Comunicação e Sociedade, vol. 48, 2025, e025025
https://doi.org/10.17231/comsoc.48(2025).6432

"You Can't Put It in Cotton, Can't Pack It in Silk": Sámi Journalists' Experiences of Reporting on Sexual Violence

Svea Vikander

University of the Basque Country, Bilbao, Spain

Abstract

This article examines the internal experiences of Indigenous Sámi journalists reporting on sexual violence in their homeland of Sápmi, a region spanning the Northern areas of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. Drawing on interviews with nine Sámi journalists and an analysis of 30 articles from Sámi news publications, the study identifies the challenges they face in their reporting. These include their experiences of hostile work environments and a deep, almost indescribable discomfort at the prospect of encountering the subjects of their reporting in non-professional "arenas" (Clarke et al., 2018) such as grocery stores or weddings. Using situational analysis, the study explores how these challenges are also relational, situated within interacting social worlds. Although they were not explicitly asked about their own experiences of harassment, five out of six female Sámi journalists shared that they had been sexually harassed at work, some saying that this impacted their sexual violence reporting. Some of those participants felt the incidents had not affected them, while others described longstanding negative impacts on their self-esteem and recent efforts to discuss their experiences with fellow journalists. The findings point to a need for scholarly attention to the complex internal and relational lives of Indigenous journalists.

Keywords
Sámi, journalism on sexual violence, experience, Indigenous journalism

"Não Se Pode Guardar em Algodão, Nem Embalar em Seda": Experiências de Jornalistas Sámi na Cobertura da Violência Sexual

Resumo

Este artigo analisa as experiências internas de jornalistas indígenas sámi ao reportar sobre violência sexual na sua terra natal, Sápmi, uma região que abrange as áreas do Norte da Noruega, da Suécia e da Finlândia, bem como a Península de Kola, na Rússia. Com base em entrevistas a nove jornalistas sámi e na análise de 30 artigos de publicações noticiosas sámi, o estudo identifica os desafios que enfrentam no exercício da atividade jornalística. Estes desafios incluem experiências de ambientes de trabalho hostis e um desconforto profundo, quase indescritível, perante a possibilidade de encontrar os sujeitos das suas reportagens em "arenas" não profissionais (Clarke et al., 2018), como supermercados ou casamentos. Recorrendo à análise situacional, o estudo explora de que forma estes desafios são também de natureza relacional, inseridos em mundos sociais em constante interação. Embora não tenham sido explicitamente questionadas sobre as suas próprias experiências de assédio, cinco das seis jornalistas sámi

relataram ter sido alvo de assédio sexual no local de trabalho, referindo algumas que tal teve impacto na sua cobertura da violência sexual. Algumas dessas participantes afirmaram que os incidentes não as afetaram, enquanto outras descreveram impactos negativos duradouros na sua autoestima e tentativas recentes para discutir as suas experiências com colegas jornalistas. Os resultados apontam para a necessidade de uma maior atenção académica às complexas dimensões internas e relacionais da vida profissional dos jornalistas indígenas.

Palavras-chave
sámi, jornalismo sobre violência sexual, experiência, jornalismo indígena

1. Introduction

Media studies marked its "affective turn" 20 years ago (Clough & Halley, 2007), but has only recently begun to engage with journalist's emotion (Kotišová, 2019; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2020). Kotišová (2025) studies emotion in journalism as a collection of physical sensations and mental cognitions which compel the human body to action. Others, such as Archetti (2022), have called for a more comprehensive understanding of journalistic subjectivity, introducing methodologies to comprehensively study journalists' embodiment, feelings, and perspectives. As Meijer (2020) argues, understanding journalistic experience requires attention to "emotional, interactional, technological, haptic, practical, embodied, material, and sensory dimensions" (p. 399).

This burgeoning literature remains centred mainly on journalists in the majority Western contexts. Studies of Indigenous journalists and those in the Global South may foreground urgent external pressures, such as threats to freedom of expression, physical safety, and political interference (e.g., Gonzalez, 2020; Hu, 2023), rather than studying the journalists themselves as subjects. If so, this neglect reflects a broader gap in journalism research, in which researchers disregard the ways that structural marginalisation, cultural frameworks, and colonial contexts shape journalism and its practices (Mutsvairo et al., 2021).

Studies have also centred on journalists' emotions and embodied experience as individual phenomena within a singular subjectivity (Archetti, 2022; Meijer, 2020), rather than as interrelated and collectively created or experienced. The relational aspects of emotion have been addressed by Western psychology through the concept of "emotional contagion" (e.g., Hatfield et al., 1992), but there are fundamental cross-cultural differences in qualitative experience which do not fit neatly into Western definitions of emotion even when considered collectively (Kikutani et al., 2024; Parkinson, 1996). For example, concepts such as the "evil eye" (Türkarslan & Kozak, 2025), "symbiosis of mother and infant" (Gowland & Halcrow, 2019), and the "need to save face" (Han, 2016). In researching Indigenous journalists and those from the Global South, it is essential to study not only emotion as observed, but also from a position of open and genuine inquiry into the journalist's cultural and relational experiences.

