

## SAAMI EDUCATIONAL AND KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS IN SCHOOL SYSTEMS OF THE NORDIC COUNTRIES

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### Introduction

This chapter is inspired by current theorizing about the world and knowledge society (e.g. Stichweh 2013; Holzer 2015). The conditions of Saami cultural development have been affected by global processes, including the evolution of modern school form which has been subsuming local knowledge transmission traditions. Such institutional and organizational autonomy of educational and pedagogical communication over what has been called “culture” is characteristic of a functionally differentiated society (see. e.g. Kade, 1997). Modern schooling today conditions the transmission of culture even in relatively isolated locales where traits of traditional educational forms persist. Against this can be observed centuries of resistance, and gradual global connecting of the social movements of indigenous peoples raising awareness of their political and educational rights. Such development has become politically legitimized with support of the international law (Anaya, 1996). Since the Second World War, many international organisations have facilitated articulation of the indigenous viewpoint regarding global education.

In the global discourse of education, Nordic countries have been celebrated for their strong reliance on public schooling, yet Saami educational aspirations are similar to those of other indigenous peoples. The global indigenous movement has emphasized such similarities. This has often led to connecting shared challenges to similar histories of colonisation, despite some significant differences. The postcolonial viewpoint has aimed to critically unveil the renewal

of neo-colonial domination. Our thesis is that the postcolonial struggles of indigenous movements has fostered a normative commitment in academic discourse regarding indigenous people. Pedagogical views have often adopted philanthropic stances of description motivated by benevolent practical ideals. Each viewpoint, however, is blind to cognitive limitations built in its theories, themes, concepts and distinctions. Therefore, we wish to clarify Saami education through observing its current status across three Nordic countries. Saami people also live in North-West corner of the Russian Federation, but we look across Norway, Sweden and Finland. We aim for a better understanding of the form of problems and attempted solutions that have arisen in educational reconciling of the Saami knowledge claims or episteme in the three national school systems. We will note the significance of the state boundaries crossed by Saami land, referred hereafter as Sápmi.

First we will situate the Saami culture in its Nordic context. Then, we point out how the international agreements on the rights of indigenous people and covenants of international law and context of indigenous movement have affected the Saami. This leads to considering Saami education in schooling of the Nordic regions of Sápmi. By “Saami education” we cover contextually different aspects in the problem area: 1) as assimilationist schooling, we mean inclusion of Saami persons in Nordic school systems without linguistic and cultural adaptations; 2) regarding Saami language education, strengthening the position of Saami languages in and out schools 3) in education, using Saami language in teaching subjects taught in Nordic schools; and 4) Saami as language of tuition is in cultural terms sensitively adapted in contents and methods. Western school form has penetrated the Saami culture for centuries. However, since the 1970s, global attention to indigenous rights has conditioned Saami descriptions of their educational matters. We will consider differences and similarities of educational arrangements in these nation-states in their inclusion of the Saami language and other elements of culture in their national school systems. Thus, problems between strengthening Saami identities through

culturally pertinent education and western style schooling with its formally homogenizing features are noted. We also compare policy orientations of the three countries; noting that education policies rise from the communication system of politics, not primarily from the system of education. From the viewpoint of national school systems, we will point to challenges in developing effective Saami educational arrangements according to the limits of flexibility within the western schooling, as well as possibilities for non-school educational domains. We will point to the pedagogical relevance of language immersion programs and extra-curricular school organisations, such as the Saami museum, Siida.

### The Saami in a Historical Context

The Saami view their territorial history as colonized by the Swedish Crown's proclamations of 1673 and 1695. Before then, the Lapland Border, as it was called, distinguished areas that the Swedes had clearly recognised, at least since 14<sup>th</sup> century King Magnus Eriksson, by naming it Lappmark. (Joonas, 2005a.) The Russian westward expansion confronted Swedish eastward expansion leaving the Finns as well as Saami and the Karelians, who inhabited areas along the western shores of the White Sea, to accommodate the territorial ambitions of the two regional power concentrations. In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, Swedish rulers agreed upon a North-West borderline with Russia from the easternmost part of the Gulf of Finland close to the current city of Oulu on the Northern shore of the Gulf of Bothnia. This border started to be seriously challenged during the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Thereafter, European turmoil of the 17<sup>th</sup> century left the Saami as subordinated, but not at all exposed to violent colonisation like indigenous peoples elsewhere. To understand this better, we suggest going beyond dominant views of colonization.

