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Indigenous sport and nature – a case study of a Sámi sport club

Eivind Å. Skille 

Department of Public Health and Sport Sciences, Section for Sports and Physical Education, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Elverum, Norway

ABSTRACT

Applying a broad interpretation of education, this paper investigates how one Sámi (the Indigenous people of Northern Norway) sports club teaches traditional lingual knowledge to its youth members. Using Wittgenstein's language philosophy and Mead's understanding of figurative cultures as theoretical frameworks, and qualitative methods, two relatively contradictory sets of findings were revealed. First, the content of the education focusing on the accuracy and functionality of Sámi words for elements of nature based on traditional Sámi knowledge; second, the education takes modern forms. Sport club is a modern concept, as is *friluftsliv* – the Norwegian/Scandinavian way of nature life often aiming at recreation and experience of nature aesthetics—which is apparently challenging the traditional Sámi nature life aiming at purposefulness in every aspect. The paper also shows the dispute and actuality surrounding the Sámi accuracy of words for nature elements.

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Introduction

The perception, understanding and pursuance of nature are related to culture and context. Traditionally, Indigenous peoples have a close and practical relationship to nature. For example, Orr and Ruppner (2016) claim that the 'association of American Indians with nature is one of the more enduring and socially romantic themes in American history and culture. Perhaps a few other ethnic groups have had their activities, spirituality or identity so associated with one entity' (p. 1223). Although admitting that American Indians have a prominent place in Western history, Sherpas in the Himalayas, tribes in Papua New Guinea and Aborigines in Australia are good competitors. Sámi, the Indigenous people of the North Calotte, share with the Indians a specialized expertise to live with nature, through various lifeforms: as gatherers, hunters, fishers and reindeer herders (O. M. Hætta, 2002). Modern lifestyles disconnected to nature (Roberts et al., 2019) influence Indigenous peoples including the Sámi (Nergård, 2019). Whilst knowledge and understanding of nature no longer develops through natural activities in small communities and is rarely included in formal education (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017, 2018; Olsen, 2019), the importance of contexts where people meet across generations increases (Mead, 1970). Considering education as broader than intended transmission of knowledge as in schools, every social context—including organized leisure—facilitates education (Azzarito & Ennis, 2003; Palincsar, 1998; One such setting is voluntary sports clubs (Skille, 2007) because among a diversity of social contexts these fit into many young peoples' lives (Cosgriff et al., 2012; Wright et al., 2003).

CONTACT Eivind Å. Skille  eivind.skille@inn.no  Department of Public Health and Sport Sciences, Section for Sports and Physical Education, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Elverum 2418, Norway

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Departing from studies into Indigenous sport and nation-building (Beacom, 1998; Davis, 2013; Maclean & Field, 2014), a study into Sámi sport (Fahlen & Skille, 2017; Skille & Broch, 2019; Skille & Fahlén, 2020; Skille, 2019) revealed unexpected findings related to nature. These findings shed light on both the role of sport clubs in local communities in Norway today (Seippel & Skille, 2019), and the longstanding importance of nature in Sámi culture (Nergård, 2019; O. M. Hætta, 2002) – reflected in a detailed and precise language regarding natural elements (Eira, 2012). Thus, this paper shows how apparently mutually exclusive elements merge when a sports club facilitates the education of traditional Sámi language about nature. The article is guided by the research question: What is a Sámi sport club in Norway's approach to the education of Sámi language about nature? While the empirical material is limited, a narrative from a Sámi sport club elaborated below touches upon largest phenomena: sport as a cultural phenomenon in Norway and how it can merge with Sami ethnicity and indigeneity, tradition and modernity. Nature refers to the physical environment of human surroundings; not strictly untouched by humans (as 'wilderness') but as a broad view on landscapes where the relatively untouched and the partly human made interact (as is shown in the main section below). Next, I describe the Sámi context followed by a note on theoretical perspectives before the methods are presented. The Results and Discussion section presents the narrative; empirical examples of traditional natural language are presented, and a complexity of Norwegian-Sámi and tradition-modernity is scrutinized.

