

**“No Consent, No Access” The Indigenous-
Environmental Middle Ground in Protests
against the Arctic Railway in Sápmi**

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Tiivistelmä - Referat - Abstract <p>Arktinen alue on koti monelle alkuperäiskansalle, mukaan lukien saamelaisille. Se on myös taloudellisesti houkutteleva alue monille valtioille ja yrityksille. Suomen hallitus ja yksityiset tahot ovat suunnitelleet Jäämeren rataa, joka ulottuisi Saamenmaan yli Jäämeren rantaan. Saamelaisten nuorten yhdistys, Suoma Sámi Nuorat, saamelainen taiteilijakollektiivi, Suohpanterror, sekä ympäristöjärjestö Greenpeace ovat tehneet yhteistyötä vastustaakseen radan rakentamista ja järjestäneet mielenosoituksia ja muuta kampanjointia.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena on tarkastella, millaisia teemoja kyseisillä saamelaisjärjestöillä ja Greenpeacella on ollut esillä heidän protesteissaan ja viestinnässään aiheeseen liittyen. Tavoitteena on myös käsitellä heidän yhteisiä prioriteettejansa ja eroavaisuuksia näissä painopisteissä. Lisäksi tutkielmassa selvitetään, kuinka saamelaiset esitetään näissä protesteissa. Tämän tutkielman materiaalit ovat julkisia mediamateriaaleja, sisältäen uutisartikkeleita, sosiaalisen median sisältöjä ja tiedotteita. Kyseessä on tapaustutkimus, ja tutkimusmenetelmänä käytetään laadullista sisällönanalyysia. Tutkielman analyttisenä viitekehyksenä toimii <i>middle ground</i> -konsepti. Se viittaa luovaan prosessiin, jossa eri kulttuureista tulevat ryhmät löytävät tapoja työskennellä yhdessä. Alkuperäiskansat ja ympäristönsuojelijat ovat usein tehneet strategista yhteistyötä, vaikka heidän samankaltaisissa prioriteeteissansa on ollut myös eroavaisuuksia. <i>Middle ground</i> -konsepti tunnistaa alkuperäiskansat aktiivisina ja luovina toimijoina, mutta myös stereotyyppioita alkuperäiskansoista on hyödynnetty tällaisissa alliansseissa.</p> <p>Tämän tutkielman tulokset osoittavat, että saamelaisjärjestöt ovat painottaneet Jäämeren radan vaikutuksia saamelaisten elinkeinoihin, maahan ja kulttuuriin sekä heidän tulevaisuuteensa kansana. He ovat myös tuoneet esille, että rataa on suunniteltu ilman heidän suostumustaan ja että projekti ei kunnioita Suomen lakia eikä kansainvälisiä alkuperäiskansojen oikeuksia. Greenpeace on keskittynyt metsien suojeluun, mutta puhunut myös saamelaisten asioista ja esiintynyt saamelaisten tukijana. <i>Middle ground</i> -konsepti auttaa ymmärtämään eroja ja yhteneväisyyksiä Saamelaisjärjestöjen ja Greenpeacen painopisteissä. Jäämeren radan vastaisissa protesteissa saamelaiset esiintyvät aktiivisina toimijoina. He ovat toimineet monin eri tavoin: mielenosoituksissa, kansainvälisissä tapahtumissa, sekä taiteen ja sosiaalisen median kautta. Tämä tutkimus voi lisätä tietoisuutta alkuperäiskansojen ja ympäristönsuojelijoiden yhteistyöstä ja potentiaalista edistää alkuperäiskansojen oikeuksia ja ympäristönsuojelua, sekä auttaa rakentamaan parempaa yhteistyötä tulevaisuudessa. Jatkotutkimus voisi keskittyä mm. siihen, kuinka yhteistyökumppanit ovat neuvotelleet näitä yhteistyöprojekteja.</p>		
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Tiivistelmä - Referat - Abstract <p>The Arctic is home to many Indigenous peoples, including the Sámi. It is also an economically attractive area for governments and companies. Arctic Railway has been planned by the Finnish government and private parties to span over Sápmi, the Sámi homeland. Sámi youth association Suoma Sámi Nuorat, Sámi art collective Suohpanterror, and environmental NGO Greenpeace Finland have collaborated to fight against the railway and organized demonstrations and other campaigning.</p> <p>The goals of this thesis are to find out what kind of themes have been present in these Sámi organizations and Greenpeace's protests and communication related to the Arctic Railway. Shared priorities and differences in their priorities are also determined. Moreover, this thesis explores how the Sámi are portrayed in the protests against the Arctic Railway. The data of this thesis is derived from public media sources, including news articles, social media content, and press releases. Case study is used as a research approach, and qualitative content analysis is used as a method. A middle ground concept functions as an analytical tool. It refers to a creative process where groups from different cultures find ways to work together. Indigenous peoples and environmentalists have often built strategic alliances, although also having differences in their priorities. In the middle ground, Indigenous peoples are recognized as active, creative agents, but also the use of stereotypes of Indigenous peoples have been present in these kinds of alliances.</p> <p>The results of this thesis show that the Sámi organizations have discussed the railway's impacts on the Sámi livelihoods, lands, and culture, affecting their future as a people. They have also brought up that the railway has been planned without their consent, and the project has violated both Finnish law and international Indigenous rights. Greenpeace has focused on protecting the northern forests while raising awareness of Sámi issues and appearing as a supporter of Sámi people. They have had their unique middle ground where both priority differences and convergences have been present. In the protests against the Arctic Railway, the Sámi are portrayed as active agents. They have taken action in different ways: through demonstrations, participation in international events, art, and social media activism. This research can raise awareness about the potential of Indigenous-environmental alliances in promoting Indigenous rights and environmental protection and help build better alliances in the future. Further research could look at how these kinds of alliances have been negotiated.</p>		
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Table of contents

1	INTRODUCTION	5
1.1	Conflicting interests in the Arctic	7
1.2	Arctic Railway.....	9
2	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	11
2.1	Research questions and case study as a research approach.....	11
2.2	Sources.....	14
2.3	Qualitative content analysis.....	15
2.4	Middle ground as an analytical tool.....	17
2.5	Ethics and decolonizing approach in research.....	18
2.6	Situatedness as a researcher	20
3	INDIGENOUS-ENVIRONMENTAL ALLIANCES	21
3.1	Characteristics of Indigenous-environmental collaboration	21
3.2	Collaboration between the Sámi and environmentalists	24
4	FINDINGS.....	26
4.1	Many reasons to oppose the Arctic Railway.....	26
4.1.1	Sámi organizations' themes.....	26
4.1.1.1	"Min eana min boahtteáigi" – "Our land our future"	27
4.1.1.2	Neglected constitution and consent	28
4.1.2	Greenpeace's themes	31
4.1.2.1	"Valitse metsät" – "Choose the forests"	32
4.1.2.2	Indigenous rights and unasked permission	33
4.2	Mutually desired collaboration despite the differences	35
4.3	Many forms of Sámi resistance	38
5	DISCUSSION	43
5.1	Representations in the research	43
5.2	Translations and accommodation of discourses	44
6	CONCLUSIONS.....	48
	REFERENCES	50

1 Introduction

Let me begin with a personal story – a story of misunderstandings and learning from them. In 2018, I worked as a coordinator for the Arctic Youth Summit, organized by WWF¹ and CAFF². Participants included Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth from all over the Arctic. We wanted to provide only sustainable food at the event, and for us from southern Finland, that meant vegan and vegetarian food. However, we did not consider that Arctic Indigenous diets are traditionally very different while still being sustainable in their context. Therefore, after the event, some people said it would have been more respectful to provide some meat at the summit for people to feel more welcome and at home. Until then, I had thought about plant-based food as, basically, a "one-model-fits-all", but then I understood that nothing is that black-and-white. Subsistence hunting is a necessity for many people in the Arctic, while climate change is making it more difficult and dangerous. Simultaneously, in many places in the Arctic, food in grocery stores is costly. At the Arctic Youth Summit, through misunderstandings, mistakes, and discussion, I learned to better understand the participants' different circumstances. We cared about and worked for similar things, such as environmental protection, and during the event, we also created joint projects regardless of the vast diversity of the participants' backgrounds. Along the way, people learned from their different perspectives, working towards common goals while possibly having different perceptions of those goals.

In this master's thesis, I explore how Indigenous peoples and environmentalists have collaborated and worked towards that shared space of action. In many places worldwide, Indigenous peoples have chosen to build alliances with environmentalists to defend the land and people (Conklin & Graham, 1995; Davis, 2010). I am interested in finding out how Indigenous people and environmental organizations in Finland have worked together and what kind of conceptual and priority differences and similarities they have had in their campaigns. Indigenous peoples and environmentalists often seem to have somewhat similar goals, but when looked at more closely, their priorities may vary from, e.g., environmental protection to cultural revitalization (Conklin & Graham, 1995; Davis, 2010). It has been a beneficial and crucial strategic choice to collaborate in many cases, but it has required accommodation of the different priorities and concepts. There can also be challenges and risks in these alliances, such as misunderstandings and the use of stereotypes. (Simpson, 2010, p. xiii-xiv; Conklin & Graham, 1995;

¹ WWF: The World Wide Fund for Nature

² CAFF: The Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna, a biodiversity working group of the Arctic Council.

Conklin, 2020.) A middle ground concept suggests that from those misunderstandings – that are usually evident in this kind of collaborative relationships – new meanings and new practices can be created, facilitating the working relationships of different actors from different cultural backgrounds (White, 1991, p. xxvi; Conklin, 2020).

In this thesis, I will conduct a qualitative case study, focusing on collaboration between Sámi and environmental organizations and their joint protests and campaigning against the Arctic Railway project in Finland and Sápmi³. My goal is to determine what kind of themes have been present in their communication about the topic and how these partners with different backgrounds and possibly different priorities have found a way to work together to oppose the Arctic Railway. I will also discuss the representations of the Sámi in these protests. Publicly visible partners in this alliance have been Suoma Sámi Nuorat (Sámi youth association in Finland), Suohpanterror (Sámi art collective), and Greenpeace Finland (an international environmental organization). As a method, I use qualitative content analysis, and as an analytical concept, I use the middle ground. My sources in this study are public media materials.

Although the legal and political positions of Indigenous peoples have improved during previous decades (see conventions: UNDRIP [United Nations, 2007] and ILO 169 [ILO, 1989]), there are still significant problems in proper recognition and implementation of Indigenous peoples' rights. This also concerns the Sámi in Finland (e.g., Cambou, 2019; Toivanen, 2013, p. 46), and therefore, research on this topic with the potential to raise awareness and improve the situation is needed. According to Davis (2010, p. 4), relationships between Indigenous peoples and environmental organizations remain under-researched. Hence, this study will be an important contribution to this research area. The case is also topical: the protests started in 2018, and the discussions about the Arctic Railway project are still ongoing (in 2021).

This thesis belongs to the field of Environmental social science and Indigenous studies. Both Environmental social science and Indigenous studies are interdisciplinary⁴ fields. Indigenous studies recognize a variety of knowledge systems also outside of the traditional academic sphere⁵. Indigenous studies have struggled to find common ground with academia because of

³ Sámi word for Sámi homeland (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014).

⁴ There is no commonly agreed definition for interdisciplinarity, but here I refer to it by using a definition by Huutoniemi et al. (2010, p. 80): “a variety of different ways of bridging and confronting the prevailing disciplinary approaches”. According to the same authors, it is a more encompassing concept than e.g. multidisciplinary. I find it suitable for this context, as I talk about fields that cross disciplinary boundaries in different ways.

