HILDE SOLLID AND TORJER A OLSEN

Indigenising Education:
Scales, Interfaces and Acts of Citizenship in Sápmi

PROLOGUE

Around 1993, Kåfjord, a small rural municipality in Norway's far north, replaced monolingual Norwegian road signs with bilingual Sámi-Norwegian signs. These bilingual signs soon became subject to vandalism: the Sámi municipality name – "Gáivuona suohkan" – was painted over and even erased by bullet holes. In 2016, the linguistic landscape changed again. This time bilingual Sámi–Norwegian signs were replaced by trilingual Sámi–Norwegian–Kven signs. Today the full name of the municipality is Gáivuona suohkan–Kåfjord kommune–Kaivuonon komuuni (hereafter Gáivuotna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono). This time all the signs were left untouched. The tensions seem to have gone.

Figure 1. Road sign in Sámi and Norwegian – the Sámi name has been erased by bullets. Photograph: Hilde Sollid.

According to Blommaert,[1] a changing linguistic landscape can be seen as diagnostic of socio-linguistic changes. What seems to be changing in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono is the social status of the minority languages, and thus perceptions of citizenship and belonging. Stroud points out that "[f]eeling in or out of place is one of the determinants behind whether individuals are able to exercise agency and local participation as well as whether encounters across difference are expressed as contest or as conviviality."[2] Although the empirical context of Stroud's analysis is the transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa, his viewpoints echo with the colonial and post-colonial experiences of the Indigenous and minoritised people of the Arctic. Thus the multilingual road signs in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono are material symbols of political tensions and changes in Norway, and they represent a story of decolonisation.[3]

Figure 2. Road sign in Sámi, Norwegian and Kven. Photograph: Hilde Sollid.

Since the 1980s, Norway has, at least in some areas, taken a stance against the process of colonisation of Sápmi – the homeland of the Indigenous Sámi. The politics of erasure of Sámi language and culture has now been replaced by recognition of the Sámi as an Indigenous people. In this process, education is the institution where this new direction has the potential to reach the farthest. There are also significant ongoing initiatives to indigenise education.[4]

Our goal in this paper is to contribute to the conversation about indigenising education. The article includes both a case study and a theoretical discussion. The case study is part of an ongoing project in which ethnographic fieldwork in a Sámi municipality – Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono – is coupled with the analysis of educational policy documents at national and local levels. We take the story and situation of this diverse community with a strong Indigenous presence as a starting point for a discussion of the indigenisation of education on a more general level. Our point

of departure is the contention that education contributes to citizenship, and that in Indigenous contexts, education is a powerful system to develop multiple senses of belonging and various citizenship constellations. Furthermore, education is acted out on a scale that embraces national and local demands and diversities. Local schools constitute a space to tailor education to local ideas of belonging and citizenship. In our theoretical section, we propose a model of Indigenous education that focusses on continua rather than dichotomies. Thus the cultural interface[5] is a central concept in this model. This model is being developed based on ongoing empirical work alongside the reading of, and reflection on, literature on Indigenous education in different contexts.

The two authors hold different subject positions on the cultural interface of the northern region of Norway/Sápmi. Hilde Sollid is Norwegian and Sámi, with close family ties to the local community which is the subject of our case study and with extensive fieldwork experience in the multilingual area. Torjer A Olsen is a Norwegian and non-Sámi scholar in Indigenous studies who works in many educational contexts representing Sámi and advocating for the educational rights of Sámi.

CONTEXT

The Sámi live in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden and Finland, and in north-west Russia. In Norway, the Sámi are recognised as an Indigenous people. The Sámi are diverse in terms of culture, ways of living and language. The Sámi languages (of which three are recognised as official languages in Norway) belong to the Finno-Ugric language family and are thus completely different from Norwegian and the other Germanic Scandinavian languages. Prior to urbanisation and industrialisation, most Sámi made a living through various combinations of reindeer herding, fishing (both inland and coastal), farming and hunting/gathering. Today, these traditional lifeways account for only for a small minority as most Sámi have become part of their respective majority societies.