This study begins to address these gaps by documenting the internal experiences of Sámi journalists who have reported on sexual violence in Sápmi, their traditional land spanning the far north of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia's Kola Peninsula. Their experience is contextualised by findings from 30 articles about sexual violence published in Sámi media between 2015 and 2020. The term "internal experience" describes findings that encompass not only emotion but also journalists' moral reasoning, cultural values, political awareness (including colonial dynamics), commitment to professional codes, and embodied responses to their work. Situational analysis (Clarke et al., 2018) is used to examine how such realities may be co-created through the interactions of multiple social worlds.

There is some evidence that Sámi cultures have non-Western philosophies of experience (Somby, 2016). For example, Sámi expectations that community members will *ieš birget* (manage or regulate oneself), powerfully guide discussions of mental health (Stoor et al., 2019). In addition to using the broad term "internal experience", terms such as "trauma" and "emotion" are avoided, to foreground Sámi journalists' own descriptions of their realities and to retain the complexities they share.

Because it entails the negotiation of multiple, often conflicting, subjectivities, reporting on sexual violence is an affluent area for the study of journalist's experience. The journalist's own cultural values, ethics, and social position move alongside — and may conflict with — professional routines and institutional requirements. The experience of this potential conflict was the focus of this study from the outset. However, more than half of the journalists in this study shared their own experiences with sexual harassment and workplace discrimination. Describing the journalist experience is perhaps the study's most important finding. In addition to other tensions within their work, journalists stated that ongoing discrimination affected their self-confidence, as well as their reporting on sexual violence. The investigation builds on existing literature in three areas: sexual violence in Sápmi; reporting on sexual violence; and relational challenges in Indigenous journalism.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Sexual Violence in Sápmi

Sexual violence is a global concern, but in Sápmi it exists at a fraught intersection of colonial history, cultural norms, and geographic and linguistic isolation. Known for their traditional occupations of reindeer herding and fishing, the Sámi people are a vocal and politically engaged minority across four colonial states (Plaut, 2014). Most Sámi journalists who report on sexual violence do so within remote Arctic and sub-Arctic communities. Their sources may be classmates, cousins, former employers, or acquaintances. Like all professionals, they work under established norms and ethical standards.

But as individuals, they move between multiple roles in the tightly interwoven fabric of Sámi social life.

Sámi media is produced in a colonial context, which includes gendered violence. The SAMINOR 2 (Eriksen et al., 2015) study sampled 11,296 Norwegian residents, of whom approximately 20% identified as Sámi. Using the NorVold Abuse Questionnaire (Swahnberg & Wijma, 2003), the SAMINOR 2 study found that Sámi women are twice as likely as Norwegian men to report having experienced violence (emotional, physical, or sexual, 49% *vs.* 23.2%), and more than Norwegian women (34.7%). When it comes specifically to sexual violence, 21.8% of Sámi women reported experiencing it, compared to 15.6% of Norwegian women, 5% of Sámi men, and 4.1% of Norwegian men[1]. In a country that champions gender equality, Sámi women are five times more likely than Norwegian men to report sexual violence.

Many reasons for high rates of sexual violence have been posed. Shame, as a result of historical oppression, may enable sexual violence by fostering internalised hatred within Sámi communities (Jensen, 2019). Kuokkanen (2015), however, warns that Sámi perpetrators must be held accountable as individuals with agency, even in the face of colonial injustice. A reluctance to discuss the topic as a result of beliefs in *ieš birget* (Stoor et al., 2019), privacy norms (Bongo, 2012), and a reluctance to be seen as confirming the majority culture's stereotypes — Sámi men as drunk and violent, Sámi women promiscuous and unprotected — may also allow perpetrators to escape accountability.

2.2. Reporting on Sexual Violence

Research shows that the quality of reporting on sexual violence has generally improved in Scandinavian majority contexts since the #MeToo movement, gaining greater prominence in Swedish news coverage (Nordlund & Algurén, 2020) and featuring more frequently in Danish cultural commentary (Hartley & Askanius, 2020). But the majority of Norwegian media, while not as saturated with rape myths as the United Kingdom or the United States (Kunst et al., 2018; Risbakken, 2018), has been slower to engage with sexual violence discourses (Storøy Elnan, 2019) and focused on #MeToo issues relating to the workplace at the expense of larger cultural commentary (Vedvik, 2022). It remains unknown as to how this might affect Sámi media within these colonial states. In an editorial in the Sámi newspaper *Ságat* on 2 June 2018, the editors decried the lack of #MeToo stories being published, saying that, "no stories leak out of the Sámi. Why?".