⁵ On the website of the university of Helsinki, Indigenous studies are described as follows: “At the core of Indigenous Studies at UH there is a holistic understanding of the world, which we acknowledge and celebrate by studying

its holistic approach and epistemological differences that are inconvenient and difficult to understand for Western science. (Kovach, 2010, pp. 56–63; Sillitoe, 2015, p. 8.) Environmental social science, in turn, is only a few-decade-old field, and there is not yet much literature focusing on the methodology of Environmental social science alone. It combines natural sciences and social sciences and is still looking for its place in the academic world. (Massa, 2014, pp. 11–20.) I believe that an increasing amount of academic discussion around interdisciplinarity (e.g., Huutoniemi et al., 2010) might help both fields to find their footing in academia. I argue that they both offer academia an excellent possibility to learn and develop towards a more inclusive and solution-oriented direction.

Having outlined the content, justifications, and field of this study, I will move on to discuss the current situation in the Arctic. I will also provide a brief background to the Arctic Railway project. After the introduction, in the second chapter, I will introduce my research design, including the research questions, methods, and materials of this study. After that, I will dive more deeply into the Indigenous-environmental alliances globally and in the Arctic. In the fourth and fifth chapters, I will move on to the results of the analysis and discuss interpretations of the results. I will conclude the thesis in the sixth chapter.

1.1 Conflicting interests in the Arctic

Sámi people are an Indigenous people who traditionally live in Sápmi, Sámi homeland, which is located in northern Fennoscandia and covers territories in four nation-states: Finland, Russia, Sweden, and Norway. Sámi people are one of several Indigenous peoples in the Arctic and the only one in Europe. Sámi culture has changed, and their ethnicity has formed over the centuries. There are currently nine Sámi languages and many different ways to practice Sámi culture. The current estimation of Sámi population is 75 000, and about 9000 of the Sámi live in Finland, more than 60% living outside their homeland. (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014; Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, pp. 35-36.)

present social dynamics and by offering new perspectives to comprehend historical continuities and power structures. ... Globally, Indigenous Studies has paved the way for Indigenous communities' points of view, histories, and future aspirations from the Indigenous perspectives, as well as enhancing dialogues between among multiple actors from academia and civil society." (University of Helsinki, 2021.)

*But what do I say to strangers / who spread out everywhere / How shall I answer their questions / that come from a different world*⁶

The poem of famous Sámi artist Nils Aslak Valkeapää shows how perceptions of Indigenous people and colonists have conflicted when Indigenous people have demanded their rights to land and water, as well as to spiritual values. It has been difficult for outsiders to understand different ways of thinking than their own. (Gaski, 2010.) The Arctic has been seen as an opportunity for political and economic gains, which often tend to happen to the detriment of environmental and Indigenous peoples' issues (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 295). Colonial practices have continued in Sápmi for centuries through settlement, law, and assimilating Sámi people into the mainstream languages and religion (Joks et al., 2020). Sámi people have struggled to defend their lands while the right to decide over those lands has remained disputed. Finland has got many requests from the European Council to clarify the land rights of the Sámi. (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 295; Toivanen, 2013, p. 46.) Furthermore, Finland has not ratified ILO 169 Convention yet because of disagreements over land rights issues (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, p. 37). Economic pressure on the Arctic is intense for its richness in natural resources, such as forests, minerals, oil, and gas. Resources of the Arctic are attractive to both governments and transnational companies. Exploitation by extractive industries has caused severe harm for local and Indigenous people in the Arctic by polluting lands and waters, cutting down forests, and even forcing people to leave their homes. Extractive activities threaten Indigenous cultures and livelihoods, which depend strongly on land. (Toivanen, 2019, pp. 25–26.)

In the West, the stereotypes of the Arctic and Arctic people have maintained the interest in the Arctic. The Arctic has traditionally been mystified, being "either an icy hell or an inhabitable paradise". (Ryall et al., 2010, p. x.) For centuries, the Arctic has been seen as a periphery, where people guard the richness of nature – while considered not to have culture and neither political agency (Toivanen, 2019, p. 23). Among others, also environmentalists have maintained the vision of this place full of life but threatened by human influence (Ryall et al., 2010). The perception of the Other – both natural and Indigenous other – has included both admiration and fear. It has been compared to the concept of Orientalism by Edward Said, but it has been called "Arcticism" in the Arctic context. (Ryall et al., 2010.)

Traditional and modern blends in the Sámi's lives and previously described stereotypes are not the reality of the Sámi (Helander-Renwall, 2010; Toivanen, 2019, p. 23). Sámi people

⁶ An excerpt from a poem by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (1994).

are often said to have a close relationship to nature, and that notion has been accepted among Indigenous people themselves as well, but the reality is more complex (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014). Valkonen and Valkonen (2014) suggest dividing Sámi nature relations into two: one is a practical relationship that varies a lot depending on the location, and the other is a political and performative construction. Focusing on a strong nature relationship has helped the Sámi construct a coherent ethnic identity instead of focusing on divergent Sámi identities that change according to the area or place. Emphasizing the unifying characteristic of Sámi culture has helped to legitimize Indigenous peoples' unique position in international politics. On the other hand, that has required Sámi people to maintain the old, colonial stereotypes of the "other". (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014.) Later in this thesis, I will discuss how these stereotypes have been used in environmental campaigns. On the national level, the Sámi still have limited possibilities to participate in political decision-making, and they often are left out in state and business development projects (Toivanen, 2019, p. 23; Toivanen & Fabritius, 2020). Decisions regarding land are still made without free, prior, and informed consent, which is stated on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and should be obtained in any projects affecting Indigenous peoples (Sellheim, 2019, p. 109; United Nations, 2007). The poem of Valkeapää still applies today: Sápmi is an attractive area for many *strangers* who do not seem to listen to the local people.

1.2 Arctic Railway

Arctic Railway is an example of such a project where planning has been done without the free, prior, and informed consent of Sámi people. It serves as another example of colonial practices conducted still today – it has been called, for example, “today’s colonialism” (Lapin Kansa, 2018). The railway has been planned to go through Sápmi – i.e., Northern parts of Finland and Norway – to promote the industry, tourism development, and transport from



Figure 1. A map of planned alternative routes for the Arctic Railway (Source: YLE, 2018b).

Northern Europe to Central Europe and Asia (Saami Council, 2018). Figure 1 shows the red line, which is the planned route: the railway would span from Rovaniemi to Kirkkoniepi and split reindeer herding communities in Sodankylä and Inari (YLE, 2018b). The Arctic Railway has been marketed for its economic gains. Nevertheless, the Ministry of transport and communications of Finland published an investigation in February 2019 indicating that the Arctic Railway would be unprofitable, and it would have several impacts on the environment and the Sámi (LVM, 2019). Arctic Railway has been said to increase extractive industries' activity in the Arctic, while it has also been justified as an opportunity for Finland and a possibility for “sustainable growth” (YLE, 2018a). However, the project's sustainability can be questioned as it would be harmful to both nature and Indigenous people.

In addition to Suoma Sámi Nuorat, Suohpanterror, and Greenpeace, also other Sámi organizations like the Sámi Parliament of Finland and the Sámi Council, as well as many reindeer herders and herding cooperatives have opposed the Arctic Railway project (Laiti, 2019). There have been demonstrations against the railway as well as other forms of activism. The Sámi Parliament of Finland and the Sámi Council have made statements where they call for better consultation of Sámi people, as well as demand the removal of the Arctic Railway entry from the regional plan (Saami Council, 2018; Sámediggi, 2020). Besides, different associations, municipalities, and private persons have opposed the plans for the Arctic Railway. Despite the widely spread resistance and the negative results of the Ministry's investigation, private parties have continued the discussion and planning of the railway. (YLE, 2020; YLE, 2019a.) The latest development happened in March 2021, when the board of the Regional Council of Lapland moved approval of the regional plan that would allow the construction of the Arctic Railway in Sápmi (YLE, 2021).

2 Research design

In this chapter, I will describe the research design of this study. I will first introduce my case, case study in general, as well as my research questions. I will also introduce my sources and discuss the method and the analytical framework for this study. At the end of the chapter, I will discuss research ethics, decolonizing approach, and my position as a researcher.

2.1 Research questions and case study as a research approach

A case study is a research approach that investigates a case, which Gillham (2000) describes as “a unit of human activity embedded in the real world” (p. 1). It lets the researcher study human phenomena with a holistic approach (Yin, 2009; Gillham, 2000, pp. 1–2). A case can be, for example, an individual, a group, a nation, an institution, or a community (Gilgun, 2014, p. 661; Gillham, 2000, p. 1). Different methodologies and methods are used in case studies, and case studies are used in many different disciplines, but the concept of the case is what makes the case study unique. One of the essential things in a case study is to define what it is a case of. (Simons, 2014, p. 457–460.) I chose the collaboration of the Sámi organizations and Greenpeace in the Arctic Railway context as a case in this study. I was interested in comparing it to other similar alliances around the world, it being a case of interaction and collaboration between Indigenous peoples and environmentalists. Other studies have also looked at how these actors from different cultural backgrounds work for a common goal despite some priority differences. A case study is beneficial in testing theories and in-depth descriptions (Gilgun, 2014, p. 661). These two are characteristics of my study, too, as I aim to look at how the middle ground concept can be applied to this case and describe the themes discussed in the context of this collaboration.

Suoma Sámi Nuorat, Suohpanterror, and Greenpeace have collaborated and had joint actions against the Arctic Railway since autumn 2018 (Greenpeace, 2019). They have organized demonstrations and communicated about the Arctic Railway on their



Figure 2. A red line in Inari (Source: YLE, 2018b).

platforms. Finnish, Sámi, and international media have written news articles of their collaboration. In September 2018, the protesters organized several demonstrations in Sápmi where they formed a "red line" of people and red banners, red being a color that symbolizes life (see Figure 2). Sámi languages, as well as Finnish and English, were used in these banners. They have had protests also during several political events concerning the Arctic



Figure 3. Protesters in front of the House of the Estates, Helsinki (Source: YLE, 2019b).

Railway, such as a seminar dealing with the Northern Lapland regional land use plan (Greenpeace, 2018b) and the Government formation negotiations in front of the House of the Estates in Helsinki (See Figure 3). These demonstrations have been similar to those organized in Sápmi, including red banners with short statements. (YLE, 2019b.) There have also been other local people present in the demonstrations and Indigenous activists from Canada and New Zealand supporting (Greenpeace, 2018a).

Based on the goals of this research and the research materials used, I decided to focus on the following research questions:

- 1) What are the themes highlighted in the campaigning and protests of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace against the Arctic Railway?
- 2) What are the shared priorities and priority differences of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace in the campaigning and protests against the Arctic Railway?
- 3) How have the Sámi been portrayed in the protests against the Arctic Railway?

Next, I introduce the partners that have collaborated and who I primarily focus on in this case. **Suohpanterror** is a mostly anonymous Sámi art collective who began their journey in 2012 (Suomen Luonto, 2015). They introduce themselves on Facebook as follows: "Propaganda from Sápmi". With their artwork, they take a stand on such issues as the self-determination of the Sámi, land rights, and cultural appropriation. They are known particularly for their provocative posters. In addition to the demonstrations, Suohpanterror has been active on social media, and they have also published posters about the Arctic Railway. (Suohpanterror, n.d.) **Suoma Sámi**

Nuorat, i.e., Finnish Sámi Youth, is an association of Sámi youth in Finland and was founded in 1999. The association aims to strengthen Sámi youth's identity and increase their awareness of Sámi culture by organizing training, projects, and lobbying. (Suoma Sámi Nuorat, n.d.) **Greenpeace** is an international environmental organization that works, according to their website, “against environmental degradation” and “for our planet’s future” (Greenpeace, n.d.a). The organization was founded in 1971, and it has been active in Finland since 1989 (Greenpeace, n.d.b). Greenpeace Finland belongs to Greenpeace Nordic, one of the 27 independent national or regional organizations worldwide (Greenpeace, n.d.c).