The Norwegians inhabited Scandinavia along its Atlantic coast; and Saami reindeer husbandry, fishing and hunting took place in the Northern part of the country. For centuries these

boundaries together with the moving Swedish Lappmark borders demarcated the areas where Saami people could maintain their traditional land distribution, called Siida. Such Siida borders became Lapp Villages due to the taxation by the Swedish Crown. (Joonas, 2005b, pp.187-189.) However, the late 17<sup>th</sup> century proclamations, mentioned above, started to break down the traditional Siida system and introduced more competition from new settlement of peasantry at their borders (Lähteenmäki, 2004, p.87; Nahkiaisaja, 2006, p.41). The Lutheran Church took over the mission of Christianizing their respective Saami areas. During the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Danish Norway, Sweden and Russia viewed parts of the traditional Saami land as their shared territory. The relationship of the Saami to the states, which competed in the edges of the traditional Saami land, has been described as colonial, also on the basis of legislations of the independent nation-states of Norway (1905) and Finland (1917) until the end of the assimilation politics in the 1950s. During these 300 years the traditional Siida areas disintegrated and were partly destroyed, and the Saami became dependent on national majorities and thus marginalised. (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2012, pp.30-31.) The history of the Saami in the making of Finland requires a rather distinct argument for colonialism, if any, given that Finland itself was an Autonomous Grand Duchy of Imperial Russia (1809–1917).

Finnish is so closely historically and etymologically related to Saami languages that the 16<sup>th</sup> century German observers could not distinguish between these languages while distinguishing them from Swedish (Häkkinen 1996, pp.25-26). Swedish was, with the 16<sup>th</sup> century Lutheran reformism, pushed by more scholarly programs attracting people to Christianity and schooling clergy for Swedish eastward expansion. Karelian territories came under Russian language influences. Centuries of regional power struggles thus resulted in linguistic differences according to confessional differences. Well before Lutheran reformism consolidated the Swedish Crown for its 17<sup>th</sup> century aims of controlling the eastern part of the Gulf of Finland, the Roman Catholic Church had started to impose cultural order among peoples in the Finno-

Ugric language family who previously had not established connections to any Church having schooled clergy to foster territorially centralizing aims. Thus, schooled Finnish peasantry were enticed to develop a unifying Finnish literary language which then took its own course from the 17<sup>th</sup> century with increasing number of schools and the University founded in 1640 in Turku by the Swedish crown. Such development accentuated differences between the Finno-Ugric language groups, but enabled scholarly development of the unifying Finnish language and subsequent integration of the Finns. While the Finns turned these forces into nation-making and state formation, the Saami remained at the margins.

Despite growing interest in the Saami people the scholarly systematization of written Saami took place only in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the turmoil of the times, the semi-nomadic forms of Saami life were pushed towards areas where reindeer herding was less imperilled. Saami life endured by moving away from political hot spots affecting the trade between East and West through the Gulf of Finland. Finno-Ugric peoples that had adopted more settled agrarian forms of livelihood were acclimated more easily to structures of the Swedish estate society. Though, independent peasants (*bonde*) of Sweden were not as oppressed as the serfdom peasantry in some other feudal arrangements of the time in Europe and Russia, taxation based motives for population classifications distinguished between settlers and those who practiced traditional Saami culture (Nahkiaisaja, 2006, pp.43-48, 64-69; Lehtola, 2012, p.23; Vahtola, 2005, pp.185-187). These developments were accompanied by instituting governance of the remote areas through schooling and parochial education into Christianity (Kylli, 2005; 2014) and led to territorial demarcations with severe consequences by turning the traditional forms of Saami wild reindeer husbandry to semi-settled reindeer herding. Territorial demarcations were the frontiers between Sweden and Imperial Russia, when Finland was attached to the Russian Empire in 1809. And, in 1852 and 1888 Saami living areas in Finland were determined by Imperial order (Nahkiaisaja, 2006, pp.17-20; Lehtola, 2012, pp.13, 23).

The nationalist movement in Finland in the 19<sup>th</sup> century emphasized the importance of schooling. The political autonomy of the Russian Empire allowed leeway for a gradual switching of the language of schooling from monolingual Swedish to bilingualism with Finnish. Between the 1880s and 1939, Saami languages were not in the focus of nationalist politics. For centuries the minority language of Swedish had dominated the schooling arrangements for the Finnish speaking majority. The Swedish speaking population in early 17<sup>th</sup> century Finland which was a part of Swedish reign until 1809 has been estimated around 17%; and has declined ever since, being currently around 5% (Liebkind et al, 1995, p.64). Due to historical conditions, Swedish has had a decided influence in Finnish schooling while tuition in Saami has struggled for its existence. Yet, multilingualism and some continuity of Saami education in connection with missionary work had existed for centuries. The end of the Second World War further affected Saami languages in Finnish territory; when the North-East frontier with the Soviet Union was pushed westward the Skolt Saami language became settled in Inari in Finland. Post war reconstruction related to Western modernization views, and focused strongly on the nation-state. In global view, however, decolonising experiences after World War II gradually exposed the dark side of modernity. Enlightenment inspired understanding of science and technology had become related with somewhat unwarranted views of progress, and scientific knowledge had been turned to an important resource for global schooling. Such escalation can be characterized as disregarding the locally oppressive side in the common marriage of schooling and progress. To better understand the current challenges in developing proper Saami education, reconsideration of knowledge in society from the local indigenous viewpoint is needed. To reflexively distance from nation-state bound views on schooling, the support of the theory of world society appears as useful.