Context: Sámi and Sápmi

The Sámi are the Indigenous people of the North Calotte, inhabiting the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the north-western part of Russia. The land of the Sámi is called Sápmi. After millennia of cohabitation with Norwegians, Swedes, Finns, Russians, and these peoples' predecessors, the Sámi were victims of a harsh assimilation policy since nation states were created and the powers wanted a single united citizenry in each state. Consequently, the Sámi people in Norway experienced a hundred years-long 'Norwegianization' process (approximately 1850–1950). Sámi culture, especially language, was amended. Although Sámi culture varies geographically and transforms dynamically to modernization processes, one result of the assimilation process was a divided Sápmi (Andresen et al., 2021); with core Sámi areas in the inland districts and revitalized Sámi areas along the coastline. In addition, many Sámi live outside Sápmi, partly in cities in the south (O. M. Hætta, 2002).

Today, the Sámi are well integrated into Norwegian society and participate in the Norwegian voluntary sector in line with other citizens. Community sports clubs are the context in which most youth, Sámi as well as Norwegians, spend the most organized time outside school (Rafoss & Hines, 2016; Seippel & Skille, 2019). Moreover, Sámi and other Indigenous peoples spend more time in nature during their everyday lives than other parts of the population (Rafoss & Hines, 2016; Roberts et al., 2019). Sámi also have their own organizations for example, the Sámi sport organization: Sámi Valastallan Lihtu-Norga (SVL-N) organizes universal activities including skiing and football,¹ and Sámi-specific sports, such as reindeer racing and lassoing.

Sámi sport clubs refer to members of SVL-N (often in addition to being members in the Norwegian sports organization, NIF); in contrast to Norwegian sports clubs that are members of the NIF (only). The Sámi sport clubs are usually located in Sámi areas, but there is no ethnic criterion for individuals' membership in sport clubs. In that respect, Sámi (Indigenous) and Norwegian (Western) cultures merge in the Sámi sport clubs. By 2018, 23 clubs with 3785 individuals were members of SVL-N (Skille, 2019). The focal sport club is located in a typical Sámi village where many, although not all, speak Sámi in everyday life. The sports club is bilingual, and its identity is Sámi. It is also a bi-cultural and bi-organization as a member of both the Norwegian and the Sámi sport organisations.

Theoretical perspectives

Looking into international works (e.g. Harrison, 2005; Olsen & Andreassen, 2017) and specific works of Sámi in Norway (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018; Sollid & Olsen, 2019, 2019), they consider the formal school system—hereunder its curricula and teaching. The point here is that informal education takes place in voluntary sport clubs. Building on Nergård (2019) and given the focal sport club's emphasis on functional elements of language, one theoretical inspiration is Wittgenstein's (1021, 1951) language philosophy. Second, leaning on Indigenous lifeforms' proximity to nature and the informal setting of education (Azzarito & Ennis, 2003; Palincsar, 1998; Wright et al., 2003), another theoretical perspective describes 'the process of cultures preparing for the future and adapting to change' (Dutch, 2013, p. 1): Mead's (1970) concept of figurative cultures.

Wittgenstein's (1921, 1953) philosophy consists of two consecutive theories.² The first can be summarized in the well-known quotation: 'What can be said, can be said clearly' (Wittgenstein, 1921, foreword), preconditioning an underlying structure of thought and language; the latter is the communication of the former. The structure enables us to understand and describe a phenomenon. When thought and reality share a logical structure, language uses symbols following the logic to picture, mirror, mimic or model reality (Wittgenstein, 1921). Later, Wittgenstein regarded his first theory as an oversimplification. Thus, his second theory claims that language gets its meaning in specific contexts. Clear expression requires an anthropological enquiry into the focal context; lingual meaning is locally and culturally dependent (Wittgenstein, 1953). Therefore, the theory is relevant for the study of a Sámi sport club situated in its surrounding nature.

