

Being Sami Enough

Increasing the Sami Stage of Performance

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Abstract

The area of inner Finnmark is often presented as a core Sami area. Many of the cultural markers that are considered and recognised as Sami, are based on traits from these areas. Based on fieldwork done mainly in inner Finnmark, I argue that there is a constant process of expressing a Sami ethnicity within a performance stage defined by both the norms of "how to be Sami" and the ever evolving and breaking of new grounds for this performance. The process might be conceptualised as two axes; one illustrating a measurement of "purity" and the other the constant means of expanding the boundaries for expressions of the Sami ethnicity. Language is a vital foundation that affects both of these axes; although it is used contextually as a marker of Sami ethnicity, it is still an important, perhaps the most important way to assert ones Sami ethnicity, as it makes out the basis of the objective part of the Sami Act's criteria for how one might be considered Sami. The language is both an important means of communication, and thus social inclusion, but it is also a deeply emotional matter that carries meaning beyond the use as a marker of ethnicity. The *gákti* (Sami traditional clothes) might be considered the most recognised emblem of Sami ethnicity besides the languages. The making of the *gákti* is a process that involves both the continuation of cultural specific knowledge, and the composing of new expressions. As the *gákti* is a garment that pinpoints the wearers geographically based affiliation, it also connects the wearer to a specific social community and might counteract feelings of rootlessness associated with globalisation. Still, it also allows for a range of manipulation within certain boundaries. Based on these two examples, the language and the *gákti*, I argue that while the Sami ethnic identity needs to take on the challenge of including people into the ethnic group that does not necessarily master this knowledge, this might still be a difficult process for many of the people considering this knowledge as vital for themselves and for their ethnic expression.

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Trevor Nickolls: Warmun Mandala (c) Trevor Nickolls/BONO

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Chapter 1: Introduction

*Jag finns visst, jag är feminist, miljöaktivist och pacifist
jag är skoterligist och egoist.
jag är buddhist, jag tror på Jesus Krist
Jag var här först inte sist
Deala inte med mig som en rättstvist
mellan ditt, mitt, rader på vitt,
historiska lögner och påhitt
Antirasist my ass
när du inte ser från vem du snott all din cash
Han, hon, hen, son
av oss stal du landet en gång
Urfolkskvinna, snölejoninna, jag är regnbågen på din näthinna
jag är allt det men jag är mer, mon lean queer, har funnits här i tusentals years
Hej minister, kan jag byta nåt ord
fast du har så litet bord
Det här rör faktiskt vår jord
Vet du om att vi tar självmord
för att vi är för små för att finnas
för att det som rör få inte kan hinnas
Kan du förstå, en vill inte försvinna
när en levt så länge vidder kan minnas
Är det demokrati
när massan styr över såna som vi
Jag vill vara fri, mer än inuti
Är det nåt jag gör är det att höra hit
Urfolkskvinna, snölejoninna, jag är regnbågen på din näthinna
Jag är allt det men jag är mer, mon lean queer, har funnits här i tusentals years.
Eamiálbmot, álo gávdnon, mon lean lejonváibmu garra fámuin
Mon lean gait, bonju maid, arvedávgi ravddas ravdii*

(Snölejoninna – Sofia Jannok, 2016)

A cold summer evening in 2016, I stood on the grass lawn in front of the stage at Riddu Ridđu¹. The people around me were dressed for the cold conditions; some wore gáktis², many also wore poncho-like garments, called luhkka. It was still early in the evening, and the big headliners were yet to enter the stage. The Chinese-Mongolian band Hanggai played a mix of pop-rock and traditional Mongolian music. The vocalist looked like a cross between Genghis Khan and Elvis, dressed in a long fringe coat and round sunglasses. Despite singing in Mongolian, he managed to capture the attention of the crowd. Suddenly, I felt someone ticking my arm. I turned around and saw Anders (25). He was dressed for the occasion, in a gákti. He seemed upset, his eyes wandered. I carefully asked if he was ok, but he seemed lost for words. Finally, he fixed his gaze onto me, and told me what had just happened to him. He shared a lavvo (Sami tent) with some friend, during the festival. It was put up in the tent camp just by, and he had sat there talking to some of his friends when an older man, also wearing a gákti, came in and sat down with them. After listening to them for a while the man turned to Anders and raised his voice. He told him that it was a shame that he, who apparently could not speak Sami, thought it was ok to wear a gákti. Anders left the lavvo without a word.

These two examples; Jannok's lyrics *Snöleoinna*, and Anders experience, illustrate a duality within Sami³ identity politics. Firstly, Jannok opens up for both the combinable *and* consistent identity categories within one and the same person; "I am a feminist, environmentalist and pacifist [...] snowmobile driver, egoist, I am a Buddhist, I believe in Jesus Christ [...] I am queer". Secondly, we have Anders' experience with being called out for wearing a gákti while not being able to speak Sami, which shows expectations and limits for the inclusion into the ethnic group. The aim of this study is to explore different aspects of expressing and asserting one's Sami ethnic identity, especially in regards to what counts as "being Sami enough". I will examine this question within a context of language and the use of the traditional Sami garment, the gákti. As my research and

¹ Riddu Ridđu is an international indigenous peoples' festival held every summer in Manndalen in the municipality of Kåfjord in northern Troms.

² Gákti is the Northern Sami term for the Sami folk dress costume.

³ Sami, Sámi or Saami. I will use the word Sami throughout this thesis.

relevant literature on Sami culture highlight, especially Sami language and the *gákti* seem to be the most important means there is in conveying one's Sami identity.

The thesis is based on a fieldwork done mainly in inner Finnmark (both Karasjok and Kautokeino)⁴, an area that is often referred to as the heart of Sápmi (Hovland, 1999). Sápmi being both the geographical region where the Sami people live, and also the Sami community. I have, in order to extract the possible influence of globalization on the Sami identity, conducted a multisided fieldwork where my material contains data from various settings in Tromsø and Oslo, as well as the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York.

Chapter 2 provides both a presentation of the place of research as well as the progression of the fieldwork. I also present some methodological choices and an analysis of my own position in relation to the field.

Chapter 3 gives an insight into the geographically and culturally based community that is Sápmi. The historical basis is important to understand the specific challenges of each individual and local community in asserting and expressing their ethnicity.

Chapter 4 will evaluate the language as the most important means of identifying and expressing the Sami ethnicity. Inner Finnmark is a stronghold for the Sami language, and although it is used as a contextualised way of assessing ethnicity, meaning that one is not necessarily viewed as Sami by mastering the language and vice versa, it is still posed as a definite advantage and even sometimes a requirement to master the language. Here, the Sami language also has the moral upper hand (Stordahl, 1996). The language differs from the other idioms, as it constitutes both an important symbol of Sami ethnic identity, but is also the primary way people communicate. Language can thus be seen at the same time as the topic of the conversation and the medium for the conversation, which became particularly apparent in close settings such as conferences, where language and teaching were topics. The chapter therefore deals with language both as an expression, and as a theme for ethnic conservation work. With the starting point in the various informants' voices, I will describe some contrasting experiences

⁴ The villages are known as Kárášjoga and Guovdageaidnu in Northern Sami. I will use the Norwegian names in this thesis.

with languages in everyday life in Finnmark. I will also describe my own experience as a Norwegian speaker in these settings.

In chapter 5 I will present the *gákti*, the traditional Sami garment. Beside the language, the *gákti* has been the most significant Sami cultural expression in recent times (Bjørklund, 2000: 32), and might be the most easily recognisable trait of Saminess, both from the inside and the outside. The *gákti* wearer signals her ethnicity outwards, while also communicating different attachments and oppositions within the Sami ethnic group.

I will assess the *gákti* as an idiom, and show how it is used in several different contexts. I will also explore the topic of *duodji*⁵, which includes *gákti* stitching and the preparation of various accessories belonging to Sami traditional clothing. *Duodji*, as presented by my informants, was associated with a great deal of pride, while also showing important boundaries and expression possibilities within the framework of a material object; it is in a clear intersection between the continuation of cultural expressions and the opening for creativity and innovation. The discourse for "what we Sami do and like" is more clearly expressed here. In addition, it can be a fear that knowledge and traditions will die out, and a pressure to act with something one dislikes because the knowledge must be maintained and transferred.

Identity politics is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can be studied from different focal points. Eriksen (2008:173) describes several ways to interpret identity politics and its responses to globalization⁶. One of interest to our subject is to consider it in terms of the collective work of weak and oppressed groups in order to achieve equality (cf. Friedman, 2008). This is an on-going process, and with the establishment of the Sami parliament, much work has been done. Identity politics within a global context can also be emphasized with regard to psychological aspects such as attempts to

⁵ *Duodji* denotes Sami handicraft traditions, but also several other areas of knowledge, including *gákti* production, the production of other clothing adapted to an arctic climate, woodwork, forging, silverware and optimal utilization of the reindeer as a resource and material (Flamming and Kramvig, 2008)

⁶ Eriksen (2008) mentions other angles on the subject too, yet also emphasizes that none of these alone is sufficient to assess identity politics, which is too complex a phenomenon to be explained sufficiently from one focal point alone.

establish or find one's roots and create something fixed in a world characterized by rapid changes and floating categories. This aspect is of particular interest, as our main concern is about the identity markers in today's society. Identity politics might therefore both be determined as a way of establishing, maintaining and sustaining one's identity and sense of unity within a community, as well as an important means in the struggle for scarce resources. It might be that the struggle for scarce resources makes the politics of identity something serious and not something to be taken lightly. This perspective is possibly one that is hard to combine with some individuals' post-modern search for a multifaceted identity, for example the Sami identity.

During the Norwegianization process, the Sami language was not accepted, and one might claim that especially young children were robbed of their mother tongue. There are many examples of Sami people who taught their children only Norwegian, as they were told that it was not good for children to be exposed to different languages at home. With the best intentions for their children in mind, they abandoned their own language and surrendered to the language of the majority. The implications that followed for the children that lost their mother tongue, and the pressure on the Sami language, might be an important contributing factor to the ambivalent position of the language within the Sami community. Firstly, the Sami language has a unique position within the community as an identity marker, as its very existence can be seen as retaliation against the Norwegianization. Secondly, the language is inaccessible as an identity marker for the Sami children who were not taught the language.

Theoretical Framework and Definitions

Identification of differences between people is a basic mechanism used in order to make sense of the social world that surrounds us. This is done by employing a range of cues, which can be seen as verbal and non-verbal forms of identification tools. These cues combine criteria of similarity and differences, and also closeness and distance, in order to locate oneself and others on the social map (Jenkins, 2011:3). Ethnicity is one such means of categorization. Ethnicity might be defined as "the social organisation of cultural difference" (Barth, 1969). It is articulated, communicated and negotiated in a constant discourse both inside the group and outward towards others. For ethnicity to be apparent, a group needs to have a minimum of contact and sense of cohesion among

themselves as in contrast towards others that are not included within the defines of their ethnic group (Eriksen, 1993:16). In studying ethnicity, it is "the ethnic boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it encloses" (Barth, 1969:15). The cultural stuff that is made relevant as markers of ethnicity is used to create and maintain a distinction between those who are considered "us" and those considered "the others" (Eriksen, 1993).

Because ethnicity is a relational, situational and socially constructed phenomenon, it is also open to some degree of negotiation. In the case of Sami ethnicity, for instance, during the revitalization process that happened in the 70's and 80's, much that was recognized from both within and from the outside as markers of the Sami ethnicity, was redefined. Through a process that can be characterised by a fundamental change of attitude towards the Sami ethnicity from a stigmatized to a more equally accepted ethnic identity, these markers became visible emblems of "Saminess". These emblems, that used to be hidden and looked down upon, became ways of recognizing and conveying one's Sami identity. Harald Eidheim (1971:71) uses the term *idiom* to describe a; "language' of signs, symbols and categorizations which have a bearing on identity management". Briggs' term *emblem* can be used in much the same way (Hovland, 1999). Briggs (1997) demonstrates how some cultural characteristics or traits (what Barth calls cultural stuff) are made into emblems, which are used to actively contrast the outside, and create a unity within a group. In line with the basic theory of ethnicity, she notes that the group is rarely aware of their own cultural traits before they are compared and contrasted against others. The Sami language and the gákti are two such traits that are often fronted as emblems. Still, this is a contextualised process, and often these traits are not actively portrayed and interpreted through an "ethnic lens" (Eriksen, 1993).

Although most people will find that they receive one or more ethnically based tags at birth, the individual later has the choice of expressing these or to take measures to remove themselves from them (Baumann, 1999:58). This might be conceptualized within Goffman's term *impression management*, a process of trying to influence other people's impressions of oneself, by trying to control the information one gives during the social interaction. Wearing a gákti can be one such means, when trying to let people know one considers oneself a Sami.

Using a dramaturgical model to present everyday interactions, Goffmann (1971) describes how expressions of the self can be manipulated by *overcommunicating*: pushing specific features forward onto the *front stage*, or *undercommunicated* or hidden *backstage*. Ethnicity can be conceptualized in Goffman's term as unfolding as a performances on a stage. However, this stage⁷ is not the same size for all groups and within all contexts. The identity of a Sami person is more susceptible to being seen through the "ethnic lens". The Norwegian majority population, being "the norm" in Norway, has a larger stage than the Sami minority, and stating one's ethnicity is often not a point of great concern (Thuen, 1993). One does not have to highlight or communicate one's ethnicity to make it visible, or to work for or against connected assumptions and expectations in the same degree as many ethnic minorities do. This might even result in the misunderstood notion that the majority does not have any ethnicity (Eriksen, 1993).