Constructing the Identity of the Saami as an Indigenous People

Society viewed as communication system, which encloses all social systems can help identifying regional differences within differentiated communication systems, such as education and politics (Luhmann, 1997; Stichweh, 2004; 2008). By adopting the latter view of society, instead of spatially bound groups, we can better analyse the significance that the surrounding nation-states have had for the Saami as indigenous people. Differences between political and legal conceptions of indigenous people can be better understood through a theoretical notion of world society. Such a perspective allows questioning the relations between culturally relevant education and othering schooling in the making of the Saami cultural order (nation) and political orders (parliaments) in Sapmi where educational complexities are conditioned by different nation-states.

Saami indigenous identity became constructed in the interdependence of global, transnational region, national and local communications. The connectivity between levels is related to three periods of Saami movement's history: 1) transnational cultural and political organizing of the Saami people promoted during 1950s and 1960s; 2) the revitalization and strengthening of the regional Saami cultural identity during 1970s and 1980s in connection with the global discourse and human rights issues; 3) the establishing of the political institutions, such as the Saami Parliaments in Norway, Sweden and Finland between 1987-2000 with an increasing focus on the concerned nation-states (Seurujärvi-Kari 2012). Founding these autonomous parliaments has not led to claiming an independent state. Instead Saami nation-building has emphasized cultural cohesion among the Saami people. Thus, also symbols, such as the Saami flag of 1986, have so far pointed to the unity of Saami people, whatever their national citizenship. Thus, the Saami identify themselves as citizens of four countries.

Political and judicial interest in 'indigenous peoples' emerged after the Second World along with growing concerns for human rights and environmental issues. This background provided the rise of indigenous movements and politics to international attention. By the end of the 1960s

indigenous peoples managed to organize themselves and gradually founded a global network around the 'indigenous' category. During the 1960s, western modernization views still prevailed in understanding indigenous peoples as primitive or lesser developed. (Jernsletten 1998; Lantto 2003; Seurujärvi-Kari 2010.) However, times were changing in Nordic countries towards equalization, reversal of oppression and recognition of cultural differences. In this context of change, Saami people were the first among all indigenous peoples to create a transnational organization, the Nordic Saami Council in 1956 in hope of increasing the cooperation between Nordic states promised by the Nordic Council founded in 1952. Finland joined in 1955. In 1992 the Nordic Saami council was renamed the Saami Council with membership of the Russian Saami.

The Saami Council first promoted revitalizing the language and culture as basis for common ethnic identity and then provided administration for designing proper transnational cultural policy via negotiations with governments authorities (Rantala 2004; Wigdehl 1972). Transnational mobilization aimed at raising the level of education by means of national school systems, while aspiring to the inclusion of Saami language and culture in their educational foundations. One task of the Saami Council has been to prepare the all-Saami Conferences every three years since 1953 and every four years since 1992. In these Conferences Saami representatives have decided on Saami issues. These conferences and the Nordic Saami Council were the principal elements in organizing regional Saami culture until the early 1990s. The transnational notion of Saami people was especially reinforced via important political and cultural programs approved in 1971, 1980 and 1986 Conferences, where education and language issues were given focus. The 1971 Conference founded the Saami Language Board (*Sámi giellalávdegoddi*) to systematize the Saami language and to create a common orthography envisioning its pedagogical potential. By the end of the 1970s a North Saami writing system common in three Nordic countries was approved by the Saami Conference;



subsequent writing systems of other Saami languages were created following the model, thus fostering the idea of a unified, modern Saami region. Thereafter, teaching of Saami language grew and using Saami in instruction grew slowly. Also publication and broadcasting in Saami were stimulated, and the first specific Saami research center, Nordic Saami institute (*Davviriikkaid Sámi Instituhtta*) was established in 1973 in Kautokeino, Norway. The institute had great symbolical value, as it was established in the center of the Saami area, thus motivating founding of the Saami university college (*Sámi allaskuvla*) in the village in 1989. In Saami Conferences, nationwide symbols were approved; its own flag and the text of the national anthem *Sámi Soga Lávlla* was approved in 1986, and the composition for the Song of the Saami people in 1992. (Seurujärvi-Kari 2011.)

Paradoxically, when the significant context for constructing the Saami identity was extended and complicated the referencing of Saami issues, nevertheless, became geared to national frames. Firstly, identity communications became intensively connected to the world level of indigenous discourse, operating through a network of indigenous peoples and various international organizations. Secondly, the regional context changed when Sweden and Finland were accepted to the EU in 1995. Norway remained outside and in 1999 Finland entered the Euro-zone but Sweden didn't. Thus conditions changed significantly for the Saami region. For instance, the EU has its own minority policy discourse of importance for the Saami. Of concern is that new criteria have led to increased regional complexity, with corrosive consequences for previous transnational referencing of Saami policy issues. Now educational problems are framed by global indigenous issues and increasing importance of local contexts, but nationally framed. Thus nation-state level negotiations with EU regulations are considered as enabling or restraining factors in Sweden and Finland, but not in Norway. For instance, the Saami Parliament of Norway has defined the Saami as an indigenous people but not as a linguistic,

cultural and ethnic minority, while Saami Parliaments in Finland and Sweden in accordance with EU policy accept both definitions.