Mead's (1970) categories of culture depend on the speed of change: stable/slow, intermediate, or fast. Each category is characterized by interrelationships between how knowledge transfers across generations. Which generation that is most knowledgeable differs as the speed of cultural change accelerates. In post-figurative culture, contemporary challenges are solved by using the past as guidance and considering the knowledge required to be contained within the eldest generation. The world is stable, and the future is considered a replica of the past; by educating the youth through traditions. Post-figurative cultures are typical for isolated societies. Second, a configurative culture deals with cultural challenges, including new situations that are different to those of the past whereby each generation confers internally. Parents consult other parents, and children communicate with peers. This is typical for modern Western societies with migration where there is no established behaviour from the parent generation serving as a model. Pre-figurative cultures exist when the required solutions to cultural challenges are perceived to exist in future generations. When a younger generation has the skills to solve cultural change, education works 'backwards.' An example is information technology where youth teach parents. Any of the cultural forms may apply to the study of education in authentic leisure settings (Azzarito & Ennis, 2003; Palincsar, 1998; Wright et al., 2003).

Material and methods

This paper originates in an overarching study into Sámi sport clubs and nation building of Sápmi, and which was developed into a case study of one sport club. Originally, I interviewed board members from three clubs in core Sámi areas, two clubs in revitalized Sámi areas, and one club in Oslo. I followed an interview guide with five main topics: 1) the activities of the sport club; 2) the organization of the sport club; 3) the policy of the sport club; 4) local identity; and 5) nation building. In this paper, I consider two interviews from one specific sport club from a Sámi village and present results mainly from section four, with questions, such as '(How) does sport create belonging?' and probes like 'How, please exemplify.' Although questions or probes about nature were not part of the interview guide, many responses pointed in a nature focused direction; therefore, I developed this overarching phenomenological analysis into a small case study; let me elaborate.

The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and subjected to a five-step phenomenological analysis (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008; Giorgi, 2012). In Step 1, I read through the interviews to familiarize with the data, and took notes on immediate reflections (Skille, 2019). In Step 2, I identified meaning-units based on the texts of all 10 interviews. In Step 3, I transformed the response of the sports club representatives into applicable expressions to support the draft text. One unexpected outcome of the analysis was adult leaders' – of one specific sport club—consciousness about facilitating younger members' learning of lingual features of local nature. This unintended finding occurred especially relevant to combine with previous knowledge about Sámi language's precise terms used in nature (E. K. Hætta & Vangen, 2019; Eira, 2012; Guovddas, 2012; Åsheim, 2013), thus, I developed this case study of one sports club between steps 3 and 4. Following Yin's (2003) idea of combining available sources to shed light on a case, I added information from the sports club and local authority internet sites. Due to anonymity, they are not cited directly.

In step 4, I identified the main message expressed by interviewees, selecting quotations for the manuscript, including translation of relevant quotations into English. Because 'terms not found in the transformed meaning-units are required to describe' the phenomenon (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003, p. 253), I added theoretical terms for interpretive purposes in step 5. Through steps 4 and 5, I combined interview transcripts and the online information. Tracking back-and-forth between the elements and the empirical whole, I conducted a hermeneutic analysis, organizing text to carve out a narrative (Alexander & Smith, 2001). The next section presents the narrative and describes how the focal sport club facilitates education in traditional Sámi nature language in a modern world and in a modern way.

In addition to following classic qualitative approaches including formal ethical approval (the Norwegian Centre for Research Data), Indigenous research requires understanding of Indigenous peoples (Chilisa, 2012; Denzin et al., 2008; Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2009). Regarding Sámi sport and culture, I consider myself as neither an insider nor an outsider—but rather an 'in-betweeners'; I am a non-Sámi North-Norwegian. I grew up in core Sámi areas, with Sámi friends and cousins, partially playing Sámi sport (without reflecting upon it before I became a researcher), speaking the typical (far north Norwegian) dialect of the Sámi areas and claiming general knowledge into Sámi culture. To make my point, I borrowed a citation from Torjer Olsen, Professor of Indigenous Studies, which could be mine: 'Stating my Norwegian identity, implies that I do not self-identify as a Sámi ... Being from the north of Norway, however, complicates the story. ... My family turned out Norwegian' (Olsen, 2017, p. 522).