Existing research suggests that reporting on sexual violence is emotionally challenging. Journalists describe the stress of finding sources while also supporting and protecting them, as well as the fear of professional or social pushback (Hewa, 2024). Ojibwe journalist Mary Anette Pember, who reports on sexual violence in *Indian Country Today*, says that covering Indigenous sexual violence stories requires her to interface with

[1] While the NorVold Abuse Questionnaire rates sexual violence on a scale from mild — coercion but not genital contact — to severe — penetration —, no information about reported severity levels was given.

material that is, "decidedly messy and deeply human" (Byrd, 2019, para. 3). First-hand exposure to sexual abuse images, narratives, and crime scenes can be difficult for journalists (Rentschler, 2010).

But there is more than one kind of first-hand exposure. This is a journalistic experience often overlooked in the literature, perhaps because its study would admit that, according to Deuze and Glitsos (2024), journalists have bodies. Journalists who report on sexual violence may be survivors of it themselves (Hewa, 2024). Shifting coverage styles are making this more common. While sexual violence stories were once dominated by courtroom coverage (predominantly by male reporters), most journalists now covering sexual violence are women (Benedictis et al., 2019). Hewa (2024) finds that female journalist survivors of sexual violence sometimes avoid reporting on the topic, afraid that it will be upsetting or that they will not receive adequate support from editors. Such avoidance is a freedom-of-speech issue not only for the journalist as a person and a professional, but also for society as a whole.

While the literature on reporters' experiences of sexual abuse coverage is slim, studies point to a convergence of pressures for journalists working in this area. Despite rising awareness of journalist emotion, trauma, and online harassment, little is known about how these challenges manifest for Indigenous journalists.

2.3. Relational Challenges in Indigenous Journalisms

There is no literature problematising the internal experiences of Sámi journalists specifically, but emotional labour (the work of managing one's own emotions; Hochschild, 1979) is often greater for Indigenous journalists (Patrick et al., 2024), especially when working in majority contexts (e.g., Kae, 2023). There are particular challenges faced by Indigenous journalists working in Indigenous journalism systems. These include the need to perform a watchdog role, monitoring both Indigenous and majority institutions (Hanusch, 2013; Skogerbø, 2001); the responsibilities of insider criteria (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012); and the work of reconciling conflicting cultural and newsroom norms (Thomas, 2024).

Plaut (2014) found that Sámi journalists felt obliged to be extra critical of their own institutions to "build them up" (p. 88) and keep them viable while also aware that critical stories could be picked up and covered inappropriately by the Norwegian press (Ijäs, 2012). Sámi journalists report being aware of stereotypes about Sámi people in the majority Norwegian culture and the harm they cause (Ijäs, 2012). To inadvertently confirm them could be, as one journalist tells Plaut (2014), "like a bird shitting in its own nest" (p. 88).

Sámi journalists bring valuable lived experience to their work. But this experience also makes them aware of the emotional stakes of upsetting one's family, breaking long-held cultural taboos, or appearing unfair (Cottle, 2000; Markelin & Husband, 2013).

Tuhiwai Smith (2012) introduced the term "insider criteria" to describe such obligations, noting that Indigenous researchers were more heavily criticised by their own communities than by outsiders. Criticism from fellow community members can be deeply cutting, as, like the majority of journalists in rural areas (Bowd, 2005; Císařová, 2017), Indigenous journalists often feel deeply tied to their local community (van Rjiswijk, 2020). Even when the content resembles mainstream journalism, the relational stakes in Indigenous journalism are often much higher.

Journalists must conform to their newsroom's norms, as well as the cultural norms within which the media operates (Mellado & Mothes, 2020). The struggle to reconcile some Indigenous approaches with journalistic standards in the majority media has been documented (e.g., Thomas, 2024), though less is known about the possibility of similar conflicts in Indigenous media systems. Deuze and Glitsos (2024) find that such disputes lead the journalist to feel a decreased sense of agency, which they link to substance abuse and risk-taking. Indigenous journalists face a constellation of potential relational stressors in their work as they navigate their responsibilities to their nations, communities, and profession.

3. Study Methods

Given the sensitivity of the topic and the researcher's outsider position in the Sámi community of Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino), a methodology was chosen that would yield rich, textured data and allow participants to articulate their own experiences. As a post-structuralist theory which acknowledges the multiple groups to which individuals belong, social worlds/arenas theory (Clarke et al., 2018) is well-suited to conceptualising the multifaceted experiences of people who navigate clan affiliations, professional lives, and interactions with colonial structures, moving between multiple social worlds throughout their days. As a conflict-focused methodology, situational analysis (Clarke et al., 2018) can also capture perspectives on the ongoing tensions and sometimes rapid changes experienced by Indigenous societies.