Nation-states as operative contexts for Saami identity communications gained in importance with Saami parliaments. In accordance with the Saami Act of 1987, a first democratically elected Saami Parliament (Sámediggi/Sameting) was established in Norway. Subsequently, Saami parliaments were founded in Sweden (1993) and Finland (1996). Previously Norway had a leading role in developing Saami political rights, partly due to the Alta Controversy (1979–1981) where Saami activists organized to oppose damming of the Alta-Kautokeino river. This local conflict focused international attention on the subordination of the Saami and their demands for self-determination. The Alta conflict fostered legal changes concerning the Saami rights. Finally, in 1988 the Saami were recognized as an indigenous people in the constitution of Norway (§110a 1988), which obliges the state to ensure that the Saami are able to practice and develop their language, culture and way of life. The Alta event resulted in legal consequences that altered Saami educational issues. The Saami became members of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) in the 1974 Saami Conference. Since 1975 the key topic in Saami discourse was the worldwide cooperation of indigenous peoples.

In the developing context, general principles concerning indigenous peoples were defended in order to gain world political legitimacy and potential for legally compelling consequences. Previous demands for justice and equality became crystallized in gaining recognition as equals, even though lacking state identification. The value of distinct cultures, languages and knowledge gradually gained in recognition; as manifested in admissions to international fora, such as the United Nations Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (UNWGIP, 1982) and the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPF, 2002). In the UNWGIP the representatives of the indigenous organizations together with governments of the UN member states drafted the 1989 International Labour Organization Convention (No.169) concerning Indigenous and

Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, replacing the 1957 ILO-Convention on the Protection and Integration of Indigenous and Tribal Populations. The 1957 version was criticized for its essentialising, homogenising and assimilatory goals and terminology, but the 1989 Convention distanced itself from “populations”, “minorities” or “people”, and referred instead to ‘indigenous peoples’, thus offering unifying significance for such peoples with common problems. Norway was among the first countries to ratify the new Convention in 1990, thus confirming indigenous peoples’ rights to their languages and cultural heritage, to their lands and natural resources. Finland and Sweden haven’t ratified it yet, but have recognized the Saami as an indigenous people. (Seurujärvi-Kari 2012.)

The context for referencing Saami educational issues changed considerably in 1980s. Since then, the significance of international treaties and covenants has been increasing, while indigenous peoples’ communication has evolved in close-knit global network, involved in international negotiations and drafting of conventions, such as, the 2007 UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (UNDRIP), affirming existence of the rights of the Indigenous Peoples and the close relationships of such Peoples to their specific environments and to their need for land and other resources to sustain their ways of living. The latter declaration is not legally binding but morally challenging, and thus politically important; its articles 13–17, together with articles 26–31 in ILO-Convention No. 169, acknowledge linguistic and educational rights of indigenous peoples to create proper educational institutions and to participate as equals at all levels in planning and execution of nation-states’ educational programs. The declaration of 2007 simply codifies the existing global consensus on the education of indigenous students, but through intellectual and educational self-determination of their proper institutions, indigenous academics are more likely developing relevant knowledge and pedagogical methods to empower their communities to participate in society. States are urged to take effective measures together with indigenous peoples for providing their

proper education (UNDRIP Article 14.3.), and not to discriminate indigenous peoples in their aspiring of education, dignity and diversity of cultures, but to appropriately reflect their traditions in education and public information thus promoting understanding instead of prejudice (Ibid, Article 15). Such are the claimed “minimum standards for the survival, dignity, and well-being of indigenous peoples of the world” (Ibid, Article 43).

Ethnic cultural autonomy and the participation of the Saami in discussions related to the implementation of the international conventions have been possible since the Saami Parliaments became operative. In Finland, the rights of the Saami people to maintain and develop their own language and culture became further strengthened by the Constitution in 1995 (updated 731/1999). The law concerning the Saami parliament in Finland (1995: 974) aims to secure the cultural autonomy of the Saami by giving them right to elect the members of their parliament. The Saami parliaments in three countries, however, seem to have led to emphasizing nation-state level negotiations at the cost of more versatile transnational strategy of the Saami movement. Against this, a Saami parliamentary council was founded in 2000 to strengthen cross border cooperation, but without any decision power, making it likely that each Saami Parliament develops its own national focus without regional cooperation. The Saami Council, set forth in 1956 to conduct transnational unity of the Saami has evolved to a non-governmental cultural organization operating at the international level with mandates of Saami national organizations. Different enclosures of signification, whether political or cultural, seem to have increased rather than decreased complexity in regard to Sami issues. As depicted below, the identity of the Saami appears to be complex: the citizenship, the first language learned, the locality of origin, etc. Even the territory of Sapmi is hard to pin down.

