory of science this project is based on qualitative research, specifically inspired by the grounded theory methodology. We aim to explore and comprehend how natural resource extraction, especially through the mining in Kiruna Kommun, but also other acts of extraction such as clear cutting of forest and putting up windmill parks affect the surrounding Sámi communities, with a focus on traditional livelihoods such as reindeer husbandry. Sarah J. Tracy describes: "*Qualitative researchers examine people's actions (local performances) and the structures (informal guidelines and formal rules) that encourage, shape, and constrain such actions*" (Tracy 2013:22). Therefore, a qualitative research design is essential for our study as it allows us to investigate the execution, experiences, and developments associated with the influence of the resource extraction on the surrounding communities.

Our study is primarily concerned with capturing the thoughts, perspectives, and narratives of individuals connected to reindeer herding. As we wish to conduct in-depth research and capture diverse nuances and perspectives on the perceived truth among different individuals, we find that interviews and observations offer greater insight compared to other methods such as questionnaires. While this approach may entail a smaller number of cases or sources than a quantitative approach, it is crucial for our project to acquire localized and

specialized insights (Kristensen & Hussain 2017). Therefore, our qualitative research is centered on fieldwork which we will further elaborate on in the following sections.

Our aim is not to uncover an objective truth, nor do we believe that we can remain completely detached from the phenomena under investigation. We recognize that the insights we gain through various qualitative methods will be shaped by the perspectives of the subjects, their experiences, and their historical and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, their truths will always be influenced by these factors. However, we find it valuable to understand the truths or realities they experience and (re)produce, how these are sustained, and in what context they exist. Additionally, we want to emphasize our awareness of the impact our presence may have on the phenomena being studied. While we endeavor to minimize our interference and influence in our research design, we acknowledge that our presence inevitably affects the results.

From our social constructivist point of view, we do not believe in the existence of neutral or objective science or research, nor do we view it as the ultimate goal. Instead, we prioritize transparency to ensure that there is no ambiguity about how our results are obtained (Kristensen & Hussain 2017).

5.2.1 Inductive research

Our research approach and design are grounded in an inductive approach to research, wherein our findings and empirical data guide the analysis rather than predetermined theories or theoretical frameworks. Initially, we will collect data by observing interactions among individuals within the Kiruna community and engage in discussions with relevant individuals. Subsequently, we will identify patterns within the data and draw conclusions based on theories that we find relevant to our analysis (Tracy 2013).

This approach entails using the inductive method to uncover patterns derived from firsthand experiences. Following the completion of our fieldwork, we will then examine theories to provide insights into these patterns on a broader scale, contextualizing our data within existing theories (Kristensen & Hussain 2017).

Approaching the field without a predetermined set of theories allows us to maintain as much impartiality as possible, despite having conducted prior research on the field and its associated issues. As previously mentioned, we do not strive for a completely objective or

'true' research outcome, as we recognize that our presence and interpretations as researchers inevitably influence the knowledge, we gather. However, by adopting an inductive approach, we endeavor to minimize our own biases and preconceptions from the empirical data collection process. Furthermore, incorporating theory to analyze our data within a global context after concluding our fieldwork in Kiruna enables us to draw scientific conclusions based on our data collection efforts (Tracy 2013).

Founded in our grounded theory approach we have conducted open coding followed by axial coding on our data, and the results from these two combined is what will lead us to choose the theories (Glasser & Strauss 1999:1). In this thesis grounded theory is used to create a guided but dynamic process, where new insights and knowledge along the field work will optimize our understanding of the phenomenon and shape the following approach to conducting further knowledge. The initial collection of data and construction of categories for analyzing the data will be made without having specific theories from which we interpret our data.

5.3 Fieldwork

Conducting field research is a method within a qualitative framework, where the aim is to study and interpret a subject within its natural environment. As Tracy states the term field "*... is metaphorical: it is not a real field, but a setting or a population*" (2013). In our case, the population and setting for conducting fieldwork is the Sámi reindeer herding communities in Norrbottens Län.

When seeking to comprehend the impact of natural resource extraction in a specific area, it is imperative to conduct fieldwork. In our project the fieldwork consists of spending three weeks in Kiruna conducting interviews and observations. These methods enable us to assess the extent and manner in which local reindeer herders are affected in their daily lives by the presence of the mine.

A key part of qualitative research design involves identifying individuals willing to participate in the research, as they serve as our entry point into the field. These individuals contribute by granting us access to their environment, allowing us to interview and observe them. Therefore, they are not merely subjects under study but active participants facilitating our acquisition of specific knowledge (Tracy 2013).

In this thesis we refer to them as participants because they through different interactive ways provided us with valuable firsthand experiences and knowledge, which we would not have been able to understand without their participation in our fieldwork. Further, they actively chose what to share and what not to share with us. Thereby, they had the control of what knowledge they provided for our study, and it was our job to co-work with them to make them tell us relevant information, why we see them as participants for our study.

In addition to familiarizing ourselves with the area and field through background reading, our preparation has also entailed reaching out to local politicians, activists, reindeer herders, and other relevant individuals and organizations whose cooperation is necessary for us to access the field. Following sections will delve into the specific methods used in this project, namely interviews and observations.

5.3.1 Interview

One of our main methods to conduct data is doing interviews. Doing interviews help us understand what reality our participants live in and how they experience it (Kristensen & Hussain 2017). By talking to Sámi reindeer herders, we gain firsthand insight into the issues they identify in their daily work, their origins, and where they see these issues coming from, and lastly how they deal with them. These personal matters require us, as interviewers, to create a safe environment for participants to share openly. As we will later elaborate on, we learned the importance of expressing sympathy with their issues and demonstrating our understanding of their situation. They were more willing to engage when they saw we had prior knowledge and understanding of their circumstances. Before going more into these interactions, we will outline the types of interviews conducted and the knowledge they provided.

5.3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews

First of all, we did semi-structured interviews with people face-to-face in their own surroundings when staying in Kiruna. When we did the semi-structured interviews, we recorded the entire interview. We chose beforehand one of us to be the leading interviewer and the other one to be more observant and write notes. However, both of us could ask follow up questions. This we did to ensure that one could focus more on keeping the interview nice and dynamic, and for it to be easier for the interviewee to only be aware of

one person asking questions. This is an important choice as we realized that each of us sometimes obtain different understandings of quotes. (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015)

We also did some telephone and online interviews with relevant people whom it was impossible for us to meet in person due to time or placing. Reindeer herders are always working in some ways, so doing an interview through the phone made it possible for them to talk for instance while driving or cooking dinner. We experienced that the participants we talked to through phone calls were still very present and clear in their statements. This may be because we sent them a description of our aim of the interview beforehand and because they were all used to expressing their challenges due to their interest in politics and awareness of their position as being a minority in society.

Before going to Kiruna, we contacted relevant people within the field who would be interesting for us to talk to. These people represent different parts of the field which gives us a more representative understanding of the issues since we include various perspectives. For instance, we contacted local politicians, workers within the reindeer herding profession, the mining company LKAB, and activists against the mining. Common for these people is that they are all relevant for us when wanting to understand the field from different approaches. Further we aimed to conduct data by being in public places talking to people and catching opportunities for more occasional interviews. These became more informal talks and thereby a part of our observations which we used for conducting knowledge and a broader understanding of the field.

Common for our use of different interview types is that they are based on open-ended questions to get a deeper understanding of the interviewees experiences and understanding of context. This helps us to limit the presence of our own bias which risks influencing our procedure and thereby the answers and knowledge we get out of the interviews (Tracy 2013).

We ended every interview with asking if they had anything to add or things, we should be aware of. This was to make sure that even though we structured the interview it was still based on them and their knowledge because they are the experts and maybe we didn't cover all important aspects from their point of view.

5.3.2 Observations

To do field observations and participant observations we went to Kiruna to experience the different aspects, atmosphere, and dynamics present in the community. This gives us a deeper understanding of the everyday challenges which we would not be able to contextualize in the same amount by reading articles and only doing online interviews. As we investigate the experience of realities it is essential for us to observe how the different realities regarding the need and influence of natural resource extraction in Norrbottens Län are produced and reproduced between people. This is to understand which social institutions create hegemonic understandings of reality. Through this insight we will be able to identify why and how a certain perception of reality is created and maintained (Kristensen & Hussain 2017).

Our participant observations are inspired by following steps (Tracy 2013):
1: Seeing what people do (cultural behavior within the Sámi communities). This was done by following reindeer herders in their job, helping them out with tasks they wanted to include us in, having lunch with them, etc.
2: Understanding what people know (cultural knowledge), by having informal conversations about both specific things and challenges, and broader general structures. How are issues addressed and what are identified as issues for our participants?
3: Getting to know which things Sámi people value, make, and use (cultural artifacts)

All these steps are important to investigate when wanting to understand how natural resource extraction influences the Sámi communities.
During our stay and after doing observations we wrote field notes, where we wrote down important facts, quotes, information, and impressions from our stay in the field. We wrote down every impression we each had and talked it through when we had different understandings of what had been said or done. If we were still in doubt of what was being meant, we decided to either go back to our informant for clarification or not to use it in the project. Our field notes from the observations can be found in Appendix 2.

5.3.3 Ethical considerations

When doing research, especially with people, it is imperative to have some ethical consideration. This includes consent which in this context means that the people whom you

do research with are aware of this fact, accept the way you collect your data, and know what you will use the information for (Kristensen & Hussain 2017). This is something we include in our way of collecting data by stating our aim and reason for contacting specific people for possible interviews already in the initial contact. We explain what kind of knowledge or theme we want to investigate through each specific person due to their position in society, like their job situation or connection to either the mine or reindeer herding. However, we have chosen to exclude certain words, such as 'impact' to let the participants themselves express what they experience with their own words, and for us to try to interfere as little as possible on how they articulate their reality as they perceive it.

Further we started every interview by stating the aim of the interview and the expected length, to be as transparent as possible. We have decided to only refer to the participants by first name. This is due to the fact that there exist heavy stigmas on the Sámi people, especially in terms of the rights of the grazing of their reindeer. Therefore, we do not want to risk fueling an existing conflict in the local communities. Yet we wanted to maintain their agency by keeping their first name and further, none of them wished to be anonymous (Kristensen & Hussain 2017).

In our ethical considerations, we prioritize to minimize our influence during interviews, striving for an environment that feels natural and comfortable. Our aim is to ensure our participants feel safe and authentic in their responses, without our presence unduly affecting their behavior. This ethical approach safeguards against any potential harm to participants while maximizing their engagement and willingness to share insights and enlighten us with their views and knowledge. Ultimately, our goal is to gather valuable knowledge while respecting the well-being of the individuals within the communities we study (Wackenhut 2017).

In researching marginalized communities, particularly when we, coming from a non-marginalized position, are not part of those communities ourselves, it is crucial to apply an extra layer of ethical consideration. The principle of "do no harm" becomes paramount in ensuring participants aren't exposed to hurtful memories, legal issues, or personal danger as a result of sharing information with us. This commitment underscores our responsibility to safeguard the well-being of those whose voices we seek to amplify, prioritizing their safety and dignity above all else.

Summarizing, we want to state that we have aimed to do our field research based on the following three ethics principles: Informed consent, being honest of what we do and how, and lastly the "do no harm" principle. It is essential to have these things in mind throughout the entire production of the research otherwise it will not be seen as valid research (Kristensen & Hussain 2017).

5.4 Methodological limitations

When doing our research and fieldwork we have been aware of our limitations both as researchers and due to methodological choices during the process. In the following section we will present some of these thoughts and how it shaped our production of knowledge.