Indigenous peoples (the Sámi in my thesis) and environmental organizations (Greenpeace in my thesis) are very different entities. In my study, I focus mainly on the specific Sámi organizations and activists, and hence the unit of analysis is more comparable with Greenpeace as an organization and its representatives. Representatives of these Sámi organizations represent the Sámi culture, but their views cannot be generalized to represent every Sámi person's views – likewise, Greenpeace can be said to belong to Western culture, although not all Western people align with Greenpeace’s ideas and values. In my thesis, I recognize these cultural connections but also try not to generalize overly. Even though Suohpanterror is a collective, when I talk about “Sámi organizations” in the context of this thesis, I mean both Suohpanterror and Suoma Sámi Nuorat. By organization, I refer to a broader unit, whereas when I need to describe individual behavior, I sometimes use the term “activist”. These situations mainly relate to the protests and demonstrations, where the term sits well.⁷ I recognize that the term does not encompass all the situations and all people in these organizations and aim to use it accordingly.

There has been disagreement on the ability of a case study to generalize the findings. Simons (2014, p. 465) argues that it is crucial to distinguish the generalization in a case study from generalization in “traditional forms of social science research” where large samples and statistical analysis are used. In a case study, it is possible to generalize by comparing one case to other cases or focus on what can be learned from the single case itself. The strength of the case study can also be seen in the opposite of the generalization, which is particularization: understanding the specific phenomena in the particular context. However, when making in-depth analysis on a single case, it becomes easier to understand also universal phenomena. (Simons, 2014, p. 466.) Indigenous peoples and cultures are diverse and cannot be generalized into one homogeneous group, yet there are many stereotypes. Moreover, Indigenous peoples

⁷ Activist: “a person who believes strongly in political or social change and takes part in activities such as public protests to try to make this happen” (Cambridge dictionary, n.d.)

have faced similar issues around the world concerning, e.g., power relations and discrimination, and they have got power by making collaborative networks with other Indigenous peoples (Virtanen et al., 2013, p. 11). In my study, I compare my case to other similar cases, but it cannot be assumed that the findings of my case suit all the similar cases in other contexts. However, I see potential in this kind of research to contribute positively to other similar cases and help build better practices in the future.

2.2 Sources

I use secondary data sources in my research, which means that the data was not created by myself for this research specifically, but it consists of ready-made documents (Kananen, 2017, p. 120). All the material I used was public and accessible for all at the time of the retrieval, including news articles, press releases, social media posts, and videos that deal with the Sámi and Greenpeace collaboration in the context of the Arctic Railway. Väliverronen writes (2014) that even if earlier newspaper material could have been sufficient for a media analysis, nowadays, it is seldom justified to use only newspaper material because the internet and social media can provide valuable additional material. They say that media material should be gathered broadly from many different sources (Väliverronen, 2014). I searched for both (online) newspaper material but also, for example, social media posts.

I aimed to avoid bias in my materials by using both Greenpeace's and Sámi organizations' social media writings and press releases by both. News articles were from Finnish or international sources and, understandably, not written directly by either party. In my analysis, I divided the materials according to the source into two categories: direct writings or speeches by Greenpeace or Sámi organizations and indirect writings by journalists. I used only social media posts either created or shared by Greenpeace, Suohpanterror, or Suoma Sámi Nuorat, and in news articles, I picked those parts where a Greenpeace or a Sámi activist spoke. As for videos, I analyzed the interviews where the speaker could be identified as a Sámi or Greenpeace representative. Although I did not search for materials by the Sámi in general but focused on these two organizations that were part of the collaboration, I used interviews by any Sámi in the videos as my material. That was because those videos were created as part of the same protests and campaign.

I searched for the news articles on YLE and Helsingin Sanomat archives with a publication date of 2018-2020. YLE is the national broadcast media in Finland, and Helsingin Sanomat

is the biggest newspaper in Finland. I used the search words “saamelaiset greenpeace” using different forms of the Finnish word for “Sámi”, “suohpanterror greenpeace” and “saamelaisnuoret greenpeace”. My data included one article in Helsingin Sanomat and five articles in YLE. I also added other news articles as I went through the social media channels of Suohpanterror and Suoma Sámi Nuorat and ended up with 11 news articles that were relevant to this study. Additional news sources were Kansan Uutiset, Voima, Inarilainen, and the Barent’s Observer, which dated from years 2018 and 2019. Moreover, I used Greenpeace’s press releases about the subject, 6 in total, and one press release by Suoma Sámi Nuorat. I also used 4 Twitter posts by Sámi organizations and 5 Facebook posts by Greenpeace. Both the press releases and social media posts have been published from September 2018 to May 2019. Moreover, my materials included four short campaign videos published on Greenpeace’s social media channels and one video of a speech by a representative of Suoma Sámi Nuorat. The videos mostly included Sámi interviews. (See Figure 4.)

Type	Number of the units
News articles	11
Press releases	7
Social media posts	9
Videos	5

Figure 4. Data categorized by the type of the document and the number of the units.

2.3 Qualitative content analysis

Content analysis is a group of research techniques used to make inferences from different forms of communication. Content analysis can be either quantitative or qualitative. Drisko and Maschi (2015) divide the content analysis into three categories; basic, interpretive, and qualitative. Basic content analysis uses only quantitative analysis, and interpretive content analysis makes inferences from data by paying attention to both manifest and latent content. Latent content

entails the meanings that are hidden behind the manifest content, like irony and sarcasm. Qualitative content analysis also aims to interpret the text, developing categories that are carefully chosen and revised continuously. (Drisko & Maschi, 2015, pp. 1–8.) I decided to use qualitative content analysis in my research. It is a good way to inductively examine the data when determining which themes the collaborating partners talk about related to the Arctic Railway.

Content analysis can be inductive, deductive, or abductive. Inductive analysis is started based on the data without specific theoretical assumptions. Deductive analysis starts from a theory that is used as a basis for the analysis. Abductive analysis is a combination of data- and theory-based analyses, and it lets the researcher be guided by their previous knowledge, but they can shape the analysis based on the data, as well. (Silvasti, 2014, pp. 40–44.) I used inductive analysis because I did not want to use any theory for coding and categorizing it. It suits my study best because I was searching for themes occurring in a unique case. The interpretation of the findings based on the theoretical framework was made after the content analysis.

At the beginning of the analysis, I first read through the material many times. It is vital to get to know the data profoundly and as a whole before one starts coding the data and going into more detail (Silvasti, 2014; Drisko & Maschi, 2015, p. 102). That enabled me to plan my analysis and helped me to evaluate the sufficiency of my data. Then I started choosing the relevant parts of the material for my study. In this stage, the researcher looks for the noteworthy and applicable parts for the study, and those parts will be then utilized later in the research (Silvasti, 2014, pp. 38–44; Drisko & Maschi, 2015, pp. 93–94). I coded the text first according to the “speaker”, using different colors for the Sámi and Greenpeace – based on Silvasti’s instructions on color coding (Silvasti, 2014, pp. 38–44).

In the next phase of my analysis, I used descriptive coding (Saldaña, 2014, pp. 593–594), which aims to summarize the topics of the text. It helps the researcher to identify the contents to be used in the analysis later. That suits my analysis very well because I aim to find different themes from the text. In this stage, I focused mainly on my first research question: “What are the themes highlighted in the campaigning and protests of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace against the Arctic Railway?” I identified all the different topics I was able to find. After that, I started to categorize those topics into themes. Usually, themes can be either pre-determined or created during the coding process. A theme is a broader unit than a code. (Silvasti, 2014, p. 44.) I used inductive analysis, so I identified the themes entirely based on the material. Saldaña (2014) explains categorizing as “our best attempt to cluster the most seemingly alike things into the most seemingly appropriate groups” (p. 587). I created charts for both Greenpeace and

Sámi speakers where I inserted the main themes, subthemes, and the initial topics I found from the texts. That enabled me to see which themes had more mentions than the others. I did this separately to the texts where the speaker was from Greenpeace and where the speaker was Sámi – I did not try to use the same themes for both. For this entire analysis, I used the instructions of Silvasti (2014), Drisko and Maschi (2015), and Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017).

In the qualitative study, clear instructions do not always exist, which might sometimes be frustrating for a researcher (Silvasti, 2014, p. 48). Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) also mention that qualitative data analysis can be surprisingly challenging for a beginner as there is no straightforward and clear guidance, which I noticed as well. Content analysis gives one much freedom, but it can also cause insecurity about whether the analysis is proceeding in the right direction or not. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) say that it is appropriate to use one's creativity in the analysis. There were no instructions for this unique material, so even though I followed guidelines, I still needed to adapt the method to my data and be creative.

2.4 Middle ground as an analytical tool

In this thesis, I use the middle ground concept as an analytical tool to interpret the research results. I will examine the collaboration of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace in the context of the Arctic Railway and find out if and what kind of middle grounds can be found there. This framework was initially developed by historian Richard White (1991), who used it to analyze native-settler relations in North America. The concept has also been applied to Indigenous-environmentalist alliances, the first time by Conklin and Graham (1995), who outlined the benefits and risks of alliances between Amazonian Indigenous peoples and environmentalists. It has been 25 years since their article, and there have been various studies on the topic since.

Middle ground has been used as a describing concept in many contexts and disciplines to understand better how social, cultural, and political relations are created. The middle ground concept was created as an alternative framework for binary and hierarchical concepts explaining intercultural relations. (Conklin, 2020.) A middle ground is a creative process where new ways to connect are being sought in intercultural relations (Conklin, 2020; White, 1991, p. xxvi). White (1991, p. xxvi) describes that the middle ground does not mean becoming more like each other, but it is the place in between the cultures and peoples. Different actors adapt based on their perceptions of the other, which usually does not fully resemble the reality and often leads to misunderstandings. New meanings and new practices created from these misunderstandings

establish the middle ground. (White, 1991, p. xxvi.) The actors in the middle ground are changing mutually, however not aiming for cultural hybridity or syncretism. All intercultural cooperation does not happen in a middle ground, nor is it just a compromise. The most suitable situations for finding a middle ground are where reciprocal needs and a relative balance of power exist and where new connections and symbolic meanings are created to benefit from it economically, politically, or in other ways. (Conklin, 2020.)

Conklin (2020) describes the middle ground as "an explicitly political terrain in which the operations of power are central" (p. 345). Power is a vital aspect of the middle grounds – they are not about domination or subordination but a balance. In addition, in the middle ground, Indigenous people are recognized as creative agents, not victims. Middle grounds can be formed only when there is a mutual need for cooperation and consent. Middle grounds are always temporary - they occur when the needs meet symmetrically, and discourses need to be adapted to reach the actors' goals. (Conklin, 2020.) Mutual benefits and forming new working relations are essential characteristics of a middle ground (Conklin, 2020; White, 1991). A middle ground is not just a situation where the interests meet. It is a practical and creative process where practices and language need to be adapted and translated for different groups of people to help them work together and understand each other (Conklin & Graham, 1995; High, 2020).

Conklin and Graham's middle ground was mainly present at the international and public, symbolic level (Conklin, 2020). In the 1990s, the Indigenous-environmental middle ground created a significant impact because it happened at the right moment to shift the power balances and give Indigenous people a better bargaining position. Many recent middle grounds are being worked towards forming more long-term relations to get more long-term support. The 21st-century middle grounds are strived for through practical work and close working relationships, not only symbolic politics. (Conklin, 2020; High & Oakley, 2020; High, 2020.) In chapter three, I will present more practical examples of middle ground in Indigenous-environmental contexts.

2.5 Ethics and decolonizing approach in research

Next, I will go through ethical matters related to this study. Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK) provides general ethical guidelines for human sciences in Finland (TENK, 2019). One of the general ethical guidelines of TENK is that the research should not cause "significant risks, damage or harm to research participants, communities or other subjects of research" (TENK, 2019, p. 8). In this research, I did not directly work with people, and the material

was already public, which reduces the risk a lot. However, people are discussed in this research, and one way to avoid harm is the anonymity of people in the research. Protecting privacy is one of the topics on TENK guidelines, and people should not be recognized in the study (TENK, 2019, pp. 14–15). In this study, people are referred to either as “a Sámi person” or a representative of a certain organization. Participants have been informed about the research on an organizational level. TENK guidelines also mention that it is important to reduce the need to gather unnecessary data and reduce the research pressure on minorities (TENK, 2019, p. 16). In my research, I used only publicly available materials and did not need to gather new data.