<MAP 5.1 ABOUT HERE>

Map 5.1: Border variety and Saami University College as learned center

The traditional living area Sápmi, as depicted above, covers in total almost 400 000 km<sup>2</sup>. This area corresponds to the traditional Saami language area. The smaller, Saami Core Area refers to those parts of the traditional area where the Saami speakers form a majority, and the Saami language is a dominant language or in official use. This area has been diminishing. Its decline signals Saami scattering with consequences for Saami education, especially in Sweden, where no clear Saami language community exists due to rather intensive industrialization in traditional Saami areas. Currently, many Saami speakers live in the capitals of the nation-states Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki. Traditionally, ten mutually understandable Saami languages are distinguished that vary from a few to some hundreds of speakers with the exception of about 20 000 North Saami speakers distributed between Finland, Norway and Sweden.

While language borders cross the state borders, North Saami remains an important unifying factor. The Saami as one nation of transnational people, however, appears to have lost importance to the Saami themselves. Only a part of the traditional living area of the Saami people offer legal protection of Saami rights. In Finland the Saami Homeland is defined and protected by the Constitution of Finland (sections 17: 3 and 121: 4), declaring it the Saami autonomy with regard to Saami culture and language. Such homeland municipalities are not found in Norwegian and Swedish legislation, but separate Administrative Language Areas were established in Norwegian laws that denote municipalities, where individuals have the right to extensive use of spoken and written Saami, and where authorities are obliged to serve Saami speakers in their own language and, by law, to teach Saami and offer tuition in Saami languages. Among other issues, migration from traditional living areas to cities has had consequences for preserving and transmitting cultural heritage within national school systems.

Saami Educational problematics in Nordic School Systems

Comprehensive research on Saami education as framed in the evolution of national school systems is still lacking. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century there has, however, been more interest in such research (Lund, 2014; Keskitalo et al, 2014a). In what follows, we identify four periods common to the evolution of the Saami education: 1) the *missionary* period which aimed to spread Christian doctrines among the Saami, 2) the *assimilationist* period which stressed the importance of the nation-state's major language, 3) the *tolerance and acceptance* period aiming at the schooling of all citizens by using Saami languages as pedagogical help and only limitedly as language of tuition, and 4) the period which stresses the *revitalization* of the Saami languages and -culture among other aims of the schools (Lund, 2014). To the end of more precise temporal analysis of the process, we add a period opened with national legislations of the late 1980s and 1990s as guarantees for cultural autonomy.

These five layers, have accumulated a load of significations to the current regional or national viewing of the educational problems in the Saami core area. Tensions between the regional, national, and local have significance in regards to the complexity of educational developments in the Saami region. Such complexity can be unfolded by means of more abstract elaboration of differing structural expectations. In short, centuries of spreading Christianity made the subsequent mono-lingual nationalist political assimilation more plausible. Still, post WWII, the nationally unifying potential of schooling was commonly emphasized thus marginalizing the Saami. Later, the ideas of inclusiveness in the Nordic welfare states supported tolerance for linguistic and cultural variety, thus providing leeway to foster Saami cultural revitalization and emergence of cultural autonomy. It is important to observe the historical significance of the nation-state enclosures and the need of observing their consequences in current regional complexity of the Saami educational endeavor.

Some of contemporary research has described the inclusion or exclusion of the Saami persons to the modern school form, while some focuses on educational arrangements and pedagogical

practices responsive to Saami culture. Boundaries of pedagogical communication cannot be reduced into school organizations. Only part of educational communication is focused directly on pedagogical interaction in schools. In addition educational communication operates in school regulations and curricula that condition the ways in which certification mediated pedagogical communications should be carried on. In what follows, we stress the importance of language revitalization in connection to educational arrangements since in Nordic countries, assimilative schooling of the Saami dominated to the end of the 1950s and disregarded Saami languages, both as a school subject and as a language of instruction.

Given nationalist overtones, Saami languages were even stigmatized, leading parents not to speak Saami to their children, thus jeopardizing cross-generational transmission of some Saami languages. In such an environment, schooling in Sapmi was actually intensified with the inclusive gains of the national school systems during the 1950s. Educational arrangements of the time, such as the boarding school network, had considerable assimilationist pedagogical potential for sparsely populated Sapmi. Thus, schooling, with its boarding schools, became a symbol for state control of the Saami. (e.g. Rasmus 2006.) The long assimilation also meant first of all language shift or at worst language loss and with that losses in the socialization necessary for Saami language communication and knowledge transmission. Only along increasing linguistic and ethnic tolerance of the past few decades have issues concerning recognition of minorities and different knowledge traditions been activated, and epistemological debates were initiated in the international indigenous movement.

Different knowledge traditions have been recognized by both indigenous and non-indigenous academics. Anthropology points to the importance of “local knowledge” (Geertz 1983). Modernity recognized that intensified reflexivity has been gradually subverting reason in the sense of the Enlightenment-based views on gaining certain knowledge (Giddens, 1990, p.39).

The reappraisal of traditional knowledge forms and celebrating the increased reflexivity has connected to aiming towards the “new common sense” (Sousa Santos, 1995), with implications in subversive views and for resistance in which the indigenous movement promoted social and ecological responsibility that should be expected from the unleashed powers of modern technoscience. Such meanings have been shared by the scholars of the indigenous movement who elaborate conceptions of indigenous knowledge and episteme. This has led to a deconstruction of the current academic knowledge hierarchies and to looking ways indigenizing academe (Kuokkanen, 2007a; Virtanen et al, 2013).