5.4.1 Access to the field

Our field trip consisted of three weeks in Kiruna. Essentially one could stay much longer to conduct more in-debt results, but we will get relevant interviews and as many observations as possible to make it as representative as possible. Doing a shorter and more condensed field research gave us the opportunity to conduct a solid and close snapshot of the complexity of the situation. In this section we will elaborate on how we got access to the field, how we struggled with it, and lastly how it shaped the data we ended up having collected.

Before going to Kiruna, we did not know anyone in the field, which meant that we did not have prior access to the field from which our starting point could be. Therefore, we contacted several individuals in a broad scheme of representatives regarding reindeer herding in Kiruna Kommun. This included politicians, local citizens, activists, scientists, and NGOs. The full list of people we contacted and when can be found in Appendix 1. As the appendix will show, many people never responded to our request or answered that they were unable to help us. This made it clear to us that if we wanted to succeed in accessing the field we had to go there physically and spend time in the environment. A concrete example of this is the Sámi Parliament whom we contacted through different people and e-mails without success. During our stay in Kiruna, we went to the department of the Sámi Parliament in the city and asked if any of them had time for an interview. Luckily one of the employees had time, and we ended up having an hour-long interview with a very relevant employee. This interview will along with our other data be presented in later sections.

As the example mentioned above, we ended up accessing the field in different ways by walking with flyers about our purpose on the street, searching for informants on Facebook-groups, talking to people when walking around in the city, and going on the mining tour. To sum this up we ended up having more success with physical facing people and meeting with them than contacting them on email.

Being a reindeer herder means that you are in some way always working, always having to be available for the reindeer, unforeseen happenings, and you always have more work to prepare for the next season to come. Therefore, we also quickly realized that if we wanted people to participate, we had to follow them whenever and wherever suited them. This included any time at the day and also sometimes doing stuff while talking, if they for instance needed help with work. We had to follow their premise for them to be able to talk to us. As we will mention in the next part it had its challenges, but it also had many pros since we then saw their work in action, and they could point at different meaningful places when driving past.

5.4.2 Withdrawal from the field

It became clear to us that to answer our research question we needed to talk to people about circumstances that are highly influencing their life conditions in many ways. This means our informants got emotional and told us about things that were close to their heart. Therefore, it became important for us to make sure at least one of us prioritized being totally aware of our participant, making sure the person felt safe and listened to, while the other then could take notes or do other practical things. Further, we also needed to have time to talk the interview through after every single one due to heavy information and to avoid possible misunderstandings. Therefore, we preferred not to have interviews right after each other yet within the frame and aim of always being available for our participants.

5.5 Presentation of our empirical data

Building on our considerations and interactions with people we ended up having conducted the following interviews and observations, which we will present here as our empirical data for doing the analysis.

We have conducted two interviews with representatives from the Sámi parliament, two interviews with reindeer herders, two observations/interactions with reindeer herders, and one interview with the mining company. Further we have one observation/interaction with a resident of the village Vittangi, 75 km southeast of Kiruna city, who is a biologist and fighting for a mining-free Northern Sweden, and occasional talk with two Kiruna residents which all add knowledge to our general understanding of the field. Table 1 gives an overview of the empirical material. Below follows a short presentation of each informant.

Affiliation	Semi-structured interviews with firsthand sources to reindeer husbandry
Sámi associated with reindeer herding	Stig Johannes
	Lars Ante
	Henrik
	Nils Joel
Political	Thomas
	Stefan
LKAB	Emma and Jeanette
Residents in Kiruna	Urpo*
	Mother and daughter*

Table 1 Overview of participants

Note: ***Informal talks**

Stig Johannes is a Sámi, Kiruna citizen, and former reindeer herder. He still has the reindeer but due to illness he is not herding them himself anymore. Now he is engaged in the tourist industry, running an Airbnb in Kiruna, and taking tourists on snowmobile tours in

the surrounding area. We got in contact with him on Facebook. In a local Kiruna group we posted that we were looking for accommodation, and he wrote us on messenger offering to stay at his Airbnb. At that time however we already found accommodation, but we stayed in contact with him as he asked if we wanted to work for him. We told him that our aim of being in Kiruna wasn't taking on a job, but that we could come by his place and discuss what kind of job it was. In this first contact via messenger we also disclosed to him that our aim of being in Kiruna was field research for our thesis.

From there we met with him a few times, also going with him to his cabin helping him out with practical stuff, or just having coffee in his living room and through these occasions we had casual conversations with him. He never wanted to do a formal interview so the data we have from him is through conversations during various activities. However, we want to emphasize that he from the beginning was aware of our purpose. Our field notes from the times spent with him are to be found in Appendix 2. His knowledge is essential for our project as he himself is a Sámi reindeer herder, and therefore a firsthand source. The information we get from him is the primary information we need to answer our research question.

Lars Ante is a reindeer herder and musician from the Kiruna area. We got his contact from the Sami museum in Jukkasjärvi, which we found during our research of the area. They sent us his phone number as a member of one of the Sámebyar in Kiruna Kommun, and we then called him and had an initial talk. Then we agreed via text message that we would go with him to his cabin in Björkliden for the next day. We helped him with practical stuff and informally interviewed him. Like Stig Johannes he didn't want us to record, why we have field notes from our talk with him in Appendix 2.

Henrik is a Sámi reindeer herder living between Gällivare and Luleå. We got his contact going through the Facebook friends of Stig Johannes. There we looked for people with pictures of reindeer, or where it was stated that they were engaged with reindeer herding. We reached out to him on Facebook introducing ourselves and our project, and through dialogue on messenger he accepted an interview with us. Due to his location, we did the interview online, but we were still able to assess the insights we needed about his experience and perception of reality and what practical challenges he faces. As Stig Johannes, he is a firsthand source to the reindeer husbandry. The full transcription of the interview is to be found in Appendix 3.

Nils Joel is a reindeer herder from a small village in the Kiruna area. Apart from herding reindeer he is also a handicraft man, Duodji, and engaged in youth politics in the Sámi youth organization Saminuorra. We got in contact with him the same way as with Henrik: through the Facebook friends of Stig. With Nils Joel we were supposed to meet up in person, but then he ended up having too much work and getting down with a cold. Therefore, this interview was also done over the phone. His knowledge is essential for our project as he himself is a Sámi reindeer herder, and therefore a firsthand source. The full transcription of the interview is to be found in Appendix 4.

Thomas is a part of the Swedish Sámi Parliament, working with informing both Sámi people and non-indigenous people, for instance the Swedish government, about circumstances, knowledge, and rights. We got in contact with him through visiting the Sámi Parliament when staying in Kiruna. He provided us with knowledge regarding the issues the Sámi communities face today and earlier. He showed us how the landscape has changed and how it has influenced migration routes of the reindeer. The full transcription of the interview is to be found in Appendix 5.

Stefan is a long-time member of the Swedish Sámi Parliament. We got in contact with him through e-mail after having seen his name in articles and documentaries. He provided us with a more general knowledge about the issues Sámi reindeer herders are facing, and especially he provided valuable insights into political work of the Sámi parliament and how this can be seen in a global context.
The full transcription of the interview is to be found in Appendix 6.

Further we interviewed two employees from LKAB, which we contacted through their press information. We found this contact information on the website and interviewed Jeanette and Emma who both work in the section of social impact and thereby are in contact with the local community including the Sámi. Therefore, it was relevant for us to talk to representatives for the company to understand how they legitimize their work. In the thesis they function as representatives for LKAB why we refer to them as representatives instead of participants as our other interviewees.

Lastly, we had more informal talks with other sources not directly connected to reindeer husbandry. As stated in Table 1 this was a mother and a daughter whom we met at church, where we went to meet local people. They were not Sámi but lived in Kiruna and gave us knowledge about the presence of LKAB and the power the company has in the city. This was mainly connected to the fact that the city has to move three kilometers due to the mining.

And then we talked to Urpo who is a biologist we met while hanging up posters saying we were looking for participants or people to interview. He is also not Sámi but is a part of an activist group who fight against natural resource extraction, why he knows a lot of relevant things for us regarding the influence of the extraction on the area. The notes from these talks are to be found in Appendix 2.

5.5.1 Coding

When finishing writing our field notes from observations and un-recorded interviews, and finishing our transcription of every interview, we started coding our data. We used Nvivo to conceptualize, navigate, and retain an overview of our data. This helped us to compare repetitions in the data, quotations, and identify topics and themes in different parts of our data. While doing the interviews and afterwards transcribing them we identified several topics that showed up again and again. We gave these topics names and used them for our first coding of the data, the open coding. You will find them listed in Table 2 below. Afterwards we made an axial coding, which is also shown in the table. This division is made to shape the analysis of the project by identifying connections and common points between the codes which we can analyze and later interpret upon. Thereby these specific codings are done based on our data and then we afterwards chose theories that can be used to explain the problems we identified through our data.

	Open coding	Axial coding
1	Agency	Agency
2	Relation to the state	Cultural recognition by the state
3	Global perspective	Indigenous rights in a global perspective
4	Mental health	Practical and socio-economic challenges
5	Practical challenges	Practical and socio-economic challenges.
6	Extinction of culture, identity	Cultural recognition by the state
7	Economic aspects	Practical and socio-economic challenges.
8	Rights - Land rights, indigenous rights	Indigenous rights in a global perspective
9	World view - nature view	Ancestral belonging
10	Green transition	Indigenous rights in a global perspective
11	Generations ancestral elements	Ancestral belonging

Table 2 Overview of open coding and axial coding

The axial coding is shown in Table 2 through colors. The blue color represents the practical challenges reindeer herders face in their work due to natural resource extraction in the area. We call this practical and socio-economic challenges. Within this theme is also economic aspects and mental health since our data shows that these elements are closely connected. This is on an individual level, where our informants have given us insights on their individual

challenges. Yet as our data will show they face similar challenges but how and which consequences this have will be elaborated on in section 7.1.1.

The green color represents a more communal level and focuses on Sámi experiences of relation to the Swedish state and what we identified as a feeling of having their cultural identity limited. How we connect these will be shown in section 7.1.2.

Following is section 7.1.3 which focuses on the expression and awareness of rights in relation to land rights, being indigenous, and (less represented) as Swedish citizens. This is in our data, and thereby analysis, connected to a global understanding of one's existence, and further the understanding of how the need for a global green transition must be played out. This is represented by the yellow color.

Lastly is the red color, section 7.1.4, which represents statements related to the world and nature view represented in the Sámi communities. Through our data we found that this view is closely connected to the knowledge that has been passed on for generations and ancestral belongingness. Therefore, these codes are connected in our analysis.

The term agency has not gotten a color since we found that is a tendency running through all the other categories and we want to investigate that more directly into that through our theory. The findings within the frame of these four themes of the axial coding will be presented in the first part of the analysis and afterwards put in a theoretical perspective in the second part of the analysis.

Since the interview with the representatives from LKAB, Emma og Jeanette, has another purpose than the interviews with reindeer herders, we have coded them through the tree codings: Relation to the state, green transition, and relation to the local residents and Sámi communities. We use this interview to add an extra perspective and understanding on the findings in our other empirical data.

5.6 Concluding remarks

As we have a social constructivist approach to science and knowledge our aim is to get as close to the lived experiences as possible, to understand the lived realities surrounding our case, where fieldwork through interviews and observations was essential. To secure reliability and transparency, we have made fieldnotes, transcriptions, and codings which constitute the empirical data of this thesis. Our grounded theory approach made us enter the field inductively, why we identified patterns and tendencies in the empirical data after

conducting it during our stay in Kiruna. After identifying these findings, we chose relevant theories to explain these findings through theoretical lenses. These choices of theories will be presented in the following section.

6. Theory

In this section we present our reflections and choice of theory for this thesis. As we have taken an inductive approach to the data collection, the theories have been chosen and determined based on the findings in our empirical data. This means that we have identified patterns and trends that reoccur in our interviews and observations which we will interpret and discuss through different theoretical frameworks offering an explanation of these tendencies.

