

Political Cleavages in Indigenous Representation: The Case of the Norwegian and Swedish *Sámediggi*

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Abstract

In response to indigenous demands for self-determination, Norway and Sweden both established a *Sámediggi* (*Sámi* parliament) consisting of popularly elected *Sámi* representatives. The political systems of these two countries are generally regarded as similar. However, the legal bases, electoral systems and party systems of the two *Sámediggi*s vary significantly, and so does their influence and autonomy within their respective political systems. In this paper, we compare the political cleavages that structure *Sámi* politics within the two countries. In Sweden, the main cleavage is caused by the ‘category split’ between reindeer herders and other *Sámi*, created by state policy. In contrast, disagreement on the extent of *Sámi* self-determination seems to be a major cleavage in Norwegian *Sámi* politics. The left-right dimension appears to be important in Norway, but not in Sweden. This depends on the fact that national Norwegian parties participate in Norwegian *Sámi* elections, unlike their counterparts in Sweden.

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I. Introduction

Throughout the last decades, indigenous peoples are increasingly claiming their rights in their capacity as peoples, especially the right to self-determination, to ownership of their traditional land and to their own culture (see, e.g., Anaya 2009; Brysk 2000). Different states have responded differently to these demands for self-determination (see, e.g. Robbins 2015; Vinding & Mikkelsen 2016). In a state where an indigenous population is territorially concentrated, as the Inuit in Greenland within the Danish state, institutions for regional self-government may be an attractive solution. Where indigenous peoples live territorially scattered, territorially defined structures for representation is not a viable option. One solution is reserved seats in national parliaments, as the Maori seats in the Parliament of New Zealand. The Nordic states with indigenous Sámi minorities have chosen a different solution. These states – Finland, Norway and Sweden – all established a *Sámediggi* (Sámi Parliament) consisting of popularly elected Sámi representatives.

Representative indigenous institutions, such as the *Sámediggis*, can unite two seemingly contradictory considerations. On the one hand, representative institutions acknowledge the political diversity within an indigenous people. Indigenous peoples – just like other peoples – comprise individual political actors who may have diverse ideologies, values, agendas and strategies. Nevertheless, as Nils Oskal (2003) points out, indigenous peoples often face external expectations of conformity. In order to be perceived as ‘authentic’, indigenous individuals are expected to conform to preconceived notions of indigenosity. The establishment of the *Sámediggis* breaks with these conformity expectations and institutionalizes the right to political disagreement (Oskal 2003: 337). On the other hand, representative institutions – while acknowledging disagreements – also channel these disagreements and produce either a majority position or a compromise that unites the different positions. Indigenous peoples have experienced marginalization, discrimination and oppression, and often need to speak with a united voice against the authorities of the state in which they live. This is presumably an advantage also for the states, which can deal with one authorized voice instead of a number of groups who may have conflicting views. In the cases of Norway and Sweden, the *Sámediggis* serve as the authorized voice of the Sámi within their respective countries. But what are those disagreements that form the basis of indigenous politics?

Based on unique survey data from the Sámi Election Studies that were carried out in both countries in 2013 and 2017, we will in this paper compare the political cleavages that structure politics in two seemingly similar cases: the Sámi in Norway and Sweden. The Sámi is one people divided during the course of history by national borders, and the Scandinavian

neighbours Norway and Sweden are generally regarded as similar countries, at least in a wider international perspective. Following Seymour M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan's (1967) theory of cleavage structures in Western Europe, our starting point is that the political cleavages of today are deeply rooted in history, and specifically in the processes of nation-building.

In the next section, we discuss the relevance of Lipset and Rokkan's (1967) perspectives in a Sámi context, and present the historical legacies set by Norway's and Sweden's policies towards the Sámi. Thereafter, the party systems of the two parliaments in which Sámi politics is played out – the *Sámediggis* of Norway and Sweden – are presented. Next we briefly present and compare the broader institutional context: how the *Sámediggis* are elected, and what their political role is. Thereafter, we describe the survey data, how it has been used and its limitations, before we turn to our empirical analysis. Here, the question is whether the survey data describe different cleavage structures in the two countries, and, if so, whether such differences correspond to institutional differences and to the legacies of the past.

II. Political cleavages in the Sámi context

Processes of nation-building – together with conflicts emerging from the industrial revolution – form the basis of political cleavage structures in Western Europe, according to Lipset and Rokkan's seminal work *Cleavage structure, party systems, and voter alignments: an introduction* (1967). They underlined the importance of history in today's politics. Contemporary party systems are deeply rooted in choices made and alliances formed in the past. From the nation-building processes cleavages evolved from the power struggle between the central authorities and the national government on the one hand and local and regional actors on the other (the centre-periphery dimension). Another cleavage stemming from this process developed out of the conflict between the (secular) state and the church. From the industrial revolution evolved two political cleavages: one between the property-owning elite and the emerging bourgeoisie in the cities, today transformed into a cleavage between urban and rural areas, and one between capital and labour. This latter cleavage is the foundation of the ideological left-right dimension that have characterised European party politics during the 20th century.²

² These political cleavages are still important for party politics in most European countries, although maybe not politicised in the same way as before to mobilise citizens or groups of citizens (Kriesi 1998). Moreover, new cleavages of importance for voter behaviour and party structures have been suggested, for instance, between those who participate in the information and network society and those who are left outside (Castells 1996), or between materialistic and post-materialistic values (value-based cleavages) (Inglehart 1990).

Lipset and Rokkan did not discuss the experience of indigenous peoples. However, we believe that their emphasis on historical processes makes their approach useful also to understand indigenous politics. Many of these cleavages may be significant in an indigenous context, but conflicts between the nation-building centre and a country's periphery seem to be particularly relevant. As dominant political elites attempted to build centralized nation-states – at the expense of cultural and linguistic minorities – a cleavage emerged between national elites and their bureaucracies on the one hand, and local resistance on the other. In Lipset and Rokkan's (1967: 10) words, nation-building involved 'the typical reactions of peripheral regions, linguistic minorities, and culturally threatened populations to the pressures of the centralizing, standardizing and "rationalizing" machinery of the nation-state'. Moreover, such territorial-cultural conflicts did not necessarily lead to demands for secession; 'they feed into the overall cleavage structure in the national community and help to condition the development [...] of the entire system of party oppositions and alignments' (Lipset & Rokkan 1967: 41). This is clearly relevant for indigenous peoples. On the one hand, a similarity between indigenous peoples is their experience of marginalization or oppression by the state. On the other hand, indigenous peoples are usually too small and territorially scattered to demand secession. Accordingly, the historical and/or contemporary relationship with the state is likely to impact contemporary indigenous politics – including political cleavages *within* an indigenous people.