Since late 20<sup>th</sup> century, new ways of appreciating indigenous knowledge have appeared (e.g., Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999 and Marie Battiste. 2000, 2002, 2008), and has been politically advanced by UNESCO. Indigenous knowledge includes both knowledge of nature and livelihoods and a spiritual and aesthetic culture closely connected to language and is collectively preserved and transformed from generation to generation. Thus, indigenous education is learning about life through participation and community relations, including not only people but nature as well. According to Battiste (2002, p.5) indigenous knowledge fills the ethical and knowledge gaps in Eurocentric education, research, and scholarship. In its reflexive uses, the concept serves to re-conceptualize the resilience and self-reliance of indigenous peoples. Such a paradigmatic turn in viewing knowledge connects with schooling, which is following the disciplinary structures of university knowledge production. The university organization has, however, been only limitedly extending to areas not previously included in its domain (Kantasalmi, 2001; 2008 and Kantasalmi ad Hake, 1997). Thus, while indigenous studies programs have been initiated in many regular universities, the latest one at the Finnish university in Helsinki in 2015 (Indigenous Knowledge and Culture, 2015), so far, indigenous knowledge forms have fared poorly, in both the university and its influence on schooling (see, Keskitalo et al, 2013). Despite the past few decades, Saami culture has only



modestly penetrated even the lower levels in national school systems of the Nordic countries. Saami traditional knowledge and wisdom have not been recognized in national school systems. Epistemologically, schooling continues the assimilation cycles of dominating Western knowledge forms and languages.

In the 1960s and 1970s, indigenous activists and scholars worldwide, drew attention to distorted schooling of indigenous peoples. Developments in international law and politics convinced the Saami of their right to provide education in their languages as appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning. (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011.) Thus, the Saami emphasized a close linkage between education and language. Since then, developing Saami language and identity through schooling has been viewed as the key to cultural integrity. Accidentally or not, in parallel with the latter turn comprehensive school reforms were carried out in Nordic countries. These reforms stressed equality of opportunities, but only gradually inspired altering educational structures to favor inclusion of the Saami language and culture into the school system. Officially, in the Nordic comprehensive schools (1-9 grades) the Saami language could be taught both as a mother tongue and as a second language (Aikio-Puoskari, 2007, p.75; Hirvonen, 2004, 2008, p.17). In practice, however, the scarcity of trained Saami teachers formed a serious obstacle. Saami remained mostly an auxiliary language of pedagogical communication. The reforms, nevertheless, increased inclusion of Saami pupils into comprehensive schools and fostered schooling career possibilities even to higher education and to Saami speaking teacher education. Yet, the supply of qualified Saami speaking teachers remains a serious problem. However, steps taken in teacher education enabled new generations of Saami scholars to elaborate epistemic views on teaching contents and methods.

Before recent reforms, teacher education in Norway was in the Saami department of Tromsø Teacher-Training College, established in 1951. Thereafter, teacher-training was moved to the Upper Secondary School of Alattio in 1963, which became a regional college of Finnmark in

1973. In this college part of pedagogical education was offered in Saami. However, given shifting Saami movements, in 1989 teacher education was rearranged in Kautokeino, thus forming the nucleus for the current *Sámi allaskuvla* - Saami University College (SUC). This move broadened the Saami knowledge production by joining forces with the previously initiated Nordic Saami Research Institute, *Sámi instituhtta*, mentioned above. The initial idea of *Sámi allaskuvla*, was to train Saami-speaking public school teachers to cross over national borders (Hirvonen, 2004, pp.23-24) and instruction has been developed on the basis of Saami perspectives and world view. Thus the tension between the Norwegian national viewpoint and the cross-nation-state regional viewpoint of the Saami was alive, and leading its initial regional role in Saami teacher education. In a reform of higher education in Norway in 1995, Saami University College assumed the main responsibility for Saami higher education and teacher training at the Nordic level (Hirvonen, 2009; Keskitalo, 1997, pp.162-163; Seurujärvi-Kari, 2005b). Its training qualifies students to work particularly among the Saami, but it also gives them a general official qualification as a teacher in Finland, Norway and Sweden in the Saami language and culture. Currently, *Sámi allaskuvla* is a part of the Norwegian higher education system. The growing number of competent Saami scholars has been attractive for Saami students from the three Nordic countries. *Sámi allaskuvla* has had an important role and most likely will have a central role in developing indigenous knowledge and its transfer into new learning methods. *Sámi allaskuvla* currently publishes journal *Dieđut* and another, *Sámi dieđálaš áigečála* in the Saami language in cooperation with the University of Tromsø.

In Finland, the comprehensive school reform of the 1970s ended elementary school teacher seminars which had served Saami speaking teachers since the 1950s. The newly formed northern universities in Oulu (1956) and the University of Lapland in Rovaniemi (1978) started teaching North Saami language. At the outset, Rovaniemi had quota for Saami speaking students in pedagogy and in Oulu similar arrangements were made for kindergarten teachers.