Parts of Sápmi are also homeland for the Kven, who are recognised as a national minority in Norway. This legal status indicates their long-term presence in Norway, and at the same time it reveals a political differentiation between Sámi and Kven. The Kven are descendants of Finnish-speaking people with linguistic and cultural roots in northern Finland and Sweden. Linguistically, Kven is closely related to Finnish, and together with Sámi is also a Finno-Ugric language. Sámi and Kven are not, however, mutually intelligible. In 2005, Kven was recognised as a full language, not just a dialect of Finnish.[6] Traditionally, the Kven settled in the same areas as the Sámi and made their living from the same natural resources, with fishing as their mainstay. However, while reindeer herding is considered typical of the Sámi, forestry work in Norway's river valleys is associated with the Kven.

In Norway, colonisation occurred very differently from the colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand. Here, Sámi, Kven and Norwegians have been living in neighbouring regions and villages – and even in many of the same villages – for centuries. Colonisation became part of a larger process related to the emergence of national states with their borders and taxation regimes. The Christian missions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with their largely aggressive opposition to Sámi Indigenous religion, was a major part of the colonisation process, as was Norway's assimilation policy (1859-1950) – fittingly called Norwegianisation – directed at the Sámi and the Kven. Following these major cultural dislocations, Sámi and Kven cultures and communities changed. Their languages were undermined, and many Sámi and Kven families became Norwegian.

One major arena of colonisation was the educational system. The Norwegian School Act of 1739 was part of a national mission effort aimed at achieving national literacy (in order that all citizens should learn to read the Bible). The schools were the main arena for the government's assimilation policy. Here, Sámi and Kven children underwent Norwegianisation. The assimilation policy was officially rescinded after World War II, leaving the Kven and the Sámi as marginalised citizens in the Norwegian community. However, reflecting changing attitudes to Indigenous communities worldwide, Norway changed its policy towards the Sámi beginning in the 1980s. A policy of recognition was introduced, largely as a result of the work of Sámi activists and politicians. Within the educational system, an initial peak was reached with the launch of the first Sámi curriculum in 1997. Since then, the two national curricula have reflected official recognition of the Sámi – and to some extent the Kven – as one of Norway's five national minorities.[7]

EDUCATION, CITIZENSHIP AND THE CULTURAL INTERFACE

The field of Indigenous education is primarily developed and articulated by Indigenous scholars and educators and by scholars and educators working more or less closely with Indigenous communities.[8] The concept of Indigenous education covers a broad range of educational needs, from the education of members of mainstream society about Indigenous affairs and issues to the education of members of Indigenous communities themselves. The model set out in Figure 3 takes this basic distinction as a starting point:

This basic model is the first step in creating a theoretical model that reflects the diversity of Indigenous education. The distinction between education for and of Indigenous peoples, on the one hand, and education about Indigenous peoples, on the other, reflects the situation in many countries, regions and communities where Indigenous peoples are present. In Norway, the national curricula (at least since the 1980s) demand this dual approach in relation to the rights and situation of Sámi students, and also to what all students should learn about the Sámi.
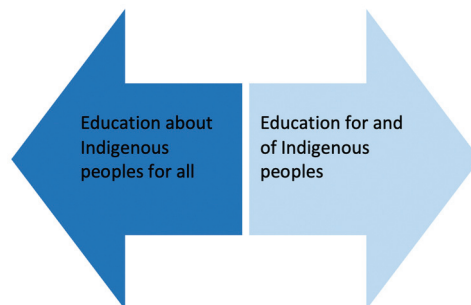

Figure 3. Indigenous education conceived as a continuum.

