



Transitional Justice in Settler States: Challenges, Contradictions and Possibilities

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Why the Nils Klim Webinar Series Matters

The Nils Klim Webinar Series *Transitional Justice in Settler States: Challenges, Contradictions and Possibilities* offers an exceptionally timely and academically significant forum for examining the evolving landscape of Indigenous–state relations, with a focus on the Nordic region. At a moment when Sámi Truth and Reconciliation Commissions (TRCs) are reshaping public discourse, this series situates these developments within a broader scholarly conversation on settler colonialism, transitional justice, legal responsibility and political reform.

For researchers, students and individuals interested in law, history, political science, sociology, Indigenous studies and related fields, the series provides a rare opportunity to engage in **cross-disciplinary dialogue** at a high academic level—bringing together leading scholars whose work informs some of the most pressing debates in the field.

The webinar series is made possible by the Nils Klim Prize and organised in cooperation with the ERC-funded project *From the Margin to the Centre: Rights Development, Transitional Justice and Indigeneity in the Nordics* (MARCEN).

A Research-Relevant Approach to Transitional Justice

Academic, legal and political discussions on transitional justice have typically centered on contexts of authoritarian collapse or civil conflict. Yet settler states present a fundamentally different challenge: there is no regime change. The structures responsible for historical and ongoing harm remain operative. This series addresses these questions through the following themes:

- **Comparative insights** from Nordic Sápmi and Canada
- **Interdisciplinary dialogues** which broaden what counts as evidence, harm or remedy
- **Critical perspectives** which question the limits of current institutional models

In doing so, the series enriches the academic landscape by treating transitional justice not as a fixed toolkit, but as an evolving set of practices, concepts and methodological challenges.

A Multi-Dimensional Inquiry

Each session brings a distinct disciplinary lens, yet it is the dialogue across sessions which makes the series academically compelling.

- The opening dialogue with Professor Eva Josefsen on **state responsibility** and the Norwegian TRC foregrounds questions of mandate design, selective recognition and the political economy of reparations – issues that are highly relevant to legal and policy research.
- The session with Postdoctoral Researcher Otso Kortekangas on **education** highlights the role of knowledge institutions in producing both historical assimilation and contemporary forms of structural ignorance. This invites scholars

to rethink education as a site of both coloniality and potential repair.

- The conversation with Professor Astri Dankertsen on **gendered settler colonialism** adds analytical depth by revealing how categories of gender shape experiences of harm, archival visibility, and institutional response – an intervention which carries methodological implications across the humanities and social sciences.
- A commissioner’s perspective, featuring Doctor Láilá Susanne Vars, with a particular focus on legal and **human rights** questions and the Swedish TRC, enables an examination of how truth commissions operate in real time, under constraints which may differ from classic transitional justice contexts.
- The exploration of **queer perspectives**, with Associate Professor Billy-Ray Belcourt, extends the field’s conceptual boundaries, suggesting alternative epistemologies and forms of testimony that challenge traditional legal frameworks.
- Finally, the session on **Sámi self-determination** with Oula-Antti Labba connects central legal and political concepts with on-the-ground governance, foregrounding jurisdiction, authority and daily practices of Indigenous sovereignty.

This layered, intersecting structure offers a rare chance to observe how different disciplinary insights **speak to and recalibrate each other**.

Why Attend?

This webinar series speaks not only to scholars but to anyone interested in understanding how societies confront difficult histories and imagine more just futures. Whether you follow debates on Indigenous rights, work in education or public policy, or are simply curious about Nordic history and contemporary social issues, the series offers valuable insights.

Here are a few reasons to tune in:

1. It opens up vital questions about justice today

The series takes on the limits of traditional transitional justice models – ones designed for post-conflict settings – and asks what happens when these ideas are applied to settler states like Finland, Sweden, Norway, or Canada. What questions of responsibility, reconciliation and political change do these contexts raise?

2. It brings together real-world experiences, research and community voices

Speakers draw on truth commission work, historical sources, legal cases, education systems and community knowledge. Listeners will gain a clearer sense of how historical injustices continue to shape everyday life in the Nordic countries and how different sectors – schools, courts, parliaments, municipalities – are confronting or reproducing these patterns.

3. It highlights diverse perspectives and ways of knowing

Apart from engaging in legal and political analysis, the webinar series also addresses questions concerning:

- whose stories are heard,
- what gets left out of official histories, and
- how creative and community-based methods can open new pathways for understanding.

This makes the series valuable not only for researchers, but also for teachers, journalists, policymakers, civil society and the general public.

An Open Invitation

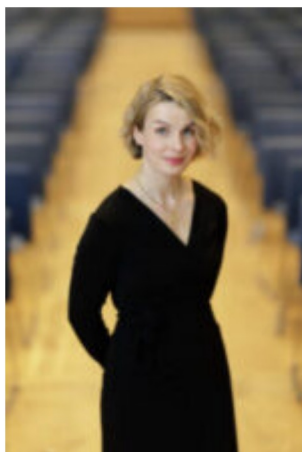
For scholars, students, professionals and community members alike, this series offers both insight and inspiration. You will hear from leading researchers, writers and professionals working at the intersections of Indigenous rights, law, history and social change. Their dialogues encourage listeners to reflect on their own assumptions, consider diverse worldviews and think critically about what justice in settler states could look like.

Whether you attend one session or the full series, you are warmly invited to join these conversations. No prior expertise or registration is required, only curiosity and an interest in learning more about how Nordic societies are confronting the legacies and ongoing realities of settler colonialism.

Join us to listen, reflect and be part of a dialogue that matters both within and beyond the university.

The schedule and links can be found [here](#).

About the Author



Daniela Alaattinoğlu is an Associate Professor of Law at the University of Turku. Her interdisciplinary research explores how societies and laws co-evolve, how groups mobilise to transform their positions, and how law intersectionally includes and excludes. She is the author of *Grievance Formation, Rights and Remedies: Involuntary Sterilisation and Castration in the Nordics, 1930s–2020s* (Cambridge University Press, 2023) and leads the ERC-funded project *From the Margin to the Centre: Rights Development, Transitional Justice and Indigeneity in the Nordics* (2025–2029). In 2025, she was awarded the Nils Klim Prize for her outstanding research as a young scholar.

Author photo: Eivind Senneset, University of Bergen / The Holberg Prize.

Main Image: Vertical shot of a winter landscape with northern lights reflection on a frozen lake, Tromsø. Photo by Wirestock, via Freepik.

#Indigenous Rights

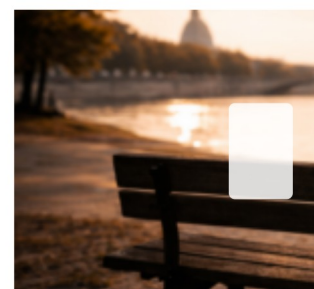
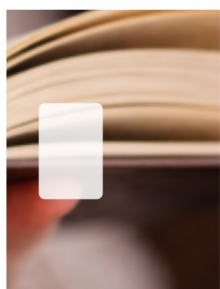
#Nordic Sápmi

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