However, this also means that we will use concepts from different theories to comprehend and make sense of the data. In this case we have chosen concepts and key features of the theory of liminal spaces (Gennep) and the national order of things (Gellner) focusing on Liisa Mallki's (1959) understanding of liminal beings as a threat to the national order of things, agency-structure theory, generations by Karl Mannheim (1893) and Joseph P. Gone (1967), epistemological violence based on Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942) built upon by Kristie Dotson (1975) and Vandana Shiva (1952).

We have selectively drawn from the theories to enhance our understanding of the data, avoiding reliance on any single theory entirely. By combining these approaches, we can conceptualize our findings and derive conclusions from our empirical data. In our presentation, we introduce each theoretical approach individually, and then sum up illustrating how they complement each other. This approach is relevant for comprehensively understanding our data and ultimately addressing our research questions.

6.1 Liminal space

The theory of liminal spaces can be traced back to Arnold van Gennep's concept of "liminality" in his work "The Rites of Passage" (2004), first published in 1960. Here liminality refers to a transitional stage between two phases of a rite of passage. During this both groups and individuals can experience temporary removal of social positions and norms. During this liminal phase, they often experience ambiguity, uncertainty, and a sense of being in between places and spaces.

Contemporarily the concept of liminality has been extended to not only focus on rites of passages. Here scholars have applied it to different cultural phenomena such as migration, displacement and marginalization. One of the most influential scholars in this regard is anthropologist Liisa Malkki. In her scholarship she applies 'liminality' to the experience of refugees, focusing on how they exist in the margins of society and navigate uncertain and transitional states (Malkki 1992).

Malkki argues that refugees are liminal beings in the national order of things. The national order of things, as conceptualized by Ernest Gellner, refers to the nation state as a political entity with a centralized government, defined territory, and culturally homogenous population (Gellner 1983). In this book he also emphasizes how education plays a role in creating a national order of things when the state is spreading standardized education and literacy in the national language. This, he argues, creates a sense of community and unity for the population within the nation state. Overall, his conceptualization of the national order of things is concerned with how the interplay between nationalism, modernization, and state-building processes shapes the social, political, and cultural landscape of modern societies. This means that the nation state is the primary institution in shaping social life in the respective territory. (Gellner 1983 (edit 2006); Malkki 1992)

In this thesis we will use the notion of liminality as people being in between; neither nor, both and. We will investigate how Sámi experiences leave them both belonging and not belonging to both their land and the given nation state they are situated within, here Sweden. In this regard the national order of things plays a vital role; it is through this that they fall in between places. Building upon Malkki's notion of refugees being a threat to the national order of things, we will explore how the reindeer herders, even though native to the territory they inhabit, can be seen as a threat. We are aware of the difference between being a refugee and an indigenous people, why Malkki's use of liminality as threat to the national order things is not made directly to describe problems within our field of research, however we argue for the relevance of the usage for our study, due to the fact that some of the same things are evident: difference in culture, language, traditions, etc. We argue that seeing our data through this lens can provide crucial insights into how and why the Sámi experience of conducting a traditional livelihood, such as reindeer husbandry, is experienced as it is by the surrounding society, and how that could have an impact on the Sámi people.

6.2 Agency-structure

Another theory we find essential for explaining our findings in the empirical data is theory describing the relation between agency and structure. Structure is state, legislation, social norms (culture, racism, etc.), and global power structures which all together create the maneuver room Sámi communities live, act, and work within. Agency is action, control, behavior, and personal reaction the people have to their circumstances (Tan 2011; Giddens 1984).

Sherman Tan proposes that social life can be explained by a '*dialectical relationship* between "structure" and "agency" (Tan 2011:38). Tan bases this understanding of the relationship between structure and agency on Gidden's 'structuration theory'. In this theory Giddens argues for the duality of structure, saying:

"*Crucial to the idea of structuration is the theorem of the duality of structure [...] The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices that recursively organize*" (Giddens 1984:25).

This means that an individual will, at the same time, act under different circumstances and social structures and recreate these same structures (Tan 2011). Thus, growing up as a Sámi in a Sámi community involves being in opposition to the state and mainstream society, while also having your agency rooted in the minority experience. As the state is situated by a structure suppressing the minority the minority's agency is shaped by fighting the state.

In our analysis we will use this when analyzing the structures that are specific to the Sámi, and when exploring how the structure and agency is interrelated. We will also use it to understand to what extent structures shape the agency people have - and how agency can change structures. We acknowledge that one of the critique points of structure-agency theory is that it is hard to define exactly what these terms cover, and how one is able to analyze structure and agency when also being a product of given structures (Tan 2011). Further it leaves the question to what extent structures define and determine an individual's agency and, thereby, if or when one ever has a free will (Tan 2011). Yet, we argue that this theoretical approach gives us a vocabulary and room for investigating to what extent the structures in which the Sámi are situated determines their livelihood and practice of reindeer

husbandry. Further, it helps us understand how they navigate and act in these circumstances, avoiding the portrayal of them as passive victims, and thereby also uncovering the interplay between structures and agency.

6.3 Generation

To contextualize other findings in our data we want to investigate the generational aspects, and ancestral belongingness, of what our participants told and showed us. Therefore, we introduce theory that can explain relations through generation, traumas through generations, and more specifically historical trauma within indigenous communities regarding the given nation state.

Our starting point is Mannheim who lifted the concept of generations from being solely biological to also a social concept. Mannheim defines generation as being historical and defines three elements in which these are shaped: generations through time, generations through actuality and generational units. People born in the same year share the same location in the historical process. People experiencing the same historical events can be seen as *actually* being part of the same generation. Yet, it is important to underline that Mannheim distinguishes between kinship based on blood which is the family and then historical generations. Finally, people battling the same issues and challenges can be said to be part of the same generational unit. (Mannheim 1927)

Since we want to understand the self-understanding as being a product of your kin and community, we include Gone (2013) who has written about generational trauma among indigenous people. In order to understand the trauma indigenous people, face today we need to understand it through generational trauma, and at the same time we must limit it to the specific generation of the community we want to investigate.

He uses the term historical trauma and describes: "*the concept of historical trauma calls attention to the complex, collective, cumulative, and intergenerational psychosocial impacts that resulted from the depredations of past colonial subjugation*" (Gone 2013). Historical trauma is connected to colonialism and the different oppression this included, which has been passed on as generational trauma through 'modern forms of colonialism' and storytelling. This means that contemporary violations, although often less physical than historical violations, resonate with narratives that have been passed down through story telling about historical trauma.

With modern colonialism he refers to discrimination factors in international and national societies and legislation which leads back to colonialism. Based on his work, Gone states that the bad conditions of mental health among indigenous people around the world can partly be described through the trauma that has been passed on for generations. He directly connects the fact that indigenous people around the world have worse mental health than the majority of their nation state with colonialism and historical trauma. The generational trauma, passed down, is a condition for indigenous people, thus leaving a mark on them as a community and generation. (Gone 2013)

Critical voices point to the difficulty of firstly defining what and who a generation and a trauma is, and later how to prove the passing on of the trauma. Yet, due to our social constructivist approach we are not aiming to strictly define these but rather analyze and interpret the experience of having a trauma that has been passed on from previous generations. We use his understanding of indigenous historical trauma being connected to colonization when interpreting our informant´s emotional connection to events of the past, and why they see current happenings in the light of that.

6.4 Epistemic violence

Spivak, an Indian feminist scholar, introduces the approach of epistemic violence (EV) in postcolonial studies when analyzing how colonial oppression has changed the landscape of history. Her work is about India, but her conceptual framework is very useful for seeing and explaining colonial structures also in other places. We will use it in this thesis to explain relevant aspects of the relation between Sámi communities and the Swedish State. She shows how colonial tools and instruments have changed from being physically violent and killing people to later including academia, knowledge and mindsets (Spivak 1988). In her work 'Can the subaltern speak' from 1988 she explains different ways in which critical voices can silence colonial subjects and at the same time othering marginalized groups of people (Brunner 2021). As we will now show her framework has been used in different ways and other scholars has built upon it, but she is still one of the more influential writers of EV, and conceptualize it as: "*the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other*" (Spivak 1988:35).

As Spivak's EV departs from discourse and representation, Shiva takes on a materialist approach to EV, as she puts capitalist exploitation, the maximization of profits, the

accumulation of capital, and imperial militarism at the heart of her definition (Brunner 2021). Through these various factors Shiva argues that a reductionist form of scientific knowledge occurs, which reduces human capacity of understanding the world as it destroys all other ways of knowing. Within colonial studies and EV this is when the knowledge which the majority accepts, are valued higher than knowledge from the colonized residents (here indigenous people) (Brunner 2021).

Shiva also argues that a consequence of EV deprives nature of its ability to renew itself, as it is regarded as a non-living and exploitable resource. This, Shiva claims, has enormous effects on indigenous populations first of all because they see nature differently and they often live in areas exploited for resource extraction (Brunner 2021).

Dotson argues that central aspects of epistemological violence are damaging a given group's ability to speak, being listened to and being heard. In Dotson's work she presents two kinds of silencing: 'testimonial quieting' and 'testimonial smothering' (Dotson 2011). In testimonial quieting a failure to acknowledge the speaker as a knower occurs. This means that the audience needs to acknowledge the speaker as a knower in order for the speaker to gain legitimacy as a knower, and when that does not occur the speaker is undervalued as a knower. In this regard the 'speaker' belongs to an objectified social group, which the audience might have negative stereotypes about, thus hindering them from being perceived as knowers. (Dotson 2011).

Testimonial smothering can occur when the speaker doesn't believe or have faith in the ability of the audience to comprehend the testimony, in which case the speaker will simplify or limit the testimony to only contain elements which the speaker is certain and have faith that the audience will be able to understand. Dotson offers three ways of the occurrence of testimonial smothering, and she argues that this smothering must be seen as a coerced silencing:

1) the content of the testimony must be unsafe and risky; 2) the audience must demonstrate testimonial incompetence with respect to the content of the testimony to the speaker; and 3) testimonial incompetence must follow from, or appear to follow from, pernicious ignorance (Dotson 2011:244).

Even though departing from and acknowledging the influential work of Spivak, we argue for the relevance of also including the points of Shiva and Dotson, as we aim to address these

issues from a multifaceted perspective, incorporating both a materialist approach and the concept of testimonial silencing. These are relevant perspectives in order to understand our data through the lens of EV. We acknowledge that many others have offered their perspective on different approaches to EV but due to the scope of this thesis we have chosen to limit ourselves to base our understanding on Spivak and chosen Shiva for a materialistic approach which we find relevant due the green transitioning and Dotson's testimonial silences as it is what we argue we can extract from our data.

Since this theory is very critical towards global systems and structures, it is also subject to criticism itself. Seeking out these tendencies could be argued to be provocative, however scholars might reproduce hierarchical structures by asserting power relations. We find that as long as these power-relations are present and influence individuals and societies it is important to create awareness about them. Based on the work mentioned above, we will in this thesis, use and conceptualize EV as a systematic erasure of alternative ways of knowing and understanding the world, involving the misrepresentation, or silencing of subaltern knowledge and perspectives. EV exclude or marginalize certain voices and narratives, reinforcing dominant colonial narratives, and erasing the complexity and diversity of subaltern experiences.