This distinction relates to a similar distinction – or more correctly a *dichotomy* – found in Indigenous research on Indigenous education and methodologies. Here, the dichotomy between the West and the Indigenous, and between all things related to the West and all things related to the Indigenous, has gained a strong foothold. This dichotomy is particularly marked among scholars seeking to articulate Indigenous methodologies.[9] For example, Margaret Kovach talks about tribal epistemologies as being very different from Western knowledge.[10] There has been alleged to be a certain essentialism implicit in such claims.[11] Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that such essentialism has been an important strategy within Indigenous politics.[12] If framed as an essentialist dichotomy, however, it rests on the assumption that both sides – the Western and the Indigenous – are homogenous. Such a claim is a political one. Neither Indigenous methodologies nor Indigenous education can be separated – or seen as existing independently – from politics. They are inherently political fields.

Schools – and entire educational systems – are fertile arenas for the implementation of state policies, especially those affecting minorities and Indigenous peoples. Schools are the state's tools to provide its citizens with knowledge and ways of acquiring knowledge that are defined as the most important. Thus, schools and education are tools for the reproduction of ideology and for making state policies become reality. The experiences of Indigenous peoples speak of challenges, both on the local and global levels. Educational systems tend to be based on the needs and culture of majorities, of the mainstream. The experiences of Indigenous peoples worldwide tell a clear story of schools and education as major arenas for colonisation, assimilation and the communication of states' monocultural ideologies.[13]

This history is, of course, an important factor in the continuing articulation of the dichotomy separating the Western and the Indigenous. Within the contemporary movement for Indigenous education, there is a emphasis on the need for Indigenous children to get an education using Indigenous languages and knowledge. There is a similarly strong emphasis on the need for the decolonisation of existing systems. Marie Battiste argues that the educational system (in Canada) is Eurocentric, and that decolonisation needs to include both a new, improved way of learning for Indigenous students and a far-reaching critique of the system.[14]

As a discipline, Indigenous education finds itself lumped with this same distinction. The distinction between Indigenous education as the appropriate education *for* and *of* Indigenous peoples, on the one hand, and Indigenous education as education for all *about* Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, can be understood either as a dichotomy or as a continuum. In our proposed model, we argue that the continuum concept better describes reality than does dichotomy.

The term 'cultural interface' proposes an alternative to dichotomised thinking, describing a space for relations that an individual (and a community) can occupy. This space has numerous subject positions available, is multi-layered and multi-dimensional, and shapes how a person speaks both of themselves and others. Notions of continuity and discontinuity may provide fruitful ways for understanding Indigenous people's relationships, both to other groups and to the past.[15] In Sápmi, and our research area in particular, this concept describes the situation of many in the aftermath of decolonisation, assimilation and revitalisation. Individual families are diverse and potentially multilingual in the sense that their members can self-identify as Norwegian, Kven and Sámi. This reveals a situation where dichotomies are not clear-cut. Thus, the concept of the cultural interface, and the notion of numerous subject positions, seems a constructive alternative to a simplistic dichotomism, and is also applicable to Indigenous education.

In many Indigenous contexts – as in the example from Sápmi discussed above – the boundaries between who is Indigenous and who is not can be blurred. In addition, as many Indigenous children, regardless of geography, attend mainstream schools,[16] a clear-cut distinction between education *for* Indigenous peoples and education *about* Indigenous peoples and issues is simplistic. Having presented the challenges and possibilities of Indigenous education as a continuum, we argue that both sides of the original continuum embody a continuum of their own, and at the same time they are related. Thus the model needs to be more complex in order to grasp the reality of Indigenous education.