The teaching of Saami language began in Norwegian higher education during the 1960s at the University of Oslo, but it faded due to lack of demand, and was continued by native speakers in the University of Tromsø in the 1980s (Utbildning för samiska barn 2015). Native language teaching was since 1970 been offered in Finnish Universities of Helsinki and Oulu under the control of Helsinki, and in Sweden in the university of Uppsala but it later moved to the northern University of Umeå. In Finland, the University of Oulu was given a national responsibility for Saami teachers' training in Finland when the Giellagas Institute for Saami culture research was founded there in 2001 (Giellagas <http://www.oulu.fi/giellagas>). Gradually a regional network co-operation between these Saami studies organizations has been developing. However, such academic study still offers potential for elaborating on Saami culture and local knowledge of the arctic, with applications for proper Saami education. Furthermore, Folk High Schools for Saami were founded in Norway (1932), in Sweden (1942) and in Finland (1953). As part of the widening provision of adult education (Lund 2000), and together with the research organization (Sámi Instituhtta), they served as incubators for the core of Saami culture interests and a place for its youth to meet.

In Finland, the comprehensive school curriculum planning committee (Committee Report 1970) equated the rights of the national language groups of Finnish, Swedish and Saami for children to receive the initial teaching in their mother tongue; to this end a quota for Saami speakers in teacher training, mentioned above, was suggested. The Saami Committee (Committee Report 1973) proposed developing Saami secondary education with the goal of reaching functional bilingualism. Norway lead when a Saami comprehensive school was built in the 1960s. Moreover, in 1976, the Norwegian Ministry of education founded a special advisory council for Saami education (Samisk utdanningsråd), which today operates as part of the Saami Parliament (Hirvonen, 2008, pp.17-18). In the 1970s in Sweden, an upper comprehensive school was established in Gällivare for the teaching of Saami language. In

addition, in Sweden, the “nomad schools,” which dated back to early 1900s, were reformed and their names changed to Saami schools in 1977 (Utbildning för samiska barn). In the 1985 reform, all Saami children were entitled to receive education in such schools for first six grades. Currently, there are altogether six such schools in Northern Sweden, teaching both in Saami and Swedish, but emphasizing Saami language and culture. In the 1980s these were organized under the jurisdiction of special board with representatives of the central government and the Saami people. Since 1993 administration of the Saami schools (Sameskolstyrelse/Samiskuvlastivra <http://www.sameskolstyrelsen.se>), has been directed by the Saami Parliament.

By the end of the 1980s, Saami was taught both as a mother tongue and used as language of tuition in all schools in the Saami Homeland of Finland, but mostly at the primary level. Finnish 1980s regulations, however, did not oblige the municipalities to arrange the teaching of Saami language nor its use as an instructional language, but only made these possible in principle. In Sweden, the instruction in Saami language began in public schools in 1976 as a result of an educational reform concerning the home languages of the children of immigrants and members of linguistic minorities. Apart from the special Saami schools Swedish municipalities can choose to offer integrated Saami education in its schools after proper arrangements with the Saami school board. In integrated programs, knowledge about Saami culture is offered according to compulsory school curricula, but instruction in languages other than Swedish, including Saami, may not exceed 50% (The European Charter of Minority and Regional Languages; Sameskolstyrelse; Läroplan för sameskolan, forskoleklassen och fritidshemmet 2011.) Still today, municipalities in Finland and Sweden, have difficulties in complying with their educational obligations, e.g. to arrange Saami bilingual instruction due to scarcity of Saami-speaking staff. While Sweden entitles all Saami children to receive education in special

Saami schools, the Norwegian model is extensive. However, in Sweden there is no municipality with clearly Saami dominant population, as in Norway and Finland.

In Norway the solution of Saami recognizes Saami as equal with Norwegian. The Saami curriculum (O97S) requires revitalization of Saami language and cultural heritage through education. The regulation states that “In terms of content and quality, education must provide basic skills which bring the cultural heritage to life, motivate students to make use of the local culture, and provide children and young people with the desire to become active and innovative in both the Saami and Norwegian societies” (Hirvonen, 2008, p.21). In Finland and Sweden there are no differentiated curriculums for Saami education. As Saami education in Finland and Sweden is interwoven into national curriculums, deconstruction of the features of dominant schooling remains difficult, thus jeopardizing the construction of Saami identity within the national school system. While in Sweden the recognition of the status of Saami as indigenous people caused some difficulties, related to viewing all minorities in rather similar terms, in Finland the ILO Convention 169, inspired positive discrimination of the Saami. Thus, an increase of resources through special funding scheme was approved, when education legislation was reformed in 1998. Thereafter, municipalities have had an incentive to arrange Saami bilingual instruction. Research has detected increases in regards to teaching hours and numbers of attendance (see; Aikio-Puoskari 2007, p.80; Seurujärvi-Kari, 2005b).