6.5 How the theories complement each other

The theories presented above provides us with the necessary theoretical foundation to comprehend different perspectives of our data. We argue for the equal relevance of the theories as they shed light on different angles and perspectives on how natural resource extraction is affecting the traditional livelihoods of Sámi people. Even though they are independent theories we see them as also interrelated as we believe they together provide the extensive understanding we think is essential to obtain a broad and nuanced understanding of our data. The theory of liminal space and national order of things provides us with the fundamental understanding of how Sámi experience belonging to the land and at the same time not belonging to the place and contemporary Sweden. This builds upon agency-structure theory allowing us to understand how the Sámi navigate in their liminality and exploring what structures they have upon them from an individual perspective. As we are interested in the Sámi traditional livelihood, we will also gaze upon this from a collective perspective, thus using the theory about generations. This also helps us to understand the historical setting of previous and contemporary Sámi generations, as well as understanding

the struggle of possibly being the last generation of reindeer herders. Finally, we will use the lens of EV to try to pinpoint how and why these things occur: studying the Sámi experience through this lens offers us an understanding of the discarding of alternative knowledge, and how knowledge hierarchies are created leaving the traditional knowledge of the Sámi less valued than knowledge accepted of the Swedish state and majority.

Combined we will use these theories to analyze our findings and results of analysis 1.1 in order to answer our research question.

6.5.1 Other theories we could have used

When going through our data many interesting theoretical reflections came up. Different theories would have enlightened different findings and interpretations. Here we present a few of our thoughts about other relevant literature and theory we could have used to give other perspectives on our data. We have chosen to present theories that have a more structural focus on the state's governance and behavior. However, we want to emphasize that many other theories, such as theory of social death or recognition theory could have also offered an interesting understanding of our data.

6.5.1.1 Affordance

One theoretical approach we could have chosen to use, to investigate and explain our findings in the data, is theory of affordance introduced by Gibson (1979). This focuses on the relationship between individuals' perception of nature, things, and the environment (Gibson 1979). As our data will show that the Sámi and the Swedish state have what we call a different world view, we could have used the concept of affordance to explain how the perception of the environment is fundamentally different. This we could use to explore why it seems impossible for the two parts to make a compromise about how to extract the earth, due to the fact that the starting point of this negotiation, and view on how to see possibilities or opportunities for interaction with the environment, are totally different.

6.5.1.2 Extractivism

Another relevant approach we could have used is extractivism, and 'green extractivism', and the connection between extracting resources in the global south for green solutions in the global north. Extractivism refers to a mindset where resource extraction comes before

anything else. It regards nature as nothing but a potential source for resource extraction, thus not taking into consideration environmental nor social impacts (Andreucci, et.al. 2023). This approach could help us state the social impact of extraction and further show aspects of how global power structures within extractivism are also seen nationally, here in Sweden.

We opted against these theories because we determined that incorporating them would necessitate obtaining additional perspectives from LKAB or the Swedish state, while in this thesis, our aim is to focus on the experiences of the Sámi reindeer herding community. However, it is an interesting concept to have in mind when interacting with our data.

7. Analysis

This analysis will consist of three parts: first, we will extract the results and findings from our data and present these through different categories. Following we will illuminate and interpret them through different theoretical perspectives and lastly discuss how this can be seen in the light of colonialism.

7.1 Analysis 1

In this part of the analysis, we have taken the terms from our first open-coding we presented in the methodology and transformed them into analytical categories using the concept of axial coding. The codes were: Relation to the state, global perspective, mental health, practical challenges, extinction of culture/identity, economic aspects, rights (land rights, indigenous rights), worldview/nature view, green transition, generational/ancestral elements, and they have now been condensed to four categories. 1: Practical and socio-economic challenges, 2: Cultural recognition by the state, 3: indigenous rights in a global perspective, 4: Ancestral belonging.

These categories were created based on grounded theory, where we looked at the open codes and then used axial coding to create analytical categories within the same theme. We want to emphasize that we regard all four categories as equally important as well as intertwined, and even though we are separating them from each other in each category we argue for a holistic view on the consequences for a comprehensive understanding of the situation.

7.1.1 Practical and socio-economic challenges

The first category we want to dive into is 'Practical and socio-economic challenges'. Within this category we are presenting our findings about how natural resource extraction is affecting everyday life, such as time spent on the work, mental health, disruption of the reindeer and the economic situation of the herders found in the coding presented in Table 2.

Several of our participants have told us about practical challenges in their everyday life which have consequences in cumulative ways. This is for instance roadkills of reindeer which is happening by both train and cars. One of our participants reports of up to 300 reindeer being killed each year by the infrastructure going up to Kiruna. For reference the Sámebyar in Kiruna are allowed a specific number of reindeers: Könkämä, Saarivuoma, Lainiovuoma, and Talma are allowed 36.500 reindeers each, whereas Vittangi are allowed 5.000, Gabna 6.500, and Laevas 8.000 reindeer (Samediggi (B)).

The reindeer herders are offered economic compensation by the state for the loss of their reindeer. However, the compensation is not enough for them either financially or emotionally: "*We do not care about them (the compensations, red.) you can not sell your soul. It is like, they can compensate, but you cannot compensate for our livelihood and our way of living. It is a cultural heritage they take from us.*" (Appendix 3) This is just one example from our data which shows us that reindeer herding constitute something more than simply just a livelihood for the herders: it is traditions rooted deeply in their culture, and when that tradition is complicated, by e.g., road kills, the bare existence of Sámi livelihood is endangered. Regardless of the economic compensation offered by the state, which doesn't cover the actual financial loss, it is evident how the state's one-dimensional outlook on compensating economically is received almost as an insult. It shows us how the Sámi view on reindeer herding as a cultural heritage and traditional way of life, is in dissonance with the state's view of a livelihood driven primarily by economic incitements.

An essential point we have come across from the participants is how infrastructure, mining, clear cutting, and wind power fragments the land, and thus disturbs the reindeer: "*(...) all these roads and things, make the reindeer separate more, and the clear cutting make them not grassing everywhere*" (Appendix 3). Other herders have told us about the reindeer also separating more in areas closer to the city due to noise and fragmentation of the forest

where they go (Appendix 2). This is a problem because these changes in habits of the reindeer demands the herder to also change their way of herding in order to adapt to the new environment. This means implementing e.g., new technologies such as GPS. And while that may be a step towards making the lives of the reindeer herders easier and more convenient it is at the same time a step away from the traditional ways of herding and also more expensive. Further, it changes the cycle of the years of the reindeer. The reindeer herding is tightly connected to the seasons, and usually the winter season is the quieter one where the herders can rest. But now this has changed too:

"*It is one of the reasons why I hate winter so much, because it is supposed to be one of the more relaxed times of the year, when you are only with your family's reindeer, because during the winter we are all separated into our own groups. So, it is supposed to be, that you only have to drive around, check to see how they are doing, yeah it is supposed to be a very relaxed time.*" (Appendix 4) This means that not only is it getting less profitable for the herders, due to expenses to machinery and food, they also have more work than they used to.

These changes in the landscape lead to reindeer herders having to adopt new ways of herding that are profoundly different from what they have learnt from their ancestors. "*My grandfather just needed skis for work all day, I need machines, I need cars, I need trailers, I need transportation*" (Appendix 3). Not only is it an extra expense with motor vehicles, gas, reparation, etc., but it is also seen, by the herders, as a step further away from their ancestral culture and the reindeer: "*what machines can do is to make people forget what the reindeer are able to do. Like, because if you have to move them by let's say an ATW for example, because you have it much more easy than a reindeer, you just have to sit on your little seat and press with your thumb and steer, that is all you have to do, but a reindeer has to move, physically*". (Appendix 4)

Another aspect of including more machinery is what Nils Joel describes as a more macho-culture, surrounded by fixing and driving their machines, which is different from their ancestors: "*Macho-culture is men being very much toxic and looking down on others, laughing and having fun on other people's behalf. (...)I have heard of stories from when my mother was younger, then the male reindeer herders was a lot more soft, humble, and forgiving. But because of the whole industrialization and the machines coming into play then that culture has changed a lot.*" (Appendix 4)

In and around the Kiruna area several of the herders are reporting disturbances due to the mining and city (Appendix 2; Appendix 4). This makes the reindeer spread out, and in this case, Lars told us that it would be easier for him to use a GPS, to navigate and find the reindeer. However, he is very hesitant to do this as he wants to keep practicing reindeer herding the old ways, and wants to stay closely connected to the reindeer: "*I know where the reindeer are because I know how they think*"(Appendix 2).

In this case we can also see the interrelationship between the profession, tradition, culture, and nature. Part of the reindeer herding is being rooted to the land, living with and off nature and understanding and using nature through inherited knowledge.

Even though he acknowledges some of the conveniences with implementing machinery and technology to his profession, he is afraid that if he starts using more machines, he will lose the close connection to the reindeer, and the knowledge and connection that have been passed on for generations will slowly get lost. Henrik expresses the same worry: "*I wish I can live as my grandparents(...), but it is impossible today. The land is all fragmented because of all the roads, and railroads, and cutting down the trees*." (Appendix 3)

As we have seen, the reindeer herding industry is more than just a financial means to get by, thus when eroding it, it leaves marks not only financially but also mentally on the reindeer herding community. The participants are pointing out how they feel left with no future in their home areas, and how they don't see a future for reindeer herding in the area: "*People leave the samebyar (in the Kiruna area, red.) for samebyar more South because there is no future here: because of the mines, railways, climate change- everything.*" (Appendix 2)

This shows us that it is not only because reindeer herding in general is declining, but because specifically the implications and issues the reindeer herders face in and around Norrbottens Län makes them leave for more southern places where resource extraction is less heavy.

The loss of conducting traditional livelihoods the way the Sámi communities wish to do it leaves them with a feeling of categorically not fitting into Swedish society. In contemporary Sweden there is no room for the customs and culture, as economic growth and resource extraction comes first. This leaves them feeling marginalized and inferior to Swedish agendas and customs, which is evident in statistics of mental health issues and suicide among Sámi reindeer herders (Appendix 3) When asking if these circumstances make people quit reindeer herding, he answered: "*No, it is more that they commit suicide. (...) because of maybe the economic situation and this, they commit suicide instead. If you one*

time have started with reindeer herding it is really hard to stop, because it is like a drug."
(Appendix 3).

Through this quote: "*The reindeer not have place in this modern world anymore*" (Appendix 3) Henrik states that not only does the reindeer not have a place in the modern world, but that goes for the Sámi as well. We build this argument on the attachment to the animals and traditions that we have showcased above. The reindeer herders and the reindeer are deeply connected through history, traditions, and the way they see and use the land and nature.

7.1.1.1 Part conclusion

Ultimately this section shows us that the herders feel that they, involuntarily and coerced by circumstance, have to reinvent the way they herd their reindeer. These reasons for changes are connected to natural resource extraction as it is due to among others mining, railways, and clear cuttings that the reindeer behave differently, and the circumstances and environment are changing. The practical change of being a reindeer herder is both making the economic situation for them decline, and further it is removing them from their cultural heritage and traditional ways of herding. This has mental consequences for the individuals and communities. Most obvious is this in suicide statistics of Sweden and the fact, that mental issues within Sámi communities are mentioned by more participants.