When a study concerns Indigenous peoples, it is essential to consider the ethical aspects of the research. For a long time, academic research has been colonizing towards Indigenous peoples, and the interest of Western scientists in the Sámi has been founded on the colonial practices and racial narratives (Datta, 2018; Reid, 2019). In my opinion, academia should actively work to dismantle the racist and colonial structures and research practices. That is why it is valuable to give space for contemplation and reflection on how my research takes these issues into account and how this research could serve decolonization and not echo the colonizing way of doing research. Löf and Stinnerbom (2016) mention that well-designed research on, or with, Indigenous peoples might have the potential to improve the situation of Indigenous peoples. The current research should consider these historical aspects and ensure that current and future research does not repeat past mistakes. (Datta, 2018; Löf & Stinnerbom, 2016.) A working group consisting of university professors and representatives of several Sámi institutes is currently developing guidelines for Sámi research. They aim to create ethical guidelines for researchers to do Sámi-related research sustainably. These kinds of guidelines already exist for many other Indigenous peoples, but not for Sámi people. (Lapin Yliopisto, n.d.)

The term decolonization entails the process of decolonization and the fact that colonialism is not over (instead of *post*-colonialism, which connotes that colonialism is over and is something that happened in the past) (Smith, 1999). Datta (2018) mentions that one of the decolonizing aspects of doing research is that the research made about Indigenous peoples should always be inclusive and aim for such relevant results for the communities. This research can support decolonization because it could raise awareness of the issues that the Sámi face and increase understanding among other people. Furthermore, it could encourage better collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors. Arctic Railway is one practical example of why decolonization is still needed also in Finland.

2.6 Situatedness as a researcher

I am a Finnish, white woman, not Indigenous myself. I have had the pleasure to get to know Indigenous people around the Arctic in various projects and events, including Sámi people from different regions of Sápmi. I have also worked for an environmental organization, but I do not have connections with Greenpeace. This helps me relate to the research topic, but simultaneously I need to recognize my standpoint and preconceptions and cut loose from them as much as possible to do the research with an open mind. Gilgun (2014) emphasizes the importance of transparency when writing a research report. It is important to write "what researchers did, how they did it, and why" (p. 661). I recognize that I speak from my perspective but aim to keep my mind as open as possible to the research materials. I want to be transparent and explain my choices so that my intentions are as clear as possible. No researcher is completely objective, but it is important to recognize these preconceptions that guide us as much as possible.

My academic background is in environmental and sustainability science. These fields are very interdisciplinary and require broad thinking across the lines. This has given me a good foundation for my minor studies on Indigenous issues and Indigenous methodologies, which are holistic by their nature. Indigenous studies have equipped me for this master's thesis that concerns Sámi people. In this research, I want to honor Indigenous research methodologies and ways of knowing. Although the scope of a master's thesis does not allow me to go as deeply into the Indigenous methodologies as I would like to, I want to stay critical towards the shortcomings of Western science and its hegemonic position as a knowledge system. Kuokkanen discusses in their book "Reshaping the University" (2007) that ignorance of different epistemes leads to a disappearance of other than dominant epistemes and makes it difficult for Indigenous people to participate in academia. This is one form of colonialism that includes the assumption of non-Western epistemes' inferiority (Kuokkanen, 2007). At the same time, it is good to remember that these two are not entirely separate and cannot and should not be compared as opposites. They can be complementary and mutually supportive, and this way, it could be possible to improve the understanding of different phenomena. (Tengö et al., 2014.) What I want to strive for when doing my research is related to what Datta explains in their article (2018): "The term 'decolonization' to me as a researcher means becoming, learning, and taking responsibility for participants." Inspired by this, I want to perceive this research as a learning process to decolonize my own mindsets and thought patterns.

3 Indigenous-environmental alliances

So far, I have briefly introduced the background of this thesis and discussed the research design. In the following chapter, I will move on to discuss Indigenous-environmental alliances and to examine how the concept of middle ground has been applied to other cases. I will then present what kind of alliances there have been between the Sámi and environmentalists in the past.

3.1 Characteristics of Indigenous-environmental collaboration

Collaboration between Indigenous peoples and environmentalists has been a strategic choice to promote their goals in many places worldwide (Simpson, 2010, p. xiii–xiv; Conklin & Graham, 1995). The issues they have been advocating for have often related to the rights to land and resources, environmental protection, and cultural revitalization (Davis, 2010; Conklin & Graham, 1995). Having seemingly similar goals, the actual priorities of Indigenous peoples and environmentalists have varied (Conklin & Graham, 1995). A big difference has been that environmental organizations often have more narrow goals, focusing mainly on nature and the environment. In contrast, Indigenous peoples who have a holistic approach actively working with many issues at once also focus on, e.g., cultural and economic issues and issues concerning their heritage and land claims. That might sometimes be a challenge in collaboration. (Davis, 2010.)

Indigenous-environmental collaborations started to emerge in the 1980s and 1990s when both environmental and Indigenous movements got public and political attention in an unprecedented way nationally and internationally (Conklin & Graham, 1995; Conklin, 2020). In Amazonia, Indigenous peoples and environmentalists' interests converged in protesting against the destruction of the rain forest and maintaining the Indigenous ownership of the land. Both needed something from each other, so strategically it was a good choice to collaborate, and there was a good foundation for a middle ground to emerge. (Conklin, 2020.) A middle ground could also be found on the international level, in the form of the development of a global intercultural community. It was an imaginary mutual space where different cultures meet but based on perceptions and symbols more than reality. The middle ground in 1990s Amazonia was based on the assumption that Western conservationist and Native people's principles and views of nature were similar. It was a needed compromise to be able to work together towards mutual goals, to protect the Native land and the forests. That kind of commonality was an appealing idea for Western audiences and, therefore, useful in campaigning. Using environmental

discourses was a more understandable way of communicating Indigenous land rights issues to the outsiders. Indigenous-environmentalist alliance was built on symbolic representations, and Indigenous people needed to keep up those false images to maintain their international support. (Conklin & Graham, 1995.) That resembles how the Sámi have needed to keep up false narratives of their relationship with nature to be allowed to participate in international political discussions (See Chapter 1.2).

Indigenous people have strategically used these narratives themselves, but also environmental organizations have used the stereotypes for their gain. A lot of environmental campaigns have presented Indigenous people as part of nature, non-changing and requiring protection. This has been called “strategic essentialism”, as it has been a politically strategic choice. (Sarkki, 2011, pp. 90–91; Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 300.) These images work as marketing tools or attractors of donors for NGOs only when they are of a particular kind, suitable for Western audiences. “The Ecologically Noble Savage” has been a term used of Indigenous peoples, kept alive, for example, by European philosophers of the 16th–19th centuries who saw native people as “primitive” and “innocent,” opposite to European “destructive” cultures. Linking Indigenous livelihoods with nature conservation has even maintained this conception. (Conklin & Graham, 1995; de la Cadena & Starn, 2007, p. 6.) In the Western context, the image of the “noble savage” has had rhetorical power, and media has reproduced these ideas of exotic people living in harmony (Conklin & Graham, 1995; de la Cadena & Starn, 2007, p. 6).

As discussed, Indigenous people themselves do not always identify themselves with these imageries, which can contradict Indigenous peoples' own goals (Conklin & Graham, 1995). These kinds of stereotypes reinforce the idea of Indigenous people as “victims” that need saving, instead of inclusion of local people and common conceptualization of priorities (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 301–303). Even academic research has emphasized Indigenous peoples' victimhood instead of their own agency (Toivanen, 2019, p. 23). The word “traditional” is also sometimes used in a strategic way when negotiating Indigenous rights – although the traditional livelihoods should not be understood as “unchanging”. Subsistence communities have needed to adapt and develop, as Indigenous cultures continuously do still today. (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 299.)

Indigenous-environmental alliances have required accommodation and translations from both sides. It is also an important theme in middle grounds. Translations have been related especially to concepts relating to “nature”, “environment”, and “land”. (Conklin & Graham, 1995; High, 2020.) Wao öme, a term of Waorani people in Amazonian Ecuador, is one example

of this. Wao öme refers to "a place of abundance", and it relates to what Western people know as "nature" or "environment", but it has many more different nuances in it. The concepts of Western conservation discourse focus on "nature" and "culture" being separate - nature being separate from humans and needing conservation. Living in wao öme is different from conservationist discourses that emphasize harmonious living with nature - wao öme, for example, also entails dangerous relationships between people and animals. However, Indigenous concepts are not just the opposite of the Western concepts, but they can be developed and constructed to engage in environmental politics strategically. Environmentalists and Waorani people translated the different concepts of wao öme and conservation to work together and communicate to defend Waorani lands. Waorani people also adopted Western conservation terms to understand them from their perspective. This way, the concepts are forming new meanings in the middle ground. These translations are not just accidental misunderstandings but strategic ones, even though the real meaning might need to be compromised. (High, 2020.)

Since the 1980s, the discourses of environmental and Indigenous rights movements have partly developed and transformed in parallel. They have changed a lot during recent decades, while in the Arctic, they have also borrowed narratives and practices from each other. (Conklin, 2020; Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 297.) Originally, Indigenous rights movements have been chiefly human rights-oriented, emphasizing physical and cultural survival. Environmental movements, in turn, have focused on protecting flora and fauna, and people have even been seen as a hindrance to protecting nature. However, environmentalist values have changed towards holistic sustainability thinking, recognizing humans as important actors in protecting biodiversity, whereas Indigenous movements have adapted environmentalist discourses. (Conklin & Graham, 1995; Conklin, 2020.)

Davis (2010) sorts out three different ways of collaboration. Side-by-side collaboration means that the parties work together to reach certain goals. Paternalistic alliances resemble colonialism, and the non-Indigenous party takes the lead. The third way of collaboration is where Indigenous partners take the lead. However, in practice, different ways of collaboration can mix up and vary during the process. (Davis, 2020.) As discussed before, middle ground presupposes a side-by-side alliance where the power balance is relatively even (Conklin, 2020). Sometimes Indigenous peoples' and environmentalists' goals also conflict strongly. There are examples of such environmental protection projects that have been directly harmful to Indigenous people, for example proposing displacement of local people to protect nature (Tsing, 2007, p. 41, p. 55). Moreover, not all Indigenous people have similar views with environmentalists

(de la Cadena & Starn, 2007, pp. 2–4; High, 2020). Tsing (2007, pp. 55–57) discusses the difficulty to reach environmental protection and Indigenous sovereignty and wealth in partnership when operating in the capitalist system. In many cases, Indigenous people have had no other choice than make their livelihoods in ways that are not sustainable. Like anyone else, most Indigenous people are not disconnected from the global market economy, and many livelihoods are linked with capitalist development. (Conklin & Graham, 1995; Tsing, 2007, p. 55.)

There are risks in Indigenous-environmental collaboration, but well-formed solid relationships and alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous actors have the potential to increase solidarity and decrease the legacy of colonialism (Simpson, 2010, pp. xiii–xiv). The concept of middle ground helps to understand how these alliances find a way to work out but can also point out risks and issues of misrepresentation and prevailing stereotypes. It has often been a good strategic choice for Indigenous peoples to focus on raising awareness of environmental issues while simultaneously getting visibility for Indigenous issues. They have also benefited by getting needed resources, including money and personnel, and support in local and national projects. (Conklin, 2020.) Embedding human rights in environmental work has been beneficial for environmental organizations as well. Alliances with Indigenous peoples have been a way to legitimize the involvement of them as “outsiders” in local issues and to increase the moral value of their work. (Conklin, 2020; Conklin & Graham, 1995.)