Figure 4 describes indigenising education as continua within the continuum: (1) Indigenous education as education for Indigenous people will in practice vary from Indigenous schools using Indigenous curricula, languages and pedagogies, on the one hand, to Indigenous students claiming an Indigenous education within the framework of mainstream schools; (2) Education about Indigenous peoples and issues will in practice vary from a decolonised and/or indigenised mainstream school using decolonised and/or indigenised curricula and pedagogies, on the one hand, to colonised schooling (in every sense), on the other.
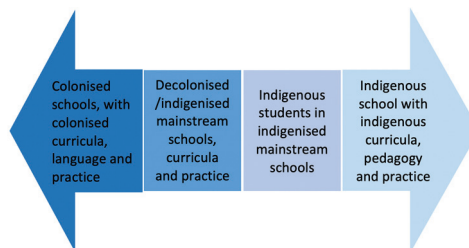

Figure 4. A more complex model of Indigenous education: continua within the continuum.

This model, which is based on the idea of the cultural interface, is a way of describing the reality that Indigenous education, in practice, can have many different variations and articulations, and that different educational systems can be located on different parts of the continua. Even the Norwegian educational system seems to be located on different parts of the continua. In Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, local schools were a key arena for colonisation and assimilation through their curriculum, pedagogy and practice. In recent decades, these schools have moved through an era of decolonisation and recognition of Sámi students in mainstream schools to being defined as Sámi schools following a Sámi curriculum. At the same time, there is an institutional tardiness at work – as is the case with any educational reform – slowing down efforts at decolonisation and indigenisation.

Because schools function as major arenas for state policy, education policy effectively equates to state policy on citizenship. What is taught in school becomes a way of communicating who is included and who is excluded in the community of citizens. Citizenship is related (but not restricted) to democratic values, offering spaces where members of a community can exchange ideas *and* act together to shape their future. One of the core values of democracies is the possibility of people having real influence on society through participation in the economic, social and political life of their community. Thus, citizenship presupposes a sense of belonging to a larger community, where people desire and are allowed to engage. This in turn suggests that there are different possible subject positions towards citizenship. A person can be an insider (citizen), they can be an outsider with the potential to become an insider, or even an outcast who, despite attempts to become a citizen, is kept outside or silenced.[17] Citizenship is thus a social contract in a state of flux that at one level is expressed through formalised rights and responsibilities (citizenship as status)[18] and, on another level, manifests in terms of how people engage (citizenship as practice).[19] Furthermore, in addition to these accepted frameworks, citizenship can be expressed through actions that create social belonging and relations (citizenship as acts).[20]

Acts of citizenship are connected to participation, and can be interpreted as stance-taking towards previous social actions,[21] since there is always a range of positions available. The term 'cultural interface' describes a similar space of relations that an individual (and community) lives by and with. Nakata states that when Torres Strait Islanders deal with their Indigenous past and traditions,

they must be seen as active agents in their own present. The collective Islander narrative consists of a body of complex narratives rather than a singular narrative.[22]

Citizenship is thus about both the individual member's engagement with the community and goals that are achieved interactionally between participants – something that can be ratified, ignored, modified or contested. The actions relating to the road signs in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono are statements performed by individuals about relationships between Sámi, Norwegians and Kven. Furthermore, citizenship can be described as embodied practice – actions that have developed into and become established dispositions that frame future actions. In this way, citizenship is a mode of conduct that is acquired through "routines, rituals, customs, norms and habits of the everyday"[23] – that is, citizenship as habitus.[24] In this sense, education plays a major role in developing a mode of conduct in the relationships between individuals and the community.

AN EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY: INDIGENISING EDUCATION IN GÁIVOUTNA–KÅFJORD–KAIVUONO

As indicated in the prologue, citizenship positions in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono are in flux, and the trilingual road signs discussed above identify three main social positions or insider groups – Sámi, Norwegian and Kven – all of which can be combined and enacted in individual and unique ways. One important step to recognition of the Sámi after a long period of oppression was the establishment of a Sámi administrative area in 1992. In our view, the politicians behind this initiative performed an act of citizenship that renegotiated the possible stances towards Sámi. With this decision, Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono took on the responsibility to actively contribute to the revitalisation and reclamation of the language, culture and society of the Sea Sámi. The main tools for this task were the right to use Sámi language in communication with local authorities and societal institutions (like health services and church services) and the right to learn Sámi and to have Sámi-medium education.