7.1.2 Cultural recognition by the state

The second category we have identified is 'Cultural recognition by the state'. This category is the axial coding of what we found in the two open codes 'relation to the state' and 'extinction of culture and identity'.
From our empirical data, observations, and interviews, it is shown that the reindeer herders, in general, have a tense relationship with the Swedish state in various ways. One way is, as mentioned in the preceding section, the lack of possibilities to conduct reindeer husbandry the traditional way: "*It is made impossible for me to herd reindeer the way I was taught because of the state misusing the land in more than one way*" (Appendix 2).
This understanding, that the state doesn't understand how to govern nature, is present throughout all interviews and observations. It is clear that the participants regard the state's use, understanding, and respect of nature as deficient and the reindeer herders are the ones feeling the consequences of this lack of responsible use of the land. This will be highlighted

further in category 3, but it is worth paying attention to here as well, as it is interfering with the herders' relationship to the state. In this section however, we will focus on the land; feeling of belonging to the land, and expression of miscommunication and misunderstanding about owning land. Many of the informants live with an understanding that the government has stolen their land for decades (Appendix 2; Appendix 3). They feel that the government does not respect the Sámi right to the land, and that the state is willing to sell their (the Sámi's) land to the highest bidder, which can also be international companies who seek to extract from the earth, regardless that newcomers and the technologies they bring with them will destroy the land and thereby make it impossible to conduct Sámi activities on the land: "*(the Swedish government, red.) are taking the right of the land away from us and saying this is their land. And they are selling it out also to anyone who wants.*" (Appendix 3) What also became clear to us when talking to the participants was that this is not just a political battle but a question that made every one of them emotional. It was clear that this is not just a question about the right to land, but an existential issue of the right to exist.

Many of the herders have traces to their homelands for generations and generations: "*my family have been doing reindeer herding here, probably longer but, since the iron age in this area. And now it is covered in mining and other shit.*" (Appendix 3) When the state washes those traces away, both the migrations routes of the reindeer, offering places, and other meaningful elements, it feels to the Sámi that the state is neglecting them, and washing away them, their cultural foundation, and history. Another participant states: "*In their eyes the Sami people are a nuisance, people that will get in the way, and they will fight against any kind of proposition they (red: the state) have. This is because we know that their way of handling these lands isn't good in the slightest. It only leads to destruction and money generation.*" (Appendix 4) This point is connected to the fact that the herders don't see the state governing nature in a right and just way. The Sámi do not agree that the most important thing in regard to nature is extraction and money generation. As our data state, they have another take on taking care of the earth - for them overconsumption is the main issue, which we will elaborate on in the section about green transition. However, they express an understanding for private companies to be focused on economic growth and have profit as a goal, but the state should have a broader, more holistic picture of the situation: "*They have no thought about the nature at all. They can say whatever they want, but in the end, they only want profit, that is all they want, that is the only thing they talk about. That is the only thing they work towards. And also it is interesting to think about; it*

would be understandable if a private actor, you know, would work towards profit, but LKAB is a state owned company" (Appendix 4). Besides being an expression of political disagreeing with the state, these expressions in our data also show frustration, lack of trust, and a feeling of not being heard, which all adds up to the reconstruction of the Sámi communities as a minority in the Swedish society and not an equal part of Swedish society.

Building on this is our finding of disbelief and mistrust towards the state in the data. As mentioned earlier, several informants experience that the state has stolen their land during decades, which has created a distrust that has been passed on for generations and continue to make current happenings, such as the opening of new mines, experienced in that perspective. Further we see examples of other ways in which the state has acted, and still does, which support their perception that the state is not honest and working for the best interests of the Sámi. For instance, Stig Johannes describes how official Sámi documents have been burned, and how Sámi people got killed when coercively being converted to Christianity. Here cultural elements such as drum, joik (Sámi music), duodji (handcraft) got forbidden and the punishment was killing (Appendix 2). This is still perceived as a direct act of systematically killing a people with all its cultural and traditional knowledge, and the racism that followed is still seen in Swedish society today (Appendix 2). This is thereby related to the perception of traumas that has been passed on for generations, which we have learned from our informants; from drums and shamans being burned to experiences of racial discrimination (Appendix 2: Appendix 4). While these experiences of racism cannot be directly attributed to the contemporary Swedish government, our argument, grounded in our data, suggests that the state still shapes the perception of Sámi people within the population through existing institutional discrimination. This is supported by the feeling of being a nuisance and a burden for the society which Nils Joel expresses: "*In their eyes the Sami people are nuisance, people that will get in the way*" and he continuous: "*It's racism that's been passed down for generations; some people having stereotypes, some people actually calling me Lapdjärvel, no mentioning of Sámi people in education or reindeer herders. So yes, it is very clear that Kiruna has been for many, many years tried to make Sámi people invisible because as I said nuisance*" (Appendix 4).

These experiences of racism mentioned above contribute to creating a distance and a gap between the Sámi people and the majority of Swedish society. The Sámi people we interviewed all expressed that they see a difference in being 'Sámi' and 'Swedish', and that

they have a deeper connection to being Sámi than Swedish: "*We are Swedish citizens, but we are Sámi*" (Appendix 4).

Further the creation of the nation states made it impossible for reindeer herders to migrate with the reindeer the way that they used to. For instance, Lars Ante explained how the herders used to travel to the west coast of what is today Norway with the animals, but now that has been complicated due to the current borders and national legislation. This adds to what our informants describe as belonging more to the Sámi origins of their ancestry rather than to the nation state, in which they live. He states: "*For me, if I am in Norwegian area with the reindeer, I am Norwegian - if I am in Sweden I am Swedish*" (Appendix 2). For him the national identity doesn't matter, but the Sámi identity does.

7.1.2.1 Part conclusion

To summarize our findings within this category, an important thing to highlight is that all our participants express the relation between Sámi communities and the Swedish state as based on distrust and miscommunication. Contemporary violations of rights together with generational trauma builds up the feeling of being inferior and even hidden throughout generations. They feel misunderstood, neglected, and not important to the state, and this lack of awareness and protection of their cultural heritage and legal rights leads to a slow but steady erosion of central parts of Sámi culture. This goes back to the creation of nation states, later the killing of people and cultural artifacts during coercive Christening, and until current time and the last decades with the earth being sold to big companies aiming to extract the earth.

The practical effects of the natural resource industry which makes it impossible to herd reindeer the same way as earlier, we mentioned in category 1, combined with the experience that the state is neglecting the Sámi communities, leads to erosion of culture, traditions, and Sámi identity, because all these things are tightly woven together, and the reindeer herding profession is more than a job - it is cultural heritage. Ultimately, this leaves the Sámi with the feeling that ending traditional reindeer husbandry means ending the future of Sámi culture.

7.1.3 Indigenous rights in a global perspective

The third category we have detected is 'Indigenous rights in a global perspective'. This category is the axial coding of the three open codes 'global perspective', 'rights (land rights and indigenous rights)', and 'the green transitioning'.

Throughout our observations and interviews it is clear to us that the legal rights connected to indigenous people (and the identity connected here) play an important role in the life and circumstances for reindeer herding. It is their last resort to ensure they have a place in this world. Despite not knowing all the legal frameworks (Appendix 5) they are strongly aware of the jurisdiction meant to protect them and their livelihood. First and foremost, they perceive the land as 'theirs', thus stolen by the government: "*Yeah, well they (the Swedish government, red.) are taking the right of the land away from us and saying this is their land. And they are selling it out also to anyone who wants*." (Appendix 3).

As the state is claiming legal rights over the land, they have the opportunity to extract the natural resources, or even sell it to foreign companies for the same purposes, as we are seeing today in Gällivare and potentially in Gabna and Talma (Appendix 2).

In general, we have observed a high level of awareness of indigenous land rights, even though the people we have talked to have seemed rather hesitant to, at least in their everyday life, identify with being an 'indigenous people' (Appendix 2). However, it is clear that they will use it as a last resort to make sure their rights are not being violated. As we know from interviews with Sametinget these issues often end up in court when communication breaks down (Appendix 5).

Land rights, e.g., grazing rights, are essential for the reindeer herders as they need the land for their animals. The view upon the land is different, and where the Sámi see reindeer pastures, migration routes, work, etc. the state sees a new klondike where they can get the material they need for the green transitioning (Appendix 5). This has, according to Sametinget, accelerated especially after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as Sweden seeks to boost independence from Russia. This trend is also evident within the Europe Union, which desires independence from Chinese minerals (Appendix 5). In this regard Northern Sweden has become interesting in the attempt to solve the 'need' of extracting resources within Europe. Henrik states the issue in a global perspective like this: "*The resources of the world is soon finished, we using them more than they ever can come back. So it's like… we need to do something pretty quick. and this growing the economy that is not will happen so*

many years more, because we not can take more nat. resource soon because people live in other places will take up Sápmi and other indigenous land. Because it is the same pressure everywhere on indigenous land, it is the only land that is left to harvest. And when they have harvested that then they have nothing more and the economic system will crash." (Appendix 3)

Our participants believe that the focus on economic growth has led to overconsumption, contributing to the current climate crisis. They perceive that the Swedish state is misusing the land, accelerating environmental degradation, and pushing the earth towards extinction. On the other hand, the Sámi express that they know how to live sustainably, as they have done for thousands of years never taking more than they need. As an example, Lars Ante explained that in the areas where Swedish people have hunting rights for moose, they shoot both mothers and calves, which he sees as a wrong way of hunting. He argues that the Swedish way of hunting is greedy and does not take into consideration that killing mothers and babies will eventually make species go extinct (Appendix 2).

Further our participants all express that they don't believe in framing mining and other natural resource extraction as green, which is what LKAB claims it is: *"(...)there is nothing green about a mine, you have to. just the simplest act of extracting ore from the earth without giving anything back, that is like the core example of exploiting"* (Appendix 4). They feel that when they oppose the state's resource extraction plans for green transition, they are portrayed as being against environmental preservation and resistant to adopting a new way of life necessary for the green transition.

In our data we also see that the Sámi have a perception that the state has a different perspective on sustainability than they do: "*yeah, what is sustainability? hahah. if you look at the only sort of major agreement when it comes to sustainability was in the Brundtland rapporten. which say that a sustainable development is seeing to the needs of today without risking the needs of coming generations. But then again… what are our needs today? if that question never is answered how will we know when we are affecting coming generations?*" (Appendix 5).

From this quote we understand that there is no clear definition on sustainability, which leaves room for interpretation on what it is, and what compromises the needs of the future. Our data shows that current extraction methods jeopardize the future of reindeer herding. However, on the contrary side, we also hear state-owned LKAB arguing that not extracting iron ore in Kiruna compromises the future of Swedish society (Appendix 7). As Sweden is

framing themselves and creating a narrative that they are going to save Europe from Russian and Chinese energy, the discourse about green energy obtains hegemony over the discourse of cultural conservation.

Additionally, their starting point for sustainability is so different that it seems completely incompatible, thus leaving the Sámi with a feeling of neglect and inferiority once again. This is also interesting since LKAB continuously uses the word sustainability while not being able to offer a definition of the concept. During our interview they said several times that they are working towards being sustainable, and when we asked what they mean they said, 'as sustainable as possible', thus never offering a clear definition of a key concept of the company's approach on a sustainable green transition (Appendix 7).

This amplifies the perception that the state is extracting without consideration for the Sámi reality and especially without regards for Sámi knowledge (Appendix 4). Stefan states: "*In this debate or in this prospect for the green transition we can see that there is not so much interest from the dominating society from the state agencies from the major companies, from Swedish citizens to involve the Sami perspective or the Sami dimensions in this, and we have realized this many years ago of course*." (Appendix 6)

The sheer number of 'green' workers required for the green transition poses an additional threat to the Sámi traditional livelihood: "*(...) now it is coming second wave with this green transition, or what they are calling green transition (...) They need thousands of green workers. This new (iron) industry that's on the way, need many, many, many thousands of workers. And it is not place for this people if we will continue with the historical way of life.*" (Appendix 3). As more workers are moving to the city, the city is expanding and the people moving there want to be able to live a full social life with restaurants and leisure activities. Therefore, the city will need to develop, thus growing and demanding more infrastructure taking up more land. All these factors contribute to the increased use of the land, making it particularly challenging to continue traditional reindeer herding.