3.2 Collaboration between the Sámi and environmentalists

Environmental organizations and activists have been working for nature conservation in Sámi lands in Finland for many decades. Already in the middle of the 20th century, discussions of new national parks, as well as disputes over forest loggings, took place in Northern Finland, and Finnish Association for Nature Conservation was one of the environmental actors in these discussions. After that, all Finnish major environmental organizations have participated in the discussions to some extent, organizing campaigns and protests trying to preserve biologically valuable old forests – some of them more in a negotiating way and some preferring more direct actions. However, even environmentalists have had different opinions on some issues. (Raitio, 2008, pp. 32–35, pp. 115–130.) Sometimes it has been a good strategy for the Sámi to collaborate with the environmentalists, even though the difficulties and disagreements have also been present in these encounters (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 297).

Protests against a hydroelectric powerplant in Alta-Kautokeino in the 1970s were a crucial impetus for Sámi activism and politics and collaboration between the Sámi and environmentalists. A large movement emerged to oppose the project, and demonstrations took place in the north and Oslo. Sámi youths organized a hunger strike, which brought publicity to the issue as well. The conflict got both national and international attention, but it was also an important event for the political and artistic activism of the Sámi and helped strengthen the Sámi community. (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, pp. 40–41; Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 297.) The dam was built later, but it was smaller than planned. Reasons for the success of the protests could be found in Sámi professionals as leaders of the movement as well as in Sámi working with international environmental activists, which helped promote their issue. (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, p. 40.) Both environmental and indigenous movements had gained attention on both national and international levels, which was an opportunity from which to benefit (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 297). The events led to changes in Norway's politics, including, e.g., new legislation and the establishment of Sámi committees. The Alta case also had an impact on the politics of neighboring countries. (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, pp. 40–41.)

Some Sámi people have built long-lasting connections with environmentalists, and one example is the collaboration between Greenpeace and Sámi people in Finland. Greenpeace Finland and reindeer herders have cooperated to prevent forest loggings in Sápmi already since the beginning of the 21st century. Greenpeace has expressed to support Sámi communities and oppose the industrial land use, which harms nature and reindeer herding. (Greenpeace, 2019.) Greenpeace has offered resources for the local people and experience in campaigning. Greenpeace's presence in forest conflicts has also helped by giving the issue political pressure nationally and publicity internationally, but it has been controversial, too. (Raitio, 2008, p. 218; Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 305–306.) Not all the Sámi have sided with Greenpeace or environmentalists in general. Greenpeace's presence has caused local conflicts, for example, between Sámi reindeer herders and Sámi forestry workers. (Sarkki, 2011, pp. 90–91; Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 304–306.) Some Sámi people have seen environmental activists' participation in local issues as "ecological colonization". There are these kinds of views still present in discussions – in some cases, environmentalists have been experienced to be patronizing and insensitive to local needs. (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 304–305.)

4 Findings

In this chapter, I will discuss the results of the content analysis and aim to answer my research questions. I will also apply middle ground as an analytical framework to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

4.1 Many reasons to oppose the Arctic Railway

In this section, I am going to answer my first research question, which is: “What are the themes highlighted in the campaigning and protests of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace against the Arctic Railway?”. I start by looking at the themes present in communications by Sámi organizations, including news articles where they have been interviewed, and I continue by examining the themes present in communications by Greenpeace, including news interviews. It is clear that the shared goal of both parties has been to stop the Arctic Railway project, but there are a lot of different themes that they discuss when communicating about the topic. These themes are looked for both related to the demonstrations that have taken place in Northern Finland and Helsinki and other communication materials that the Sámi organizations and Greenpeace have produced when raising awareness about the Arctic Railway on social media and at international events.

4.1.1 Sámi organizations’ themes

Sámi organizations discuss many different themes concerning the Arctic Railway, and during the analysis, I found that those themes could be divided into following two main categories: “Threats to the future of the Sámi” and “Lack of recognition of the Sámi rights”. I found that these categories summarized the main themes that stand out in the materials. They were found both in news articles and Sámi people’s own communication channels and direct video interviews. Sámi activists and organizations often built a storyline where they talked about other similar harmful projects in the past and how the Sámi have for a long time needed to fight for their rights. The railway was seen as a continuation of their past struggles. They also referred to their future as a people – how the railway would threaten their whole future, including their culture, livelihoods, and lands. In addition to these themes, there were other rarer themes present, such as Sámi people’s role in guarding their land and nature, as well as references to climate change. Furthermore, they talked about the need for support in their protests. Despite the

categorizations, there were many connections between different themes. For example, a threat to land also threatens people, and a threat to the reindeer also threatens Sámi culture.

Sámi organizations' main themes

Threats to the future of the Sámi

Lack of recognition of the Sámi rights

Existence of the Sámi in the future

Threat to the Sámi culture

Threat to the Sámi livelihoods

Threat to the Sámi lands

Wellbeing of the Sámi

Indigenous rights

Self-determination of the Sámi

Mistreatment of the Sámi in the past

Colonialism and exploitation of natural resources

4.1.1.1 "Min eana min boahhteáigi" – "Our land our future"

Themes that fall under the headline "Threats to the future of the Sámi" include main arguments for why the Sámi oppose the railway. One of the slogans used in the demonstrations was "Our land our future" (See Figure 5). It appeared in North Sámi, too: "Min eana min boahhteáigi". The concern over their future is present in many discussions: according to the Sámi speakers, the railway would threaten the Sámi people's existence in the future. The railway would cut the reindeer herding districts, threatening their possibilities to continue their livelihoods and culture.

It is difficult to speak about the topic because the impacts of the railway are not only a threat to the profession but to the whole life and the continuation of the generations. Land, where the



Figure 5. Demonstration against the Arctic Railway in Inari (Source: YLE, 2018b).

reindeer and people live together, is one, and you cannot have one without the other.⁸

Impact on the Sámi livelihoods could have effects on Sámi languages as well. The railway would also impact the land and nature where Sámi people live, significantly affecting the people themselves, as well. According to the Sámi,



Figure 6. Poster by Suohpanterror (Source: Suohpanterror, n.d.).

it could also affect their health, for example, by causing trauma or even suicides.

The Arctic Railway is a project that violates the constitution and Indigenous rights and threatens to endanger entire segments of Sámi culture, destroy our ancient forests and pollute our lakes and rivers.⁹

In the text excerpts, the Sámi's personal connection to the topic is highlighted, of which the slogan "Our land our future" is one example. They would experience the railway's effects firsthand, which is why they stand against the railway. Suohpanterror, in their poster, expresses this with the text "We Don't Have a Plan B" (See Figure 6). There is a train which runs over a herd of reindeer and a heading "ARCTIC FAILWAY". The poster delivers a dramatic message: it is either Sámi people's lives or the Arctic Railway.

4.1.1.2 Neglected constitution and consent

"Lack of recognition of the Sámi rights" was identified as another main category for themes discussed by Sámi organizations. That includes such themes as the Arctic Railway planners' failure to listen to the concerns of the Sámi and to adhere to international conventions on Indigenous rights and national laws concerning Sámi rights. Sámi activists also often refer to past

⁸ A comment by a Sámi reindeer herder at the protests: "Asiasta on vaikea puhua, sillä radan vaikutukset eivät ole vain uhka ammatille, vaan koko elämälle ja sukupolvien jatkumolle. Maa, jossa porot ja ihmiset yhdessä asuvat, on yhtä, eikä toista ole ilman toista." (SN6)

⁹ A tweet on the Suoma Sámi Nuorat Twitter account: "#JäämerenRata on perustuslakia ja alkuperäiskansojen oikeuksia rikkova hanke, joka uhkaa ajaa kokonaisia saamelaiskulttuurin osia sukupuuttoon, tuhota ikimetsämme ja saastuttaa järvemme ja jokemme." (SD27)

mistreatment of the Sámi and the harmful projects they have needed to fight against. They find the railway to be a continuation of the past. They also refer to Arctic Railway as colonialism, it being another project where people from outside come to their homelands and utilize their resources.



Figure 7. Demonstration against the Arctic Railway in Inari (Source: YLE, 2018b).

Our region has been utilized for the good of others already for centuries. We have had to fight against the state and international companies.¹⁰

In the demonstrations, the protesters used the slogan “Stop colonialism” (See Figure 7). The railway project was compared to similar situations when exploiting projects have been carried out in Sápmi without Sámi people’s permission. One example that is often mentioned is the artificial lakes in Vuotso in the 1960s. Those reservoirs spanned over Sámi villages and forced people to move from their homes.

One of the Sámi organizations’ themes is that Sámi people have not been listened to in the Arctic Railway project even though they have a right to free, prior, and informed consent in any projects affecting them, according to, e.g., United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (United Nations, 2007). Sámi activists sometimes mention the international Indigenous rights but mainly talk about their own perspective, focusing on the fact that their consent has not been asked.

We want to communicate to the Finnish government that you cannot come here without our permission.¹¹

Sámi activists often state that the railway does not have their permission. That relates to the discussion about their land. As discussed in the introduction, Finland has been requested to clarify the land rights of the Sámi by the European Council, and land rights issues have also been

¹⁰ A comment by a Sámi activist at the protests: ”Jo vuosisatoja aluetamme on käytetty muiden hyväksi. Olemme joutuneet taistelemaan valtiota ja kansainvälisiä yrityksiä vastaan.” (SD22)

¹¹ A comment by a Sámi activist at the protests: ”Haluamme viestiä Suomen hallitukselle, että tänne ei ole tulemistakaan ilman meidän lupamme.” (SN2)

a reason for not ratifying ILO 169 convention (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 295; Toivanen, 2013, p. 46; Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, p. 37). The Arctic Railway seems to be another project carried out on their land where Sámi people are not heard sufficiently. They want to be able to decide on such projects that have an impact on their lives. I refer to that as self-determination, which has been determined, for example, in UNDRIP. It is a “right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions” (United Nations, 2007). Regardless, it is still possible to plan such projects as Arctic Railway without properly hearing Indigenous people.

In addition, Sámi activists refer to the Finnish constitution and say that the railway project violates it. In Sámi organizations’ own communications (Twitter and their speech at UN), they often demand attention to the Finnish law, yet it is absent from the news sources and Greenpeace’s communications. Instead, international Indigenous rights are referred to much more often in other sources.

The Ministry of transport and communications of Finland has overlooked the obligation to negotiate 9 § in Act on the Sámi Parliament (974/1995) and the UN’s free, prior and informed consent by ignoring the obligation to negotiate properly. If realized, the Arctic Railway would also violate the Finnish constitution (731/1999) 17 §, which warrants Sámi people’s right to maintain and develop their language and culture.¹²

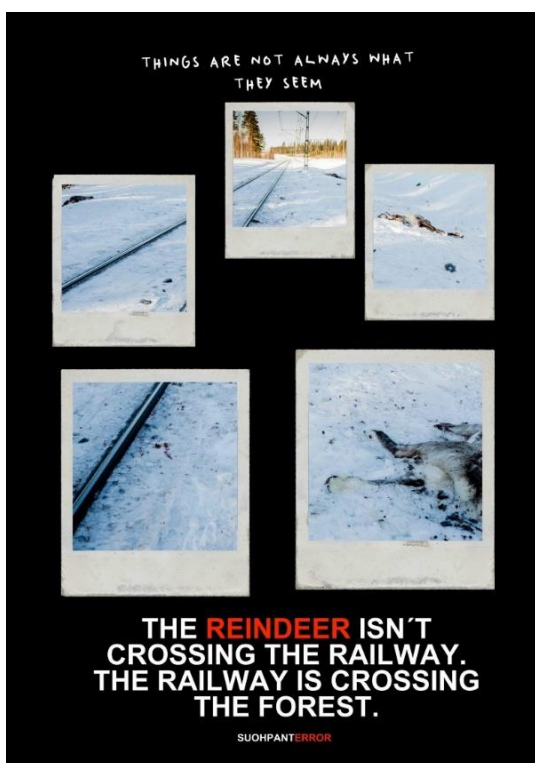


Figure 8. Poster by Suohpanterror (Source: Suohpanterror, n.d.).