The revitalization of the Sami languages and culture following the Norwegianization may then be considered not just as a process of fighting to maintain language and culture, but also something that has grown into a fight to expand the stage of performance, especially for the younger generation. Today, the Sami population in general has a larger stage, as currently there is taking place a "Sami boom"⁸ – in the artist Sofia Jannok's words, it is "in" to be Sami. This is making it easier to identify oneself as Sami, and making the Sami stage larger. Over the last decades, there has been a big increase in people who want to enter the Sami Parliament's census, wishing to identify themselves as Sami (Bjørklund, 2016, Gaski, 2008).

The ethnicity of northern Norway is complex and politicized, and concepts like Sami identity, background, ethnicity or "Saminess" all carry different associations (Hovland, 1999). It might for instance be viewed as a measurable matter, thus raising the question how to "be Sami enough". As a starting point, we can use the Sami Act's⁹ criteria, which

⁷ Thuen uses the word "spillerom"

⁸ During a concert, the artist Sofia Jannok used this term to describe what is happening in Sweden right now.

⁹ The Sami Act, *Sameloven*, is a Norwegian legal act dating from 1987, regulating the election of the assembly, the Sami Parliament's authority and organization, the use of the Sami flag and the use of Sami language in public activities.

state: "Everyone who declares that they perceive themselves as Sami, and who either a) has Sami as their home language, or b) has or has had a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent with Sami as home language, or c) is the child of a person currently or previously registered in the (Sami Parliament's) census, has the right to be registered in the census." (Lovdata, 2016). The Sami language is the objective criterion allowing for registration in the census, showing the importance of the trait as an identity marker. One will always find oneself confronted with the Sami language as an identity marker. Those able to speak Sami will always have to deal with the fact that some Sami people are not able to speak Sami, just as much as Sami people that do not speak Sami must deal with this inability. All these concerns are utterly impacted by being within the context of the Norwegian culture, and the Norwegian language.

An analysis of ethnic relations must also take into account that despite the anthropological theories on the subject, people often have different ideas on what ethnicity entails. As a researcher, it is important to recognize the beliefs of the people you meet and to realize that one's own interpretation framework, partly developed through a professionalization process within the discipline, does not necessarily match the framework of the informants (Baumann, 1999). Firstly, no individual is an independent entity that creates self-understanding without the influence of others; one's self-understanding is a relative phenomenon (Briggs, 1997, Paine, 2003). And secondly, conception of opinion, like ethnicity, is relational and contextual, and one and the same informant may therefore express different and occasionally sprawling opinions. Nevertheless, as a researcher, one must bear in mind that "[I]nformants are never wrong; they have reasons to think what they think" (Baumann, 1999:90). The same person can thus add different things in the concept of ethnicity in different contexts and for different purposes. In some cases, for example, it will be expressed as a basis for collective identity, while in others it is described as the basis for personal assessments (Paine, 2003:299).

Ethnicity and culture both tend to be presented as something natural rather than as man-made concepts (Baumann, 1999). This is done, among other things, through a reification of the expression of ethnicity, placing it in a framework of something inherited or genetic, as something one *has* or *owns*, rather than *makes* (Baumann, 1999). The different views on ethnicity and culture can thus be interpreted within the

dichotomy of essence and process. Baumann argues that in presenting ethnicity as a matter of having, one can also embody it as something under development.

Ethnopolitical rhetoric is often based on an essential cultural view like heritage.

However, according to Baumann, this political rhetoric is in fact creative and dynamic, as in its efforts it might create a unity where there was previously none. "All 'having' of culture is a making of culture, yet all making of culture will be portrayed as an act of reconfirming an already existing potential" (ibid:91-92).

From this point of view, it might also be measurable; if one can have ethnicity, it might also beg the question of *how much* ethnicity one has. In the case of Sami ethnicity, the revitalisation process of the 70's and 80's measured and compared largely against the Norwegian majority. In this process, there was created standardized images as well as emblems that were used to show off Sami ethnicity. Although there is some performance space for Sami people, they still must express their ethnicity in ways that are recognised as Sami. After all, if the goal is to get the message across, it is essential to give out a message that is understood as both ethnic and Sami.

Based on a view that ethnicity is thought of as a matter of having, a way of conceptualizing this point could be to consider it as a sort of "matter of purity". During the Northern Light Seminar on Riddu Riđđu, activist and poet Mimie Mäarak expressed frustration over this measurement – she wished for a stronger sense of community among Sami people, rather than focusing on a constant measurement of each other's "Saminess" as if talking about various degrees of a diluted extract¹⁰. Especially amongst the younger generation of Sami, this seems to be important. The empirical example with Anders shows his disappointment when he was told by an elder in his community that he was not "Sami enough".

In multicultural areas, identity politics will always be affected by the ongoing mixing and adaption between the different cultures. The impact of multiculturalism on identity politics can, according to Eriksen (2008:148), be differentiated on two axes. One axis covers similarities and differences, and the other, purity and dilution, or fusion, depending on how one perceives it.

¹⁰ She expressed it as "ulike grader av utblandet saft"

The old man criticising Anders for wearing a gákti when not being able to speak Sami would probably describe Anders as an example of the purity of the Sami as being weakened and diluted. Nationalism, and other types of political identities connected to religion or ethnicity, are often communities that use the notion of purity and similarities. In this respect, the outside world is often regarded as contagious (ibid:148). Just as much as one can relate to Anders, and his experience of not being Sami enough, it is also possible to imagine what it must have felt like for the elder Sami seeing a person wearing a gákti without “really” being Sami. I did not have the chance to ask the older man how he felt and why he commented as he did, but it might be that he thought that Anders was “not Sami enough”, and by wearing a gákti, he polluted it as an identity marker. In line with Baumann’s (1999), the man would have had reasons to think what he thought. Given the historical of oppression of Sami culture during the Norwegianization process, he might have felt a fear of diluting the Sami identity by allowing someone who did not master the language to wear the gákti.

Within the same society and community, one can perceive and relate to the different axes as illustrated by Eriksen (2008). When some Sami people render purity as important, other Sami people are more interested in how difference can be of interest and the continued dialog between different groups can create unity (ibid:149). This view goes well alongside Baumann's view of ethnicity also as something one is making, and not just having. In this sense, one is more likely to describe the impact from another group as fusion, and not dilution. If one combines fusion and difference, one can say that the society is one without distinct boundaries, where the individual is allowed to adjust, maintain, and define oneself quit freely, and one will find hybrid forms within the society in different forms and variations (ibid:149).

If the majority population in Norway has a larger stage than the minority, allowing for a wider choice of personal identity and expression. The Sami community very much lives within this context, and one might say, is part of it. The performing stage of the Sami community is growing. Identity politics, as Eriksen points out, is affected by the cultures that breathe and live next to each other. Sami people live in Norway, and when Anders, being a Sami, wears a gákti while speaking Norwegian instead of Sami, he has already made the Sami stage of expression a little bigger.

Parallel to Eriksen's "purity" being managed as a scarce resource (Harrison, 1999), the relational nature of ethnicity simultaneously results in new ways of expressing Saminess. I believe it is constructive to conceptualize these main aspects in terms of a plain formed by a horizontal and a vertical axis. The vertical axis can be envisioned as the "purity" axis, and the horizontal axis one might think of as the dynamic axis, where the nature of Sami is being stretched and redefined.

On the purity axis, the discourse is about negotiating within established criteria what it means to be Sami, based on, and partially locked within, some of the same foundations that were developed in the 70's and 80s'. Sami idioms or emblems like the Sami colours (red, blue, yellow and green), joik and doudji, as well as reindeer herding and language, are all important sources of recognition and pride within this framework. Saminess is sometimes objectified as a matter of having a scarce recourse, which needs to be preserved. From this point of view Saminess might also be considered more or less real, based on how successfully one preserves the real essence of it. Drawing the comprising of the axis even further, one might be able to draw a graph on how "successful" one's Saminess is, depending on different points of reference, like language, place and family connections, and one's coping with certain Sami social codes, attachment to reindeer husbandry and mastering of different doudji techniques. The stage for performing Sami ethnicity is then limited within certain categories, and expressions of Saminess need to be done and measured within these limits.

Despite this first axis, it is also possible to be considered as (or expressing) "too much Saminess". As Stordahl (1996) points out, the term ČSV, which is described in detail in chapter 3, is today often used as a derogatory term for a person who flaunts their "Saminess" "too much". It is then used somewhat synonymously to the term "super Sami". Although this might not be a universality agreed upon meaning; Linne (22) proclaimed herself as "being ČSV", upon us meeting at Riddu Ridđu. I also noticed that one stand sold colourful t-shirts with ČSV printed across the chest. Still, I think the point of this use of the term ČSV today might be considered as an expression of the postmodern identity formation. Greater emphasis is placed on individual choices and preferences in their definition of themselves (Giddens, 1991), and it is created with a greater degree of over-local and global impulses (Thuen, 2003).

This postmodern identity formation is based in the freedom of individual expressions.

Sticking to the axes as a way of conceptualizing the discourse, I think this second postmodern view can be illustrated by the second axis; the dynamic one, that opens new ways of being Sami, more or less as a direct reaction to the first axis. It is about continually breaking new territory for what can be accepted as Sami, partly by updating and legitimizing new expressions of "Sami", partly through consciously breaching the norms, and partly through the use of Sami traditional expressions in new contexts in a direct dichotomy to the first axis. This is a way of creating a larger stage for performing, by making new expressions understood and accepted as Sami. In some aspects, it might be considered an opposition to the older generations, while also being an effect of modernity's emphasis on individuality, in line with Giddens, 1991.

As Jannok describes in the song *Snölejoninna* in the beginning of this chapter, it is possible to combine Sami ethnicity with many other categories of identity. Her last point "mon lean (I am) queer" points to an interesting example; In the Sápmi Pride¹¹ context, many of the traditional Sami idioms, like the flag or the *gákti*, are used, but changed or inverted in some way. For instance, one might dress in a "proper and traditional" *gákti*, yet reversing the use extensively by wearing the opposite garment then one's sex dictates.

Hovland (1999) describes the situation among the youth he encountered in Kautokeino as being somewhat constricted by them needing to make a choice between being Sami or Norwegian. Fagerlid (2005) questions this account, as it seems strange and may be based on Hovland's own feelings more than actual findings. Her experience with young Asian informants in London contradicts Hovland's dichotomised presentation.

However, viewing these accounts in relation to the axes, I believe that they might both be right – the same individual might feel pressured to continue traditions while at the same time reacting and forming new ideas and attitudes. The younger people's fight might not so much be the actual survival of the Sami culture in relation to the majority culture, but the fight to be accepted as Sami enough within one's community, and one means to this end is the fight to enlarge one's ethnic stage. Putting it in another way, one

¹¹ Sápmi Pride is a LGBTQ festival with a Sami profile. It was first established in Kiruna in 2014 (Voss, 2014)

can say that the typical Sami identical marker can be seen as the core within a cell, and the young people pushing the barriers of the cell in order to make room for themselves. After all, it is the barriers of the cultural stuff that defines one's ethnicity, and in the case of the Sami people, the history of Norwegianization has made this task a challenging one.

Chapter 2: Presentation of Field, Method and Position

When I arrived in Karasjok, mid-January, the winter was at its coldest. Karasjok holds the records for being the coldest place in Norway. Despite the “shockingly cold” conditions, it was remarkably quiet. Now I had arrived “in the field”, and the fieldwork could begin. However, it was easier said than done. In this chapter I want to provide an insight into the process of data collection that underlies my findings, through (1) presentation of “the field” and fieldwork, (2) placing myself in the field, (3) presentation of methodological choices and (4) an analysis of my own position in relation to the field.

Anthropology is always written from a position of situated knowledge, with “views from somewhere” (Haraway 1988:590). I would argue that the researcher’s position is of interest regardless of how close they are to their own place of fieldwork. Given the highly qualitative character of the research, findings are also based on a “negotiated reality” (Crapanzano, 1980), made in the contact between the informants’ and researcher’s points of view. An account of how this was done provides an insight into the framework of analysis, while at the same time legitimizing the research by openly presenting the process behind it. As a researcher, close to her own field, this is of importance. In addition, it gives me the chance to present some findings directly related to my own position, for as Århén (2008) states, “part of the field is me”. When using the term field, I describe the social community in which I did my research. My connection to my field and my own ethnic identity as Sami have had a profound impact on all aspects of my research process.

Change in Plans

The goal of my project changed drastically during the fieldwork and the following writing process. Before leaving for Finnmark, I had plans to try and get access inside a Sami organization that worked within the larger indigenous network. The goal was to look at the status of indigenous peoples as a basis for contact between the groups, how to create and maintain contact, and what it implies. I would investigate indigenous

peoples from a Sami perspective, as well as look at both venues and relevant themes related to this status.

However, I found it difficult to get access within such an organization. I communicated a great deal with Gáldu (Gáldu Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) at the start of my field work, and despite the fact that I experienced the organization's staff as very welcoming, my desire to work and do my research within organization was let down. I did several interviews with both Gáldu, the Sami Parliament and the Sami Council on their work internationally, and my travels to various conferences and meetings gave me some basis for writing about this topic. Nevertheless, I found it challenging to concretize my findings, as well as narrowing and pointing the task in a certain direction. Locally in Karasjok and Kautokeino I did not experience the identity of indigenous peoples as being particularly relevant in the daily lives of those I met. Many recognized themselves as indigenous people when asked direct questions about the issue, and this would be expressed, for example, by someone commenting that they felt similar to other indigenous people with whom they were confronted through *Ođđasat* (Sami news broadcasts). At the same time, it was clear that they saw themselves first and foremost as Sami and that the similarities and differences that were drawn were mostly between the Sami and Norwegians, the North Sami and other Sami, the Sami from Karasjok and Sami from Kautokeino and between real Sami and other Sami. Therefore, after a while, I decided to work more locally based on the category of Sami, but still utilized the knowledge I had acquired throughout the process.