From the second half of the 19th century, the two states' policy towards their Sámi minorities was based on an alleged racial and cultural superiority of Norwegians and Swedes. Two ideas were taken for granted: that the Sámi neither had any right to self-determination nor ownership rights to land, water and other natural resources. Although the two countries shared this hierarchical ideology, their Sámi policies developed quite differently. There is reason to believe that these historical policy differences have left their mark on the political cleavage structure of today's Sámi polity in Norway and Sweden.

In Norway, the hierarchical worldview justified a harsh assimilation policy from the 1850s to the end of WWII (see, e.g., Minde 2005). The alleged racial superiority of the Norwegians was combined with the strong nationalism of a young state. In Sweden, on the other hand, this worldview led to a dual policy of both segregation and assimilation. The Sámi were defined as a 'tribe' or 'race' in need of protection by the Swedish state and – most importantly – were only to have a chance of surviving as a people as nomadic reindeer herders. This is known as the 'lapp-shall-remain-lapp' policy, where Sámi reindeer herders should be segregated from Swedish society and 'civilization' (see, e.g., Lantto & Mörkenstam 2008).

Sámi in any other livelihood, such as farming or fishing, were to be assimilated. This dual policy of segregation and assimilation created a clear distinction – a ‘category-split’ (Ruong 1982: 187–8) – between reindeer-herding Sámi (with specific rights) and other Sámi (without such rights). This split is still evident within Sámi politics and society in Sweden, as we shall see below, for instance in terms of competing structures of Sámi representation, but much weaker and less institutionalized at the Norwegian side of the border.

In both countries official policy towards the Sámi slowly changed after WWII, and the legacy of race biology and cultural hierarchies could no longer justify public policy. In both countries, this gradual policy change was in many ways influenced by the growing mobilization of the Sámi themselves (Josefsen et al. 2015). In Norway, the conflict around the damming of the Alta River in the 1970s and early 1980s put Sámi rights on the national political agenda. In Sweden, Sámi rights became topical after some Reindeer Herding Communities and individual Sámi sued the Swedish state and claimed ownership of reindeer grazing areas in the Taxed Mountains (Skattefjällen). In the early 1980s, Sámi political mobilization in these two cases led to the appointment of a Sámi Rights Commission in each country, and, eventually, to the establishment of the two *Sámediggis*.

In recent years, we can thus see traces of a Sámi nation-building process. A separate Sámi political system – with political institutions and a nation-building elite of its own – has been established in both countries. Moreover, a collective Sámi identity has been more firmly articulated, across the borders of the four states which divide their ancestral lands, and parallel to – and influenced by – the mobilization of indigenous peoples around the world. A concrete expression of this nation-building is a set of Sámi national symbols: a Sámi flag, a National Day and a national anthem.

This development, however, may also cause a counter-reaction – not only among the Norwegian and Swedish majorities, but also among the Sámi themselves. The extent of Sámi self-determination can be a contested issue. The Sámi people live territorially scattered. For some people, the Sámi identity can be less important than the local or regional identity that is shared with one’s non-Sámi neighbours. In this perspective, self-determination can be seen as less important, or even creating ethnic divides. For others, the historical experience of oppression and assimilation policies, and the lasting damages inflicted on Sámi language and culture by these policies – as well as present-day racism – are more important considerations. From this perspective, reclaiming Sámi rights, culture and identity become crucial. Today’s Sámi politics may therefore be described as an intersection of two processes of nation-building: the older Norwegian/Swedish and the newer Sámi. This is probably a more fitting description

in Norway than in Sweden. One reason may be that other conflicts (i.e. the category split) overshadow discussions of the extent of self-determination in Sweden. Another reason may be that the *Sámediggi* in Sweden actually has less political influence than its Norwegian counterpart, as we shall see. In other words, the institutional features of the two *Sámediggis* may also contribute to the further development of political cleavages.

III. A ‘double’ and a ‘single’ party system

The *Sámediggi* in Norway was established in 1989, while its counterpart in Sweden followed in 1993. The party systems of the two *Sámediggis* were thus shaped in the late 1980s and early 1990s, within the frames set by the historical development in each country. However, not only the historical context, but also the choices made by Sámi political actors were different in the two countries. The outcome was two very different party systems.

Norwegian Sámi politics involves a ‘double party system’. First, several Sámi parties and candidate lists participate. Some are national Sámi organisations, fielding candidates in all or most of the constituencies. Others are running for election in a single constituency. Second, also traditional Norwegian parties participate in *Sámediggi* elections in Norway. Norwegian parties were established political actors in the traditional Sámi settlement area long before the *Sámediggi* was founded, with Sámi members and Sámi municipal councillors. Participation in *Sámediggi* elections when this new political arena was established was a small step.

Two main competitors have dominated Norwegian Sámi politics since the *Sámediggi* was established. One is a Norwegian party – the Labour Party – and the other a Sámi organization – the NSR (the Norwegian Sámi Association, *Norgga Sámiid Riikkasearvi*). The NSR had a majority of the seats in the *Sámediggi* until 1997, but neither party has had a parliamentary majority since. The two main competitors thus need to seek support from smaller parties and lists to form a parliamentary majority. As Gaski (2008:4) points out, Labour and the NSR started out with very different histories. The Labour Party had been a governing party in Norway in much of the post-war era, responsible for implementing the assimilation policy towards the Sámi. The NSR was originally a Sámi cultural and political organization working for Sámi rights and for the revitalizing of a Sámi identity, long before the *Sámediggi* was founded – often with the Labour Party as its main opponent, for instance during the conflict on the damming of the Alta river around 1980. The political distance between Labour and the NSR may seem rather small in day-to-day *Sámediggi* politics, but earlier voter studies nevertheless show that this historical antagonism still divide the voters of the two parties (Bergh & Saglie 2015).