Sámi organizations have brought the issue to international attention as well. For example, Sámi youth organization held a speech at The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and asked the UN special rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples to examine the violations of the Sámi rights in Finland. They also asked other Indigenous people to support them. They have used English as

¹² An excerpt from a press release by Suoma Sámi Nuorat. “Suomen Liikenne- ja viestintäministeriö on ylenkatsonut Saamelaiskäräjälain (974/1995) neuvotteluelvoitetta 9 § sekä YK:n vapaaseen ennakkotietoon perustuvaa suostumusta jättämällä täyttämättä neuvotteluelvoitteen asianmukaisesti. Toteutuessaan Jäämeren rata rikkoisi myös Suomen perustuslain (731/1999) 17 §:n saamelaisille takaamaa oikeutta ylläpitää ja kehittää kieltään ja kulttuuriaan.” (SD18)

one of the languages in the protests, and Suohpanterror has communicated on social media in English. Although some of their posts are in Sámi languages emphasizing the message being directed to the Sámi audience, the posts about the Arctic Railway have been written in English, indicating that they are reaching out to bigger audiences with these posts. Figure 8 shows one example of a poster in English, and the railway's effect on the reindeer is demonstrated. "The reindeer isn't crossing the railway. The railway is crossing the forest." (See Figure 8).

4.1.2 Greenpeace's themes

I found several different themes when Greenpeace discusses the topic of the Arctic Railway. They talk a lot about protecting nature and the forests, but they also talk about the rights of the Sámi and refer to international conventions of Indigenous rights. Both in news articles and Greenpeace's own communications, I found the following categories to sum up the main themes: "Environment and nature protection" and "Sámi rights and livelihoods". In addition to those two categories, there are other minor themes, such as the economic unprofitability of the Arctic Railway and the promotion of peace in the Arctic. Under these main categories, the sub-categories represent different themes related to the upper-level topics. Even though the same key themes seemed to be prevalent in both Greenpeace's own publications and the news sources, the emphasis on the different themes was somewhat different. I will discuss this in more detail later. For Greenpeace, I found the division between the environment and the Sámi rights to reflect the materials well, whereas for the Sámi organizations, a different kind of division seemed to sum up the materials better. Therefore, I ended up in a different kind of categorization for them. Of course, the themes still overlap in practice, and 100% clear categorizations cannot be made. For example, in Greenpeace's press releases, they connect forest protection with reindeer herding and climate change.

The forest is saving us all from climate change while being vital for Sámi reindeer herding.¹³

¹³ An excerpt from a press release of Greenpeace. Originally in English. (GD17)

Greenpeace's main themes

Environment and nature protection

Sámi rights and livelihoods

Forest protection

Climate change

Threat to nature

Industrial development

Indigenous rights

Self-determination

Sámi livelihoods

4.1.2.1 “Valitse metsät” – “Choose the forests”

Greenpeace emphasizes forest protection a lot. That is quite natural because Greenpeace has a long history working in northern Finland to prevent forest loggings. It could be argued that protecting the forests is the central theme for Greenpeace. Greenpeace even says in their press releases that their (Greenpeace’s and Sámi organizations’) joint goal is to protect northern forests. In demonstrations, they used slogans such as “Forest is life” and “*Valitse metsät*”, which is Finnish and means “choose the forests” (See Figure 9). In Greenpeace’s press releases and news articles, the forests appear the most when nature and the environment are concerned. However, they do not only talk about protecting forests but often justify it by linking forests to climate change, saying that forests are important carbon sinks and storage. They also mention the biodiversity of the forests, but very rarely, compared to climate change. Focusing on climate change could be a better strategy for them as the public environmental discussion has focused on climate change a lot in recent years.



Figure 9. Demonstration against the Arctic Railway (Source: Voima, 2018).

These regions are important for us, too, because the Arctic Railway would destroy nature here. Already since 2002, we have collaborated with the local reindeer herders to protect these forests. In many places, the railway would go through those forests that we have managed to protect together.¹⁴

In addition to discussing the forests and climate change, Greenpeace also mentions nature protection in a more general sense and claim Arctic Railway to be harmful to the arctic nature. Greenpeace predicts that the railway would increase industrial operations in the Arctic and thus threaten the arctic nature. They discuss the potential new pulp mills and mines in the Arctic and express a strong objection to those. They find these developments as unsustainable and as exploitation of Arctic natural resources. That also relates to the forests – new pulp mills would increase the demand for wood – and increased industrial activity in the Arctic would affect the Sámi reindeer herding as well, which leads us to the next category.

Planned pulp mills and the industrial exploitation of the Arctic are threatening reindeer herding of the Sámi and their rights to the traditional livelihoods.¹⁵

4.1.2.2 Indigenous rights and unasked permission

Greenpeace also discusses Sámi issues and defends their rights. As for this category, there is quite a big difference between the content of Greenpeace's own communications and news articles. Greenpeace discusses Sámi-related things, especially reindeer herding and Indigenous rights, a lot in their press releases and social media, but Greenpeace representatives' contributions only rarely include these topics in news articles. A possible, natural explanation for that might be that the journalists have chosen Sámi people to discuss the Sámi-related issues rather than asking Greenpeace to talk about those. Whereas Greenpeace's press releases also include such topics as forests, climate change, and nature protection, their Facebook posts mainly focus on Sámi issues.

On Facebook, Greenpeace has campaigned by inviting people to sign a petition where they demand the Finnish government to respect the rights of the Sámi (See Figure 10). In these posts, Greenpeace appears to be in the background as a supporter of Sámi people. When Greenpeace

¹⁴ A comment by a representative of Greenpeace: "Nämä seudut ovat myös meille tärkeitä, sillä Jäämeren rata tuhoaisi luontoa täällä. Me olemme jo vuodesta 2002 alkaen tehneet paikallisten poronhoitajien kanssa yhteistyötä näiden metsien suojelemiseksi. Monin kohdin rata kulkisi läpi niiden metsien, mitkä me olemme saaneet yhdessä suojeltua." (GN4)

¹⁵ An excerpt from a press release of Greenpeace: "Suunnitellut sellutehtaat ja Arktisen alueen teollinen hyväksikäyttö uhkaavat saamelaisten poronhoitoa ja oikeutta perinteisiin elinkeinoihin." (GD16)



Figure 10. A Facebook post of Greenpeace (Source: Greenpeace Suomi, 2018c).

discusses issues concerning the Sámi, they mostly talk about their livelihoods, focusing on reindeer herding. Greenpeace also quite often brings forward Indigenous rights in general. They refer to international conventions – for example, ILO 169 convention has been mentioned. Greenpeace also brings up the importance of self-determination of the Sámi. Sámi people should be able to decide about things that affect them. Greenpeace brings up that Sámi people have not been asked permission during the Arctic Railway planning process.

Both the Arctic Railway and the factories supplying with wood from Lapland are such projects that should not be taken forward without permission from the Sámi communities. Anything else is blatant scorn of the Indigenous people's rights.¹⁶

As discussed, both the environmentalists and Indigenous peoples have aimed to benefit from their international attention (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, p. 297). Greenpeace has been said to bring the Arctic Railway case to international publicity by sharing photos and videos on their channels. Those have been translated into English as well.

Through the photos and the videos, Greenpeace wants to transmit the message of the resistance to the world.¹⁷

¹⁶ An excerpt from a press release of Greenpeace: "Niin Jäämeren rata kuin Lapista puuta hankkivat tehtaot ovat hankkeita, joita ei pitäisi viedä eteenpäin ilman saamelaisyhteistöjen suostumusta. Muu on alkuperäiskansojen oikeuksien räikeää ylenkatsomista." (GD16)

¹⁷ An excerpt from a news article. Originally in English. (GN8)

4.2 Mutually desired collaboration despite the differences

In this section, I will explore the priorities that Sámi organizations and Greenpeace share, as well as the differences between their priorities. The middle ground concept can help examine these aims and look beneath the seemingly similar interests. This discussion will also touch upon how those partners might have benefited from the collaboration. Sámi people and Greenpeace's collaboration builds on working together for several decades. Davis (2010) discusses three different forms of Indigenous-environmental collaboration: side-by-side, Indigenous-led, and paternalistic. In the case of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace working to stop the Arctic Railway project, collaboration seems to have happened mostly side by side, mixing up with Indigenous-led collaboration. Sámi organizations and Greenpeace have worked together to reach a mutual goal: stopping the Arctic Railway project. In the protests, Greenpeace and Sámi participants appear side by side as equal partners. However, the Sámi and issues relating to them often seem to be in the center, and Greenpeace appears as their supporter. That is what the collaboration looks like from the outside – public media materials do not show how the collaboration has looked internally and how people have personally experienced it. Side-by-side collaboration, but also Indigenous people showing their own agency, support the middle ground theory. In a middle ground, there is a relative balance of power.

The balance of power in these kinds of alliances is usually relative, indeed, and Greenpeace's equal position to the Sámi can be questioned. Tsing (2007, p. 48) argues that there is often a power imbalance between white environmentalists and Indigenous activists because the stereotypes present in these alliances uphold colonial discourses. Certainly, the balance of power is not static but more of a process. As Davis (2010) mentions, different forms of alliances can mix up during the collaboration. In Sámi and Greenpeace collaboration, their communications create an impression that Greenpeace is the supporter of the Sámi. That might balance the starting point of imbalance in this case. In the early 2000s forest conflicts, some accused Greenpeace of being patronizing and insensitive. These kinds of views cannot be completely ruled out in the case of the Arctic Railway protests, but the Sámi activists' outlook communicated outwards has seemed positive.

It's great that the resistance is launched here, as this is where the Sámi Area starts. We've met and planned the actions, and it's good and a sign of strong cooperation that we can engage in this together.¹⁸

¹⁸ A comment by a Sámi activist at the protests. Originally in English. (SN8)

We were alone against the lake reservoirs. Now we do not need to be alone.¹⁹

When Sámi organizations or activists mention Greenpeace, which does not often occur, they emphasize the strength they get from the collaboration. Greenpeace refers to Sámi people a lot. For example, Greenpeace has shared social media posts asking people to support Sámi people and collect names to a petition aimed at the Finnish government. The petition's main request is that the government would respect the rights of the Sámi. Greenpeace mainly refers to the Sámi rights on a very general level or by talking about ILO 169 convention, which Finland has not ratified. Sámi organizations and activists also talk about Indigenous rights secured by international law, but they also cite the Finnish constitution and the Act on the Sámi Parliament. Indigenous rights is one common theme of both, but there seem to be slight differences in their emphasis. It could be said that this collaboration has been established on Sámi people's terms – Greenpeace being their supporter, rather than both supporting each other equally.

Greenpeace supports Sámi communities in their opposition to industrial land use harmful to reindeer herding and nature. Greenpeace and reindeer herders have successfully collaborated since 2003 to decrease loggings in the state forests and protect valuable forest areas. Collaboration to oppose the Arctic Railway has continued since autumn 2018.²⁰

Greenpeace talks more about environmental issues in general than Sámi organizations, which also mention, e.g., climate change, but more rarely than Greenpeace. They focus more on the railway's practical impacts on their surroundings. Greenpeace discusses industrial developments in the Arctic a lot and is concerned about the exploitation of the arctic natural resources that the railway could lead to. Sámi organizations also bring those things up, but they link those developments with a more personal connection: they talk about a threat that comes "from outside" and "from abroad", and these industrial projects threaten "their natural resources". They link these developments with colonialism. Both Greenpeace and Sámi organizations find the industrial developments in the Arctic a negative thing, but their perspectives are different. This kind of mutual "enemy" can strengthen the collaboration and be one puzzle piece of their

¹⁹ A comment by a Sámi activist at the protests: "Me olimme yksin tekojärviä vastaan. Nyt meidän ei tarvitse olla yksin." (SN7)

²⁰ An excerpt from a press release of Greenpeace: "Greenpeace tukee saamelaisyhteisöjä poronhoidolle ja luonnolle haitallista teollista maankäyttöä vastaan. Greenpeace ja poronhoitajat ovat tehneet vuodesta 2003 alkaen tuloksellista yhteistyötä valtion metsien hakkuiden vähentämiseksi ja arvokkaiden metsäalueiden suojelemiseksi. Jäämeren ratahanketta vastaan on toimittu yhdessä syksystä 2018 alkaen." (GD13)

unique middle ground. They both need to stop this development – for their own reasons – but their collaboration can make it easier to reach that goal.