Differences in curricular orientations between three national systems, becomes regionally significant issue, which relates to differences in political referencing of the Saami educational problems. The complexity of the issue becomes clear from the global view point, when indigenous scholars worldwide and their Saami associates argue for curricula that would be developed by indigenous peoples themselves (e.g. Battiste 2002, 2008; Keskitalo et al. 2013; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Recognizing the complexity might result in sustainable solutions. While in Finland the education laws refer to a restricted geographical area, in Norway the Education

Act of 1998 (Nr. 1096) stated nationwide right for Saami children to receive teaching in the Saami language. This is important given concentrations of Saami speakers in cities. Accordingly, every child in the Saami area is taught Saami, and bilingual instruction in Saami and Norwegian is offered for every child. Emphasis on Saami culture in the classroom has become an important part of the curriculum. However, only four of twenty schools in the Saami Administrative area and about ten schools outside this area, used the Saami curriculum in the school year 2004–2005. Currently, there are also some schools categorized as ‘maintenance of bilingual education schools’, where Saami language in curriculum is more prominent than Norwegian. Some of these schools have aimed to increase Saami-speaking classes, teaching curriculum subjects in Saami, while others have aimed to decrease such instruction. (Hirvonen 2008, pp.22–23, 32). However, Hirvonen (2004) considered the Norwegian curriculum reform as the most significant ever in the Saami school history. Yet, even in Norway most Saami school teachers have been trained at majority universities or teacher training colleges. Furthermore, programs facilitating Saami children’s truly bilingual development are short in supply, and school alone do not produce new Saami speakers. Students prefer to use the dominant language when talking to each other outside classrooms even in the physically separate Saami schools in Sweden. (e.g. Rasmussen, 2015.) However, in all Nordic countries Saami students in Saami core areas can study in the Saami language.

Less than half of the estimated 70 000 Saami persons can communicate in Saami. Defects of schools in Saami education combined with still remaining negative attitudes of parents can be fatal for the smallest Saami languages (Magga, 2008; Seurujärvi-Kari, 2014). In such conditions, so called “language nests” are currently considered as effective in language immersion, above all, in early childhood (Pasanen, 2010; 2015). This is a kind of, total immersion in minority language targeted for minority children who are under school age where the personnel does not use the majority language at all, but the children are allowed to use it

freely. (Pasanen <http://www.visat.cat/articles/eng/116/the-language-nest.html>.) Good results have been obtained in the villages of Inari and Ivalo in Finland (Olthuis et al., 2013, pp.27-30; Olthuis, 2003). Thus, the Ministry of Education and Culture has renewed funding for these programs. Also, a government program in Finland to revive the Saami language was prepared in cooperation with the representatives of the Saami Parliament in 2011 and accepted in 2014. Out-of-school organizations, such as the Saami museum Siida and Saami Education Centre in Inari Finland, spread Saami knowledge tradition.

### Conclusions

Three Nordic countries discussed in this chapter are similar and different in political referencing of the Saami people and language. Although, from the Saami point of view, their educational problems are regional and lived through in the local communities of the Sapmi, the national emphasis for assimilation is hard to resist. We have clarified intended nation-state level solutions of Saami problems. We pointed out the paradoxical increase in Saami cultural autonomy but decrease in regional cross-border co-operation in framing challenges. Educational distributions depend unequally on the host state. The scarcity of certified Saami speaking teachers stands out. Teachers' training has been influenced by majority systems for decades. Even in Norway, only 15 % of the Saami teachers had studied at Saami University College, and less than half of the teachers were Saami-speaking at the beginning of the 21st century (Hirvonen, 2004, pp.149, 154). In some areas the educational contents for comprehensive schools are better adapted to Saami culture while in other areas their equivalents can be mere translations from the teaching materials for the majority (Aikio-Puoskari 2007; Hirvonen 2004).

Before 1990s all-Saami regional focus were directed into nation-state allied Saami parliaments and school planning and teaching materials were forced into nation-state frames. Saami

parliaments have not yet found sufficient collaboration for contesting needed development, for example in producing culturally pertinent teaching materials for Saami curricula, whatever the nation state context. Recent research seems to confirm that the Saami educational community largely conform to national frames of education policy (Jannok, 2013; Keskitalo et al, 2013, pp.83-90, 95). Yet, the Saami themselves need to take more active role in promoting and determining their indigenous language revitalization and education processes.

In global indigenous perspectives, however, more profound paradigm changes for Saami educational arrangements and pedagogy have been envisioned. Saami researchers point to challenges in advancing towards the goals set forth in international conventions, in national legislation about indigenous rights, to education in one's own language, to an integration of Saami heritage and knowledge to schooling at all levels, thus recognizing the equity of such contents in programs valued as equal to those of the majorities (among others Jannok 2013; Keskitalo et al, 2013; Keskitalo et al, 2014b; Magga et al, 2008). Our analysis of the regional complexity of Saami education affirm that recognizing such profound changes would require also indigenizing of the hierarchical top of the organization structure in national school systems, namely the university. Structural expectations thus strengthened, would foster inclusive openings in the certification logic of schooling and would result in wider recognition of new knowledge forms in national school systems. Increasing the pedagogical emphasis on learning of the psychic systems of people, instead of certification mediated schooling might offer leeway for such development of Saami education.

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