Besides the Labour Party, three other parties from the national Norwegian party system also participate regularly in *Sámediggi* elections: the Progress Party, the Conservative Party and the Centre Party. While Labour, the Conservatives and the Centre Party belong to the mainstream of Sámi politics in Norway, the right-wing populist Progress Party's Sámi policy differs radically from all other parties and candidate lists. Its position is that the *Sámediggi* should be abolished. According to the Progress Party, the *Sámediggi* is a case of ethnic discrimination. Besides the NSR, the largest of the Sámi parties are *Árja* (the Northern Sámi word for 'commitment') and *Nordkalottfolket* (People of the Northern Cap). While *Árja*'s policies are quite similar to the NSR's, *Nordkalottfolket* aims to represent the mixture of people – Sámi, Norwegians and Kven (descendants of Finnish immigrants) who inhabit Northern Norway, rather than what is specifically Sámi. Furthermore, the electoral system enables representation of candidate lists with a limited geographical focus, only participating in a single or a few constituencies. For examples, there are lists that represent minorities within the Sámi society, such as the Southern Sámi community, or some specific interests within a region (e.g. reindeer herders).

In the elections to the *Sámediggi* in Sweden, only Sámi parties field candidates. The traditional Swedish parties stay out of Sámi elections, although no legal barriers prevent them from participating. There is, however, a tradition within the Sámi community in Sweden – dating back to the Sámi national conference in 1918 – to adopt a neutral attitude to Swedish politics, in order to avoid internal division and has thus historically not tried to influence Swedish politics through the traditional national political parties (Lantto & Mörkenstam 2016: 57). The Sámi parties in Sweden represent many different interests within the Sámi community. Some of them were founded on the basis of Sámi civil society associations, for example organizations for reindeer herders, non-reindeer herders or youth organizations (Fjellström et al. 2016: 91–95). The party structure has been quite stable over the years, although the 31 seats in the parliament have been distributed between six to eleven parties during the different lengths of office.

The main division within the *Sámediggi* in Sweden separates parties representing the reindeer herders from parties representing other Sámi interests. This division could be described as a conflict on which level and through which body Sámi interests ought to be represented in relation to the state on issues concerning reindeer husbandry. Should, for instance, the right to predator compensation for lost reindeer be decided and dealt with by the *Sámediggi* or by the Reindeer Herding Communities? Moreover, the division reflects the state policy established already in the early 20th century (see above), when a system of Sámi rights

was constructed around reindeer husbandry excluding all Sámi occupied in other Sámi livelihoods, like fishing, hunting, and handicraft. State policy thus created two categories of Sámi with different standing in relation to the system of rights (including the right to hunt and fish on ‘Crown land’) – reindeer herders and non-reindeer herders – still maintained in contemporary legislation (see, e.g., Lantto & Mörkenstam 2015: 151).

Since the first election to the parliament in 1993 up until 2009, the parties representing the reindeer herders’ interests were in the majority in the *Sámediggi*. Dominant among these parties – especially during the first three parliamentary terms – has been *Sámid Riikkabellodat*, a party that has developed out of the *Sámiid Riikkasearvi*, the first national Sámi organisation with its base in the Reindeer Herding Communities. The party has never had a majority of seats, however, and has relied on coalitions with other parties to form a majority, for instance, *Guovssonnásti*, with its origin in the reindeer owners’ organisation (*Renägarförbundet*), and *Vuovdega – Skogssamerna*, representing the forest reindeer herding Sámi. However, the largest party in the *Sámediggi* during the most recent terms has been *Jakt- och Fiskesamerna*, primarily representing the interests of the Sámi not engaged in reindeer herding. They are working closely with *Landspartiet Svenska Samer*, originating from the largest organisation representing Sámi outside reindeer herding, and *Álbmut*. In between these two party-blocs, there are two parties that have been in coalition with both sides over the years to form a majority: *Min Geaidnu* and *Sámit/Samerna*.

IV. Similar, but different: The Norwegian and Swedish *Sámediggis*

When the *Sámediggi* in Sweden was established in 1993, it was in many ways a blue-print of its counterpart in Norway, established four years earlier (Josefsen et al. 2015). The two *Sámediggis* are institutions for non-territorial autonomy, where the right to vote is based on ethnicity, not geography (see, e.g., Coakley 2016). The *Sámediggis* shall represent all Sámi within each country, also those who live outside of the traditional Sámi settlement area. However, when *Sámediggi* is translated into the English label ‘parliament’, it is misleading. The *Sámediggis* have no legislative authority and no independent financial resources, for instance through taxation. While state-based and with their power delegated from national parliaments, the *Sámediggis* are indigenous-controlled and enable an amount of indigenous autonomy (decision-making by indigenous bodies) and indigenous participation (in decision-making bodies that are not exclusively indigenous, e.g. consultations with the state in Norway) (Josefsen et al. 2015, 2017; Falch et al. 2016; Lawrence & Mörkenstam 2016).

For *Sámediggi* elections – unlike other elections in Norway and Sweden – voter registration in a Sámi electoral roll is required. This comes in addition to other voting rights: registered Sámi voters retain their right to participate in general elections. Registration in the electoral roll also entails the right to run as candidates for *Sámediggi* elections. Potential voters must themselves take the initiative to register, since there is no official registration of Sámi ethnicity in the two states. The Sámi electoral rolls of Norway and Sweden are based on the same principles (see Pettersen 2015; 2017). Persons above the age of 18 can register as voters if they fulfil two criteria. First, registration is a matter of self-identification: the voters must declare that they identify as Sámi. Second, there is an objective, language-based criterion: the voters or one of their parents or grandparents (in Norway also great-grandparents), must have used Sámi as a home language – or, alternatively, one of their parents must be (or have been) registered on the electoral roll.

Although similar in many respects, there are several important differences between the two *Sámediggis* (Josefsen et al. 2015; 2017). First, their formal legal status and position differ. Both parliaments find themselves in an awkward position, combining the roles of a democratically elected assembly and a government agency, but the balance between these roles differs. The *Sámediggi* in Sweden is to a greater extent an administrative authority subordinate to the Swedish government, and its legal basis gives it a more limited mandate. The first paragraph in the Swedish Sami Parliament Act states, for instance, that ‘[in] this Act provisions are made for a special government agency – the Sámi Parliament [...]’ and its general mission is to ‘monitor issues related to Sámi culture in Sweden’ (SFS 1992:1433:§1). Its Norwegian counterpart has a more autonomous position, and a wider mandate: ‘The business of the *Sámediggi* is any matter that in the view of the *Sámediggi* particularly affects the Sami people’ (Act of 12 June 1987 No. 56:§2-1).