Research Locations

Given the area of inner Finnmark's position in a Sami context, I find it difficult to anonymize the site of fieldwork. To give a context for the thesis, I present Karasjok as my "main site of fieldwork"; the village was the basis for further exploration of networks that stretched beyond it. I also spent time in the neighbouring village of Kautokeino, and have chosen to purposely blur the lines between Karasjok and Kautokeino in many of my empirical descriptions in an effort to preserve my informants' identities.

I spent the majority of winter and spring 2015 in Karasjok, from mid-January to mid-June. During this timeframe, however, I also travelled to various locations following my

initial initiative (Marcus, 1995). After only a couple of weeks in Karasjok, I travelled to Tromsø to attend the 3rd Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress (BIPC)¹² and the subsequent conference. The congress was held at the University of Tromsø, and included indigenous peoples from Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland (Sami from all four countries and Nenets and Veps from Russia). This was my first time experiencing the larger indigenous community at work. It was also an important introduction to the network of Sami youth that I ended up basing much of my empirical research on. During the three days of congress, I met a number of ethno-politically involved Sami people, among whom were a couple of young girls. They invited me to attend the annual meeting of a Sami youth organization held just outside Oslo in March. I accepted the invitation, and after about a month back in Finnmark, I travelled to spend an oval weekend in Oslo. The annual meeting gathered young people from different Sami areas (both North, Lule and South Sami). Despite being one of the oldest participants, I felt very welcome. This meeting became a very important setting for getting in touch with people who, later during my research, became important informants. Among these people were Linne (20). She told me that she was going to attend the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, and wondered if I had thought about attending.

Attending the Forum was not part of my original plan, partly because I did not realize that it was a possibility. However, after the meeting in Oslo, I started working on getting access. I contacted several organizations, but it was a difficult process, both because I did not know how the system worked and because I was rejected several times before I finally got help from the University of Tromsø to register myself as a student observer. I travelled to New York at the end of April and attended nine of the fourteen days the Forum lasted. This became a highlight in the fieldwork. Although I had read up on the global indigenous movement it was an unforgettable experience to observe it first-hand; indigenous peoples from all over the world, in total around two thousand participants, were gathered. I attended the main meetings of the Forum every day, and the Youth Caucus which was held in the morning. In the afternoons and evenings, there were

¹² Arranged by WGIP in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

several side-events and “cultural evenings”, and I tried to attend as many of these as possible. Linne became my main companion during this trip.

The last months back in Finnmark was spent in both Karasjok and Kautokeino. In mid-June, I left Finnmark and the period that I consider to be my primary field period was over. In addition to the primary period of research from January to June 2015, I also went back into the field several times between spring and autumn 2016. I include three separate events in this thesis. In March 2016, I attended the Arctic Indigenous Education Conference in Kautokeino. The conference focussed on language and education, and participants were from Sápmi, Northern Canada, as well as speakers from Hawaii and New Zealand. In the summer of 2016, I went to the Riddu Riddu Festival. During the same trip, I also travelled to Karasjok and spent a week there in July.

Fieldwork

It is important to distinguish between doing field work and (just) being in the field (Wolcott, 1995:65). The difference between these two lies in the state of mind and the action pattern that follows. Whether you do fieldwork depends as I see it on your intention, and if you collect data by actively engaging in taking notes, recordings or other forms of documentation of your experiences that can be used in analytical and comparative work. Based on this assessment, I do not, for example, consider my stay in Karasjok a couple of days in autumn 2015 as part of my field work, because I participated in a private family affair and did not seek the site as a researcher. The distinction between field work and being in field is important both for the researcher herself during the process of collecting data and for the opportunity to provide full disclosure around the data material (a description of the material on which the work is based). This gives the researcher the opportunity to evaluate her work process as well as allowing the researcher to “turn off” during periods when she does not perform field work (Stordahl, 1996). This is particularly important for anthropologists who do fieldwork at “home”.

It is also crucial to assess what actually constitutes one's place of field. I did field work in Karasjok, Kautokeino, Tromsø, Oslo and New York. Despite considering Karasjok and Kautokeino my main places of field, some of the data is also collected in these very

diverse locations. Nevertheless, the field consisted of many of the same informants whom I met in these various settings. For example, I met Linne (20) both in Oslo, New York and in Finnmark. That way, I feel I can legitimize using this data from such different settings.

Informants and Using Personal Social Networks

I find it natural to make a distinction between the informants that I consider to be my main informants, those who gave me the depth material that I use as the basic structure for presenting the topic I am discussing; and the other, unnamed people I met during the field work, who have helped to provide the breadth in the data base. Most of people in both categories are from inner Finnmark. Except for Anders, presented initially, and Marit from Chapter 4, all my main informants are from this area, and all (except Marit, who is Norwegian) identify themselves as Sami. I have given all my informants new names, as well as changed certain details, to prevent their identity for being known.

To be so closely connected to my own place of research has posted certain challenges. I have close family living in Karasjok, and for most of my fieldwork I lived with them. I did not, however, consider them as informants. Still, they did play a vital role in the process of getting in contact with people that constituted sources of data. Some of my informants were introduced to me by family members. Others I met by chance, either in the village or during my travels. Not regarding my family as appropriate informants was important from an ethical point of view, but it also had more practical consequences that became very important. Together with my closest family, I could, as far as possible, turn off the analytical data-gathering researcher role, something I feel was important for managing this fieldwork.

In terms of age, I see in the data basis for this thesis that I have several informants from the late teens to the mid-twenties and several older people in the age group between the forties and mid-sixties. I therefore lack a range of people in the age group that may be termed young adults; Late twenties to mid-forties. I think this can be partly a coincidence; I did not get in touch with especially many in this age group at the start of fieldwork, and therefore few of them made up the data basis.

Karasjok

Karasjok is a relatively small village by Norwegian standards, most of the municipality population of less than 3000 live in the village itself. The village is often referred to as *kirkestedet*¹³ or just "*bygda*" (the village). The topography of the area is characterized by the typical climate conditions of the Northern Norwegian inlands, with a great span in seasonal temperatures from about minus thirty degrees Celsius in the winter, up to about thirty degrees plus some days during summer. The landscape is characterized by pine trees, sandy moraine soil and flat, gently sloping mountains. The village itself is located in a valley with the river Kárašjohka running through it. It was common to use the river as a reference point when describing the village, as it splits the village in a northern and southern riverbank. There is a bridge connecting the two sides. From the river, the terrain gradually rises upwards towards the surrounding Finnmark plateau. On the northern bank of the river is what I would consider the village centre, as most shops, offices and institutions are located here. A few hundred meters from the bridge is a roundabout surrounded by a gas station, a small shopping centre with a grocery store, kiosk, bookstore and a pharmacy. On the opposite side of the road there is a fast food kitchen serving both hamburger and *finnebiff* (reindeer meat). A little further down the street is the local pub Bivdu, where one can order takeaway pizza, play billiards and watch football on a big screen.

The headquarters of several central Sami institutions are located in Karasjok, including the Sami Parliament, NRK Sápmi (the Sami department of the Norwegian national broadcasting company), Sámiid Vuorká-Dávvirat (the Sami Collections, museum and storage of Sami objects) and SANKS (The Sami National Centre for Mental Health and Substance Use). The village also has its own health centre and retirement home, as well as schools offering the pupils classes from primary school through high school.

Many people owned snowmobiles. In winter, people often drove them both in the village – especially on the frozen river – and on trails between the houses in the surrounding area. I did not have a car or a driver's license during my stay, and thus belonged to the very limited group of people who walked a lot. Both snowmobiles and

¹³ Literally "the church place"

cars were in very frequent use. Driving was an activity in itself, and I got the impression that it was common to just drive around the village with no specific purpose other than the activity of driving itself. Cars often gathered in the parking lot outside the shopping area in the village centre; several cars could be parked side by side, while the drivers were half hanging out of the windows chatting. While out driving, people also showed an interest in other drivers; they were often attentive to who else was driving around, whose cars were observed, who were sitting in the cars and in what direction they were heading. Quite often, this became the topic of conversation both while sitting in the car and later by the kitchen tables.

In addition to these local rides, driving to the nearby areas around Karasjok was also common, both within Finnmark and across the border to Finland, where there are grocery stores, gas stations, liquor stores and a hotel with a restaurant and bar. It was common to shop for groceries and customs goods that are noticeably more expensive on the Norwegian side¹⁴. There were also many who went for dinner at the hotel or to party and socialize at the pub. The nearest major town on the Norwegian side is Lakselv (about 70 km away), and the nearest cities are Alta and Hammerfest (both are approximately 200 km away). There was a bus service with a few departures a day, but departures were often at unfavourable times, and the bus rides took a lot longer than driving a car. If one did not have the option of driving oneself, it was common to use Facebook to arrange for transport of people or goods, offering to pay some of the money for fuel in return.

Methodological Choices, Informants and Challenges

In both Karasjok and Kautokeino, the couch became an important place for data collection; the flow of visitors, and my own visits to neighbours and acquaintances, gave an opportunity to do data collection at home. Some settings gave particularly good grounds for conversations. For instance, I found that watching Oddasat (the Sami news) often led to conversations about the topics that were addressed during the broadcast.

¹⁴ It was common to refer to the community in Finland as on the Finnish side (of the boarder, or in some cases referring to of Sápmi), as thus recognizing and affirming the imagined community.

Ođđasat thus became a "natural trigger", which was not initially influenced by my presence as a researcher, and it gave me an insight into what people were actually interested in. It gave an introduction to what I would call "conversation interviews". I distinguish these "conversation interviews" from regular conversations because they were guided by my interests as a researcher. In such settings, I felt that my role as a researcher became more obvious, often helped by a notebook or recorder. In general, such interviews helped give me an impression of the local discourse, what people were concerned with. I have found it useful to distinguish between different types of interviews and divide them into categories based on form, setting and intention. I distinguish between conversational interviews as described above, and formal interviews, life stories and short snapshot interviews. There will be some overlap here; in some cases, for example, I experienced that an interview went from being formal to becoming more like a life story. The formal interview settings were generally more recognizable as research both for myself and for the informants; it was guided by questions, prepared ahead for both me and my informant.

The snapshot interviews were very short, made in breaks during the conferences I attended. In this way, I could establish contact with people whom I interviewed more in depth later, or I could gather simple statements about specific topics. However, it was a challenging way to collect data; it required for me to be continuously on target and outreaching. In Tromsø, I was assisted by an interpreter (who spoke both Norwegian and Russian) to do such interviews, in other contexts I managed with Norwegian and English. I regard the formal interviews as the most structured and "classical" interviews; I chose interview objects, arranged interviews and prepared questions. The structure of the interview was thus relatively set, but with some opening for following initiatives asking follow-up questions. In the correspondence preceding the interviews, the informants had received some information about what I wanted to talk to them about, so that they were prepared. In some settings, I got the opportunity to listen to people's life stories, as well as permission to write them down or record them with tape recorder. My data material also consists of interviews, which went from being structured as formal interviews being a setting for my informants to tell life stories. They took control of the situation and decided to tell in depth about their life without any particular influence on the questions and thus less shaped by me as a researcher.

My Position as an Insider-Outsider

My mother grew up in Karasjok, and I have family there. Still, the village is not a place I know well from before. My previous experience has been based on relatively short trips, typically related to large family celebrations such as weddings and confirmations, as well as some holiday trips lasting a couple of weeks.

I identify myself as Sami, that is; I used to define my own ethnicity as half Sami, half Norwegian. This, in itself, led to interesting findings concerning the boundaries of Saminess. I used to think of this way of defining my own ethnicity as a neutral, pragmatic and explanatory way to describe my affiliation. I have never before encountered any negative reactions to this it. During my fieldwork, however, this description was problematized through the reactions of some of my informants; some responded with wonder, others with a more direct reluctance, others again reacted with laughter. I got the impression that this categorization did not make sense; one could not be "just half" something. Hovland (1999) describes how his informants were often given a choice; either Sami or Norwegian. This might be one way to interpret these encounters; I was advised not to define myself as "half", but "both". Issát, who could himself fit into this ambiguous category, attempted to explain the problem by means of a linguistic image. In Norwegian, the words "halvt" (half) and "halt" (limp) have identical pronunciation. He explained that "you are not half/limp, you walk as well as everyone else, you are just as steady."¹⁵ As I interpret this statement, the problem is related to the right to define oneself as Sami, in other words, I am allowed to fully take on a Sami ethnicity. Towards the end of the fieldwork, I met Elle, who explained the situation to me in a different way. She laughed when I told her that I had received reactions for my way of defining myself as "half". Furthermore, she explained that the reactions, as she saw it, were not directed at the definition in themselves, but rather at what those who reacted thought it implied; She believed that they might considered it a partial deprivation of the Sami identity. According to Elle, identifying oneself as "only half" could be interpreted by many as a renunciation of one's Sami ethnicity.