Social worlds/arenas theory grew out of later developments of grounded theory as established by Glaser and Strauss (1980; Clarke et al., 2018). Using cartography as both metaphor and technique for data analysis, the researcher develops an understanding of a "situation" (usually a point of conflict or cultural change) by creating hand-drawn schematic "maps". These maps depict how "social worlds" — not real-world locations but groups of people or rhetorics with aligned aims — interact and negotiate conflict. Social worlds meet within "arenas" (physical and mediated spaces) where they are "negotiating, collaborating, struggling with other groups, seeking authority, social legitimacy, and the power to achieve their goals" (Clarke et al., 2018, p. 150). Individuals usually belong to more than one social world, and those worlds may have different aims in different arenas.

4. Study Design

Drawing from three news outlets (the Sámi language *Avvir* and NRK Sápmi; and Norwegian-language *Ságat*), 30 articles were chosen from over five years of 2015–2020. Article search terms included "seksuel" and "seksuála" (sexual); "overgrep" (abuse) and "loavkašuhtti" (abusive or insulting); and terms related to the #MeToo movement. A total of 26 different writers contributed to the articles; 10 were written in the first half of 2018, reflecting a high-profile sexual harassment case in Guovdageaidnu and the full swing of the #MeToo movement in October 2017. All articles were machine-translated into English, verified by a first-language speaker of the original language, and coded in NVivo. After translation, their length ranged from 396 to 1,698 words, with an average of 842 words.

Sámi journalists who had previously reported on sexual violence were identified through searches in the *Ávvir*, NRK Sápmi, and *Ságat* archives and through the snowballing method. Nine semi-structured interviews, lasting 30–90 minutes, were conducted online between January and April 2020. Six interviewees were female, three were male; their experience in journalism ranged from two to 36 years. All participants identified as Sámi and had covered sexual violence in Sápmi. All but one spoke a Sámi language, and all but one currently resided in Sápmi. Due to the small size of the Sámi media landscape, the sensitivity of the topic, and the multiple studies published from this sample, participant anonymity is protected by withholding further details such as age, region, or workplace.

Living "with" the data (questioning, considering, and re-conceptualising it through coding, categorising, and memo-writing) is an essential part of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). Physically engaging with data through spatial-visual means (Clarke et al., 2018) further illustrates the composition, aims, and interactions of social worlds. These are iterative processes which begin before participant or source data collection, as the researcher creates a "messy situational map" (Clarke et al., 2018) of the social worlds and discourses believed to be operating within the situation.

The first "messy situational map" of reporting on sexual violence in Sámi journalism was created in March 2020 (Appendix A, Figure A1). Over the course of a year, it was revised and refined as understanding of the situation's complexities deepened and as data collection and coding progressed. Almost 300 codes were generated from the interview transcripts and article texts. To gather them into overarching themes, a variety of means were used, including the NVivo "explore" function and the creation of an "abstract situational map" (Clarke et al., 2018).

The abstract situational map includes categories such as human and nonhuman elements and actors (e.g., Sámi journalists who report on sexual violence, and survivors of sexual violence; the publication *Ságat*), discursive constructions (e.g., stereotypes of Sámi as drunk and violent; giving shorthand names to sexual violence allegations as if they were isolated events), political/economic elements (e.g., the Sámi Parliament; potential financial consequences for discussing sexual violence), and sociocultural/symbolic elements (e.g., Sámi social media platforms and groups). This map helped surface

gaps in knowledge about the situation, such as the potential for journalists and editors to belong to different social worlds within it.

Situational analysis also offers a methodology for uncovering unspoken positions (perspectives) within discourses: "location maps" (Clarke et al., 2018) in which the researcher places social worlds along axes indicating endorsement of a rhetorical position. This methodology helped to surface and name the implicit positions of social worlds, such as the assumptions inherent in Sámi institutions' exhortations to survivors to "speak out" or "break the silence" (Appendix B, Figure B1).

The "relational map" (Clarke et al., 2018), which detailed how each social world related to each of the others in the situation, provided the most valuable form of data visualisation. As data collection continued, it became apparent that journalists were not only telling us about their experiences in reporting *on* sexual violence but also their experiences *of* sexual violence. This meant that the topics in the interviews were complementary but, in some ways, overlapping with those in the news articles. To capture the broadest range of perspectives, relational maps were created from the articles and interviews separately, and then combined into a broader schematic of the situation. Both maps generated detailed and interesting information about the power dynamics at play in the situation. When mapping the relations between the social worlds of female Sámi journalists who have experienced workplace harassment (FSJ) and Sámi editors regarding the journalists' own experiences of sexual violence, a memo noted that,

> FSJ (...) are in a position of supplication to editors, either bringing their experiences to the editor or suppressing them. They look to the editors for guidance and sometims [*sic*] for discipline [of perpetrators]. Sometimes they talk with other FSJ later, and decide that the editor was out of line. The editors are in a position of authority (...) can decide what assignments FSJ are given. The editors cannot control the behaviour of men in the public who harass the journalists. The editors may themselves be harassing the journalists.