Results and discussion

The focal sports club is located in core Sámi areas. Interviews with representatives from several sports clubs in the municipality underscored the meaning of nature for local identity. The local identity is complex and refers to several layers. Sometimes, local identity refers to a specific village with one specific sports club. On other occasions, local identity refers to the municipality that comprises several villages and sports clubs. The ethnic element is often incorporated in the local identity: 'Well, we are a Sámi municipality, it is as simple as that' (Interviewee # 1). The ethnic element is important *and* simultaneously often taken-for-granted. For example, the statements 'We are Sámi and proud of it' and 'So the "Sámi-ness" is not a big deal here with us' appear within a couple of minutes within the same interview (Interviewee # 1). In addition to the Sámi element of local identity, nature was very important. As one interviewee shared, they live in 'a coastal Sámi community. That is an important part of the identity' (Interviewee #1). In other words, local identity is particularly related to the sea, the interviews often referred to themselves as 'coastal Sámi' (see also Skille, 2019).

Nevertheless, the coastal Sámi culture is a complex phenomenon (Nergård, 2019), which includes activities and industries both off- and onshore. Another interviewee elaborated on the diversity by listing several nature-related industries: 'The culture is closely connected to the primary industry, the sea, agriculture and reindeer herding. You can sense that, although not everybody works in the

primary industries. . . .’ (Interviewee # 3). The latter is important, despite a declining number of inhabitants that work in the primary industries and that natural everyday relationship with nature diminishes as part of a modern world (statistics from the municipality homepage). Against this backdrop, I move on to present and discuss the specific findings of one sport club’s nature education. I first present a section focusing on traditional Sámi language, and second, a section concerning the complexity of biculturalism, tradition and modernity.

Traditional Sámi language

The interviewees, who were board members and parent coaches in the focal sports club, described the use of a hiking trail in a valley and along a small river in the immediate vicinity of the village. The sports club takes the responsibility of providing signposts in Sámi language and thus combines phases of Mead’s (1970) categories of culture. Regarding the signs along the hiking trail, I will emphasise two interrelated points. First, the names for specific places along the trail refer to recognizable natural features. Second, the words provide additional information that implies ‘functionality.’ Especially the latter point comprises the ‘Sámi-ness’ of the words, which I later compare to another study, which is elaborating on the variety of terms used for ‘snow’ (Eira, 2012).

The sports club provides historical and contextual information about the nature area in which the trail is located: ‘One has gathered natural resources like cloudberry, grouse, fish, wood for building, wood for heating, winter food for animals, and *senna grass*. *Senna grass* is used in traditional Sámi shoes made of reindeer fur. The sports club informs about the long-term use of the area, and about a transition in the use of the area, from a focus on primary industry and livelihood activities, to a recreational use of nature in the form of *friluftsliv*. In that respect, the sport club’s use of the term *friluftsliv* apparently refers to a narrow understanding of the concept, see below. The historic use of the area goes back several millennia to the period prior to the domestication of the reindeer. At that time, the reindeer were chased into pits—grave traps—where they were captured and slaughtered. Modern animal husbandry employs fences to control the domesticated animals.

Closely associated with the historical element of reindeer hunting, the sports club provides a list of Sámi names along the trail. As one interviewee informs me: ‘We have made signs along the [sport club] path as we call it . . . All the way up to the [sport club hut] there are a lot of Sámi signs where we have explanations for the names’ (Interviewee # 4). The words originate from various points in time and refer to both naturally shaped and human created features in the landscape details. Let me provide some examples. *Ágget* stems from *ágjet*, which means ‘chasing’ and refers to rushing wild animals into grave traps. The grave traps originated in the 11–13th centuries and are a hunting method and digging style stemming from the Stone Age. *Guopmejeagge* has origins in *guopm* – a version of *guomu* that means ‘animal stomach.’ Thus, *Guopmejeagge* referred to the place where reindeer herders kept the animal stomachs after slaughter and was in use in the focal area until the 1950s. While *Guopmejeagge* is an example of the recent history of human creation, *Giškánanjohka* has a longer history and reflects a natural formation. First, *giškánan* is a remnant of the eastern Sámi language indicating that the northern Sámi language is influenced by people migrating from Russia to Norway (measured by today’s borders). Second, the word refers to natural features, but which no longer exist. The sign explains: ‘the stream going into the fjord, delta-like during low tides, or it could stem from the time the stream curved to the east before it curves back to the west.’