¹⁵ "Du e ikke halvt/halt, du går like godt som alle andre, du e like stødig"

I will discuss the categorisation of "native" versus "non-native" further down, but first I need to point out as also Narayan (1993:673) underlines: the researcher, "native" or not, always has many different "strands of identification available". In focusing on language and the gákti, there are especially two "stands" of my own identity that need to be described further. Even though I have not chosen to focus on gender relationships in this thesis, it is still important to consider. Many of my main informants were women, and so one could easily argue that although it is not really my focus, gender is constantly present in the thesis. In the context of the gákti, women were notably more interested in the topic, the fashion side of it as well as the manufacturing. The making of most of the pieces that the gákti attire consists of is also traditionally considered to be women's work. My owning and wearing a gákti also gave a common point of reference, both in terms of recognizing the practical and perhaps also emotional aspects of the garment.

A very clear distinction was also created through lack of language skills. Sami language is not completely unknown to me, but I have never really learned it. During my fieldwork, I learned the language well enough to follow simple conversations, what my aunt described as "kitchen Sami" – conversations about simple topics that refer to certain things and words often heard. In Karasjok, the Sami language has the "moral upper hand" (Stordahl, 1996), which means that most people choose to speak Sami rather than Norwegian. The majority (around 80 %) of Karasjok's population is Sami-speaking. Nevertheless, virtually everybody (with the exception of a few elderly people, and immigrants from the Finnish side) also masters Norwegian. One can "manage" with Norwegian, but I would say that Sami language skills can be described as "gull verdt" (golden) (Hovland, 1999). Very often conversations took place in Sami, or in a kind of fluid mix between Sami and Norwegian, which meant that, at best, I could only partly follow a conversation. More than anything else, I think this contributed to my fellow human beings and informants regarding me as a partial "stranger" and, in any case, not "local".

Anthropology without Radical Differences

Anthropology has its roots in descriptions of "the others", starting with a difference between "the West and the Rest". Other disciplines, such as sociology, political science and economics, were to study the "West", while anthropology made holistic

descriptions that included the focal points of other disciplines in one and the same analysis of "the others" (Lien, 2012:304). These analyses were made from a stand of "radical differences"; The anthropologist was "The Stranger" who was aware of patterns and aspects of the social life that members of the community took for granted (Schutz,1964). However, the moral context of ethnographic descriptions was completely changed as representatives of "the others" became both the readers of the research published about themselves, and also themselves researchers (Geertz, 1990:132).

Through the reflexive turn that followed, focus was placed on how rather than where one conducted research (Messerschmidt, 1981). One turned away from the holistic descriptions, in favour of the particular (Eriksen, 2014). The anthropologist could conduct studies within his "own culture" or "home", and thus from a stand that was not characterized by "radical differences".

There are many examples of good "home anthropological" work today. At the same time, there is an ever-actualized debate about whether "home anthropology" is really possible. The question is made current again and again as "anthropological practice is still constituted in the axis between us and the others" (Lien, 2012:305). Lien breaks the content of the debate down to three positions: 1) The study of "the other" is essential because it represents the foremost characteristic of anthropology, 2) ethnographic descriptions from home are too challenging, and 3) statements about one's own communities can be based too much on claims and too little on actual ethnographic descriptions. The first point questions both the basis of anthropology's academic content and whether anthropological methods are adequate in the study of "ourselves." Anthropology is a very qualitative discipline, which is methodically different from the other social sciences discipline in its focus on ethnographic descriptions based on long-term participation, and focus on the particular. There will thus be certain requirements for content and form, independent of the anthropologist's background – without such terms, the descriptions will be more like travel reports or enlightening journalism (Eriksen, 2014). The debate is not about undermining the validity or value of studies that are based on "radical differences" but rather about whether this position may be considered as a requirement or one of several possible approaches to the study of culture (Lien, 2012). The resistance to "home anthropology" is also based on doubt

related to the anthropologist's ability to look past the known; does an anthropologist have the ability to see beyond what is known? Is it possible to notice underlying patterns, or will what is known be taken as truths when it partly forms the anthropologist's own interpretation network? (Messerschmidt, 1981) "Home blindness" refers to the anthropologist being so close to the field that she does not experience the difference that pushes forward observation and analysis and has trouble observing the unseen, obvious and commonplace (Frøystad, 2003:175). "Self-exotification" and the pursuit of "naive observation" are specific methodological tools that can raise awareness and equip anthropologist with the ability to see the known with "new eyes" (ibid.). Lien (2001) indicates that proximity can make it difficult to ask the obvious questions that can trigger good analysis, either because these are not obvious to the anthropologist, or because it creates discomfort. Even though these dangers are real, it is also appropriate to raise questions about the basis for the assumption that distance is essential; within the "home" there are many different focus points, despite one's in-depth knowledge of parts of the field, one will not necessarily have a good insight into the whole field (Narayan, 1993).

The Unpopular Anthropologist

Anthropology "at home" challenges the idea of "us" and "the others" by opening for the study of "our own" culture. Some anthropologists are also standing at a crossroads between being researcher and "native". Bernard Perley (2011:25) describes how he did not feel welcome when he wanted to conduct anthropological observations in a classroom among Tobique First Nation; although he himself belongs to this group, he was interpreted as an anthropologist and intruder. The power struggle lies embedded in the distinction between "us" and "them". The history of anthropology as a colonial knowledge producer who defined "the others" based on Western premises is emphasized. Vine Deloria Jr. (1969) addressed particularly sharp criticism to anthropology, which he believed was characterized by exploitation, lack of responsibility for knowledge production and communication, as well as lack of consideration for how the collected data was used. The anthropologist was presented as a cold, unscrupulous researcher who worked out so-called "objective data" within a Western understanding framework, and for his own gain. Deloria's opinions were decisive for Native American views of anthropologists, but it also affected the Sami and

Greenlanders who were in the beginning of organizing themselves as fourth world people (Stordahl, 1996).

Rosaldo (1989:30) refers to the historical distinction between the anthropologist as the "Lone Ethnographer" and the "native" who could act as a helper or the anthropologist's "sidekick". The anthropologist needed the "native's" help to access data that was unavailable to himself. Although the distinction between native and non-native became more blurred, it was continued in the colonial thought of the anthropologist as non-native and "the native" as still only (or first and foremost) native, not anthropologist (Narayan, 1993). Thus, the historical perspective of a "native anthropologist" leads to a greater basis for challenges than when conducting "anthropology at home". Stordahl (1996:16) indicates that the anthropology is not yet fully accepted in all Sami circles and that one can risk being stamped as a betrayer or renegade in this highly politicized field.

Some "native researchers" have the opinion that the historical framework and the methods of Western research should not be continued in the research among indigenous peoples. Smith (1999:39) argues for developing a decolonized methodology that gives indigenous peoples the power of definition "based on indigenous peoples' own worldviews and in subjects that will benefit indigenous peoples and communities". The aim of this research is to give indigenous peoples the right to self-definition and theory, and method must therefore be redefined and understood based on indigenous people's own frameworks of interpretation and within concepts of their own. One seeks to make a shift of research paradigm. Indigenous epistemology continues the distinction between "us" and "the others", but will give "the other" power of definition based on the idea that Western epistemology is best suited for the study of Western societies, not the indigenous ones (Porsanger, 2004:107).

Researcher or "Native"?

Ohnuki-Tierney (1984:584) argues that the "native" anthropologists' in-depth knowledge of their own society puts them in a "far more advantageous position in understanding the emotive dimensions of behaviour". However, Narayan points out that this is a continuation of essentializing thinking about the distinction between "native" and "non-native"; "native" anthropologists, like all other anthropologists, are at risk of

becoming "home blind", and they can become unconscious of their in-depth knowledge (Narayan, 1993). In an attempt to break down the distinction between the two categories, Abu-Lughod (1991:466) introduces the term "halfies", meaning those that fall between the "clean categories" due to migration, education, or parentage. An anthropologist whom may be labelled "halfie" is in a particular dilemma: "What happens when the other that the anthropologist is studying is simultaneously constructed as, at least partially, a self?" (Ibid:468). It not only challenges the boundaries between "self" and "others", but also places the anthropologist face-to-face with both politics and ethics. The intermediate position of "halfie" anthropologists is under pressure. Professionally, they face the same fear of lack of objectivity as "native anthropologists", at the same time they are more readily considered non-native in the communities they study (Ibid:141). Narayan (1993:673), however, uses the same argument against this category as she does towards the "native" – "non-native" distinction; two "halfies" do not make a "wholie"; It "cannot adequately account for the complexity of an identity in which multiple countries, regions, religions, and classes come together". She questions the possibility of cutting one's mixed background in half. Many would also have had to split their mixed background into more than two parts, which can eventually be difficult to relate to for their part (Fagerlig, 2005). The sharp distinction between "native" and "non-native" also does not capture the variation within the two categories; one and the same person has many identities, as well as complex location attachments, and other cultural factors such as gender and class may overshadow the ethnic identity. Narayan (ibid. 673) argues that one and the same person can have many different "strands of identification available" which in some contexts will be put on front stage, while in other contexts hidden.

The positional closeness to the field, as well as the personal attachment to the culture one studies, is a challenge, but it can also offer certain advantages. Stordahl (1996) emphasizes the advantage of having cultural competence as well as the ability to relate to both the Sami and the Norwegian way of thinking. Stordahl believes that the intercultural competence is similar to the expertise anthropologists try to achieve through field work in other cultures, and that this background can contribute to creating an intuitively intensified awareness of comparative thinking, thus providing a basis for increased understanding. At the same time, she points out that it is not

necessarily so; there are no undeniable advantages connected to such a background. The learned analytical understanding and professional background that education in anthropology provides, is necessary to further develop and reflect one's observations. In other words, the professionalization process is essential to succeed as a researcher, regardless of one's position and place of fieldwork.

Chapter 3: Sápmi

The term *Sápmi* is used to describe both a geographical and a culturally defined area. It denotes the geographical territory that has been considered traditional Sami regions, meaning both the areas of Sami origin and the traditional settlement areas. The area spans over four national territories: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia; from Engerdal in the Southeast of Norway and Idre in Southern Sweden to the Eastern part of the Kola Peninsula in Russia (Myrvoll, 2005:11).

As a concept of a cultural demarcation, Sápmi describes a cultural nation (Bjørklund, 2000). Through the revitalisation process in the 70's and 80's (described in the historical summary below), Sápmi as a symbol in itself became important. The Sami artist Hans Ragnar Mathisen has made several maps visualising Sápmi as a nation (Hovland (1999). He based his works on existing maps, but changed vital parts like national borders and the borders of both counties and municipals to make new maps. All Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and Russian names were also removed, while the Sami names that are in use today were left. Mathisen also put a great deal of work into research to uncover Sami names that were not in use, to fill in the blanks. What is left is a map showing the same geographical area, but with several new meanings and claims; it is a Sami domain (ibid.). Anderson (1991) underlines the importance of maps as means to preserve both the history and actual existence of nation states by making it visible. Hovland (1999) points out the obvious symbolic effect of Mathisen's work: the maps show Sápmi as it could have been, pointing to both the painful history of colonialization, and the possibilities of reclaiming.

Still, Sápmi as a cultural nation was not made into an emblem with the intention of fighting for a sovereign national state with internationally recognized borders. It was a unifying imagined community (Anderson, 1991). As an emblem or idiom, Sápmi is comparable to what Eidheim (1992) calls a master paradigm¹⁶ in Sami self-understanding, which acts as a framework into which other minor idioms like flag, clothing, food, music, national anthem, national day were interpreted (Hovland, 1999 cf. Eidheim 1992). However, the imagined community of Sápmi does have a centre and

¹⁶ Eidheim uses the term to describe the international indigenous community.

periphery, and the emblems used to display Saminess within this framework also make up the basis for the pursuit of purity and undiluted essence. I will elaborate further, but first, to understand the Sami stage of today, the historical context must be taken into account.

Historical Context

Stigma, Assimilation and Colonialism

The Norwegian state issued a conscious assimilation policy, the Norwegianization policy, upon the Sami and the Kvens¹⁷, which had profound consequences on the continuation of language and cultural traditions, as well as the self-identification and regard of ethnicity for these minority populations. Astri Dankertsen (2014) defines this process as a method of cultural colonization; entailing a colonization of consciousness (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992). Henry Minde (2005) pinpoints the Norwegianization process duration between two strongly symbolically loaded events: the establishment of the Finnefondet (1851), explained below, and the Alta controversy¹⁸ (1979-81). Previously, the state's policy regarding the minority populations in the North had been directed towards missionary work and enlightenment. From the 18th century onwards there was an on-going debate among scholars, politicians and missionaries, and an ever-changing view on the usage of the Sami language for teaching purposes in both schools and churches (Jernsletten, 1998). In 1851, the Finnefond was established, as an item on the Norwegian state budget assigned for the education of the Sami and the Kvens, especially focusing on the Norwegian language (Minde 2005). This warned of a more present and conscious attitude from the government (Minde, 2008:11). Norway became independent from Denmark in 1814. The period that followed was characterized by revitalization and widespread nationalism. The urban-based bourgeoisie, how was the main advocates for this movement, searched the peasant culture in the inland areas for cultural traits that were portrayed as "authentic Norwegian culture" (Eriksen,

¹⁷ The Kvens are the descendants of Finnish speaking immigrants who came from northern Finland and Sweden during the 1700s and 1800s. They settled mainly in northern Troms and Finnmark. (Paine, 2003:296) They have the status of a national minority in Norway.

¹⁸ The Alta controversy refers to the massive protests against the construction of a large hydroelectric powerplant in the Alta river. It is described in further detail below.

1993:122). The fundamental goal of the nationalization process was to create an imagined community (Anderson, 1991) based on unifying symbols and a common culture. The differences in language, lifestyle and cultural expression of the Sami population did not fit into this framework based on the idea that the national state should consist of a homogeneous ethnic group – the ethnic and national boundaries should correspond (Gellner 1983:1).