Mapping the observed relations between the social worlds clarified how female Sámi journalists (later grouped as "Sámi journalists" when two male interviewees narrated their experiences) sought agency following harassment. It also revealed the multiple social worlds embedded within larger ones, such as "editors who harass or ignore the harassment of journalists" within the broader category of "Sámi editors".

In the situation of the production of Sámi news about sexual violence, social worlds include journalists and editors, cultural traditionalists, cultural change-makers, law enforcement, and various rhetorical positions. The arenas in which they meet include the Sámi Parliament and the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, as well as the physical and online arenas provided by Sámi publications such as Á*vvir* and *Ságat*. But they also interact in less-formal spaces, such as Sámi festivals, grocery stores, living rooms, weddings,

mountain trails, and bars. Social worlds are constantly engaged in "improvisational choreography" (Clarke et al., 2018) in which they seek or respond to other social worlds' movements. The following section of this paper demonstrates some steps in that dance.

5. Findings and Interpretation

5.1. The Context of Sexual Violence Reporting in Sápmi

Iterative coding of news articles about sexual violence finds reluctance to speak about sexual violence — or its twin, an exhortation to "break the silence" — to be the most common topic. Each social world identified in this study positions itself differently in relation to "silence". The institutional arenas, such as Beaivváš (the national theatre), NRK Sápmi (the public broadcaster), the Sámi University, and some newspaper editorials, take a rhetorical position that speaking about sexual violence is good, and that victims (the social world of sexual violence survivors) are "brave" to do it. Sexual violence is here conceived as an amorphous scourge on society, something against which victims must "dare to speak". A location map of this rhetoric highlights several assumptions within it. First, that members of the social world of sexual violence survivors are not currently "speaking out" about their experiences; second, that it is difficult to do so; and, third, that this, rather than changes in political policy or judicial decisions, is what will keep other Sámi women safe.

However, the newspaper articles also depict the social world of sexual violence survivors as less reluctant to "speak out" than being consistently confused and discouraged by opacity and unreliability within, or the simple absence of, abuse reporting processes. They are stymied in a multitude of settings: a workplace has not developed routines for reporting harassment (Oskal, 2017); a survivor is unhappy with the disciplinary process (Oskal, 2018a); a woman would rather wait for the harasser to leave (retire or die) than report him to supervisors (Oskal, 2018b); harassers remain anonymous in online settings (Oskal, 2016); a survivor is told, "you are not the first one" and has the feeling that the abuse will continue without consequences (Boine & Gaup, 2018). In interviews for this study, journalists — many of whom belonged not only to institutional social worlds, but also to the world of survivors of sexual violence — echoed these frustrations.

A positional map (Clarke et al., 2018) indicates that the social world of the accused (alleged perpetrators and enabling institutions) could respond to allegations of sexual violence by taking a rhetorical position that sexual violence is not a problem, or denying that it exists. Instead, articles portray this social world as threading the needle, expressing a similar dispossession to the social world that accuses them of harm. News articles show the alleged perpetrator not held to account, describing himself as "puzzled" or "confused" by the allegations (Aslaksen, 2018); the harassment does not seem obvious or visible to other people (Paulsen, 2018); authorities such as police officers and theatre

directors refute responsibility (Bjørnback, 2018; Solaas, 2018). In this way, the social world of the accused denies responsibility without contradicting the explicit statements of institutional arenas — all of which are larger and more powerful than the individuals who inhabit the social world of the accused — that good things would come if only sexual violence survivors would "break the silence" about their experiences.

5.2. Reporting on Sexual Violence in Sápmi

Journalists focused on proximity as a challenge in their experiences of reporting on sexual violence. The difficulty of reporting on a "small community" was cited 11 times in six interviews as a landmine of ethical concerns for the journalist as a professional and as a community member. Journalists expected that social worlds would interact with uncomfortable intimacy and frequency in the reporting process, and they worried there was little room for survivors of sexual violence to move within or across them. As in other Indigenous media systems (Hanusch, 2013), Sámi journalists often perform multiple roles across a range of professions in addition to their media work, thereby belonging to an expansive network of social worlds. Interviewees reported that while editors tried their best to remove journalists from stories in which they were related to the subjects, the longstanding closeness of Sámi communities made it almost inevitable that some work, social, or kinship connection would arise — or need to be factored into their reporting. For example, Participant 7 (female) says,