The last example, *Smilče* is indeed functional. It refers to a winter road so close to a cliff that one should be aware of it so as not to trip. The point is that there is information embedded in the word itself, about how it would be wise to act in nature and thus shares with the best-known example of accuracy when referring to natural features in Sámi language, namely snow. Eira (2012) identified a ‘total of 318 traditional Sámi concepts of various types of snow and snow conditions’ related to reindeer herding. In addition to ‘concepts containing elements of the physical nature of snow and ice,’ these concepts have ‘a wider meaning than snow physics, which can be defined as basic concepts in reindeer herding related to reindeer survival mobility, tracking conditions and visibility’

(p. 125). It depends on the snow's consistency, density, carrying capacity (regarding both animals and humans), if it is wind affected, if there are thin or thick layers, and the type of the snow or ice. For example, the word *Seanáás* refers to dry, soft snow that does not carry, but makes it easy for reindeer to graze.

The empirical examples of words on signs along the trail and Eira's (2012) snow study both confirm Wittgenstein's (1921) first thesis about clarity in language. Moreover, combining the later theory of Wittgenstein (1953) with the empirical examples, words and meanings are highly context—dependent. Lingual accuracy regarding the carrying capability of snow for reindeer does not make much sense outside the reindeer herding community. The explanations of words and meanings that provide examples of historical and natural context dependencies are in line with Wittgenstein's (1953) reflections about language and reality; the words along the sports club trail reflects historical and contemporary lifeforms of a specific area (Nergård, 2019, pp. 29–32). Although each word is Sámi and refers to a specific meaning, the way the knowledge is communicated today takes complex forms.

The signs provide local historical information regarding implications for appropriate or recommended action at a given location (literally where the sign stands). However, two contextual points are, first, that the time and history have changed and continuously change on the land of the trail, and second that the local findings can be connected to global Indigenous issues. Regarding the former, it should be reminded that the words—and not least the meanings of them—presented on the signs along the trail were developed in historical contexts differing from each other and indeed differing from the context in which the sport club and its youth members live and learn. The point is that the meaning may—and indeed does—differ (much) from the meaning as perceived among today's hikers.

Regarding the Sámi tradition and culture and broader Indigenous concerns, while many and specific words in the Sámi language describe particular natural conditions, there is no general term for wilderness because traditionally, human culture and nature are one and the same for the Sámi (Nergård, 2019). The specificity of Sámi understanding of nature finds parallels among many other Indigenous peoples (and among many Norwegians). In that respect, by way of example, the following was written by the Sicangu and Oglala Lakota (Indian) chief, Luther Standing Bear but could well have been written by a (an old) Sámi:

The American Indian is of the soil, whether it be the region of forests, plains, pueblos, or mesas. He fits into the landscape, for the hand that fashioned the continent also fashioned the man for his surroundings. He once grew as naturally as the wild sunflowers, he belongs just as the buffalo belonged . . .

(cited in Orr & Ruppanner, 2016, 1223).

Another point to pick up on, is how the term *friluftsliv* was used by the sports club and its representatives. When it is presented as a recreational phenomenon as opposed to nature usage, it applies what Breivik (1978) called 'the city's' *friluftsliv* (with recreational purposes) as opposed to the rural *friluftsliv* where berry picking, fishing and hunting dominated. These terms are still in use (go fishing, etc.) while the term *friluftsliv* relatively recently has become part of the everyday vocabulary in the researched context (K. Pedersen, 1999).

Bi-cultural complexity of tradition and modernity

The educational element of Sámi nature language is complex: Norwegian and Sámi go hand in hand, as do tradition and modernity. The focal educational factor in Sámi nature language is conducted through the modern and 'Western' construction of a sports club. In that respect, it should be recalled that sport developed alongside nation states and assimilation policies. Hence, the tension and merger of Sámi and Norwegian counts for some of the content of the sport clubs' education. In order to make my point, let me move on with an empirical detour. At the end of the hiking trail, there is a hut. The sport club explains that the hut is a traditional *bealljegaahhti*: A construction made of

curved birch poles, old birch (wood and bark), peat and stone. A point is that *bealljegahti* – or *gamme* in Norwegian—is natural and traditional. According to official guidelines:

Gamme in the wilderness is a construction made directly on the forest floor with on-site materials. . . . That means that the *gamme* must be made by materials, which through decay is repatriated with nature

and no further processing is necessary.