In Karasjok, the contact between the Sami and Norwegians before the Norwegianization where often very limited; there was a distinct separation along both ethnic, economic and class lines. Norwegians mostly occupied the civil servant and official posts as well as some trading positions, and were described by the Sami population as "*alla hearrat*" (tall gentlemen, meaning important people) (Stordahl, 1996:39). Stordahl considers it accurate to portray the village as consisting of two distinctly different life-worlds – the Sami and the Norwegian – which only interacted with each other to a very limited extent. Following the dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden in 1905, government grants to the Finnefond increased, which led to an intensification of the Norwegianization policy. Several new measures were initiated, including the construction of boarding schools, which came to be the strongest state resources in this process. The school system served as a way of standardizing the mind-sets of citizens in general through education (cf. Anderson, 1986). The Norwegianization was driven "with the school as a battlefield and the teachers as front soldiers" (Neimi, 1997:268)¹⁹. The children were strongly encouraged to speak Norwegian both in and out of the classrooms (Hætta, 2002). Eriksen and Neimi (1995) argue that the increased measures must also be understood in view in of "den finske fare" (the Finnish danger); a significant increasing in immigration from Finland, especially to eastern parts of Finnmark. The Norwegianization thus became part of the process of safeguarding the national borders. However, the argument used to legitimize the policy was still expressed as a means to educate, strengthen and benefit the Sami people. The argument being that helping them become Norwegian would benefit them in the long run (Jernsletten, 1998). This need for justification goes to show that there were already opposition and voicing against the policy and the system it entailed (Minde, 2005).

¹⁹ "med skolen som slagmark og lærerne som frontsoldater"

In Karasjok, the *Soadi áigi* (the Second World War) resulted in a new benchmark regarding the ethnic relations; during the war and years of German occupation, local differences between Norwegian and Sami became more blurred due to the Germans not distinguish between "folk og finn" (people, meaning Norwegians, and Sami) (Stordahl, 1996:56). Near the end of the war, however, many local communities were destroyed and the people forcefully relocated. The German occupation resigned from the area, and burned down local communities to prevent the advance of the Soviet Red Army by removing all resources. The scorched earth policy also ruined visible ethnic expressions in the landscape. When the Germans left Karasjok on November 29, 1944, they burned down all but a few buildings. Inga (62) explained, with great passion, how the village was burned, "only the Old Church was left"²⁰. And (to think that) when the Germans came here, we welcomed them, for there was nothing else to do, but they destroyed everything"²¹. Inga herself was too young to have experienced this first hand, but as Bjørklund (2000) claims, this is a shared and often retold part of the local history.

The reconstruction that followed, combined with the growing welfare state, changed the basic structure of livelihoods and sources of income in Norway as a whole. A surge of people went from the primary industries to secondary and tertiary industries. Sami settlements that had previously been characterized by a great deal of utilization of natural resources through primary industries, such as reindeer husbandry, agriculture, fishing and harvesting from the outskirts, were now drastically changed. (Andersen, 2003:246).

The boarding school system continued after the war, and well into the 60's²². The system had major consequences for the continuation of cultural knowledge and language, but it also affected people's social life. There were different opinions upon the subject among my informants who had spent their childhood and adolescence within the system. I did hear stories of children who had experienced long-term traumatic events that involved serious abuse and sexual assaults (though not directly from an

²⁰ Karasjok has two churches

²¹ "bare gammelkirka sto igjen. Og tenk at når tyskerne kom så hilste vi dem velkommen, for det var ikke annet å gjøre, men de ødela alt sammen".

²² The first schools with Sami education were established in Karasjok and Kautokenio in 1967. (Stordahl, 1996)

actual victim of such abuse). There were, however, also positive recollections. Sára (59) told of a turbulent upbringing, in a family that relocated several times. For her, the routines and consistency of life at the boarding school was a relief. She also underlines the impact of being surrounded by many other children, and spoke of the experience as a good and safe one: "We were like a big bunch of siblings²³". Sunna (62) turned the point of this description upside down by voicing the problems this created for herself and her actual siblings; surrounded by so many other children it became harder to form strong sibling relations. She had to work consciously with her siblings to form such bonds later in life.

There is a lack of historical and social science research on the social and psychological consequences of the Norwegianization of both Sami and Kvens (Minde, 2005). The striking degree of social obedience that characterizes the period may be due to the great imbalance of power relations between the state and the individuals (ibid). Research conducted on other minorities who have experienced similar positions of powerlessness shows that one can develop defence mechanisms to cope with the social pressure, but if the pressure becomes too strong, it can lead to the development of self-loathing. This self-loathing lead to people trying their best to under-communicate or downplay their own ethnicity. Eidheim (1971) describes how the Sami people in a coastal Sami community navigated their ethnic expressions within a highly stigmatized environment; the Sami ethnicity was hidden to the extent that it became "conspicuous lack of 'contrasting cultural traits' between Lapps and Norwegians". It may also surface through negative-charged statements or attitudes towards other members of their own group (Minde, 2005). Putting up a sign with the Lule Sami name *Båddejo* underneath the Norwegian name of the city Bodø in 2011 sparked heated debates, as well as vandalism (spraying and stealing of the sign on several occasions). Chief editor of *Avisa Nordland* (the local newspaper), Jan-Eirik Hanssen, puts the controversy in the context of proximity and self-identification; "The intensity and hatred of these posts (reader's

²³ "Vi var som en stor søskenflokk"

letters to the newspaper) are terribly frightening [...] maybe it is grounded in the fear of own identity, most of us probably have some Sami blood in our veins²⁴" (Lamark, 2012).

Goffman (1963:14-16) describes stigma as influencing self-understanding to a degree that can be viewed as destructive to normal identity unfolding. The stigma can generate negative generalizations that overshadow other characteristics of the person. Eidheim (1971) illustrates this point by referring to what he describes it as "a craze for cleanliness" in the coastal Sami population in which he conducted his studies in the 1960s. The Sami housewives actively worked against the stigma associated with Sami, that they were dirty and smelled bad, by showing off how important cleaning was to them. This change in behaviour can also be interpreted as a consequence of what Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) describe as a colonialization of consciousness. Taiaiake Alfred (in Flemming and Kramvig, 2008: 105) indicates that the existence of indigenous peoples in colonial regimes is characterized by discontinuity and fear, but at the same time also by an ambivalence; they experience a discord in both rejects, but at the same time also accepting the position they are in.

The Silent Revolution²⁵

In 1956, the Sami Committee was established. Their task was to investigate both the principles and practical aspects of the policy that was conducted towards the Sami (Minde 2003a). In the report that followed, the Committee's recommendations undermined the basic conditions of the Norwegianization policy. The report was met

²⁴ "Intensiviteten og hatet i disse innleggene, er direkte skremmende [...] kan hende ligger frykten for sin egen identitet i bunnen for alt dette, for de aller fleste av oss har nok noe sameblod i årene"

²⁵ Stille revolusjon was a term used to describe the changes in the wake of the Alta Controversy. The term was first used by Arbeiderparti (Labor Party) politician Einar Førde in the resolution of Sameloven (the Sami act) in 1987 (Minde, 2003a:121)

²⁵ The meeting held in Trondheim in 1917 was the first nationwide Sami meeting (it also included some participants from Sweden). The first day of the meeting, 6th of February, has later been recognized as the Sami people's day, sometimes referred to as the Sami National Day.

with strong opposition both locally and in the government. Still, when it came up for discussion in the Storting (the supreme legislature of Norway) in 1963, a new legislation, based on the recommendations in the report, was put into action. The Sami were granted rights to language education, although still under certain conditions. This attitude change is considered a crossroads in the attitude towards the Sámi, and the government's handling of minorities in general (Stordahl 1996: 58).

At the start of the 1900s, the early Sami mobilization where effectively shot down by the Norwegian government. However, the 1950s saw this mobilization flourishing once more, and now with a renewed strength. Local commitments in different locations (Oslo being an important one) lead to a blooming organizational environment. The two most influential Sami political parties represented at the Sami Parliament today were founded during this time: Norske Reindriftssamers Landsforening (NRL), founded in 1947, and Norske Samers Riksforbund (NSR), founded in 1968 (Stordahl, 1996). At the same time plans were also drawn for a Sami Nordic collaboration: Sámiráđđi (Sami Council), a joint cooperative body for Sami in the Nordic countries, formed in 1956 (Minde, 2003). In Karasjok, the local Sami movement was actively working to improve the terms for the continuation of Sami culture, especially focusing on the language and education²⁶ (Stordahl, 1996). Within the political realm, there were two main topics being discussed: (1) the Sami people's rights to continue traditional livelihoods (like reindeer herding), as well as exploitation of their local natural resources²⁷, and (2) the Sami people faced a major economic and cultural crisis (Stordahl, 1996). Stordahl (ibid: 56) refers to Lillian Bye's descriptions of the conditions she witnessed as a tourist in Finnmark in the 70's: She was shocked to witness the bad conditions in which people were living (within a country of such generally good conditions as Norway). She compared her observations with the Afro-Americans' situation in the southern states of the United States. There was an ever-increasing sense of solidarity for the Sami in the Norwegian population. During the demonstrations associated with Alta controversy,

²⁶ The locally based work that was put down at the time is one of the reasons for Karasjok today having so many important Sami institutions.

²⁷ This debate has dominated the Sami-Norwegian discussion, and is today known as "the right to land and water" (Stordahl, 1996:55)

several of the protesters engaged in the campaigns and demonstrations were Norwegians fighting for the "Sami cause" (Hætta, 2002).

Ethnopolitical involvement beyond the 70's took a nationalist form and became highly politicized (Gaski, 2008). This resulted in a two dichotomous fronts, to which it was difficult to be neutral. Already at the release of the Sami Committee report from 1959, there was a conflict in the politically committed environment in Karasjok: Some believed that Sami culture and language were already "dying", and thus wanted to pave the way for further Norwegianization, others would work to create security and good grounds for Sami cultural development. "For individuals, this choice represented a mutual exclusive" (Stordahl, 1996: 81). One was either "ČSVs"²⁸ (represented by organizations such as NSR, NRL and Saami Council) or "APs" (Arbeiderpartiet – the Labour Party – was the biggest local opponent against the Sami Committees report). "ČSV" was the nickname of the ethnopolitical movement, but also became a symbol in itself.

In 1978 the Storting authorized the construction of a hydropower plant in the Alta-Kautokeino river²⁹. The plans involved forced relocation of the small village of Masi (that would be submerged under water), as well as loss of important areas for the reindeer herders. In the summer of 1978 a civilian action against the construction was formed. It led several demonstrations and campaigns that in all gathered several thousand participants with strong slogans like "Let the river live!" During the fall of 1979 and again in 1981, Sami activists set up a tent camp outside the Storting in Oslo. They conducted a hunger strike, which helped to further spotlight the controversy. Protesters also gathered in Stilla to block the road to the construction site (Bjørklund, 2000). By new year 1980-1981, six hundred police officers from all over the country were sent to remove protesters. The raid created strong images in the media, both in the Norwegian press and internationally. Despite the demonstrations and reindeer husbandry's lawsuit against the state, the power plant was built, opening in 1987. The

²⁸ ČSV could have several meanings: "Čájehehkot Sámi Vuoiŋŋa" (Show Sami Spirit) or "Čohkkejehket Sámiid Vuitui" (Gather the Sami to victory) (Bjørklund, 2000:29)

²⁹ The plans for the development had already begun in the 1950s. But the NVE (Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate) did not work out the details until 1970 (Hætta, 2002)

same year, the Storting adopted the Sami Act, and thus the establishment of the Sami Parliament (which held its first election in 1989). The Alta Controversy became an important means of gathering and drew attention to the revitalization that followed. Historian Steinar Pedersen argues that it should be regarded as a true salvation for the Sami culture (Rapp, 2014); it led to great attention for "the Sami cause" both nationally and internationally. By being placed within the internationally based framework of indigenous peoples, it also gained greater moral power that forced through major changes (Minde, 2003b).

Global Impulses

At the same time as the Sami revitalization took place in Norway, the international focus on indigenous peoples increased in general. There was an international focus on human rights, and states were officially called out as being in charge for threatening their populations with respect to and according to basic human rights. In addition, the development of welfare states as well as technology and global industry in the post-war years led to an increasing colonialization of peripheral areas throughout the world. This led to a surge of indigenous peoples' movements fighting for their territories. Minde (2008:58) describes the process as a push-and-pull effect: Indigenous peoples were forced to act on the basis of fundamental threats to their existence. Inspired by, among other things, independence struggles in Africa and civil rights movements in the United States, an international indigenous peoples' movement emerged to constitute an international arena for their struggles (Minde, *ibid*:49). The UN became an important platform for expressing goals, as well as building solidarity at an international level. In 1957, the International Labor Organization (ILO), adopted Convention No. 107 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. Norway did not ratify this convention upon consideration in 1958. The government stated that the Sami population could not be considered as indigenous peoples (Bjerkli and Selle 2003: 22) and that they were nevertheless very well integrated into the Norwegian society (Minde 2003: 106). The first time a public comparison was made between Sami and other indigenous peoples, was in a newspaper article from 1963 entitled "Samerna är Sveriges indianere" (The Sami are Sweden's Indians). Still, during the period of the Alta Controversy, few Sami considered themselves to be indigenous peoples (*Ibid*: 98). However, there was a

gradual change of attitude, especially rooted in university environments; the Sami movement had an important origin in this environment, among both Sami and non-Sami academics who were keen to promote Sami rights (Stordahl, 1996). Other indigenous affairs also caused involvement; especially the difficult situation of indigenous peoples of South America caused concern. In 1968, a group of anthropologists, led by Helge Kleivan, established the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA). It has since gone on to serve as an important organisation that keeps track of indigenous peoples rights and conditions for life and cultural freedom around the world (Minde , 2008). In 1971, the UN Human Rights Commission was in need of an extensive study of discrimination against indigenous peoples. The report made as a result of this research became known as the Cobo Report (ibid.), and contained the UN's official definition of indigenous peoples:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are (1) those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, (2) consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or part of them (3) They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and (4) are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories and their ethnic identity, as the basis with their own cultural pattern, social institutions and legal systems (ibid:80)

The Alta Controversy was crucial for the process of the Sami gaining official recognition as indigenous peoples both nationally and internationally. The push-and-pull came into work; media coverage of the hunger strike, and other strong images, like the police tearing through the rows of protesters, created international attention and resulted in strong criticism of the Norwegian state government, which in turn led an act of remedy by the government which became an advocate for establishing indigenous rights within the UN system. At the same time as the Alta Controversy made headlines in the press, the Nordic countries, lead by Norway, took the initiative to form a separate working group for indigenous peoples' rights within the UN system: The Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), established in 1981. It became a watershed in

indigenous peoples' politics, because it opened for more participation and influence³⁰. The following years saw Sami and Norwegian participation in high positions within this system. Human rights expert Asbjørn Eide became the first chairperson for WGIP. Aslak Nils Sara became Vice President, and on his initiative, a Nordic Expert Panel was established, with six out of ten members being Sami. Ole Henrik Magga, the first President of the Sami Parliament (1989-1997) also became the first chairman of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) in the period 2002-2004.