> Sámi society is so small that if one person is raped, but when she was younger, she used to be kind of a wild girl who partied… people would know about it and would always think about that… the collective memory is infinity [*sic*] even things that happened generations back. (interview, 2021)

When one social world makes a claim to power — what Clarke et al. (2018) call a "bid" — others respond. In this journalist's narration, an unnamed social world, "people", denies a survivor's allegation (bid) due to her previous membership in a social world of "wild girls who party". Illustrating Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) "insider criteria", Participant 7 goes on to say that she herself may be blamed if the situation turns out badly. While the journalist knows that a victim's choices (or their grandparents' choices) do not negate the newsworthiness of her experience, she feels it is her obligation to consider this context in her reporting to protect the victim and herself.

In this regard, six journalists described a deeper, more troubling inner experience of reporting in a "small community": an experience that straddled emotion, cognition, sensation, and identity, coded in their words as "too close to home" and analysed using a targeted situational map (Appendix C, Figure C1). These participants struggled to describe their experience of anticipating running into someone they had reported (or that person's relative) in a non-journalistic context. Participant 2 (female) says "the relationship that you have to these people is going to be, what do you call it, not — yeah, that you

feel that your relationship to this person is not, is getting uncomfortable... I don't know how to explain this" (interview, 2021). Analysis indicates that this significant challenge in interviewees' reporting on sexual violence cannot be adequately described by Western emotional terms such as "fear", "anger", "sadness", or "disgust". Instead, Participant 5 (female) says "I would feel like I, I did something bad" (interview, 2021).

Participants provided no concrete concerns for the effect of their reporting becoming "too close to home", describing the potential relational consequences as "quite diffuse", saying that they "just [think] it would be hard" (Participant 2, interview, 2021). The consequences for the journalist's internal experience, however, could be severe. Participant 5 told us that, "when it became too close, that was kind of, it for me. Like, I, from then on I felt that I had enough of journalism (...), that's what made me like realise that I don't wanna do this anymore" (interview, 2021). She left the profession.

The "too close to home" unease could be interpreted as the unwanted fusion of two social worlds to which one belongs but which are nonetheless in conflict. The Sámi community member is being perceived as a professional journalist outside of work hours. But as interviewees spoke about other experiences of being approached as journalists in social settings, without the context of sexual violence reporting, it became clear that the simple conflict of two worlds did not in and of itself cause distress. Participants were confident in dismissing such approaches. As Participant 9 (male) said, "if I go to the cafe or the pub after work (...), if they want to talk to me (...) and have complaints about it, then they should call me on Monday" (interview, 2021).

Perhaps there is something specific to having reported on sexual violence which carries an element of shame, not only for the accused or the accuser, but also for the journalist. Participants in this study operate in a culture that places significant value on interrelatedness and community harmony (Somby, 2016), as well as privacy (Bongo, 2012). Miller et al. (2017) point out that cultures with such collectivist values instil moral codes that are deeply internalised; those who break them feel a deep sense of shame, even when they believe they should be broken (Groot et al., 2021). While journalists think that reporting on sexual violence is essential, such work may violate precepts of other social worlds, which are fundamental to their identity and survival.

Participants described relying on their professional social world to manage the challenges of a small community and the experience of reporting "too close to home". As Participant 1 (female) explained, "it's a role, as a journalist. It's a professional role that makes things easier. You can put yourself away a bit" (interview, 2021). Participant 6 (male) said that with habituation, the "too close to home" feeling became manageable: "you get more used to it (...). When you have a job, it's not like you can say, 'ah, I don't wanna do it today, I don't feel like it'. You have to do it" (interview, 2021).

5.3. Relational Challenges: The Lost Stories of Sámi Journalism

Against the backdrop of the reporting on sexual violence in Sápmi, this journalistic work can be understood in relation to Sámi journalists' own experiences of sexual violence. Although interviewees were not directly asked about their own experiences with sexual violence, they chose to share them. Participants may have felt that such disclosures were expected of them, as this research was reportedly known in Guovdageaidnu as a "Sámi #MeToo thesis". Disclosure of sexual violence may have been naturally adjacent to the topic of reporting on it, or influenced by the question about whether participants had experienced harassment (a question originally intended to capture online harassment, which was not frequently reported).

Five of the six female participants reported having personally experienced sexual harassment during the course of their work as journalists. The incidents ranged from online abuse and innuendo to direct overtures, inappropriate touch, physical intimidation, and one secondhand story of attempted rape. Out of nine interviewees, seven respondents recounted 10 separate incidents of work-related harassment (seven of which were first-person accounts), three sexually abusive work environments, and four incidents of inappropriate work behaviour that they declined to label harassment. One reported having observed employment discrimination based on gender. While these experiences are not all explicitly tied to reporting on sexual violence, they are significant parts of these journalists' experiences, and part of the larger situation of Sámi media reporting on sexual violence.