As mentioned, the Sámi argues for a more holistic view on consequences for natural resource extraction, where the cumulative effects are also being considered such as the traditional livelihoods (Appendix 5) This is also important, as they all state, due to the fact that the traditional Sámi way of living is not consuming more of the earth's materials than it can reproduce, in contrast to the majority of the Swedish population. So, according to Nils

Joel, if one truly wants a greener world, the majority should learn from the Sámi way of living instead of reducing it (Appendix 4).

7.1.3.1 Part conclusion

Our findings in category 3 shows significant awareness among the Sámi communities of belonging to the category indigenous people. They express a paradox related to this definition, because it, at the same time as offering them legal protection, introduces a stigma imposed by not being a part of mainstream society. This stigma they experience through racism and stereotypes, which makes them feel degraded as a people and community.

On the other hand, the term indigenous is their last hope of justice, because it gives them legal protection. However, as we have seen through different lawsuits and throughout history, Sweden does not always follow this legislation, which means that ultimately the people need to be very aware of their rights and sometimes even take the state to court in order to make sure their rights are not violated. This puts an extra workload for the reindeer herders, because not only do they have to go out to the animals and look after them every day, but they also have to educate themselves and stay informed about national and international legislation.

Further, the reindeer herders we spoke to are aware of them being a part of a political puzzle where the Swedish state wants to be a green frontrunner simultaneously with complying with international standards of protecting the rights of indigenous peoples.

Lastly, on a global scale, our participants demonstrate solidarity with indigenous people worldwide, accompanied by feelings of affiliation. This sense of connection is manifested through shared experiences of living traditional lives and challenging similar structures. Additionally, it is reinforced by their interactions at international conferences. Importantly, the Sámi show compassion and global awareness when stating that they know that other indigenous societies around the world have bigger battles, for instance by saying "*at least we don't get killed anymore*" (Appendix 3).

7.1.4 Ancestral belonging

The fourth category we have identified is 'ancestral belonging'. This category represents the findings in the axial coding of the two open codes 'world view/nature view' and 'Ancestral heritage'.

As also mentioned in the preceding categories, the Sámi argue for a more holistic view on nature and sustainability in policy making regarding the green transition. From our fieldwork

we know that they do not believe they can keep on living a traditional Sámi life in contemporary society, unless something will change: "*I think that the reindeer herding is going to change drastically into something we don't really recognize. Reindeer herding has always been very traditional for many, many years, but it has become modernized, of course we use machines, and we use technologies, but I think it will have to change to something that is not recognized as traditional Sami reindeer herding*" (Appendix 4).

This shows us two things: first of all, that the herders are both willing and aware that the reindeer herding industry needs to change. However, they push for a change where central parts of the practice can remain, thus keeping the reindeer herding based on Sámi traditions. Secondly, reindeer herding is not only a job, but also a big part of Sámi identity: "*We are all grown up with reindeer herding for many generations, we all speak the language, we are very much integrated into the culture. It's a really big identity and we are very proud of it*" (Appendix 4), and this is also closely connected to the land and nature, which makes it even more traumatizing when it is destroyed by the state: "*As a reindeer herder, I am very much rooted to the land*" (Appendix 4). Thus, it becomes a matter of identity, culture, history, and tradition, rather than merely a job. As mentioned earlier, this transition is not possible without ruining cultural artifacts and belongingness along the way.

Following this, many of our participants point to the fact that they can trace their ancestry back to the respective areas for centuries upon centuries which also adds on to the rootedness and knowledge of the area, which they claim to be theirs. Also, they experience an absence of understanding from the state to acknowledge how much damage the extractive industry is causing, both to nature and to their culture: "*You cannot repair a destroyed mountain and a hole in the ground. Like a revigne*" (Appendix 4). This perspective relates to the statement from LKAB representatives in the interview, where they mentioned giving back a mountain in Kiruna to the city after completing the extraction process. However, this mountain is now a ski hill, and therefore cannot be used for reindeer herding (Appendix 7) This fundamentally different view on 'giving back the land' is an important point here, as it shows us how different they view the world.

A quote from Henrik Andersson elaborates this viewpoint. He states: "*Yeah, but the interesting thing is, when you think of a mine in Gällivare, where I stay, it is the biggest copper mine in Europe, and when they say they will restore that mine, it is to just be water .. so you have a poison lake for many thousand years. How that can be allowed?*" (Henrik Andersson).

Here we also see another point: the Sámi and the state have completely different views on nature. While the state sees opportunities for exploitation and economic growth, the Sámi perceive these areas as pastures for reindeer and repositories of cultural history. Expanding on this, the Sámi view the current societal approach of exploiting the earth and sustaining current levels of consumption as leading to the world go under:

"*I mean a car is a car.. if it is electric or if it is by fuel. We need to go back - That is how we can fix the climate change (...) because you need exactly the same things for a car even if it's electric. You need m*ining, you need everything. So, this we have battery instead of fuel is not helping anything" (Appendix 3).

On the opposite hand, when we talked to representatives from LKAB they said, *"We need more resources than we have on earth today" (Appendix 7).*

Where LKAB, argue for the mining industry's role in the green transitioning (Appendix 7) our participants argue for a fundamental change in how we consume and that a mine will never be green: "*there is nothing green about a mine, you have to.. just the simplest act of extracting ore from the earth without giving anything back, that is like the core example of exploiting*" (Appendix 4).

This lack of mutual understanding is also one of the things that makes the herders feel marginalized. The Sámi reality is very rarely the one, which decisions are based on, as it differs significantly from that of mainstream society. This is also expressed when Lars talks about the moose hunt in areas where Sámi hold the hunting rights. They experience that the way the state is governing nature, and the climate is directly wrong and making species go extinct, and that they as a community have a better way of doing it, but this way is categorically discarded. Their argument for their "knowing better" stems from their thousand-year utilization of the land. They assert that throughout this time, they have never taken more than necessary, ensuring the earth's ability to regenerate. They have a holistic view on nature where one should never consume more than one needs (Appendix 2), and then they see the other part of society consuming way more than they need according to Sámi standards (Appendix 5).

From our participants we understand that they think it is imperative to continuously look at the bigger picture. They have a feeling that the state, and companies, do not do this, as they don't take into consideration the cumulative effects.

This is crucial to understand some of the reasons why the Sámi feel neglected. The increasing presence of people that are moving to the area due to the green transition is not

only causing noise and dust, but are also taking up physical space that traditionally were Sámi and that cultural and ancestral value to the people:

7.1.4.1 Part conclusion

When summarizing our findings in the data within this theme, it is especially clear to us that the worldview, here the view upon how to deal with climate change and meet the need for a green transition and governing nature, is pursued differently. The state and LKAB aim to fill the need for materials and growth where the Sámi tries to shed light on overconsumption as the main issue. From a Sámi point of view the extracting of natural resources adds onto the already existing overconsumption no matter if they are extracted without carbon emissions. The way of addressing the problem is fundamentally different which makes it incompatible for the state's interests and Sámi communities' beliefs to coexist. Further, there is a frustration among the Sámi communities connected to the question 'who should pay the price for the green transition?' As the Sámi are the ones consuming the least but yet it is their land that keeps on getting taken in the name of the green transition. This makes them feel that their knowledge about how to use the earth without exploiting it, which is knowledge they have from their ancestors, are not valued and leads to misuse of the earth by the state.

7.1.5 Part conclusion

Through our data we have detected different ways in which natural resource extraction is affecting the reindeer herding community: The infrastructure needed in order to actually extract is making significant changes to the nature and environment in the area, which is forcing the herders to change their ways of herding. This means that they lose some elements of the traditional way of herding, and as they regard reindeer herding as a cultural heritage as much as a job, they ultimately lose part of their culture when they are making significant changes to reindeer husbandry. This change in ways of conducting their culture and job also leads to some mistrust between the Sámi community and the state. As we have laid out above, they are left with a feeling of mistrust towards the state: they don't trust their agenda, they don't trust that the state have their best interest at heart, and because the Sámi wants to maintain their traditional ways of conducting reindeer husbandry, which does not fit with the state's wish to extract they have a feeling that there is not a place for them in contemporary Swedish society. This leads to a feeling of 'otherness', where they have clear distinctions between 'Sámi' and 'Swedish'. Due to this feeling, of not fitting into contemporary

society, we have seen how the Sámi reindeer herders are very much aware of their rights to the land as an 'indigenous people'. This being despite many of them telling us how they don't want to identify with being 'indigenous', but because of the state's continuous discard of their rights to the land they are left with no choice but to claim their indigenous right, and when necessary, take it to court. Furthermore, we see how their worldview differs so much from that of the state's that it is very difficult for them to talk about solutions. The state wants to be 'as sustainable as possible' but within a framework of growth, extraction and sustaining modern consumption, whereas the Sámi see the way we use and consume the earth as the main problem; in this sense they don't believe in the green transition in terms of 'green' power, as they believe we should decrease our consumption all together.

Our data shows us that due to natural resource extraction Sámi reindeer herders struggle with keeping their traditional ways of life, which is what they wish to be able to do.

7.2 Results in a theoretical perspective

In this section, we will examine the findings from analysis 1.1 through the lens of the theories and concepts presented earlier. Through our data we understand that liminality is the primary structure within which the Sámi are situated. Additionally, we will unfold other significant structural elements such as legislation and politics that they encounter. We contend that this liminality positions them as a threat to the national order of things, providing insight into their experiences and interactions with the Swedish state.

We have turned the four analytical categories into two sections for this part, as we argue that they overlap and are connected. Firstly, we will examine the Socio-economic challenges and ancestral belonging in the light of the theories, followed by indigenous rights and cultural recognitions. We argue for the mutual relevance of the structures as they make us comprehend and articulate different perspectives of the Sámi reality: The structures they are navigating within (Liminality), the instruments withholding and shaping this structure (EV), how then do they navigate this structure (Agency) and lastly, we see use of generational knowledge and awareness as a form of agency that is very localized to especially the case we are investigating. Together these concepts provide us an understanding of how the global structures, shaped by colonialism and geopolitical interest of renewable energy, shape and interact with local and lived experiences of the Sámi people.

7.2.1 Socio-economic and ancestral perspectives

To interpret our findings of practical and socio-economic challenges and ancestral belonging we aim to identify the structural situation which the communities navigate within, hence what their agency is influenced by. Based on our conceptualization of structure we identify the structures as the legal framework, norms, and power hierarchies which determine the circumstances of the livelihood of reindeer herders. Legislation of land and hunting rights, and the hegemonic discourse of the green transition, which require more infrastructure and workers in the area, together with power structures, regarding their status as indigenous people and a minority in Swedish society, constitutes the specific structures in this case. Elaboration on how the structure-agency relation can be used to understand how natural resource extraction affects the practicalities in reindeer herding today and the ancestral belonging, we also use aspects of EV, generational trauma theory and the understanding of liminal beings.

Through their history and ancestral heritage, the reindeer herders are deeply rooted to specific places in the landscape, but as the structures around these places change, e.g. through natural resource extraction, building of cities, and politics about green transition, the land is either taken or changed in a manner that makes the significance of the land for the herders change as well. In extension of these changes the herders express a feeling of not belonging to their ancestral lands, thus not having a place in contemporary Sweden. These changes also make the reindeer herders change their practice of herding reindeer, being coerced to abandon their traditional ways of life and at the same time not assimilating to 'Swedish' ways of life. This leaves them at the threshold of neither nor, both and. We perceive this as a consequence of the Sámi being subject to hierarchical power structures, stemming from their liminality. This, coupled with contemporary shifts in governmental interests towards the green transition, directly impacts their daily lives and agency. Their land is viewed as a critical resource for the green transition and national growth, further limiting their maneuverability. This we also interpret as an act of EV following Shiva's materialist approach. The state is silencing and disregarding their knowledge in favor of capitalist pursuits.