Implications and Misunderstandings Concerning the Indigenous Term

Andreassen and Lile (2006) refer to three misunderstandings that are often associated with indigenous status. The first stems from the view that indigenous status is based on whom first came to an area. Speaking of ethnicity within terms of genetics would be meaningless (Eriksen, 1993); if "we all" potentially may be descendants of those who came first, it will not be meaningful. However, some will oppose Sami right to the status of indigenous peoples based on archaeological findings, indicating that the Sami may not be "the first", and thus believe that it puts the Sami indigenous status in a new light and at the same time is a mockery of the "real indigenous peoples" of the world. There is no doubt that the Sami people have had strong ties and belonging to the lands before the borders of Norway were drawn, but the co-operation policy is based on Norway's tuition in the areas of two people; both Sami and Norwegians (Andreassen and Lile, 2006). Andreassen and Lile's second point is closely linked to the first and is about indigenous peoples' status giving Sami special rights to land and water. There was local resistance to the Finnmark Act³¹, which was adopted in 2005. Many who did not define themselves as Sami interpreted it as an ethno-political victory for the Sami people as a law giving special treatment justified by a "we came first" rhetoric as well as global rights struggle in international indigenous peoples' forums (Olsen, 2010). With the exception of the reindeer herding, that have special permits associated with it, Sami do not have more rights than others in this area (Andreassen and Lile, 2006). However, the

³⁰ At the first meeting in 1982, 32 NGOs, 12 states and a few academics participated, in 1994 there were 790 delegations: 267 NGOs and 28 states (Minde, 2008:73)

³¹ The Finnmark Act transferred about 95 % of the area of Finnmark from being managed by the Finnmark Estate agency, consisting of three members from the Sami Parliament, and Three members for Finnmark County Council. (Lovdata, 2005)

rhetoric is often used by Sami politicians in their arguments, especially in the discussions on land and water issues (Gaski, 2008). Despite the fact that the aboriginalization of the ethno-political movement has reached a very positive result for the Sami rights struggle, it is not necessarily a unifying process in a local setting (ibid.). Through the indigenous status, the Sami have the moral upper hand over the Norwegian state, and the recounts of Sami History as a colonial history do not necessarily put only the state, but also the non-Sami locals, in the role of colonial settlers (Olsen, 2010: 113).

Andreassen and Lile's (2006) last point discusses the right of the Sami to live in a modern society based on the misunderstanding that indigenous peoples should be "traditional". "According to such a view, some argue that the Sami can no longer be an indigenous people, nor have rights as indigenous peoples because they drive scooters, 4-wheelers, live in modern houses, etc." This freeze in "tradition" can also be traced in the romantic image of indigenous peoples as "The Ecologically Noble Savage"³². Amazon Indians are often presented within several frameworks that do not really suit themselves³³. "The problem is that Indianess and signs of Indianess have a symbolic value that is not intrinsic but bestowed from the outside" (Conklin and Graham, 1995:702). Said (1978) believes such a representation of "the other" must be understood as a representation of the West. The reality is, however, that indigenous peoples are captured in a romanticized image where they are presented (and also present themselves) as something that does not coincide with their true lifestyle, values and opportunities. Also within the academic debate, this essentializing focus has come to light. Adam Kuper (2003) believes the terms "indigenous" and "native" are not scientific categories, but must be considered new terms for primitive. He argues that the whole conceptual apparatus is based on an essential ideology of culture and identity that brings ideals about hunter-gatherer communities, nomadic pastoralists and harmony with nature. In his quest for "the real", contrary to the original, Kuper criticizes based on: (1) emphasizing the link to ancestors and their lifestyle, (2) an

³² The term is derived from Redford (1991), combining the idealized European version of "native", with an ecological perspective.

³³ One problem is, among other things, that Amazon Indians are grouped into a large unity, despite the fact that they consist of more than 180 different groups (Conklin and Graham, 1995)

assumed past, (3) the use of "Blut und Boden"³⁴ arguments based on blood (origin, family, inheritance and race) for the connection to land (Minde 2008:50). In this critique, however, Kuper has overlooked the social reality that lies behind the indigenous concept. Firstly, it is not an intellectual and invented construction, but a political institutionalized and emic reality that will not disappear if you remove the term (Friedman, 2008). In addition, one must distinguish between injustice and equal rights (Andreassen and Lile, 2006). Both Kuper and the commonsense-based points of misunderstanding which Andreassen and Lile present, related to the indigenous status do not take into account what the status is intended to emphasize: equality and equal rights, no special treatment at the expense of others. Friedman (2008) traces many similarities between the equal rights struggle that takes place within indigenous communities and the women's struggle for gender equality. Both are about marginalized groups working for equal rights. In Norway, the Norwegian population is protected by laws and legal systems; indigenous peoples' rights help ensure the rights of the Sami who were present at the formation of the nation state but have not been treated as equal. It is for example about the right to language education in one's mother tongue and other measures necessary to ensure equality and equal opportunities (Andreassen and Lile, 2006).

The Criteria for Sami Ethnicity

The debate on the indigenous term highlights the important implications involved in who is to be considered Sami. The Sami Act dictates the criteria for registration in the Sami Parliament's census. It has also become the general guideline for "who may" identify themselves as Sami (Bjørklund, 2016). As referred to in Chapter 1, according to the Sami act:

"Everyone who declares that they perceive themselves as Sami, and who either
a) have Sami as their home language, or
b) have or have had a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent with Sami as home language, or

³⁴ "Blood and soil", often linked to the Nazi regime

c) is the child of a person currently or previously registered in the (Sami Parliaments) census, have the right to be registered in the census. "
(LOV 1987-06-12 nr 56)

In line with anthropological theory of ethnicity, these criteria have two necessary conditions; it is based on both a subjective feeling of belonging within a group, and on the more objective criterion, in this case the language, that makes up a common ground for unity within the group and boundaries outwards. The subjective part of the criterion can be described as a kind of "one-sided and exclusive right"; you may choose not to identify yourself as Sami, but you will still be entitled to do so if you hold the objective criteria.

Bjørklund (2016) argues that there are some fundamental problems with the second part concerning language and/or family relations. Firstly, it might be difficult or even impossible to determine what language one's great-grandparents spoke at home. The complex situation in northern Norway makes it even more difficult; they might have spoken Sami, Norwegian or Kven. Secondly, there is also a high degree of subjectivity in the definition, since it allows for emphasizing on only one of eight great-grandparents when assessing one's own ethnicity. This means that one might consider oneself Sami based on the ethnicity (or the language spoken) of one out of eight great-grandparents, thus not considering the seven others. An increasing numbers of people are registering in the census; still, the election participation is falling, which Bjørklund interprets as proof of the claim that many do not use the census as a democratic resource, but rather as a confirmation of ethnicity (ibid:13).

The census has grown drastically since the opening of the Sami Parliament in 1989 when it counted 5505, to 15,005 today (Bjørklund, 2016:13). Yet it is not possible to provide accurate estimates of the size of the Sami population; In addition to the basic issue of whom to consider as "inside" and "outside" the count, there is no overall overview. There are also no updated sources; because ethnicity is not catalogued in any of the four state's registers today (Pettersen, 2006). The estimates may therefore vary between sources from 40-60,000 (Hætta, 2002) and 50-80,000 (Sámi Instituhtta).

As Baumann (1999) points out, culture is often made out to be a matter of having rather than making. In this context, ethnicity might also be viewed in connection to the

problematic term "race". The concept of "race" carries negative associations to former assessments and hierarchical based on grading of humans into categories based on physical appearance "Race" is also meaningless from a modern genetic point of view; there has always been a certain degree of blend between different groups, and physical characteristics and appearance will not necessarily follow simple hereditary lines (Eriksen, 1993). The ethnic groups with a long on-going connection to the Northern parts of Norway (Sami, Norwegians and Kvens) have lived side by side for a long time. Even if one would try to assess the Sami ethnicity as based on genetics, this would be challenging. Mixing within the population as well as the historical context described above, have made this task not just meaningless, but also impossible. Due to the socially constructed nature of ethnicity and the importance of self-ascription into the Sami ethnic group, one might even find different ethnic identities within the same family despite the members being related "by blood". In the book and exhibition *Sami Images in Modern Times* (Eikjok and Røe, 2013), Reidun Johannessen explains how her mother identified herself as Sami, while her sister (Johannessen's aunt), does not. Thus leaving the two sisters with different ethnic identities. The continuous mixing between these groups makes it meaningless to define ethnicity through genetics (Eriksen, 1993).

Making of Sami Emblems

The boundaries of the Sami ethnicity are made by contracting and matching (Eriksen, 1993 cf. Eidheim, 1971) towards other ethnic groups. As the Norwegian ethnicity is "the norm" in Norway, "Saminess" is often portrayed in contrast to "Norwegianness" and the "cultural stuff" that is made relevant is the stuff that makes this contracting obvious.

During the revitalization process of the 1970s and 80s (especially within the ČSV movement), this became especially evident. The process of building a new Sami image became fixed on making it a focal point for Sami collective community on one hand, and contrasting the Norwegian state and society on the other. "ČSVs" actively sought to take back the "lost" language, culture, land and self-worth (Stordahl, 1996: 84). In much the same process as the Norwegian cultural nation building, the Sami ethnopolitical movement was looking for "authentic" and unifying symbols of "Saminess". Recodifying language and cultural traits became an important way to counteract the stigmas

connected to the Sami ethnicity; promoting pride and self-worth through visible and recognisable traits or cultural characteristics of the Sami ethnic identity. The ČSVs were recognizable by their style; they proclaimed their Saminess by wearing *gáktis*, *biekso* (Sami shoes), tin-thread embroideries and the Sami colours (red, blue, yellow and green) (ibid:87). The movement was fundamentally political, but was also expressed in music, art, education, research, literature, *doudji*, theatre and media (Gaski, 2008, Stordahl, 1996, Hætta, 2002). In the arts, the dichotomised relations between Sami and Norwegian was less obvious, which lead to a larger space for expression without risking being criticized (Hägg, 1999).

As the ethno-political movements centre of gravity was based in inner Finnmark (Olsen, 2010:77). The nomadic reindeer herder's lifestyle was, and still is, a strong and dominant representation of Saminess. Although only a few percent of the Sami population³⁵ was connected to this livelihood, this image of the Sami people as predominantly reindeer herders were broadcast and reflected back by the Norwegian majority. (Bjørklund et. al 2002:126) notes that this image is still put forth by important actors in the Sami-Norwegian discourse, like the travel literature, tourism industry, film and TV productions, daily press and museums. The Norwegian school systems curriculum was also until recently dominated by this image, and Andersen (2003) notes that this focus is still the most common way to depict the Sami within the schools teachings. The space occupied by the reindeer herders in defining "Saminess" has solidified the picture outwards, but it has also affected the dynamics of inter-Sami relations. During the post-war period, the permanent dwellers of the coastal regions in Finnmark changed their self-perception; formerly, they named themselves as *sámielažžat* (Sami), and reindeer herders as *badjeolbmot* (people living up in the highlands as oppose to themselves that lived down by the sea). Reindeer herders described them as *mearraolbmot* (the people at the sea) (Andersen, 2003: 259). Today, the term *sámielažžat* is usually used only to define the reindeer herders. This type of categorization is also found in inner Finnmark; it distinguished between the reindeer herders (*sápmelaš*) and the "permanent residents" (that did not live nomadic lives), known as the *dalon* (ibid:254). Due to the position of the reindeer husbandry as

³⁵ According to Bjørklund (2000) about 10 % of the Sami people living in inner Finnmark is involved in reindeer husbandry.

quintessential Sami, the title of *sápmelaš* bears more cultural capital than *dalon*. I encountered several instances where these categories were highlighted and made relevant; in Karasjok and Kautokeino, connections to the reindeer herding community was in general highlighted. For instance, as a girl told me about a boy she was interested in dating, the very first point she referenced was his connection to the reindeer herding community. People seemed to emphasize this connection especially in context concerning ethnic markers, and it might even be seen as having a kind of a positive contagion or as having sort of a hereditary aspect to them; I was told multiple times that my ancestral connection to the reindeer husbandry made me a "real Sami". Bjørklund et. al (2002:126) notes that this public narrative has a folkloristic aspect about it.