Some of the harassing incidents came from the journalists' audience or readers. Two journalists, for example, received harassment in direct response to their journalism on sexual violence, a phenomenon outlined by Reestorff (2019). While they found these experiences unpleasant, they did not find them impactful for them or their work. Journalists who shared their experiences in hostile newsroom cultures, however, did.

Participant 1 has worked for a decade in Sámi newsrooms with near-daily harassment at the beginning of her career. She found the sexual harassment from one or two of the senior employees in her newsroom particularly problematic, but misogyny was widespread in a workplace culture she termed "not female-friendly" and "chauvinist". At the *julbord* (Christmas table, a Norwegian work party tradition and the arena for several incidents volunteered by interviewees), her editor gave out a yearly marzipan pig: the "greasiest pig" prize for the employee who told the dirtiest joke. The rhetorical position of the award seems clear: the newsroom, as an arena and as a social world, not only accepts but rewards gendered harassment.

In contrast to the acclimation that Participant 6 felt toward "too close to home", pervasive sexual harassment, especially when unaddressed, can lead to severe emotional distress and anxiety symptoms (Edwards, 2020). Some participants reported long-term consequences of even more subtle forms of gender discrimination at work. Participant 4 (female) says that she "didn't feel like [she] had a right to [her] own ideas" (interview,

2021) after experiencing frequent ridicule, sometimes spoken to as if she were a small child. She found this more damaging to her sense of herself as a journalist than the time she was physically sexually harassed while out on assignment. Other participants were more circumspect. Participant 3 (male) describes his colleagues making dirty jokes around him, but that he "probably didn't pay much attention to it" (interview, 2021).

In many ways, journalists are change-makers. In this situation, they create media that allow a survivor to tell their story, which is essential to the change that Sámi institutions claim to want. And, unlike the social world of sexual violence survivors, the professional world of Sámi journalists expressed little doubt or confusion about the right ways to hold perpetrators accountable. Unless the survivor is a vulnerable person, journalists told us, a story that is verifiable or prosecuted in criminal court should be disseminated. But behind the scenes, they are in the same bind as other sexual violence survivors. Participant 3 described the only professional consequence for the perpetrator of workplace sexual harassment in this study: a man who harassed the makeup and hair department was not hired for the job for which he was auditioning. This participant does not believe that the outlet told the performer why he was not given the role, or that anyone confronted him about his behaviour.

Journalists who experienced sexual harassment and discrimination in their publication's social world found that it complicated their internal experiences of reporting on sexual violence. Participant 4 describes how the hostility in her newsroom carried over into the journalism it produced. She recalls being encouraged to report on a series of statutory rapes as a sex scandal and now regrets the tone of her coverage, saying, "I hear [the survivor's] name sometimes and... it's not a positive way of talking about a young woman" (interview, 2021). Interviewees sometimes avoided pursuing sexual violence stories for fear of increased targeting in the newsroom, or because they did not seem "worse" than what was happening in the newsroom. Regardless of its exhortation to sexual violence survivors to "speak out", an institution which hires and promotes men who harass and belittle reporters is, in fact, suppressing them. Journalists suffer, and significant voices, perspectives, and stories are lost.

Participating in this research seemed to lead some participants to reframe. Attention was paid not to impose external labels, but some participants actively engaged in recalling and reevaluating their past experiences as instances of sexual harassment. Others were reluctant to label their experiences as such. This may reflect the normalisation of harassing behaviours, the experience's emotional complexity, or differing definitions of "harassment" within Sámi culture. Retroactive processing is happening in other arenas, as well. Recalling the "greasiest pig prize", Participant 1 says, "we talked about this again after #MeToo happened, and we just had the conclusion that that wasn't a healthy workplace at all" (interview, 2021).

6. Conclusion

Reporting on sexual violence can lead to a multitude of internal experiences for Sámi journalists. When reporting becomes "too close to home", journalists experience an internal tension that is difficult to name within Western frameworks of fear or trauma, and may be a form of shame. This experience has likely been shaped by the extended memory, communal expectations, and layered obligations of Sámi life.

Situational analysis offers a way to interpret Indigenous journalists' experiences as shaped by the complex interplay of social worlds rather than by individual psychology. Concepts such as "stress" and "anxiety" (commonly understood as subsets of fear) would not have fully encapsulated the feeling that participants struggled to convey to us as outsiders. By acknowledging that some experiences cannot yet be fully captured in English, it becomes possible — somewhat paradoxically — to more accurately represent the range of participants' experiences.