This decision was part of a chain of acts intended to change previously held assimilatory notions of citizenship. During the nineteenth century, the monolingual and monocultural Norwegian citizen was the ideal, and there was no place either for Sámi or other ethnic groups in the nation-building exercise of the new nation of Norway. The process of differentiating between previous union members Norway and Denmark was fuelled by ideas of nationalism, national romanticism, social Darwinism and state security.[25] The long-term outcomes of the state's assimilation policy are complex. Notably, acquiring official membership of the social categories Sámi and Kven became very difficult under the prevailing socio-political conditions. For example, Sámi and Kven were forbidden languages in many schools, and schools and the municipality in general presented as culturally Norwegian. While neither the Sámi nor the Kven languages disappeared, they were silenced in the official and public sphere – and hence banished to the private sphere – or were interpreted as an abandoned stage in national life and history.[26]

During the ethno-political awakening of the 1970s and 1980s, Sámi language and culture were revitalised. The establishment of the Sámi administrative area is thus part of a chain of acts of citizenship that renegotiated subject positions, not as a binary system restricted to Sámi and Norwegian, but something offering more dynamic and relational positions. The new political process facilitated the shift from an idealised monolingual and monocultural citizen to an idealised multicultural and multilingual citizen with affiliations with more than one social group or nation.

This was a shift from an essentialist towards a more constructivist idea of citizenship. Today in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, it is possible to take part in citizenship processes within Norwegian, Sámi and Kven collectives, and one is not required to choose one kind of citizenship over another. This situation reflects what Bauböck calls "citizenship constellations."[27]

According to the above model, indigenising education in Gáivuotna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono implies a shift from being mainstream Norwegian to becoming Indigenous Sámi. The municipality was obliged to replace the national Norwegian curriculum with the Sámi curriculum when it was introduced in 1997. This new curriculum was an integral part of the national curriculum and was a parallel to the curriculum taught in mainstream schools. The Sámi curriculum, which has been revised in subsequent curriculum reforms, is for use by schools in Sámi municipalities – or, more accurately, municipalities that have decided that they identify as a Sámi municipality. The Sámi curriculum is developed in collaboration between the Norwegian educational authorities and the Sámi Parliament, which is a recognised body for consultation between the Norwegian government and the Sámi. The content of the Sámi curriculum is partly based on Indigenous knowledge – but, most importantly, it is now possible for students to have a Sámi-medium education. At the same time, however, questions have arisen regarding the extent to which the new curriculum covers the diverse situations and interests of Sámi students.[28]

In the process of indigenising education in Gáivuotna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, teachers in local schools have an important role to play. Before the ethno-political awakening, most teachers were non-Sámi from southern Norway. Over time, teachers with local and Sámi backgrounds were hired, including those with Sámi language competence. Since the Sámi curriculum was introduced in Gáivuotna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, most students have nevertheless chosen to have a Norwegian-medium education and to learn Sámi as a second language. Today, a handful of students in the municipality also learn Kven as an additional language.

Following the Sámi curriculum and choosing a strategy of indigenisation involves some challenges. In conversation, school leaders in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono told us that the Sámi curriculum did not fit well with local students and the needs of the municipality. The curriculum appears to be biased towards the "dominant" inland Sámi communities.[29] In the inland region of Sápmi, the Sámi language is in a strong position even after decades of assimilation. In addition, the major Sámi institutions – the Sámi parliament, the Sámi University of Applied Sciences, and the Sámi broadcaster – are all located there. By contrast, the people of Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono feel that they are on the periphery of both Norway and Sápmi. This is mirrored in local people's stories about belonging and self-identification. On the one hand, people see themselves in terms of 'both–and' – both Sámi, Kven and Norwegian – and, on the other hand, as 'neither–nor' – neither fully Norwegian, fully Sámi nor fully Kven.[30] At the same time, since the 1990s Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono has been host to important Indigenous institutions, such as the Center for Northern Peoples and the international Riddu Riđđu festival. These institutions – and the events related to them – have contributed to new Sámi experiences and a sense of identity in both the local and international contexts. Consequently, the local community in the twenty-first century differs in some important respects from the community's situation in the aftermath of Norwegianisation. The changes and innovations of the last few decades have produced intergenerational tensions, challenges and possibilities. Indigenising education in socio-historical contexts such as this is a complex undertaking.