As analysis 1 shows there are different examples of agency and how the reindeer herders act within these structural circumstances. An act of agency is how the reindeer herders

include new or other ways of making a living, subsidiary to solely reindeer herding, as the structures have made it incompatible to live solely off of reindeer herding. This is for instance through tourism as the Nutti Sámi Siida museum, which is a reindeer herding family's museum where they offer tourists 'Sámi experiences', knowledge about the community, and reindeer visit (Appendix 2).

Running Nutti Sámi Siida in itself can however also be seen as an act of agency: the Sámi are reporting about being written out of history, not being on the school curriculum, and people not knowing about them, their culture, and their struggles. But when offering experiences for tourists they put themselves on the agenda, outside of Swedish societal structures. Educating visitors about both traditions and historical violations increases awareness, visibility, and potential for national and international recognition when protesting their rights violations. We see this as a way of owning their own story; in this museum they can express Sámi history and experience the way they understand it, without considering the Swedish national narrative, and potential political agendas Sweden could have for not owning up to the violations.

Another act of agency, which we interpret as a threat to the nation state of Sweden, is the fact that they see themselves as Sámi before Swedish (Appendix 2). The Sámi express a closer belonging to the land and territory of their ancestors, Sápmi, than to the nation state, which poses a threat to the existence of the state. That they have a different language, culture, and traditions than the majority of the nation state also is a threat, as they do not fall within the category of the culturally homogenous population group that constitutes the nation state.

To understand the significance of the belongingness our participants ascribe to their ancestors for their lives today, we incorporate Gone's work on generational trauma within indigenous communities. Currently living Sámi are facing the issues of the state's narrative and agenda of the green transitioning, but they also carry around the generational trauma of their ancestors, such as burning of shamans and drums, prohibition of speaking their Sámi language. How today's challenges are experienced is based on a jumble of existential battles that their ancestors have had to face.

An example of how the generational traumas still play an actual role today is when Stig Johannes does not trust that the state has permission to open mines because they 'dropped' all the Sámi papers when sailing them across the river in Jukkasjärvi (Appendix 2). As he is of the understanding that previous Swedish officials have consciously deleted part of the

Sámi history, the feeling and understanding of them as someone who deliberately will alter the truth to fit their own agenda persists to this day. This generational trauma that regenerates lack of trust in the state and official agendas, can also be seen as a potential source for testimonial smothering, as Stig does not believe that the state has the capacity to understand and acknowledge the testimonies of Sámi people.

Storytelling is a part of both Sámi culture and also of passing on generational trauma and collective agency to never forget their history. We see storytelling as an active act to counter battle the hegemonic understanding of history. When the Sámi are not recognized as knowers of their own history, e.g., when LKAB participants refers to Kiruna as a 'former wilderness' despite this being factually false, Sámi are subject to EV, as they are being silenced and their knowledge about the area's history is being ignored.

The Sámi knowledge and stories are passed on by the lavvu (shelter with fireplace) which Lars Ante says is the best storytelling place (Appendix 2). Through stories of violations and struggles, the traumas of previous generations are passed down, creating a narrative that then determines how the current generation perceives things. When they are not included in political decision making it is not just the isolated incident that violates them, as it resonates with past trauma of the Swedish state neglecting them, thus feeling even more violated than if it was seen as an isolated act.

Both Lars Ante and Nils Joel state that even though their kin have been reindeer herders for generations they will not push it upon their children. They base this on the fact that they know the future for reindeer herding is even more difficult today and that their children have their own agency to choose. We interpret this as the current generation of reindeer herders adjusting to the structures that slowly kill their profession, yet also as an active agency and awareness about their living conditions (Appendix 2; Appendix 4).

Other acts of agency are conserving the Sámi culture by talking the Sámi language they grew up with, making traditional joik (music) like Lars Ante, and making duodji (handicraft) like Nils Joel. They both express an awareness and respect about keeping it as close to the traditional joik and duodji as possible in respect of the earlier generations and the artisan of the practice. Knowing that Sámi languages include more terms and expressions used in the reindeer herding profession than the Swedish language can provide, means that generational knowledge would get lost if only speaking Swedish. We interpret the earlier

enforcement of speaking Swedish instead of Sámi as an act of silencing a people as an epistemic violent act of silencing people, thus damaging their ability to speak and be heard. Because it might be easier today when interacting with the surrounding non-Sámi community to speak Swedish, we see it as an act of agency, and respect for previous generations, to keep talking Sámi and passing on skills regarding making traditional music and handicraft. The only time our participants mentioned the Kolt (traditional clothes) was when stating that they do not want to be entertainment for the state or to just show up as the outsiders in 'funny clothes'. They feel that the state only wants to use them as entertainment (Appendix 4), when what they actually want is to have political influence (Appendix 5). The feeling that they only are to be shown when they can provide entertainment is also interpreted as an act of taking away their agency, and when ignoring their knowledge and significance of their clothes it can be seen as EV.

In addition to political agency, such as joining a political party, we interpret the fact that they actively choose to continue being reindeer herders as an act of agency, despite the structures of Swedish society making it very difficult for them. For instance, Lars Ante expresses it as 'meant to be' that he too would become a reindeer herder, it requires innovation to rethink how to herd the reindeer, how to make sure they get the peace, food, and shelter they need. This includes decision making of whether to use transportation of the reindeer, use of snowmobiles and other non-traditional things. The structure creates a reality where they have to rethink ways of doing things. Now the herders have discussions and different versions of how to find the right solution for them. Nils Joel expresses frustration over the increasing use of trucks to move reindeer where the animals can no longer walk. According to him, this is not the right way. (Appendix 4) The pressure on the community from the outside leads to internal division. This is also something Nils Joel describes when he says that a more negative masculine culture has appeared together with the snowmobiles and other transportation supplies. A culture he does not recognize from the ancestral stories he has been told (Appendix 4).

7.2.2 Cultural recognition and indigenous rights

As in the previous section we here argue that it is essential to first identify the structures wherein the relation to the state and global awareness of being indigenous is seen and understood. We argue that it is crucial to consider the Sámi as an indigenous people within

the legal structure. Their distinct legal framework, compared to non-indigenous people in Sweden, renders them both hyper-visible and invisible simultaneously, cf. liminal beings. As laid out in the backdrop and analysis 1.1 the Sámi feel that their rights are being violated, that they don't have a voice, thus that they are being made invisible. According to Spivak this silencing of already marginalized groups positions them as the 'other', which then enhances their liminal status. At the same time, they are hyper visible when it comes to suicide statistics, land claims, and racism. This again leaves them betwixt and between; neither visible nor invisible.

Gone identifies a direct connection between the poor mental health conditions among indigenous people and historical traumas. This underscores the importance of including the lack of cultural recognition throughout history when understanding current relations to the state.

As the Sámi fall between categories, they pose a threat to the Swedish national state. The fact that they have an alternative political organ to that of the Swedish parliament can be seen as a threat, and as an act of agency. They pursue alternative ways to get their wishes through, thus undermining the legitimacy of the Swedish political organs and establishment. However, this can also be seen as a part of their liminal being; they have to abide Swedish politics and legislation, but they also pursue to create their own.

Their legal status also makes it possible for them to make claims to the land which threatens the sovereignty of the Swedish nation state, thus making them a threat to the national order of things. Simultaneously, we observe the discourse of the necessity for a green transition to combat climate change being utilized as the justification for current and expanded resource extraction in the area. This has significant implications for Sámi lives, as demonstrated above.

As previously shown, the state and the Sámi have divergent interests in the area, prompting the state to tighten the structures around them, thereby exacerbating their liminality. Moreover, the extractive industry is further complicating their ability to maintain their traditional livelihoods, thus exacerbating their in-betweenness. The fact that the state sees the land and use of the land differently than the Sámi can also be seen as an act of EV. From Shiva we know that the EV can occur when nature is being regarded as a non-living and exploitable resource, which is the case in Sápmi. As the Sámi have a fundamentally different outlook and relationship to nature, it is also clear that their understanding of nature is being silenced, not heard, and not acknowledged.

Within the structures of the Swedish state, we see how the Sámi continuously through generations have positioned themselves as active agents, rather than passive objects. First of all, we see this on a political level where one of our participants, Nils Joel, is an active member of the political interest organization, Saminuorra. The political organization happens on local-, national-, and international level among our participants: on a local level as Saminuorra, on a national level through Sametinget, and on an international level, when Henrik and Stefan participate in international conferences and debates. This shows us that they work within the given structures to try to still have a place in 'this modern world'. Further we see that they are using their legal status of being an indigenous people to take companies and the states to court, e.g., the Girjás case. Here they use the structure of the legislation to better their own situation, claim their rights and change their reality, thus also pushing the structure that deprives them from their rights. Here we see how their agency is affecting the structure, and then the 'new' structure will at the same time change their maneuver room for agency.

Today, many of the violations the Sámi communities face regarding land grabbing are perpetrated in the name of the green transition. Therefore, we argue that a generational perspective on the impact on Sámi communities is crucial. This is due to both the narrative and discourse, as well as its direct resonance with past traumas of being denied land rights for not using it in the 'Swedish' way (Åhren 2014). In this case, and in the light of what Gone expresses as indigenous people's self-understanding as being a product of your kin and community, it becomes clear why it is so violating for Sámi people today to lose their land, because it builds upon generational trauma of being displaced from one's own land.

To sum up, due to previous violations on the Sámi community, any violation they face today feels more violating as it builds upon years and years of colonial and racist structures. Natural resource extraction is the contemporary catalysator for indigenous violations around the globe. Therefore, we argue that the natural resource extraction happening in and around Kiruna is activating the generational trauma of the Sámi community. Furthermore, we interpret our participants' statements in light of EV, as they argue that extracting resources to become greener makes no sense to them, which is not listened to at all by the government. The area LKAB labels as wilderness has been Sámi land for generations. This is not apparent to LKAB because the Sámi maintain the land sustainably, using only what it can reproduce, which appears as wilderness to LKAB. When extracting the earth and slowly reducing the indigenous knowledge, about how to use the earth properly, we interpret it as

an act of EV because the Sámi is not acknowledged as a knower and their knowledge is not acknowledged as valid, along with the fact that treating nature as not-living is an act of EV.

Building on this they are not acknowledged as knowers in the eyes of the surrounding society, even though they have knowledge about how to live with and in nature. This feeling, together with a generational trauma of traditional knowledge being ignored and not given any significance, can lead to testimonial smothering. We see this when our participants repetitively state that they have no faith in the state actually listening and having willingness to understand given situations from Sámi perspective.

Based on our interviews we know that the area was not a wilderness but a place of significance to the Sámi communities. Further it was an essential part of the reindeer cyclus because where the city is today, was where the reindeer used to calve. When asked in the interview, LKAB representatives acknowledged that the Sámi were in the area before the mining and the city of Kiruna. However, this information is not reflected in public communications. This means that they deliberately ignore and not acknowledge part of the history, to make it fit their narrative of an empty and vast space ready for extraction. This is one example of how the Sámi experience that their knowledge is not acknowledged enough to be the hegemonic discourse that is being presented for mainstream society (Appendix 5). Thereby we can again interpret that they are not acknowledged as knowers.

7.2.3 Concluding remarks

In this section we want to sum up our findings from analysis 1.2 and explain what we have gained from choosing four different theories and applying them to our data.

From analysis 1.2 we know how the Sámi's being in a liminal space in Swedish society makes them a threat to the national order of things, thus a threat to the Swedish nation state itself. Within this structure the Sámi organize themselves politically, and they maintain and conserve their culture and traditions the best they can e.g., through storytelling and passing of generational trauma. The structures persist and relate to their liminal status by disregarding Sámi knowledge about nature, hunting, and sustainability. Consequently, nature is seen as a dead resource ready for extraction, continuously ignoring the Sámi perspective. This perpetuates past structures and resonates with the generational traumas the Sámi community has faced.