Moreover, regarding tradition and culture, two points are first that ‘the *gamme* shall follow local traditions for constructions’ regarding both materials and building style (municipality webpage). Neither the guidelines nor the interviewees state anything about ethnicity in relation to the local traditions for construction. Another point is that ‘the *gamme* shall not be locked. That means that the *gamme* shall be available for everybody who roams in nature. This is in line with the general law about public access to nature: ‘Outdoor recreation is an important part of our cultural heritage in Norway. Since ancient times, we have had the right to roam freely in forests and open country, along rivers, on lakes, among the skerries, and in the mountains;’ ‘irrespective of who owns the land’ (Norwegian Environment Agency, 2013, p. 2).

Overall, the *gamme* phenomenon is ‘natural’ both regarding physical materials, as well as socially and culturally. It is bi-cultural or ‘non-ethnic;’ apparently, nobody makes a deal about ethnicity if it is local. In the local community in general and in the sport club in particular, people just refer to it as ‘[sport club] *gamme*’ as part of everyday speech and activity for local people; it thus apparently merges Sámi tradition and Norwegian culture, politics, and law: ‘the main principles of the right to roam are legally enshrined in the Outdoor Recreation Act’ (Norwegian Environment Agency, 2013, p. 2). Let me add some nuances and remind the reader that I have used the term ‘apparently’ on several occasions. While *gamme* is a Sámi artefact (S. Pedersen, n.d.), the connection between *gamme* and the *friluftsliv* act confirms how ancient principles regarding cultural heritage of using nature includes both Sámi and Norwegian elements (Ministry of Climate and Environment, 1957).

Along a similar line of cultural merger, the sport club uses the location for events on various occasions: training camps, social gatherings, and to ‘organize a *friluftsliv* camp that we arrange every year . . . it is always by the [sport club] *gamme* up here [in the woods]’ (Interviewee # 4). As indicated above, the concept of *friluftsliv* – as used by the sports club and its representatives—apparently aligns with a narrow, national romantic Scandinavian concept referring to something based on outdoor life, open-air activities, outdoor education or outdoor adventure (Hofmann et al., 2018). It thus challenges both rural Norwegian and Sámi ways of understanding and using nature. The term is contested because it was coined in the middle of the 19th century during the nation-building period of Norway. As there is no English equivalent, there is also no Sámi equivalent to *friluftsliv*. An associated and frequently used Sámi word is *meahcástallan*, a generic term referring to activities, such as: gathering, fishing, hunting, collecting wood for fuel or handcraft, and so forth. In other words, the Sámi focus is on doing something useful whenever being in nature and stands in stark contrast to the city’s *friluftsliv* (Breivik, 1978). In that respect, it should be noted that a categorization of *friluftsliv* risks understanding the phenomenon as static and veils that traditions evolve. Thus, it is timely to mention that K. Pedersen (1999) showed—studying in contexts comparable to the sport club and village of this study—how locals referred to their activities as, for example, go fishing or pick berries; in that respect, the term *friluftsliv* was—three decades ago—a recent introduction to the everyday talk (K. Pedersen, 1999).

The point is that the introduction of the term *friluftsliv* went rather un-reflected into local languages. Thus, it is time to pick up on the theoretical apparatus about learning in cultures as the focal sport club educates youth through a combination of various forms of culture. Mead’s (1970) three categories of culture: post figurative, co-figurative and pre-figurative, are all at play simultaneously in the focal sport club. On the one hand, the sport club educates youth in post-figurative knowledge, when conducting classic teaching—the transfer of knowledge from older to younger members: ‘We . . . have a local historian who teaches [the youth] about historical events at specific places and teaches them the meaning of different local names’ (Interviewee # 4). However, it does

not provide information needed to survive in the modern world but is conceived of as necessary in order to create and maintain local identity in modern Norway, including that of the Sámi. Modern lifestyles have led to increased severance with nature (Roberts et al., 2019) also among the Sámi people in Norway (Nergård, 2019). The transfer of Sámi language as applied to nature, takes modern ways of education. The particularity of the narrative is that education takes place in a leisure-time context (Azzarito & Ennis, 2003; Palincsar, 1998; Wright et al., 2003).