The Core and the Periphery

In the Sami context, "*who* you are is closely linked to *where* you are" (Hovland, 1999:57) The Sami community, like all other cultural communities, has a core and periphery areas. The most important feature of the imagined community is its way of unifying its members, "regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each" (Anderson, 1991:7). The case made above, where there are distinctions not only on the basis of different categories of Sami, but also in some respects of Sami and "something else" (being that the reindeer headers are portrayed as the actual Sami). *Sápmi* as an imagined community then might be put into question. It often appears as a number of smaller units, some of this might even collide in various contexts (Paine, 2003, with references to Høgmo (u.d.). The coastal areas of Finnmark are often defined as the most Norwegianized of the Sami communities, based on population composition, language and ethnic self-understanding (Andersen, 2003:246). Andersen points to the importance of assessing the various preconditions that these areas have faced in comparison to inner Finnmark, especially in the years following the war. Inner Finnmark were considered as focal point in working to preserve the Sami language (based on the relative good state of the language in this area). This led to an expansion of Sami institutions of various kinds to help prevent relocation (and urbanisation to the bigger cities) by replacing many of the jobs lost in the primary sector with alternatives where the Sami language and cultural knowledge gave an advantage (ibid.). This development became important for the promotion and continuation of language and cultural knowledge on more than the purely pragmatic level; it was also an important

gesture to this area being considered as the (only) fundamentally Sami area (ibid:250). The revitalization process that occurred and is still accruing in the coastal areas is distinctly different from the process in inner Finnmark. Thuen (2003, with reference to Hovland's 1996 empirical work) points out the paradox in the situation where young people in coastal areas get a new understanding of self, due to major "reconstruction work" of their own ethnicity, where they sometimes go against their parents' and grandparents' wishes. The process of continuation of knowledge then, is not necessarily a process of continuation from one generation to the next. It is an ambiguous process; on one side one may search for ancestral connections, while on the other also constructing a new and very modern ethnic identity in contrast of one's closest family (ibid:269) Andersen (2003) emphasizes the problem with thinking along this dichotomised lines; A black and white representation of the coast as Norwegianized and inland as "preserved" can overshadow important nuances in both the individual and the group's sense of self.

Chapter 4: Language

"I like to speak Sami and why should I be embarrassed that I do not speak Norwegian so much when Sami is my native language and I'm Sami."³⁶ Ravna (20) sits across me in the couch, with a cup of tea in her hand, the TV is on, and other than that it's quiet. She is visiting the basement apartment I currently rent. At the table between us my recorder is turned on; there will eventually be several hours of recording this evening.

She explains how she felt growing up in inner Finnmark with Sami as her mother tongue, but in addition always having to relate to the Norwegian language. We speak Norwegian to each other, sometimes she stops to consider certain words she is unsure of. She asks me if she can formulate herself in this or that way, or she repeats different variants of words that sounds similar until she finds the one she is looking for. I nod to signal that I understand what she means, I know Ravna now, and the dynamic of our conversation is no longer characterized by apologies for her "bad Norwegian".

Ravna describes her attitude towards her own language skills as based on a relatively newfound self-esteem. She explains that she has recently come to redefine her own view of herself and her ethnicity. She now recognizes it as a matter of exclusivity; she feels unique, and elaborates on the fact that not many people is able to speak Sami in Norway and even less people when taking the whole world into account. Ravna continues explaining how she has also gotten positive feedback from others confirming that her Saminess is something special and uncommon. This has strengthened her self-esteem. She gives an example; "My cousin was very surprised and happy when she heard that there are people in Norway who do not actually really speak Norwegian well, and would rather choose to speak Sami"³⁷.

As the political climate changed, along with the change in attitude towards the Sami language and culture as a whole, the self-esteem of the Sami speaker has undoubtedly become stronger. Stordahl (1996) describes the position of the Sami language in

³⁶ "Jeg liker å prate samisk, og hvorfor skal jeg være flau over at jeg ikke kan norsk så mye, når samisk er morsmålet mitt, og jeg *er* same."

³⁷ "kusina mi ble veldig overrasket og glad når hun hørte om at det finnes folk i Norge som faktisk ikke er så flink å snakke norsk, og heller velger å prate samisk."

Karasjok as having the moral upper hand on Norwegian language. In these areas, Karasjok and Kautokeino, the Sami language is stronger and more resilient than elsewhere in the country, and the area can thus be described as a stronghold for the Sami language (Solstad et al. 2012).

Still, many live with the memory of Norwegianization fresh in mind, and this stronghold is an enclave surrounded by the Norwegian language. The ambivalent feelings that lie in the relationship between Sami and Norwegian languages were apparent to me during my fieldwork. Sami is the preferred language of communication for many people living in this area, and is rendered almost synonymous with Sami ethnicity, revitalization and the continuity of Sami culture. Still, almost everyone also speaks Norwegian, and needs it in their daily lives. Despite the moral status of Sami language as higher, I got the impression that the Norwegian language is still in a position that leads some people to feel a certain degree of inferiority in not being able to master the Norwegian language "well enough".

During interviews, I often found Sami people apologizing for their broken Norwegian. I believe that this view of Norwegian as something one should be able to speak fluently, in turn emphasises the importance Sami language has as a Sami identity marker on the purity axes mentioned in the theoretical framework. At the same time, this strong emphasis language has as an identity marker and something pure creates the need to find different ways of becoming Sami enough for those Sami people who do not speak Sami, and thus sets of the dynamic axes where one is allowed to redefine and stretch the Sami identity. I will further try to describe how high the stakes are on either side, especially on that side which emphasizes the necessity of the Sami purity, as this is the starting point.

Sami Language in Inner Finnmark—a Matter of Mastering

As with ethnicity in general, there is no complete register on Sami language (Pettersen, 2006, Todal, 1998). Rasmussen and Nolan (2011) estimate the total number of Sami speakers to be about 35 000. The majority, about 20 000, speak Northern Sami (Todal, 1998, Magga, 1995). It is by far the biggest Sami language, with close to 90 % of the Sami speakers, and also the highest percentage of people expressing Sami as their first language (Solstad et. al, 2012). In 2012, a report on the status of Sami language was

published. The report was commissioned by The Sami Parliament, and based on quantitative data³⁸ and case-studies³⁹ from different Sami language management areas⁴⁰. The aim was to get an overview of the Sami languages in Norway, which could be used to facilitating more targeted language preservation methods. The report shows that about half the North Sami speaking community speaks the language fairly well ("rimelig bra"). Karasjok and Kautokeino stood out as municipalities where the Sami language is particularly strong; both municipalities are also administrative areas of Sami language, with a particular focus on preserving it, through measures that include comparing the Sami language with the Norwegian language within the public administration. Both municipalities are characterized by the fact that almost everyone understands and speaks Sami, and also speaks the language in several types of interactions, and in different arenas in their everyday lives (Solstad et al., 2012:12).

Mastering of Sami language clearly provides a higher social status, and it is an absolute career advantage (ibid.). In addition, I would argue that, despite being able to "get by" in your daily life in the village as an exclusively Norwegian speaker, the Sami language is to be considered a necessity to be able to live out a fully incorporated social life. As Sami is the preferred language spoken in all types of social interactions, mastering the language is crucial.

When referring to "*the* Sami language", in this case it means Northern Sami; as it is the language spoken in inner Finnmark, and the "most widespread and least threatened of the languages" (Todal, 1998:358). There are a number of opinions on how many Sami

³⁸ Questionnaires were sent electronically and by mail, to 5000 people (over 18 years old) registered in the Sami Parliament's census in Norway; all the people registered in the South Sami constituency, and municipalities in the county of Nordland, and 30 % from the other constituencies in order to get a representative number from all the Sami languages. The survey received a response rate of around 40 %, over 2000 people (Solstad et al. 2012: 11)

³⁹ The depth study covers 12 municipalities within administrative areas of all three Sami languages; North, Lule and Southern Sami. Kautokeino was one of the case municipalities.

⁴⁰ Some municipalities, including Karasjok and Kautokeino, are statutory Sami language management areas. It is a means to promote the status of the Sami language, through equating it with Norwegian language within the municipal and state agencies. The municipalities are obliged to make arrangements for the use of Sami language. (regjeringen.no, 2014)

languages there are, the numbers vary between nine and twelve (Albury, 2014; Bull, 2002, Pietiäinen et al, 2010; Hansen, 2015), and even on whether to consider them languages or differences in dialect (Huss and Lindgren, 2011). In Norway, there are three Sami languages or dialects that might be considered viable and in use. Magga (2002:9) favour the term "language" as a better description of these variations than "dialect"; the languages are so different that they are not readily comprehensible to one another, and many also uses different alphabets⁴¹. The languages form a dialectical continuum, within which the neighbouring languages are similar enough as to be mutually comprehensible, thus allowing for communication across language barriers. (Hætta, 2002:10) Given the North Sami languages position vis-à-vis Southern and Lule Sami, the survey shows the dominant position of Northern Sami, by for instance pointing to the fact that more of the people within these smaller language groups choose (or find it necessary) to also learn Northern Sami, while this tendency is not reversed (Solstad et al. 2012).

Sami Language as an Indicator of Ethnicity

Language is an important symbol of identity, both on individual and group level. Attitudes towards one's own or others' language is an indicator of deeper emotions involved (Loona, 2001:227); "debates over regional languages are never just debates over language" (Kymlicka and Petten, 2003:5). The Sami Act emphasizes language as an important means of determining the Sami ethnic identity. The Sami language has become a "meta-element of Sami culture and identity criteria" (Hansen, 2015:260) and is often listed as a separate point next to other cultural features. As Ravna's account in the introduction shows, people often tends to not make a clear distinction between ethnicity and language. It appears to be a common way to speak of the matter; language was among the first factors my informants mentioned upon defining Sami ethnic identity.

Still, there is no absolute concurrence between language and ethnicity; a Sami language practitioner is not necessarily Sami; one does not automatically breach the ethnic boundary by mastering the Sami language. The language is nevertheless rendered

⁴¹ The dialect divide began in the 800s, by both voluntary migration and displacement within the Sami-speaking group. (Hætta, 2002:110).

relevant as a means of communication, not just literally, but as an emblem for Saminess. The Sami language is an important means in communicating one's Sami ethnicity, boundaries and affiliation (Hovland, 1999:159). Hovland refers to the distinction between Sami-speakers and Norwegian-speakers as a euphemism, which avoids denoting ethnicity by rather emphasizing language skills as a basic distinction. Ethnicity and language, however, are closely linked in Sami areas (Todal, 2007: 206); At the same time, this relationship is highly contextual; Hovland (1999: 83) illustrates this point by referring to a Norwegian-speaking Sami who states that "In Alta I am Sami, in Kautokeino I am Norwegian"⁴². This sentence illustrates how the Sami language is made relevant and crucial in some contexts as a means of distinguish between those regarded as within and outside the Sami ethnicity (Hovland, 1999: 166). It is also relevant to make a note on where the man uttering this sentence is placed within the Sami ethnicity and where he is preserved as Norwegian.

Hovland describes the Sami language in Kautokeino as something that is clearly a matter of mastering (Hovland, 1999:86). He illustrates this point by referring to a girl whose friend does not speak Sami. The girl tells him that "She really understands everything, but she does not dare to speak. She's afraid that we'll start laughing"⁴³ (Ibid: 86, my translation). As the vast majority of people in the area of inner Finnmark identify as Sami, and also speak Sami as their first language, there seems to be some general expectations towards people's language skills. I occasionally come across people who, like in Hovland's example, "trivialized" the matter of speaking Sami as something one could just start doing.

Despite the already established sense of a strong connection between Sami language and Sami ethnicity, I did not get the impression that the language was treated as a matter of knowledge reserved for Sami people alone. On several different occasions, I was told stories of Norwegian people, rivgus and dážas, who had learned to speak Sami. In these presentations, the people in question were always presented in positive terms. For instance, Sára told of a woman whom she referred to as a "ekte rivgu" (real

⁴² "I Alta e æ fjellfinn, i Kauto e æ dáza"

⁴³ "Ho forstår absolutt alt, men ho tør ikke snakke. Ho e redd for at vi skal begynne å le av henne" (ibid:86)

Norwegian woman) without any connection with Sami ethnicity or the village except through her husband, a local man. When she had moved to the area, she had learned Sami well enough to practice it in only a couple of months. Sára stressed the fact that "she *wanted* to learn Sami!"⁴⁴. This goes to show Hovland's (1999) point of the language being highly contextualized as a marker of ethnicity.

Changing Attitudes

Apart from the Sami language used as a means of dividing the social map in the region (cf. Jenkins, 2011), the language is also a very emotional matter. As an important emblem of Sami ethnicity, and seen in light of the historical context, the language can be considered both as a concrete point of discussion of the right to maintain and continue one's culture, and also something that can stir up strong feelings of loss.

The economic, social and cultural impact over time as well as the active Norwegianization were both important factors while considering the position and viability of the Sami language today. It forms the backdrop of the choice many Sami parents did when they decided not to transfer the Sami language to their own children. It was an effective "Norwegianization of their own children" (Solstad et. al., 2012:21, my translation), often based on a conscious wish of trying to make their children's lives easier. After the change of climate, the "guilt" of the parents has even been up for debate. It is based in both the fact that they have not continued the Sami language on through their children, but also on what attitudes they have inserted in them by not doing so (ibid.) Unni gave me an explanation of how she, as a young mother in the 70's, assessed the situation. Unni had been concerned with both language and education throughout her adult life, and worked all her active working years within this sector. She explained that there used to be an assumption that one had to choose either Norwegian or Sami as a primary language to be used at home. This dichotomy originated from the contemporary belief of those days that multilingualism was unfortunate for the child; the idea was that it could be confusing and inhibit the child's development. "And one does not conduct experiment on one's own children"⁴⁵ she adds.