Second, and even more important, is the fact that the *Sámediggi* in Norway since its establishment gradually has increased its autonomy and influence (Josefsen et al. 2015). It has, for instance, become a mandatory consultative body for the Norwegian state in matters that concern the Sámi. The right to consultations does not guarantee any actual influence, and the impact of the consultations varies between issue areas, but consultations have given the *Sámediggi* in Norway at least some influence (Broderstad et al. 2015; Josefsen 2014; Falch et al. 2016). The legal basis for the consultations is the 1989 ILO *Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries*, which Norway – but not Sweden – has ratified. The convention states that indigenous peoples are entitled to be consulted on matters that affect them, and this has given the Norwegian Sámi a platform in international law from

which to make demands and claims towards the Norwegian state. In Sweden, both ratification of ILO 169 and the right to consultations have been controversial, and a ministerial proposal on a Sámi right to consultation presented in 2017 has of yet not led to any legislative changes (Ds 2017:43).

Third, in both countries, the national governments have delegated administrative tasks to the *Sámediggi*, but the delegated tasks differ (Josefsen et al. 2015). In the Norwegian case, these tasks include language initiatives, funding to Sámi industry, cultural heritage management and support for sectors such as Sámi culture and education, but not issues concerning reindeer husbandry, a traditional Sámi livelihood of great importance within the Sámi community and identity. In contrast, administrative tasks related to reindeer husbandry are among the most important delegated tasks for the *Sámediggi* in Sweden, besides issues concerning language, education and culture.

Fourth, there are also some differences between the two *Sámediggis*' electoral systems. For instance, elections to the *Sámediggi* and the national parliament in Norway are held on the same day and in the same polling stations. These elections are separated in Sweden, taking place in a different year and a different month. Partly as a result of this, turnout is lower in Sweden (Bergh et al. 2018). Both use proportional representation, but the whole country makes up a single constituency in Sweden (with 31 seats) while Norway's *Sámediggi* with 39 seats is divided into seven multi-member constituencies. Voting for individual candidates has no effect in Norway, whereas personal votes are important for the election of candidates in Sweden.

V. Survey data

We now turn to survey data to analyse cleavages among Sámi voters in Norway and Sweden. Earlier studies, using data from the 2009 Sámi Election Study in Norway (Bergh & Saglie 2015) and the 2013 Sámi Election Studies in both countries (Nilsson, Mörkenstam & Svensson 2016; Mörkenstam et al. 2017) suggest that the cleavages discussed above based on historical developments, also are reflected in voter attitudes. In this paper we use data from the 2017 Sámi Election Studies, which were carried out in both countries. Both election studies are based on random samples of registered voters drawn from the electoral roll, after permission granted from the *Sámediggis* in respective country.

The study in Sweden was conducted through a combination of postal and web questionnaires in three languages (Northern and Southern Sámi, and Swedish) with four reminders, two postcards and two telephone messages. The response rate was 43%. The Norwegian study was conducted through a combination of postal and web questionnaires, as

well as a follow-up phone call to non-respondents who were given the option of responding over the phone. Questionnaires were available in four languages – the same as in Sweden, and in addition Lule Sámi. Despite having the additional option of replying to the questionnaire over the phone, the Norwegian sample responded at a rate of only 21.3%.

VI. Analysis of survey data

Self-determination

As we have previously shown (Mörkenstam et al. 2017, Bergh & Saglie 2015), Sámi voters in Norway seem to have quite coherent attitudes toward the issue of Sámi self-determination, and a factor analysis of the 2017 data confirms this. We have used six survey items to create an index of people's attitudes toward self-determination.³ The items have a Cronbach's Alpha of .81, indicating a high degree of coherence across items, which make them suitable for index construction. We have standardized the index from 0 to 10, with the lowest values indicating strong support for the *Sámediggi* specifically, and for self-determination, generally.

Figure 1 indicates what the overall distribution of voter attitudes is in the Norwegian case, as well as the average values of each of the parties'/lists' voters. The overall mean for all voters is 3.3. Most voters lean in the direction of supporting increased self-determination, as can also be seen from the distribution in figure 1. This is not surprising, as this is the position of the mainstream parties at the *Sámediggi*. There is nevertheless quite a bit of variation between the voters of the different parties in this regard, which indicates that self-determination is a salient cleavage for voters in Norway's *Sámediggi* elections. Those voting for either the NSR or *Arjá* strongly support self-determination, whereas Progress Party voters are at the opposite end of the scale. The position of the Progress Party is not exactly surprising, given that the party favours disbanding the *Sámediggi*. The Progress Party stands out as the only party where the voters are on the sceptical side with regard to self-determination. The Conservative Party and *Nordkalottfolket* are closer to the centre of the scale (value 5). This is to be expected in the case of *Nordkalottfolket*, which aims to represent the mixture of people in Northern Norway, rather than specifically Sámi interests. On the side in favour of more self-determination, we find the Centre Party, the Labour Party, *Árja* and the NSR.

³ These items were included: It is important that the *Sámediggi* works for Sámi who live in cities; The *Sámediggi* should have increased influence over coast and fjord fisheries in Sámi areas; Establishing a Truth Commission on the Norwegianization policy is the right priority; The Norwegian Parliament should be able to overturn decisions made by the *Sámediggi* (reversed); The mining industry in Sámi areas should financially compensate Sámi society; The *Sámediggi* should have increased influence over reindeer husbandry; The *Sámediggi* should be closed down (reversed).

FIGURE 1 & 2 ABOUT HERE

On the Swedish side of the border, we also find some similarities and some differences. Looking at voter attitudes, a factor analysis shows that there is a distinct self-determination dimension also in Sweden. The seven questions that make up this index have a Cronbach's Alpha of .86, which suggests that this is a coherent attitudinal dimension.⁴ However, party positions do not vary as much as in the Norwegian case. Figure 2 shows that all parties' voters are at the lower end of the scale, i.e. in support of increased self-determination for Sweden's Sámi. In other words, there is no equivalent to the Progress Party in Swedish Sámi politics. There are nevertheless some differences. *Jakt- och Fiskesamerna*'s voters are somewhat more sceptical to self-determination and the Sámediggi than the others, while *Min Geaidnu*'s voters are the strongest supporters of self-determination. The difference between the other parties is small.