CAUGHT BETWEEN NATIONAL DEMANDS, LOCAL DEMANDS AND DIVERSITY

Indigenous education works within the framework of national demands and regulations on one side and local demands and diversity on the other. This framework, which consists of relationships on many levels, is not fixed. On the contrary, the various parts of the framework and the relationships between them are constantly – but often all too slowly – changing. In Norway, the national curricula have been changed several times – including reframing the relationship between Norwegian and Sámi – and the system is going through a major phase of revision as we write. At the same time, the local communities where the schools are situated are undergoing changes, both paralleling and diverging from the changes happening in the general community.

For a school and a municipality, following a national curriculum involves responding to demands made at the national level. In Norway, the curriculum is part of the legal system, and thus carries certain obligations for schools. These national demands, as expressed through the curriculum, reveal something about the priorities, practices and organisation of the schools. Following the curriculum, schools need to bear their local communities in mind. The curriculum will come into play in local communities with diverse needs and characteristics. For Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono and other municipalities following the Sámi curriculum, an additional authority stands behind national educational standards: the Sámi curriculum is devised and authorised both by the government and by the Sámi parliament.

This arrangement suggests that the national and local levels of the education system are in a hierarchical scalar relationship, where national curricula play a major role in framing and changing practices in the local schools. As previously stated, there is an institutional tardiness at work when it comes to educational reform, meaning that the structures of colonisation are still being maintained despite the desired move towards indigenisation. Educational reforms work slowly. It takes time from the introduction and ratification of a given reform to its having an effect on classroom practices.

Our analysis of educational reform in the Norwegianised municipality of Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, paired with the discussion of Indigenous education, shows that the municipality has undergone a process of indigenisation. In the 1990s, Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono started using road signs with Sámi place names, as well as following the Sámi curriculum. This was not the easiest path to walk. There was a good deal of negative reaction from locals, resistance and backlash. And the Sámi curriculum is not exactly tailor-made either for a Sea Sámi community or for the Kven minority in the community.

This leads us to identify some potential challenges relating to the indigenisation of education. Despite its obvious necessity in many areas, indigenisation is not a static set of tasks or recipes for use in all communities. We see three main challenges, none of which, however, suggests that the entire process of indigenisation be abandoned. On the contrary, we suggest that challenging indigenisation implies taking it seriously and enables us to move the process further along. Firstly, following our case from Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, *indigenisation tends to be primarily based on the needs of the dominant Indigenous group*. In a Sámi setting, this means that the 'Sáminess' of the school system reflects the Sáminess of the realities of Sápmi. The Sámi used in

the curriculum and in textbooks is mainly the (North) Sámi language used in the core, inland Sámi areas.[31] The more peripheral and assimilated Sea Sámi communities, like Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, struggle to find a place in this picture.

This relates to the second challenge, the fact that *indigenisation does not necessarily respond to Indigenous diversity*. A similar trend is seen in the movement for Indigenous methodologies in research. As important as Indigenous methodologies have been in the emphasis on Indigenous perspectives, voices and epistemologies in research, questions have been raised over the lack of perspectives relating to gender and Indigenous diversity.[32] Kajsa Kemi Gjerpe shows that in both Sápmi/Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand there is a tendency within Indigenous education to highlight and prioritise Sámi and kaupapa Māori schools respectively, even though the majority of Sámi and Māori children attend mainstream schools.[33] In Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, this is felt through the experience of being outside the Sámi mainstream. Indigenous communities belong to different parts of a cultural interface determined by historical changes and by the processes of colonisation, revitalisation, urbanisation and other factors. This has created a huge diversity between and even within specific Indigenous communities.