This approach also helps lay bare the mixed rhetoric and actions of some Sámi institutions, including the Sámi media system. While interviewees occasionally reported harassment from outside the newsroom, the most powerful interpersonal deterrents to covering sexual violence were in the workplace: newsroom cultures where sexual harassment was tolerated, gendered hierarchies were entrenched, and institutional mechanisms for addressing abuse were ineffective or nonexistent. These experiences led to long-term internal struggles for some Sámi journalists. This important finding was not an initial area of inquiry, but was nonetheless captured by the research process. The finding further demonstrates the importance of flexible, subject-centred analysis in the study of Indigenous media systems.

This study draws on the analysis of 30 news articles and only nine interviews, with predominantly Norwegian Sámi journalists, an exceedingly small sample of the transnational Sámi media community. Limited in scope, it does point to gaps in the literature. There is a need for more nuanced exploration of Indigenous journalists' experiences of workplace sexual harassment. It is also essential to better understand how personal histories shape the experience of journalism, for both majority and Indigenous reporters. What kinds of professional, cultural, or therapeutic supports might be required for such journalists? And how can their experiences be most accurately represented? Addressing these questions may require moving beyond trauma as a clinical diagnosis to understand it as part of an "improvisational choreography" (Clarke et al., 2018), one element within a shifting, overlapping, and ever-dancing set of social worlds and their discourses.

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Appendix A

Created early in the research process (March 2020), this "messy situational map" (Figure A1; Clarke et al., 2018) lists and thematically organises the elements and discourses believed to be at play in the situation of reporting on sexual violence in Sápmi.

Figure A1. *Messy situational map*

Appendix B

This "location map" (Figure B1; Clarke et al., 2018) schematically organises some of the complexities of the rhetoric of "daring to speak" or "speaking out" about sexual violence, one of the most common thematic codes emerging from the news articles.

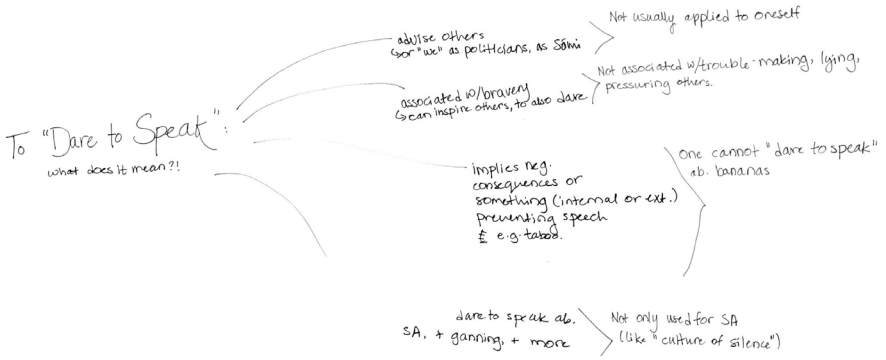

Figure B1. *Location map of the rhetoric of "speaking out" about sexual violence*

Appendix C

This "targeted situational map" (Figure C1; Clarke et al., 2018) represents an effort to understand participants' feelings of dread when reporting on sexual violence stories perceived as "too close to home".

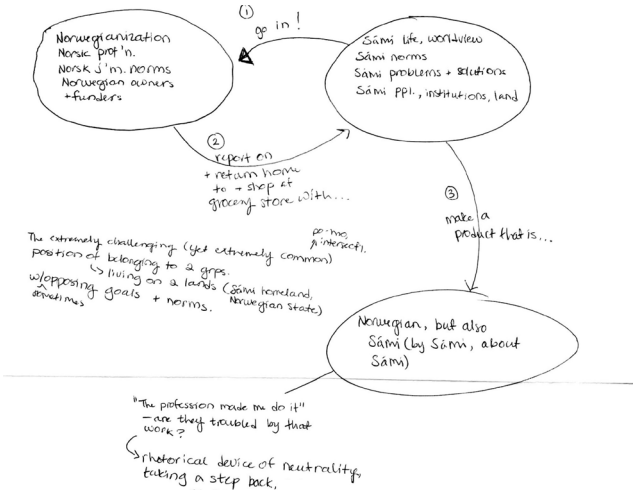

Figure C1. *Targeted situational map, "too close to home"*

Biographical Note

Svea Vikander is a researcher and media producer specialising in psychological trauma and storytelling. Her doctoral work on journalist safety at the University of the Basque Country (Spain) is informed by her background in Psychology (master, 2015) and Indigenous Journalism Studies (master, 2020). She is a member of the AI and Journalism

Resource Centre research group at OsloMet, where she explores how artificial intelligence is shaping media, particularly in investigative journalism.

ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3779-1437

Email: svea@sveavikander.com

Address: Universidad del País Vasco / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, Barrio Sarriena s/n, 48940 Leioa Bizkaia

Submitted: 31/03/2025 | Accepted: 09/12/2025