The category split

The main difference between voters in Norway and Sweden is that in the latter country an additional, unique and distinct attitudinal dimension plays an important political role. Reindeer husbandry in Sweden is organized in economic and administrative structures called Reindeer Herding Communities (*samebyar*). Previous analyses (Mörkenstam et al. 2017) have shown that the status of the Reindeer Herding Communities constitute an important cleavage, in line with our discussion of the 'category' split between reindeer herders and other Sámi, originating from the history of Swedish policy towards the Sámi. The organizational structures of reindeer husbandry on the Norwegian side of the border play a much less influential role. There is simply no comparable organizational structure on the Norwegian side of the border, and therefore no comparable issue on the political agenda in Norway. Accordingly, no questions about this topic were asked in the Norwegian survey.

In Sweden, on the other hand, this issue is certainly on the agenda. Some wish to preserve and extend the status and privileges of the Reindeer Herding Communities, while

⁴ These items were included: The *Sámediggi* should have increased influence over the education of Sámi children; The *Sámediggi* should be given increased influence over small-game hunting in Sámi areas; Sweden should ratify the ILO convention on the rights of indigenous peoples; The *Sámediggi* should be closed down (reversed); The *Sámediggi* should have less influence over the use of natural resources in Sámi areas (reversed); The *Sámediggi* should have increased influence over carnivore policy; Do you think that the *Sámediggi* should have increased self-determination?

others are critical of their unique role. This dimension also appears in a factor analysis. The four questions in the Swedish voter survey about the Reindeer Herding Communities have a Cronbach's Alpha of .69, indicating that they are closely related, though not as strongly related as the self-determination questions. We create an index based on these four questions.⁵ The distribution and average values of each party's voters are shown in figure 3. Clearly, voters hold differing opinions in this regard and there is quite a bit of variation between parties.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

The voters of two parties – *Sámid Riikkabellodat* and *Guovssonnásti* – stand out as the strongest supporters of the Reindeer Herding Communities. That is no surprise, as this is the policy of these parties, which grew out of the Reindeer Herding Communities and the reindeer owners' organisation. On the other side of the scale, we find – as expected – the two parties that most strongly promotes the interests of the Sámi outside of the Reindeer Herding Communities: *Jakt- och Fiskesamerna* and *Landspartiet Svenska Samer*. The three remaining parties are located closer to the centre of the scale.

The left-right scale

So far, we have considered cleavages based on issues that are specifically Sámi. Now we look into a cleavage that dominates the politics of the majority populations of Norway and Sweden. As described by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), the conflict between capital and labour developed from the industrial revolution, and left its mark on all West European countries. This is the basis for the ideological left-right dimension. Therefore, we use voter self-placement of a 0 to 10 scale, from left to right, to assess the impact of this cleavage from Norwegian and Swedish politics.

In Norway, figure 4 shows that the average voter placements also vary with respect to this dimension. The parties that participate in Norwegian national politics take their well-known positions. The Labour party is on the left, the Centre Party in the centre, whereas the Conservative Party (*Høyre*) and the Progress Party is on the right. The fact that these national political parties run for *Sámediggi* elections is what makes the left-right dimension relevant.

⁵ These items were included: The *Sámediggi* should have less influence over reindeer husbandry; The Reindeer Herding Communities should have increased influence over the use of natural resources in Sámi areas; Sámi outside the Reindeer Herding Communities should have the same right to hunting and fishing as the members of the Reindeer Herding Communities (reversed); All Sámi should have the right to be a member in a Reindeer Herding Community (reversed).

The Sámi lists/parties are all positioned on the centre-left, but NSR voters are a bit more left-leaning than the others.

FIGURE 4 & 5 ABOUT HERE

The left-right scale plays an insignificant role in *Sámediggi* elections in Sweden (figure 5). The average voter has a centrist position, and party differences are minimal. Voters from all parties have a centre or centre-left position, just as the specifically Sámi parties on the Norwegian side of the border.

VII. Concluding remarks

Our study confirms that the political cleavages that structure Sámi politics in Norway and Sweden are very different, also when we look at the voter level. The pattern we expected to find, based on historical developments and our knowledge of current Sámi politics, emerged from our survey data.

First, the ‘category split’ between the Reindeer Herding Communities and other Sámi is the dominant cleavage in Swedish Sámi politics, but absent in Norway. This split follows from Sweden’s historical legacy, created by the earlier Sámi policy of the Swedish State.

Second, the extent of self-determination stands out as an important party cleavage in Norway, whereas there is a greater extent of agreement on increased self-determination in Sweden. This is, however, partly a consequence of the participation of traditional Norwegian parties in Norwegian *Sámediggi* politics. It is one of the Norwegian parties – the Progress Party – that really stands out with a deviating position, regarding both party policy and voter attitudes. As mentioned above, the fact that the Norwegian *Sámediggi* is more influential than its counterpart in Sweden may make self-determination a more contested issue in Norway. However, another explanation can be that the opponents of self-determination might be more politically integrated in Norwegian Sámi politics: they have chosen to register in the electoral roll and participate in elections. Presumably, the Progress Party has mobilized its supporters to register and vote. However, previous analyses (Mörkenstam et al. 2017) indicate that there could have been a potential for a stronger self-determination cleavage in Swedish Sámi politics, if Swedish parties had participated in *Sámediggi* elections. Those Sámi who vote for the Sweden Democrats (right-wing populists) in general elections also stand out as somewhat more sceptical to self-determination.

Third, the left-right dimension appears to be important in Norway, but not in Sweden. This is clearly a result of the participation of the traditional Norwegian parties in Sámi politics,

as the left-right scale does not distinguish between the specifically Sámi parties – neither in Norway nor in Sweden. The left-right dimension may matter for the voters: voters with less knowledge of Sámi politics can vote for a Norwegian party on the basis of their Norwegian party identification. However, the left-right division is not necessarily important at the party level, in practical *Sámediggi* politics. Many issues that divide parties along a left-right axis in national politics, such as taxation, are not on the agenda of the *Sámediggi*s. Moreover, figure 4 shows that the voters of the two main competitors in Norwegian Sámi politics – the NSR and Labour – are close together on the left-right scale. When the NSR governing council was brought down by a vote of no confidence in 2016, it was replaced by a coalition of three parties far apart on the left-right scale: Labour, the Conservatives and *Árja*. We therefore regard the left-right dimension in Norwegian Sámi politics as a reflection of the participation of traditional Norwegian parties, rather than a cleavage of importance in practical politics.