Thirdly, *indigenisation can lead to the silencing of other minorities within a community*. Within the Norwegian system, the Sámi are recognised as an Indigenous people and enjoy a far-reaching set of rights. In addition, there are five other groups that are recognised as national minorities, including the Kven. They all enjoy some rights, but not to the same extent as the Sámi. The differences within the national curriculum are striking. In Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, the differences in rights between the Sámi and the Kven are palpable. If the Sámi children in the municipality struggle to have an education that fits their language level, Kven children are in an even more challenging situation. There are parallels here with the situation in Aotearoa New Zealand, where the emphasis on and recognition of Māori means that Polynesian children do not receive the same attention when it comes to language education policy.[34]

Of course, we do not suggest abandoning indigenisation as a strategy and process in education. Acknowledging the challenges of indigenisation, however, calls for the presentation of alternatives and a nuanced approach. Again, we point to Indigenous methodologies for a potential solution. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues that decolonising methodologies need to be locally based.[35] This means that although Indigenous methodologies can share a set of assumptions and theoretical foundations, they will vary from one Indigenous context to another. Similarly, indigenising education can be conducted in many different contexts, sharing some assumptions and theoretical foundations. At the same time, indigenising education will (and should) mean different things based on local diversity and local contexts. Recalling Nakata's theory of the cultural interface, we call for an indigenising of education that is open to diversity and the notion of continua. Consequently, utilising Smith's perspectives and ideas on decolonising methodologies in practice means considering and applying local diversity and the concept of the cultural interface in Indigenous education. Along the same lines, Battiste's and other Indigenous scholars' perspectives and ideas on decolonising education suggest similar solutions as well as accounting for local diversity and the local character of the interface. Indigenising education in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono means taking perspectives and ideas from both local and national Sámi contexts, as well as the literature on Indigenous education, and applying them in the local situation.

EPILOGUE

Providing an indigenised education in a community where road signs incorporating Indigenous languages are shot at and vandalised is not an easy task. Back in the sign-shooting days of the 1990s, Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono was a community marked by strong boundaries between ethnic groups. Today, trilingual signs are left standing. In the local political climate today, there is less emphasis on boundaries and differences. Seen through the lens of the cultural interface, there are numerous subject positions available for the citizens of Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, whether Sámi, Kven or Norwegian. At the same time, not all conflicts or dichotomies have disappeared. There is still tension when Sámi and Kven issues are spoken of – even in educational settings. However, the recognition of the community and its people as a diverse group can be interpreted as a recognition of living in an interface situation. The trilingual road signs – as well as the municipality's trilingual classrooms – can now be 'ours' instead of 'the others'.'

One outcome of combining our empirical work on Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono with devising a model for understanding Indigenous education is the recognition that any model must be fluid and dynamic. Thus, the educational situation in Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono, both in the 1990s and today, cannot simply be put in a single box. Rather, we need to be aware of the potential for movement within the model and the possibility of seeing schools' practices as multi-faceted, occupying several positions on the model simultaneously.

Torjer A. Olsen is professor in Indigenous studies at the Centre for Sámi Studies, UiT The Arctic University of Norway. His research interests include Indigenous issues in education, research methodologies in Indigenous studies, and gender in Indigenous communities.

Hilde Sollid is professor of Scandinavian studies at the Department of Education, UiT The Arctic University of Norway. Hilde Sollid main research area is sociolinguistics, with a special focus on linguistic diversity and multilingualism in Northern Norway. Sollid is currently working on the project *Indigenous Citizenship and Education*, funded by the Research Council of Norway, where she explores topics related to Sámi language education policy and indigenous education.

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