In this study, a sports club plays the role of educator. Sports clubs were initially founded and established as a phenomenon during the so-called Enlightenment in Europe, paralleled by colonization and suppression of Indigenous peoples. The Norwegianization process undertaken by the Norwegian state towards the Sámi (and other minorities) persisted until just a few generations ago. Whilst 'greater outdoor time likely has many origins' (Orr & Ruppner, 2016, 1236), culture and nature are complex phenomena, as are education and identity. Hence, traditional educational discourse in Norway (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018; Sollid & Olsen, 2019, 2019), as, for example, in New Zealand, is dominated by colonists' 'curricula, pedagogy, assessment apparatus, and achievement objectives' (Cosgriff et al., 2012, p. 226). Where 'Maori ways of knowing have been devalued' (p. 226) in New Zealand, Sámi knowledge is overlooked and even actively overruled in Norway (Olsen, 2019). While voluntary organizations focusing on leisure time activities may supplement to educate youth, the focal sport club adds to other revitalizing processes of the Sámi in Norway; including state supported institutions (a Sámi parliament, a Sámi branch of the state broadcaster, a Sámi college, a court for trials in Sámi language) and the inclusion of Sámi elements in the Norwegian school curriculum (Andresen et al., 2021).

Concluding remarks

Approaching the end of this paper about a Sámi sport club's education of the Sámi language applied to nature, I will indicate how the phenomenon of lingual accuracy of Sámi nature terminology is practically and publicly relevant. In 2019, two police leaders with Sámi heritage claimed that knowledge about the meaning of Sámi words for nature can save lives (E. K. Hætta & Vangen, 2019). They were referring to a winter with many snow avalanche deaths (NGI, 2019). They were criticized by the Norwegian Mapping Authority for being inaccurate in their criticism of Sámi words on maps (A. -K. Pedersen, 2019). The point is that the phenomenon of Sami words meaning and function in nature is 'alive and kicking.' Thus, the Sámi sport club fulfils a role of engaging in local Indigenous youth's 'understandings of the environment and activities of everyday life' (Orr & Ruppner, 2016, 1226). Just like American Indians, Sámi youth spend an increasing amount of time in nature in their everyday lives compared to the rest of the population (Rafoss & Hines, 2016). Hence, affinity with nature endures as a theme across generations and disciplines, reflecting the Indigenous identity and its strong natural elements.

While a Sámi sport club in northern Norway aimed at education of specific lingual knowledge in order to foster cultural pride, 'different approaches to outdoor learning and teaching . . . demonstrate a responsiveness to the specifics of the people and contexts and their unique social, cultural and ecological histories (and futures)' (Cosgriff et al., 2012, p. 229). This study shows how sport clubs contribute to the preservation of traditional natural knowledge, with tradition and modernity as well as Sámi and Norwegian going hand in hand. Thus, the nature-culture axis is important for a healthy community when knowledge and skills related to Sámi names for nature elements is of strong value, both practically and symbolically. Moreover, this study contributes to pinpoint the importance of linguistic elements in outdoor learning and to the understanding of nature as a multicultural phenomenon. The debate between local police and the state mapping authority, confirms that Indigenous knowledge and language are highly relevant. What is less debated, is who is responsible for the education of traditional knowledge—specifically knowledge and language related to nature. Moving on from this study, I call for a more systematic investigation into education—broadly

understood schools, voluntary organizations and other informal settings—of Sámi nature language. Hereunder, studies could be framed by an Indigenous education theoretical approach.

Notes

1. 'Universal' here refers to sports that are also organized by NIF and that are common in other countries (Skille, 2013).
2. The two theories refer to the so-called early and old Wittgenstein and the works *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (originally 1921) and *Philosophical Investigations* (published posthumously 1953), respectively.

Disclosure statement

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Notes on contributor

Eivind Å. Skille has a PhD in sports sociology from the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences and is currently a professor of the sociology of sport at Inland University of Applied Sciences. His research interests are mainly sports policy and sports organization. The last decade, he has also published into Sámi sport including the relationship to nature. Eivind is from the multicultural community of Tana in Finnmark, on the Norwegian side of Sápmi (the land of the Sámi).

ORCID

Eivind Å. Skille  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7469-7395>

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