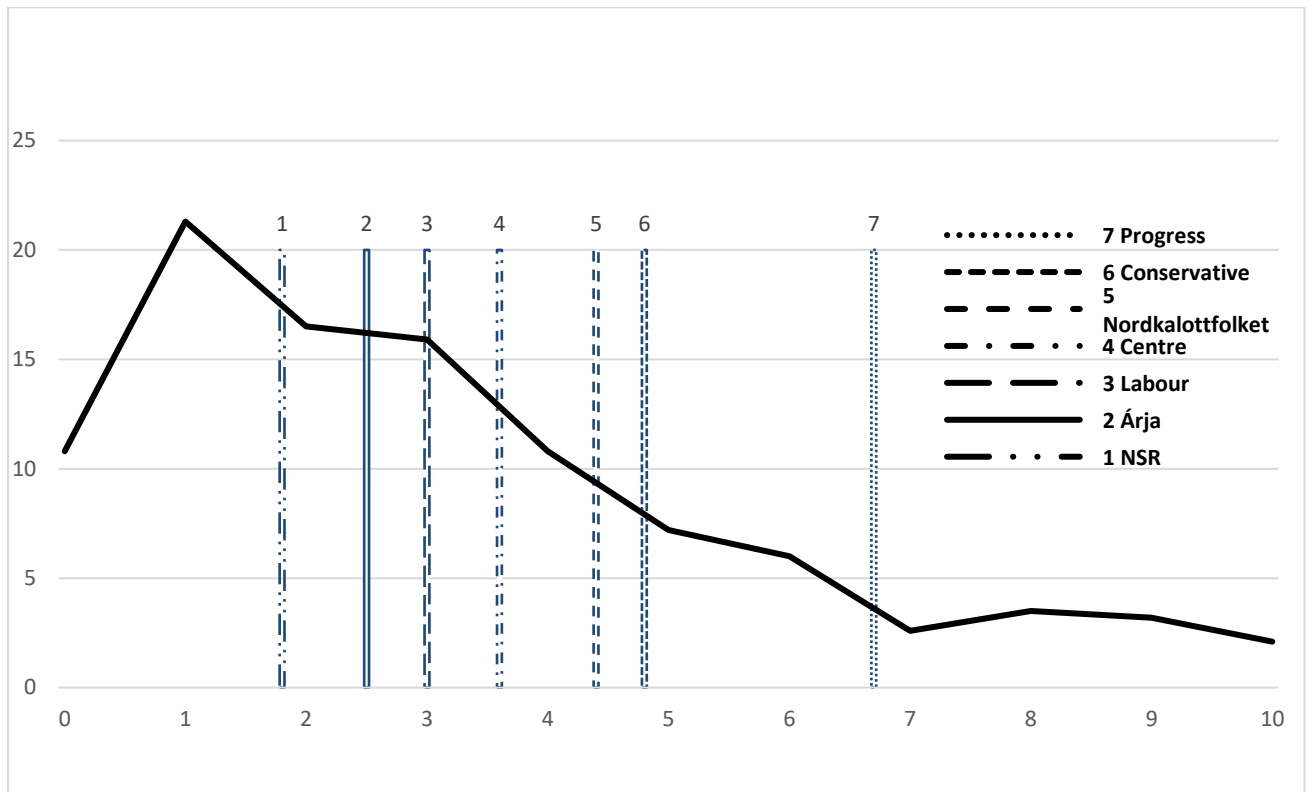
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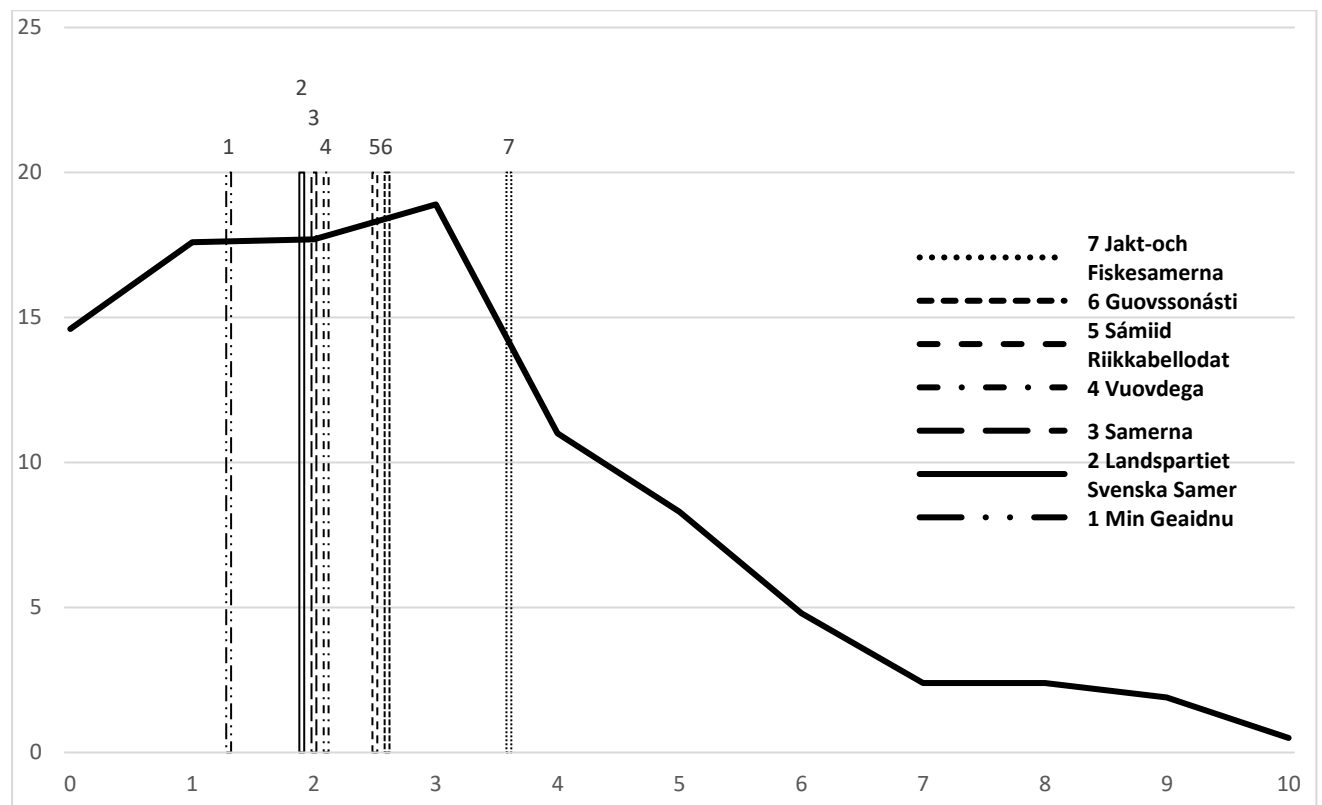
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Figure 1: Voter support for self-determination, Norway