For Greenpeace, collaborating with the Sámi can be beneficial because Sámi people have that personal relationship to their lands, whereas Greenpeace is an international organization for which that kind of a personal tie with a place is difficult to show or does not exist. For Greenpeace, it seems to be an important strategy to show the perspective of the Sámi in their communications. Greenpeace's main interests as an organization include saving the forests and fighting against climate change but talking simultaneously about Sámi issues helps them to get more weight on their messages. Allying with the Sámi might also help Greenpeace justify their presence in the north and their participation in the local issues, which Conklin and Graham (1995) also noticed in South America. Furthermore, bringing up Indigenous issues might help them reach out to a larger public and other people than just environmentalists.

Sámi organizations and activists mostly do not seem to need Greenpeace when they communicate their message. Greenpeace is needed as a mouthpiece to help bring the message of the Sámi to a bigger audience. Sámi activists emphasize that it is important to “do it together” and that they need others to support them. Greenpeace is a powerful international organization that can spread the word to different audiences than Sámi organizations. However, there is also a risk of misunderstanding when Greenpeace talks about the Sámi. The Sámi and Greenpeace's needs are different, but still, they both need each other. A middle ground can emerge if there are mutual benefits and mutual needs. It seems apparent that for both Sámi organizations and Greenpeace, the collaboration has been beneficial and needed.

In contemporary middle grounds, practical working relationships have been highlighted, and they have not been only about symbolic, international politics. In this research case, Greenpeace and Sámi organizations have worked together, organized demonstrations and events together. They have also organized activism training for Sámi youth together. Therefore, it seems like they have built their working relationship. It has not been just a one-time demonstration together, but a more strategic and long-term collaboration.

This collaboration has also been visible internationally, and it has had its symbolic characteristics as well. The Sámi have been presented as a unified people standing against the Arctic Railway, which can be argued to be a symbolic, political narrative. Sámi youth have brought their issue to the UN events, where they have asked for help and talked about the violations of the Finnish state. That has been built on the longer-term struggles of Sámi people, which has been used for effect. “Year after year after year our organization brings forth concerns from the

Sámi youth in Finland regarding the survival of our culture”, begins a speech of Suoma Sámi Nuorat at a UN meeting. At the protests in Sápmi, other Indigenous people from abroad have also participated in protests. They compare the Arctic Railway case with other similar cases that Indigenous peoples have faced and see connections between Indigenous peoples' concerns. Indigenous people standing together brings strength, and successful protests in other places are discussed as positive examples. Sámi people are a diverse group of people and cannot be put into one box, and neither can all Indigenous peoples. However, they benefit from strategic collaboration and get support from each other.

Building on misunderstandings is a typical element of the middle grounds. There are differences in how Sámi organizations and Greenpeace discuss the Arctic Railway, but there are also convergences, which have probably been needed for this collaboration to work out. However, those convergences might not be similarities, but they can include different understandings of the seemingly same thing. Greenpeace strives for nature protection, protecting the forests, and stopping unsustainable use of natural resources. According to Greenpeace, the joint goal of Greenpeace and the Sámi is to protect northern forests. Sámi organizations also want to protect the forests and nature, but they do not focus so strongly on the forests. They talk more broadly: sometimes mentioning the forests, but also the lakes, fells, and rivers. All this is also linked to their livelihoods. For Sámi people, there is much more at stake than the forests. For them, it is about their culture, lives, and future as a people. Sámi people want to have ownership of their lands and be the ones who decide what happens on those lands. Conklin and Graham (1995) also described that in Amazonia, the interests converged in protecting the forests and maintaining the Indigenous ownership of the land. Even though social issues are not Greenpeace's focus, working for Indigenous people's ownership of the land can still ensure reaching their goals indirectly because Sámi people's forest management practices are probably more in line with Greenpeace's protection goals than what state ownership would be. To better understand the differences discussed here, looking at Sámi languages might be helpful. That will be discussed more in chapter 5.2.

4.3 Many forms of Sámi resistance

There is much discussion about representations and stereotypes of Indigenous peoples in the middle ground literature. Many campaigns done in collaboration by Indigenous peoples and environmentalists have relied on stereotypical images of Indigenous peoples. This has helped

for thousands of years. This is a message to the Finnish government that you do not cross the red line without our consent.²¹

References to the past harmful projects in Sápmi bring up also the narrative of victimhood. The Arctic Railway is compared to past bad experiences, and Sámi people are portrayed as victims to the railway. Communicating about the issue without mentioning the harmful impacts of the railway on the Sámi would be difficult. From the victimhood, their storyline usually continues to the previously described action-oriented discussion. The railway is a harmful project, but the Sámi are taking action to ensure their future as a people. Comparison with the past might even strengthen the impression of strong, united Sámi people who previously “stayed silent” but not anymore. It has been said that the Sámi have often needed to keep up the narrative of one united, oppressed people to be allowed to join the global political discussions (Toivanen, 2019, p. 23; Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 295–296). Conklin and Graham (1995) mention that it is not unproblematic that there is a need to use stereotypes of Indigenous peoples' victimhood to make their voices heard. Valkonen and Valkonen (2014) also discuss the significance of the constructed Sámi identity as a people who have a strong and close relationship with nature. That has strengthened their own identity and has also strengthened it outwards (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014). Likewise, Conklin and Graham (1995) mention that these kinds of narratives have helped Amazonian Indigenous people to get international support and influence national policies. Being both authentic as an Indigenous people and having power in the Western context has been challenging (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 295–296).

Sarkki (2011, pp. 90–91) discusses the early 2000's collaboration and campaigns of Greenpeace and reindeer herders when reindeer herding was shown as “the authentic way of being Sámi”. Consequently, UN Commission on Human Rights supported them but not Sámi forestry workers, who were on the opposite side of the local conflict. That shows how particular images of Indigenous peoples can have a great political significance. Simple ways of depicting the Sámi can be effective, instead of showing more reality-based, heterogeneous ways of being Indigenous while losing the political benefit of over-simplified images (Sarkki, 2011, pp. 90–91). Valkonen and Valkonen (2014) discuss the real nature relationships of the Sámi that are practical and place-based, but the image of a certain kind of nature-relation has been easier to communicate and beneficial in the political arenas. In the Arctic Railway protests, the railway's

²¹ A comment by a Sámi activist. Originally in English. (SG17)

impacts on reindeer herding are highlighted strongly, and the reindeer herding as a Sámi livelihood is emphasized. The Sámi are seen as one people standing together, for whom reindeer herding is a prerequisite to survival. For the non-Sámi audience, it may strengthen the image of reindeer-herding being an authentic way of being Sámi, even though there are also, for example, fisher Sámi and city Sámi (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014). However, Arctic Railway's tangible impacts can be seen especially on reindeer herding, so in this case, reindeer herding is also a natural focus and example of the effects of the railway.

Moreover, it would be unreasonable to deny Sámi people the right to talk about reindeer herding in their campaigns, while it has been widely used as a marketing tool by non-Sámi people. At the protests, this is discussed by some Sámi activists. It is frustrating for the Sámi that non-Sámi use stereotypical reindeer images, for example, in the advertisement, but when Sámi people are concerned about their reindeer herding practices, it does not interest other people.

When the reindeer Sámi and their herds are pictured in an advertisement for pure arctic nature, the reindeer is good enough. But the one advertising with the reindeer does not care about the culture of the reindeer Sámi or the whole lifestyle linked with it.²²

Sámi cultures change continuously, and Sámi identity has even strengthened over recent decades through Sámi art, activism, and storytelling, and by bringing back Sámi traditions and mixing them with the new (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, pp. 41–42). Especially young Sámi people are finding new ways of agency, expressing their identities in new ways that transcend the dichotomies of nature and culture, as well as tradition and modernity (Toivanen & Fabritius, 2020). For example, social media brings new spaces for self-representations of the Sámi. There are many prominent Sámi influencers, for example, on Instagram and Twitter challenging the old stereotypes. Besides social media, young Sámi people have also found other new ways through different projects and collaborations to engage in political discussions (Toivanen & Fabritius, 2020) – collaboration around the Arctic Railway being one example.

Suohpanterror also uses social media as a platform and brings Sámi perspective in a new way to the Arctic Railway discussion. Suohpanterror's poster art has been described as decolonial art, innovatively aiming to redesign the image and stereotypes of the Sámi and challenging

²² A comment by a Sámi activist: "Kun puhtaana arktisen luonnon mainokseen otetaan hienot kuvat porosaamelaisista tokkineen, niin silloin poro kelpaa. Mutta se, joka porolla mainostaa, ei välitä porosaamelaisesta kulttuurista ja koko elämäntavasta, joka siihen liittyy." (SN6)

earlier representations and conceptions. Suohpanterror's social media activism has been effective in Sámi communities to strengthen their community and political agency. (Junka-Aikio, 2018.) They use visual and intertextual references to deliver their message to the public and tie humor with painful situations by ridiculing their “opponents” (See Figure 12).

In general, Sámi people are portrayed as active agents in the protests. Reindeer herding is discussed a lot, like in many other stereotypical narratives of the Sámi, but in this case, it is mainly steered by Sámi people themselves. The topic of reindeer herding can be seen as one part of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace’s middle ground because it has

been a topic that also Greenpeace has communicated about a lot. It can be a strategic choice because focusing on reindeer Sámi “fits” with the Western audience’s idea of the Sámi, but also a practical one as the railway would have a big impact particularly on the reindeer herding. Sámi parties have also used creative and new ways of communicating, such as poster art, and in such a way can create new understandings of Sámi people.

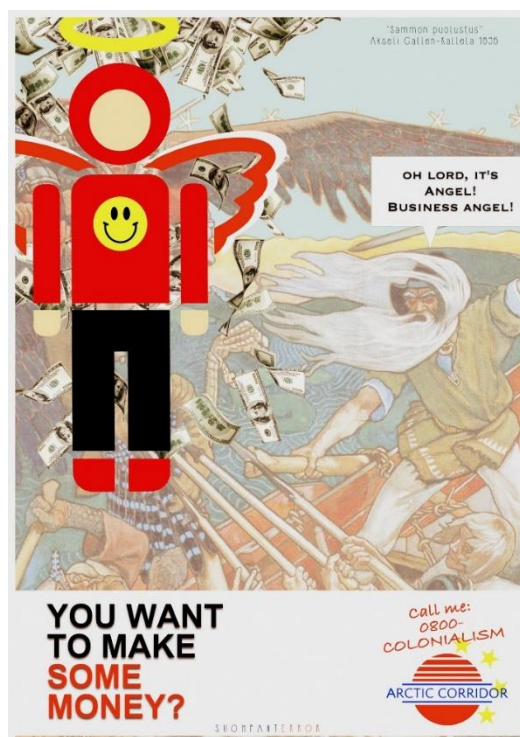


Figure 12. A poster by Suohpanterror (Source: Suohpanterror, n.d.).

5 Discussion

In this chapter, I will first discuss the research results in general, how this research represents the Sámi in general, and how Greenpeace has worked with human rights issues. I will continue by examining the conceptual differences between Greenpeace and the Sámi, which can help understand their priorities in this case.

5.1 Representations in the research

I have found the middle ground a helpful concept in interpreting the findings of my analysis. The middle ground concept is usually applied in ethnographical situations with observation methods. While this could have brought new perspectives to this study as well, the public, secondary material used in this study has its benefits. In this study, it has been possible to focus especially on how the actors present or are presented in public space. This is a fruitful perspective on this kind of collaboration where the intention is to raise awareness and deliver the message through public actions and campaigns. Interviews could have given a different perspective to the case, but those would have been specific people's perspectives. I argue that the materials in this study might give an even broader picture of the case and specifically show the organizations' official viewpoints. Moreover, as discussed in the subchapter 2.5 focusing on ethics, it is often better to avoid gathering unnecessary new data when minorities are concerned.