As we have argued in analysis 1.2, we regard the reindeer herders as being in a liminal space. We further argue that this liminality is the main gatekeeper of the structures in which they are situated. Therefore, we argue for the interconnection and interrelationship of liminality and agency. When showing the different ways in which the herders execute agency within the structures of their liminal being, we illuminate how their agency is played out. Therefore, we see liminality and agency as closely connected, and that we need to understand both of them in order to understand how the reindeer herders navigate in their social reality.

We argue that the generational aspect is crucial to understanding the reality of contemporary reindeer herders. The passing down of generational trauma can be seen as an act of agency, preserving the memory of past violations, and continually raising awareness of the injustices they have faced. As this is part of opposing the structure, we argue that a generational aspect must be added to this example of agency, in addition to the examples of agency we have laid out. The generational traumas are also closely related to the EV of the past.

The EV we have demonstrated is happening to reindeer herders is part of the structure that perpetuates their liminal existence. Simultaneously, we argue that liminality influences the extent of epistemic violence and vice versa. The reindeer herder's liminal status enables the state, through structures favoring mainstream society, to enact epistemic violence, which in turn perpetuates their liminality. Then, when they, due to the presence of generational traumas, need to fight against the EV they are exposed to, they are ultimately fighting against the structure, hence also fighting against their liminal position in Swedish society. By recognizing the interplay and interconnectedness of these theories, we argue that they collectively form a framework for comprehensively understanding our data and the Sámi reality. This framework elucidates how the Sámi navigate their circumstances, the structures they confront, and the components comprising these structures.

7.3 Discussing colonial concepts on the data

In this section we want to discuss how our data can be seen within the framework of colonialism. We will discuss how the data can be seen through the concepts of green colonialism, resource colonialism, settler colonialism, and internal colonialism. This we base on the conceptualizing, focusing on land grabbing, dominance of physical place and reformation of the indigenous mind.

7.3.1 Generational traumas

In our insight in contemporary Swedish society, we argue that colonialism persists through the enduring generational traumas experienced by the Sámi community. This assertion is supported by findings from the analysis, which illuminate the various colonial violations inflicted upon the Sámi people throughout history. From forced assimilation policies to land dispossession and cultural erasure, the Sámi have endured a legacy of systemic oppression that continues to live through generations.

The notion of generational trauma encapsulates the enduring psychological and emotional wounds passed down from one generation to the next. In the case of the Sámi, the cumulative effects of historical injustices have left an indelible imprint on their collective consciousness, shaping their lived experiences and perceptions of reality. This ongoing trauma serves as a reminder of the persistent legacy of colonialism in Swedish society.

By acknowledging the intergenerational transmission of trauma, we underscore the enduring nature of colonial oppression and its profound impact on the Sámi population. The echoes of past injustices resonate in contemporary struggles for cultural revitalization, land rights, and self-determination, underscoring the ongoing struggle against systemic marginalization and discrimination.

In essence, the presence of generational trauma among the Sámi community serves as a manifestation of the enduring legacy of colonialism in Swedish society.

7.3.2 Land grabbing

In this section we delve into the fundamental aspects of colonialism, highlighting land grabbing and conquest as defining features.

Land Grabbing is evident in the Sápmi region where land is expropriated and used mainly for the purpose of extracting resources. This can then be seen in the light of green colonialism, as the land grabbing and extraction is happening in favor of the green transition.

Resource colonialism in this context is multifaceted. Firstly, it involves the expropriation of land from indigenous communities, reminiscent of past colonial endeavors driven by motives of power, wealth, trade, and exploitation. However, the objectives have shifted. Instead of direct control over territory, the focus now lies on resource extraction for purported environmentally sustainable goals.

Moreover, the extracted resources predominantly benefit external interests, with minimal advantages accruing to the local inhabitants. This disconnect between resource extraction

and local benefit typifies the unequal power dynamics inherent in colonialism. The wealth generated from resource exploitation enriches distant entities, while the adverse impacts affect the indigenous communities residing in the affected areas, disrupting their traditional livelihoods, and exacerbating socio-economic disparities. This also resonates with the notion of internal colonialism since this concerns different interests from two parts claiming their right to the use of land, where the Swedish state is in the position of power to exercise their aim. The 'settler colonies' are being built on land that traditionally was used by indigenous people, e.g., Kiruna, and the process of rights and use of the land is thus unresolved.

The concept of center-periphery dynamics provides a lens through which to discuss the relationship between Sápmi and the rest of Sweden. Historically, the Swedish state's interests have often superseded those of the Sámi people, relegating them to a peripheral status in the national narrative. This imbalance is reminiscent of the global center-periphery framework, where dominant Western nations exploit resources and exert influence over less powerful regions, mirroring the power differentials within Sweden itself.

This perspective extends to the notion of green colonialism, wherein Western nations exploit resources in non-Western territories for their own gain. In the case of Sápmi, the Sámi people represent the marginalized within the 'global north' paradigm, challenging conventional hierarchies of power and perception. The historical legacy of colonization further reinforces this narrative, illustrating how colonial ideologies continue to shape contemporary socio-political landscapes.

In essence, our analysis underscores the complexity of colonial legacies in contemporary contexts, highlighting the enduring impacts of historical injustices and the ongoing struggle for indigenous rights and autonomy. By contextualizing resource exploitation within frameworks of colonialism and center-periphery dynamics, we aim to elucidate the systemic inequalities inherent in contemporary land governance, here in Sápmi.

7.3.3 Dominance of physical place

We know that physical domination is a key aspect of colonialism, typically achieved through military conquest, which is not the contemporary case in Sápmi. However, we argue that we do see a form of dominance in the physical place of Sápmi, through land acquisition and the establishment of settlements. Kiruna is an example of non-indigenous dominance of an indigenous physical place, through establishing a 'settlement' and thereby reshaping the landscape. Today, Kiruna is maintained and legitimized in the name of the green transition.

This way it can be seen as an act of green colonialism and internal colonialism. The influx of workers and their families, enticed by taxation benefits and other incentives, underscores the deliberate strategy of the state to populate and control the northern territories. Establishment of permanent settlements and making it advantageous for workers and families to move to the area, can be seen through the concept of settler colonialism cultivating a sense of belonging and identity among residents. This is evident in the narrative surrounding Kiruna's historical continuity and the endeavor to forge connections with the new urban center. The establishment and influx of southern workers into Kiruna can thus be viewed as an instance of settler colonialism.

Ultimately, the consequence of this physical dominance is the Swedish state's access to and exploitation of Sápmi's resources for its own benefit. This perpetuates historical injustices and reinforces the marginalization of indigenous communities, perpetuating a cycle of colonization and resistance.

7.3.4 Reformation of the indigenous' mind

Another criteria of colonialism is the 'reformation of the natives' minds' through education and religion. This process of cultural assimilation and domination is evident in various facets of the Sámi experience, as seen in our data.

One observation is the lack of recognition of traditional knowledge among Sámi communities. Our participants express frustration at the marginalization of their indigenous knowledge systems, particularly regarding use of the earth, history, and hunting practices. This lack of recognition extends to linguistic and geographical domains, where Sámi place names are superseded by Swedish names, effectively erasing indigenous narratives and perspectives from official discourse. An example hereof is the acceptance of calling the city 'Kiruna' instead of 'Giron'.

The imposition of Swedish place names exemplifies a broader pattern of cultural hegemony, wherein the dominant power dictates the terms of linguistic and cultural representation. By relegating indigenous languages and knowledge systems to the periphery, the state perpetuates a form of EV that diminishes the agency and cultural identity of the Sámi people. Moreover, the educational system emerges as a determining site of colonial intervention, with policies aimed at eradicating Sámi language and culture. The prohibition of Sámi-language schools stands as a stark example of state-sponsored efforts to extinguish

indigenous knowledge and identity, further entrenching the hegemony of Swedish cultural norms.

The erasure of Sámi language and culture can be seen in the light of internal colonialism, as explained above. Internal colonialism and executing exclusive legislation and rights in the area, we argue, is a vital step towards the state to be able to extract the resource that they want from the area. This can be seen in the light of both resource and green colonialism, as they wish to rule over the area because they want to extract resources in favor of the green transition.

Above we have discussed and reflected upon different ways the state executes colonialism in Sápmi based on our findings in the data and the terms of colonialism. Through internal colonialism we see how they have unresolved issues over land rights and use with the Sámi, thus land grabbing and expropriating occurs. This reflects both green and resource colonialism, and the import of southern workers highlights settler colonialism.

8. Conclusion

Natural resource extraction in Norrbottens Län affects the surrounding Sámi community in various ways. It influences their access to land, their ability to live traditional livelihoods, and their mental health. When focusing on reindeer husbandry we found that 300 reindeer are being killed yearly in the area due to expanding infrastructure. Additionally, the rising number of people, landscape changes from mining, and clearcutting disturb the reindeer. Consequently, herders cannot follow traditional herding practices and must rethink their profession. This happens because the Sámi communities and the Swedish state have different interests in the land (Sápmi), where the state sees the area as an opportunity for extraction in favor of the green transition and national economic growth. Through our empirical data we interpret that the structures the Sámi community are subject to through being an indigenous people within a nation state, makes them a marginalized minority whose interests are not prioritized. The position of being an indigenous people and with a history of being in opposition to the state, places them in a liminal position, where they are not completely 'Swedish' making them a threat to the nation state.

Within the structures which limit the Sámi maneuver room we also see acts of agency. Through new ways of herding, for instance through the use of snowmobiles instead of skis, and through new ways of earning money, for instance through tourism, the Sámi navigate

these changing circumstances. As a result, they feel compelled to abandon their traditional way of life, finding it impossible to live as their Sámi ancestors did. In view of the epistemic violence the current circumstances are yet another way of colonizing the Sámi communities and land.

Because the land grabbing is being legitimized in the name of green transition, we see this as green colonialism where the Sámi culture is being harder to fulfill. Therefore, we conclude that the natural resource extraction is consciously happening at the expense of the cultural heritage of the Sámi communities which will slowly but steady lead to an erosion of the traditional culture, and thereby a cultural erosion of the Sámi people legitimized through 'the need for a green transition' is happening.

Overall, our data shows that natural resource extraction in Norrbottens Län resonates with the notions of internal colonialism, thus has negative consequences on herders livelihoods in terms of reduction of economic growth, mental health and not being able to live the way they want to, and lastly feeling of the right to exist in a modern world, directly because of the extraction and the Swedish states handling of the situation.

Building on our study many more aspects could have been interesting to dive into, for instance the fact that violating Sámi land through natural resource extraction is further being legitimized as an act to gain independence from Russia and China. Thereby, our empirical findings of the impacts on reindeer husbandry can also be seen as a result of global, geopolitical power battles of resource autonomy.

To broaden the understanding of our study's conditions, findings, and conclusions, considering the legal framework could be valuable. This would shed light on how these violations occur and what UN sanctions are in place to address Sweden's violation of Sámi rights. This would include the interaction between national and international law. Going in this direction, one could use the framework of organized hypocrisy to examine if and which values are conflicting for the Swedish state. Building upon our data it could be the implementation of indigenous peoples' rights frameworks and the extraction of natural resources in Northern Sweden.

In the international legal framework, it could also be interesting to investigate cultural heritage law, particularly the intangible heritage. Here investigating colonial tendencies in defining cultural heritage, observe the progress in involving communities to identify what

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they consider worth safeguarding, and explore how and to what extent these efforts succeed in protecting the culture that is deemed cultural heritage.

Further, one could discuss whether the 'universal' part of UNESCO is a relevant and useful measurement, and how it could be viewed as an example of dominating western, colonial structures.

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