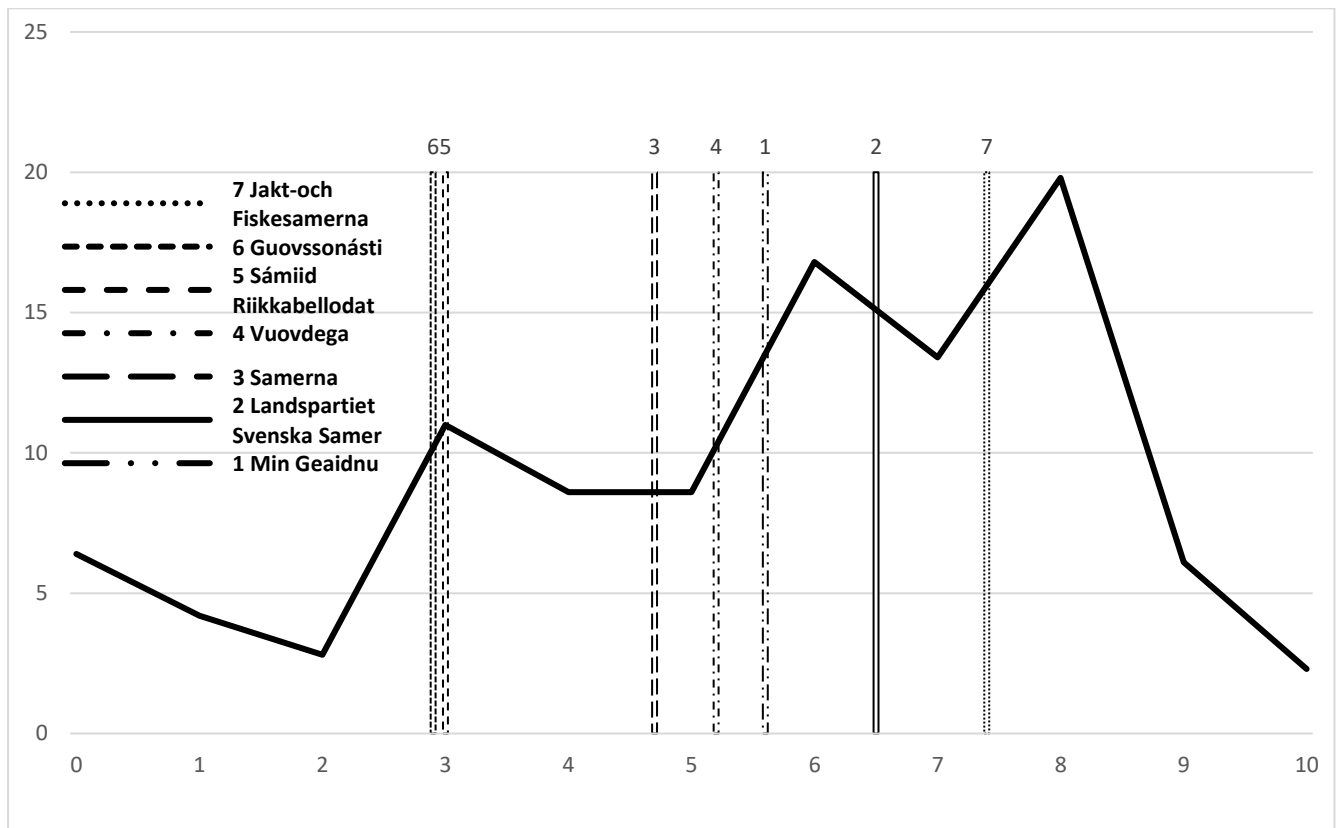
N: Árja 57; Conservatives 34; Progress Party 58; Labour Party 148; Centre Party 43; Nordkalottfolket 76; NSR 363.