It is worth noting that a relatively unified, certain kind of Sámi voice has been present in this case, and no differing opinions of the Arctic Railway have been present. Maybe some Sámi people would welcome the Arctic Railway and the potential new livelihoods it could provide. On the other hand, it has been said that in the Arctic Railway project, Sámi people have been almost historically unified in their opinions. As discussed earlier, an image of one unified people can be a political construction, and it would be odd if Sámi people would not have differing opinions like people usually do. For example, in the forest conflicts, there were Sámi who opposed loggings, but also those in favor of them (Sarkki, 2011, pp. 90–91). The scope of this research did not reach to searching for those opposing opinions in this case.

Even though the materials are focused on specific Sámi organizations or groups, the Arctic Railway affects Sámi people in general, and therefore, the comments usually refer to the Sámi as a people and not the organizations. Therefore, even though I have aimed to be clear on

whose comments I have included in the analysis, I think the general discussion on the Sámi as a people in this thesis is relevant and justified.

Greenpeace discusses the Sámi-related issues a lot and moves quite far away from issues they usually discuss. Of course, they also discuss a lot about forests and nature, like they can be expected to do. Protecting those forests can be seen as their main priority in this collaboration. However, they also focus much on human rights issues in this case. How has Greenpeace generally taken human rights or, more specifically, Indigenous rights into account in their projects? Greenpeace has, for example, brought up the impacts of climate change on people and called for including a human rights-based approach in climate work. One example is the People's Guide that Greenpeace has created for litigation situations, where, for example, governments have carried out inadequate climate mitigation. The guide also briefly discusses Indigenous peoples' self-determination and the impacts of climate change on Sámi people. (Greenpeace Philippines, 2018.) Greenpeace has sometimes taken a stand on Indigenous issues in its online publications, for example, when discussing the biodiversity of the rainforests in Amazonia. They also have Indigenous Peoples policies, at least in the USA and Canada. However, the critique of Greenpeace's participation in local matters should not be forgotten either (Strauss & Mazzullo, 2014, pp. 304–305). Ecological colonialism should not be an answer, in any case. Instead, the middle grounds between Indigenous peoples and environmentalists should be based on respect. In the Arctic Railway case, no critique has been present in the public materials.

5.2 Translations and accommodation of discourses

Overcoming conceptual differences has been discussed a lot in middle ground literature, and that inspired me to look more closely into it. In some middle grounds, it seems that Indigenous people have actively engaged with a different discourse by adapting their perspectives strategically and on their own terms. What kinds of translations have there been in the middle ground of Sámi organizations and Greenpeace? In Amazonia, the Waorani people translated their concepts to better fit the environmental discourses yet losing some of the meanings of the original words (High, 2020). When Sámi people communicate their needs to the Western society, they need to translate their culture and meanings using a language that does not recognize similar concepts. According to Kaikkonen (2019), translations of Sámi words into other languages are "not only translations of words, but also those of worlds, i.e., different ontologies and worldviews" (p. 541). Often the original word needs to be explained using categories familiar

to the target language, and the original meaning might be lost (Kaikkonen, 2019). For example, the North Sámi word *meahcci* is often translated as “wilderness” even though the actual meaning is different. In Norwegian law, *meahcci* is also interpreted as wilderness. (Joks et al., 2020.) Joks et al. (2020) argue that it is a form of colonialism, leading to harmful practices in Sápmi. It is crucial to separate strategic translations of Indigenous people themselves from colonial translations done by non-Indigenous people.

A lot of the communication of Greenpeace and the Sámi organizations’ protests have gone through news media and Greenpeace, where the formulation of messages is done by someone else than the Sámi. However, Sámi languages are also used in the protests, including North Sámi and Inari Sámi. Language use and skills differ a lot among the Sámi – some people write and speak Sámi, but some only speak it. Some Sámi people do not speak the language at all. (Seurujärvi-Kari & Virtanen, 2020, p. 36.) Furthermore, many Sámi speak other languages than Sámi as their native language.

In the collaboration between Sámi organizations and Greenpeace, especially the nature-related words matter. Sámi organizations use the term “land” a lot in all the languages, but especially in Sámi languages. The use of “land” stands out compared to Greenpeace – Greenpeace does not talk about land. In the demonstrations, there is a banner in North Sámi: “*Min eana min boahhteáigi*”, which means “Our land our future” (See Figure 13). One of the slogans in Inari Sámi says, “*Eennâm lii eellim*” (See Figure 11). There is the same text in North Sámi in another banner: “*Eana lea eallin*”. That means “land is life”. In English, the banners say, “Forest is life”. That is an interesting example of translations and different meanings: in Sámi, it is about land, but in English, it is about forests. Is it because different audiences have different meanings attached to these words? Forests are Greenpeace’s focus, whereas land can be seen as a focus of the Sámi. “Land is what car-



Figure 13. Demonstration against the Arctic Railway (Source: Greenpeace Suomi, 2018a).

ries Sámi life, and therefore if land is threatened, Sámi culture, life, and existence are also threatened” (Valkonen & Valkonen, 2018, p. 17).

As discussed before, Sámi people’s relationship with nature is not necessarily what the stereotypical narrative lets one think. Sámi concepts related to nature may reveal something about how nature is perceived by the Sámi. Looking more closely at the concepts also brings up the difficulty of bringing together Sámi and Western environmentalist discourses. Helander-Renvall (2010) writes that the Sámi language does not originally have the word “culture”, and also, the word “nature” (*luondu*) is not directly the same as the English counterpart. *Luondu* “relates to inner aspects of nature (such as the non-human mind) rather than to the natural environment or landscape” (Helander-Renvall, 2010). Joks et al. (2020) explain the same differently: *luondu* entails beings that breathe, whereas those that do not breathe have their own words, such as lake: *jávri*. Meanings of “nature” and “culture” are blended in the Sámi language, and there is no such nature that could be distinct from culture or vice versa (Helander-Renvall, 2010).

One example of a concept in which meanings of nature and culture blend is the word *meahcci*. North Sámi word for forest, *meahcci*, has meanings of practice, place, and time: what is done in a specific place and specific time. It is a Sámi word for what could be considered as a landscape, but not a landscape as the English language knows it. It means more than just a natural area outside of humans. (Joks et al., 2020.) For the Sámi, nature surrounding them has practical and spiritual meanings (Helander-Renvall, 2010; Valkonen & Valkonen, 2014). Places where Sámi people live are linked to many generations, and their homelands are connected to their experiences and memories being essential to their identity. Also, non-humans have their homes on these lands, and Sámi people recognize that. (Helander-Renvall, 2010.) According to Toivanen and Fabritius (2020), even though many young people move away from Sámi homelands, they still strongly identify with indigeneity, that identity being tightly connected to land and nature. Valkonen and Valkonen (2014) discuss the identities of Sámi who are born outside of Sápmi and argue that their identity is more linked with the symbolic, strong nature relation than place-based identity, especially for those who do not know the language and cannot identify with that.

In the protests against the Arctic Railway, both the practical, place-based relationship with nature and the symbolic one can be seen. There is much focus on reindeer herding and the railway's direct effects on these areas. The practical nature relationship of the Sámi is a relationship with one’s surrounding environment, and that is always local (Valkonen & Valkonen,

2014). The symbolic nature-relations are also present in the middle ground of the Sámi organizations and Greenpeace. Sámi organizations and activists themselves use a narrative of one Sámi people who have lived in Sápmi for thousands of years “in harmony with nature”.

Sámi people have lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years, and we are going to live in this region for thousands of years together with nature.²³

Due to conceptual differences, it would be difficult for the Sámi and environmentalists to collaborate if the Sámi would only use Sámi concepts and Greenpeace would use Western concepts. Some Sámi concepts cannot be directly translated. Therefore, it seems necessary for the Sámi to present their perspectives on non-Sámi terms and lose some meanings of their concepts. However, Sámi languages are also present in the protests, which allows the Sámi not only to translate but also use their own concepts.

²³ A comment by a Sámi activist: “Saamelaiset ovat eläneet vuosituhansia sopusoinnussa luonnon kanssa ja aiomme myös elää tällä aluella tuhansia vuosia tästä eteenpäin yhdessä luonnon kanssa.” (SG12)

6 Conclusions

In the article by High (2020), there is a picture of a protest in Ecuador, where Indigenous people protest against the oil extractions on their land. Their slogans resemble the ones of the Sámi. "Our land is not for sale!" has been written on the banners of Waorani people, whereas "Our land our future" was the statement of the Sámi. The concerns seem pretty similar: the government is planning on using Indigenous lands for economic gain without Indigenous people's consent. There were also NGOs that joined the protests in Ecuador. The Sámi face similar issues as do many other Indigenous peoples worldwide: struggles with their land rights and struggles with defending the existence of their cultures. The contemporary middle ground of the Sámi organizations and Greenpeace has many similarities with the 1990's middle grounds of Conklin and Graham (1995), as well, but there has also been a change. Symbolic images of Indigenous peoples are still present, and the similarities and differences in the priorities are much alike. However, the alliance between the Sámi and Greenpeace has not only been about symbolic political space of mutual interests but actual practical collaboration and working relationships.

In this thesis, I have examined Greenpeace and Sámi organizations' collaboration and found out that they have both converging and differing themes in their communication about the Arctic Railway. Sámi organizations have a broader but also more personal way of discussing the Arctic Railway, whereas Greenpeace has a stronger focus on the environment, forests, and climate. Greenpeace also brings Sámi issues forth and appears as their supporter, whereas the Sámi get strength and visibility from Greenpeace's participation. There are features of a middle ground in their collaboration, and the middle ground concept helps to understand why they have aimed for this collaboration. As the middle ground concept suggests, Indigenous people are recognized as creative agents, and Sámi people appear as such in the protests. Sámi people's colonization history and current colonial practices need to be recognized to understand their perspective. Difficulties might arise with different concepts of nature and the environment, but Greenpeace and the Sámi are finding the unique space of action in their middle ground.

In addition to reaching my goals for this research, I also got closer to decolonizing my own thought patterns. That is a goal that probably can never be reached completely but is a life-long journey. Yet I can notice how I have learned to recognize some stereotypes that affect my thinking, for example, I have learned about the varying nature relationships that the Sámi have

while understanding the complexity and contradictions in the use of stereotypes. However, referring to the concept of the middle ground loosely here: these learnings might be full of misunderstandings because of my personal standpoint as a non-Indigenous person.

This research can raise awareness about the potential of Indigenous-environmental alliances in promoting Indigenous rights and environmental protection and help build better alliances in the future. Moreover, there is still a lot to improve in the Sámi people's possibilities to influence politics, and these kinds of alliances might be a good strategy for the Sámi to strengthen their position as active political agents. I propose that further research would be needed on how these kinds of collaborations are negotiated and how the participants have personally experienced these alliances. It would be interesting to find out if there have been any internal conflicts among the partners and how Greenpeace has acted considering its position as a powerful organization working with a minority. That could help continue the analysis towards better practices and how the research could help establish better and more effective alliances.

Integration of Indigenous rights with both national laws and economic ventures still does not seem to materialize in the Arctic and beyond. Environmental organizations share somewhat similar concerns with Indigenous peoples, and therefore, in many cases, they have found strength in collaboration. When reading literature about Indigenous-environmental alliances worldwide, I noticed that the collaborations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people or organizations can have a decolonizing effect or the opposite – depending on how the collaboration and the projects are carried out. Well-formed alliances are crucial in the fights of Indigenous peoples around the world, and they have the potential to drive change towards more decolonized societies. These efforts are, however, in vain if there is no response from the decision-makers. Decision-makers listen to the big crowds, though, and these kinds of public campaigns can put pressure on the decision-makers. In Latin America, this has happened in some cases, and it remains unseen if the Sámi with their supporters manage to stop the Arctic Railway.

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