Figure 2: Voter support for self-determination, Sweden



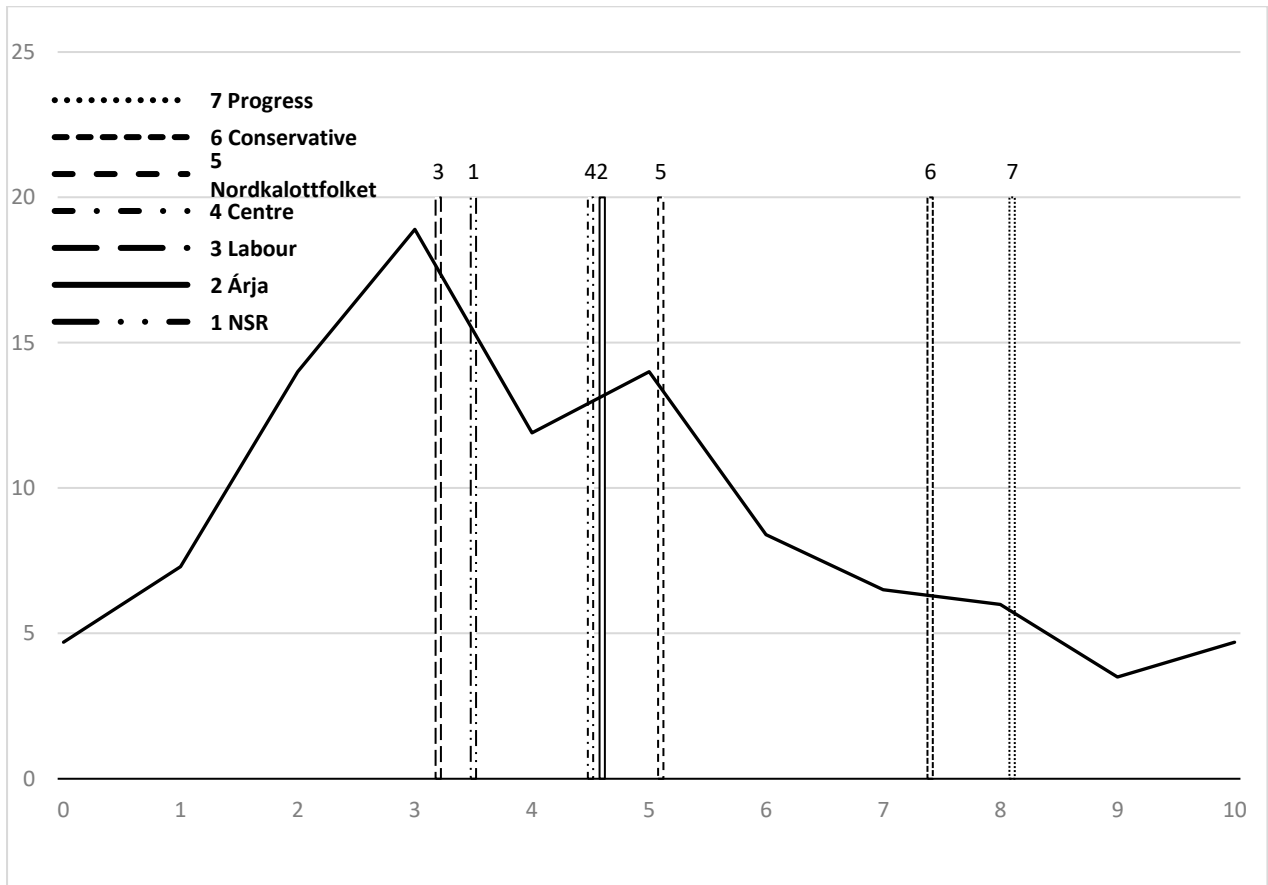
N: Guovssonásti 81; Jakt- och Fiskesamerna 190; Landspartiet Svenska Samer 55; Min Geidnu 35; Samerna 41; Sámiid Riikkabellodat 125; Vuovdega 60.

Figure 3: Voter support for the Reindeer Herding Communities, Sweden



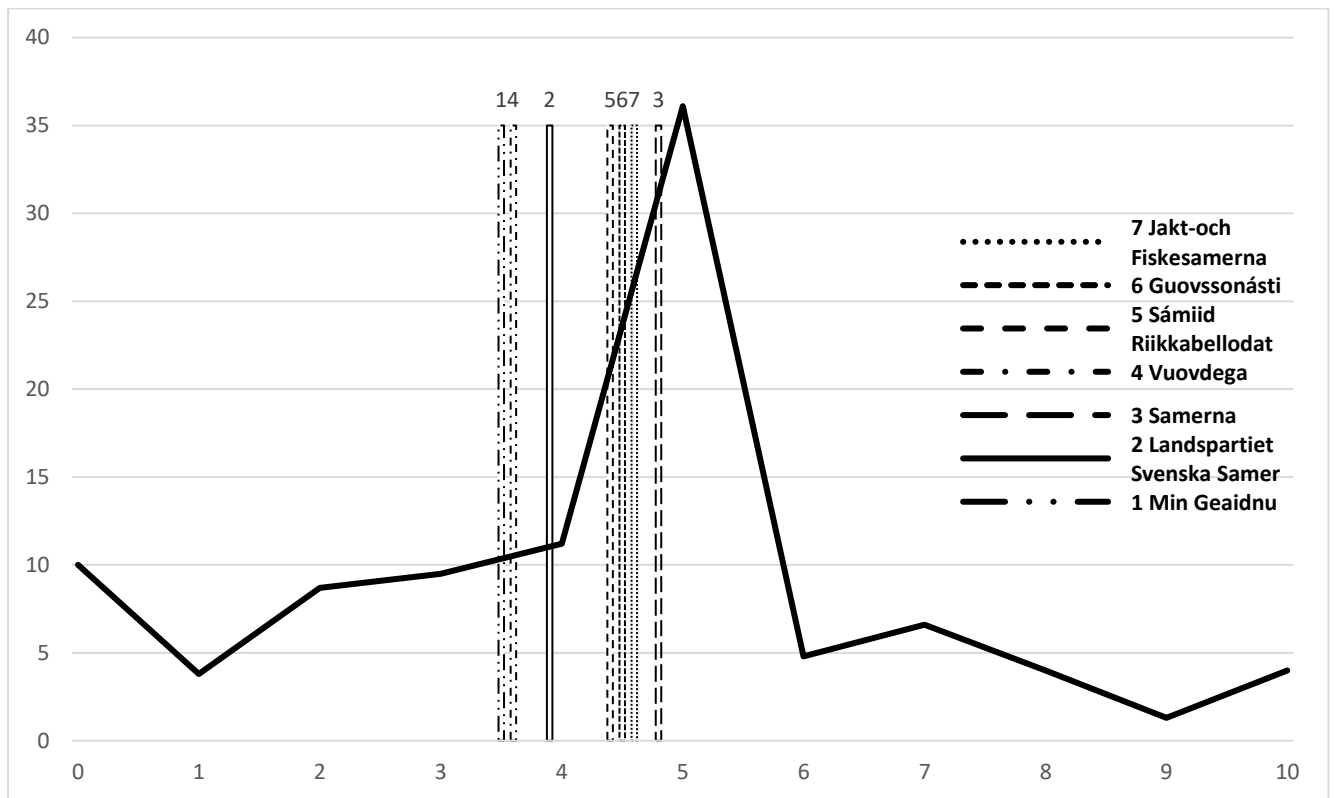
N: Guovssonásti 75; Jakt- och Fiskesamerna 184; Landspartiet Svenska Samer 51; Min Geaidnu 32; Samerna 35; Sámiid Riikkabellodat 116; Vuovdega 56.

Figure 4: Voters' self-placement on the left-right scale, Norway



N: Árja 58; Conservatives 35; Progress Party 58; Labour Party 149; Centre Party 43; Nordkalottfolket 77; NSR 366.

Figure 5: Voters' self-placement on the left-right scale, Sweden



N: Guovssonásti 60; Jakt- och Fiskesamerna 173; Landspartiet Svenska Samer 47; Min Geidnu 33; Samerna 35; Sámiid Riikkabellodat 96; Vuovdega 53.