⁴⁴ "hun ville lære samisk!"

⁴⁵ "Og man eksperimenterer ikke på sine egne barn"

Unni gave me a deeply emotional description of what it felt like to sense that one had made a huge mistake by following the standards of the day. Unni grew up in inner Finnmark with Sami as her first language, but also endured the result of the Norwegianization by spending her younger years within the boarding school system. She did not learn to read or write Sami until later in life. As an adult, she moved out of the core Sami areas, and her children therefore experienced a language environment that was very different from her own childhood. As was the norm of the time, she did not teach Sami to her child. Not being surrounded by a Sami speaking population, her child did not learn Sami at all. As part of her job, Unni participated in a lecture that included the topic of Sami language and multilingualism. It became a soul-setting experience as the lecturer presented evidence that it would *not* hurt a child to learn more than one primary language. It could even be considered beneficial.

The lecturer continued by emphasizing the parents' responsibility to teach the children the Sami language because it was the children's right to gain access to this knowledge. Unni expresses how this new information and point of view floored her. She sat with a growing feeling of having made a bad mistake by not teaching her child, who was now four years old. She explained it as a feeling of being a thief who had stolen something important from her own child. After this lecture, Unni contacted the lecturer, and told her about her predicament. She had asked for help to correct the damage she felt she had inflicted on her child. The lecturer had reassured her that it was not too late to teach the language now; by introducing Sami words and sentences little by little, in conversation with the child. Unni got tears in her eyes while describing the feeling she got when her child all by itself called her *eadni* (mother in Sami). She described it as if something that had been stuck inside her was now let loose. For her, the word *eadni* carried a much deeper meaning than the Norwegian word for mother, *mamma*; "All the good things that *eadni* means. It was like music, I've never heard anything more beautiful from him than just *eadni*. It was *so* nice!"⁴⁶

⁴⁶ "Alt det gode som *eadni* betyr. Det var som musikk, jeg har aldri hørt noe finere fra han enn akkurat *eadni*. Det var *så* fint!"

Unni's story might be a realisation of Eriksen's (2008) linguistic image of a fish that is unaware of the water until it is pulled out of it, upon which the water becomes the most important thing there is.

Sunil Loona (2001:228) points out that bilingualism is still not completely unproblematic; while it is not considered harmful to the child's linguistic development, it might still cause for concern on the parent's part. Since language is so fundamental in the formation of identity, and as a tool for continuation of knowledge, the bilingualism for the child might point out their parent's "otherness".

As my research has shown, not being able to speak Sami has great implications for one's life if one defines oneself as Sami, or has a connection to the Sami community, especially in inner Finnmark. I will further illustrate this with one of my next informants, Marit, and one of my own experiences, but first it is necessary to spend some time elaborating on ways in which the Sami language is preserved, and how important this still is, and how important it is for people on an emotional level.

Preserving the Sami Language

Although the Sami language has a stronghold in inner Finnmark, many people still seemed to worry about the future of the language. Both Hovland (1999) and Stordahl (1996) display how the young people in Karasjok and Kautokeino during the 90's used the language as an indicator of differentiation depending on context. In one of the cases he presents, Hovland shows how a Sami boy from a reindeer herder background friendly teases his Norwegian-speaking friends by speaking Sami to them. The friends react by calling him ČSV (meaning super Sami trying to force the language on them).

I did not come across the same tendency to use ČSV in this way. People generally displayed a rather concerned expression on the topic of the future of the language.

Linne told me that she thought it was very scary to hear the children speak Sami in the kindergarten she had previously worked in: "I'm scared! The kids are speaking really badly Sami!" She explains how the children used the Sami words wrong, used Norwegian words and made sentences with a Norwegian structure. It worried her. Another informant, Silje, (23 years old), explained that she saw it as her responsibility to teach Elin, her sister (20 years old), correct Sami grammar. She laughs and explains

how Elin "spoke really badly before, but I taught her to talk more correctly". I ask her to elaborate, and she explains that Elin tends to "reshuffle her Sami"; she was not able to speak Sami in the Norwegian way, by adding on words like "up" (standing up or writing up), as these were not used in the Sami language.

Ravna experienced Sami people in general as adaptable when it comes to switching languages. She found that people mostly change to Norwegian when someone in the conversation did not understand Sami. "If there is a group of twenty people, where everyone speaks Sami, then someone who speaks Norwegian comes in - all of us speak Norwegian."⁴⁷ She stopped to consider the matter, and concluded that "It's good and bad. It shows how easy it is for us to just switch Sami away. If we switch it off, on several occasions and regularly for several years, we may switch it off forever⁴⁸. That's how we can lose the language."⁴⁹ There was a clear concern about the future of the Sami language, especially among the younger generation.

The dynamic exchange between Norwegian and Sami may affect the Sami language negatively. The language survey from 2012 also presents data showing that people in the Kautokeino municipality, despite the strong position of Sami language, also express some concern about the future of the language; one is afraid of the influence that Norwegian can have on the Sami language, not only through switching or dynamic change, but also by the fact that the Norwegian language influences Sami grammar (Solstad et. al. 2012). Several of the informants in the in-depth study explained that the Sami language had both Norwegian words, and sometimes a Norwegian sentence structure and grammar (Solstad et. al., 2012: 54).

During the youth meeting, Norwegian was the common language to use, since as Magga (2002) points out, some of the Sami languages differ to a large extent. Despite the

⁴⁷ "Hvis det er en gruppe med tyve stykker, hvor alle prater samisk, så kommer det inn en som prater norsk – så snakker vi alle norsk. "

⁴⁸ It is interesting to note that while Ravna speaks of this matter in Norwegian, she uses the wording "switching off forever" in English. She does not seem to notice or problematize this matter.

⁴⁹ "Det er både og, akkurat det viser jo hvor lett det er for oss å bare svitsje samisken bort. Om vi svitsjer den bort, i flere anledninger og jevnlig igjennom flere år, da kan det hende at vi svitsjer den off forever. Det er sånn vi kan miste språket"

relative dominance and perhaps the overshadowing effect of Northern Sami, the strong position of the language in areas like inner Finnmark is also beneficial for the other two languages. Professionals from this area have combined their knowledge with local resources and have created better growth conditions for the other Sami languages in their local areas (Solstad et. al, 2012).

I'm Sorry, I Do Not Speak Norwegian That Well

"It took a very long time for me to dare to speak Norwegian with people"⁵⁰. Ravna with a little laugh in her voice: "... and I'm still experiencing it in my twenties, for me it's very hard to speak Norwegian, especially with people I do not know. It does not come naturally; I have to warm myself up to speak Norwegian. When I first start talking, it's okay, but starting is hard."⁵¹. I ask her to explain why she finds it difficult. "I'm afraid that maybe they think I'm not good enough, maybe they're going to think about how, yes, I've must be really stupid, maybe I do not have the right dialect, maybe I do not say the word right, all that spinning in my head, it makes it very difficult to get the words out, you get very insecure about yourself."⁵²

Based on this description, one can regard Ravna's choice of preferring to speak Sami just as much as insecurity and fear of not mastering the Norwegian language as it relates to the moral upper hand of the Sami language. This very ambivalence comes to the fore in informants who at one moment confront me with why I do not speak Sami, but in the next excuse themselves for not speaking Norwegian well enough. Only in very few cases, as described at the end of chapter, I experienced a pressing insistence on speaking Sami and thus a consistent expression of dominance and overtaking through language.

⁵⁰ "Det tok veldig lang tid for meg å tørre å snakke norsk med folk. "

⁵¹ "og jeg opplever det fortsatt nå i tyveårene, at for meg er det veldig vanskelig å prate norsk, særlig med folk jeg ikke kjenner. Det kommer ikke naturlig, jeg må varme meg opp for å prate norsk. Når jeg først prater, så går det greit, men det å starte, det er vanskelig"

⁵² "Jeg er redd for at kanskje de tenker at jeg ikke er flink nok, kanskje dem kommer til å tenke på hvordan, ja, jeg må være skikkelig dum, kanskje jeg ikke har den riktige dialekten, kanskje jeg ikke sier ordet riktig, alt det der spinner i hodet mitt, da blir det veldig vanskelig å få ordene ut, man blir veldig utrygg på seg selv."

Tactics to Avoid Speaking Norwegian

Ravna explains that it took a long time before she felt safe enough to speak Norwegian outside the Norwegian classes at school. She did not speak Norwegian regularly before secondary school (13-16 years of age). She never spoke Norwegian with her Sami friends, yet knew enough Norwegian to understand and talk when she needed to. "When I started at secondary school, I had some friends who could not speak Sami, and then I had to speak Norwegian".⁵³ However, she found it difficult and she repeatedly emphasizes that she would not speak Norwegian to people she did not know. "If there were more people, that I was not alone, I was the one who stayed in the background. And if I had to talk, I said something in Sami, then they translated into Norwegian. When I first started doing it, it was even harder to speak Norwegian. Then it became a habit. Then you become the dumb one who cannot speak Norwegian. And I also thought about myself that 'I can not speak Norwegian'".⁵⁴ The fear of saying something wrong meant that Ravna, like Hovland's (1999) informant, chose to avoid speaking Norwegian in the most possible cases. This tactic of getting others to translate requires something of the surrounding people, creating a more complex and demanding communication situation. At the youth meeting outside Oslo, I witnessed this tactic in practice. There were youngsters gathered from all three Sami language regions, and there were different degrees of knowledge of the Sami languages among the young people. The participants were all Sami, but since they came from different Sami language areas, Norwegian was a common language of interaction, especially in interaction with larger parts of the group. We sat around a table, six or seven people, the conversation was in Norwegian. A young girl was clearly timid and uncomfortable talking to the group. When someone approached her, she answered in North Sami to the person next to her, a more confident girl, who translated into Norwegian. However, it was clear that she understood what was said. The translator suddenly broke out "Ugh, you have to learn to speak

⁵³ "Når jeg begynte på ungdomsskolen, hadde jeg noen venner som ikke kunne samisk, og da måtte jeg snakke norsk. "

⁵⁴ "Om det var flere, at jeg ikke var alene, så var jeg den som holdt meg i bakgrunnen. Og om jeg måtte prate, så sa jeg noe på samisk, så oversatte de til norsk. Når jeg først begynte å gjøre det, da var det enda vanskeligere å prate norsk. Da ble det en vane. Da blir man den dummingen som ikke kan norsk. Og jeg tenkte også om meg selv at 'jeg kan jo ikke norsk'."

Norwegian."⁵⁵ The girl reacted with a shy smile and shrunk a little. She continued, however, to speak only through the translator.

Despite this encouragement, people generally, as Ravna point out, switched to Norwegian as needed. Everyone, except for a small number of seniors and immigrants (especially from the Finnish side), understood Norwegian well enough to speak fluently and understandably. The conversations often included what I would designate as a dynamic shift between the two languages; they changed, consciously and unconsciously, words or sentences, or the conversation could eventually be shifted from Norwegian to Sami. Particularly, these conversations were used to reproduce a particular word exchange or explain a course of events; It was common to "play out" what and how a person had said, thus changing language to Sami or Norwegian according to the situation they described. I often experienced what I consider as a subconscious change from Norwegian to Sami language; conversations where several of the participants mastered Sami, and could go from Norwegian to include me, to Sami, again to switch to Norwegian when the parties became aware that I could not follow the conversation.

Even though the Sami language has the moral upper hand on Norwegian, it does not change the dominant position of the Norwegian language. The stronghold of Sami languages is a small "enclave" in a country that is dominated by Norwegian language. On paper, Sami and Norwegian are equal in the administrative areas. In practice, however, this is a truth with modifications. The language survey of 2012 shows that many people choose to submit applications and forms in Norwegian, although Sami in some (but not all) cases is available. Processing is often more time-consuming if you send the papers in Sami. The expectations of community skills in Sami meet the same high standards and requirements as the mastery of Norwegian. As a Norwegian speaker, and thus "articulated" in the Norwegian language, I noticed that many responded with some uncertainty and what I would describe as an apologetic tone to me. Except for a few cases where someone consciously chose to ignore my lack of language skills, most people automatically switched to Norwegian when it became clear to them that I did not master Sami, sometimes followed by some excuses for their "bad Norwegian skills".

⁵⁵ "Uff, du må lære deg å snakke på norsk."

The conversations in Norwegian were still influenced by Sami intonation; Often, some Sami words and expressions could also pass through.

I met John, a 16-20-year-old boy, during the Easter wedding in Kautokeino. John greeted me with a handshake and began to speak Sami. When I explained a little apologetic that I did not understand, he was put out; "Oh, ok, hey, My Norwegian is not so good, or I know Norwegian, but I mostly speak Sami, My Norwegian is not so good, Hi, my name is John."⁵⁶ The meeting with John is one of many with this kind of exchange before you can start the conversation. This "apologetic attitude" applied not only to language, but some individuals also used it as a kind of explanation; Sentences like "we Sami do not know/understand"⁵⁷ were often said in an ironic and humorous tone. It was so common that I would call it as a set expression. I interpreted it as a way to ease the mood or defuse the situation through self-irony, either because the conversation became in-depth on topics they were not interested in or where one of the actors felt insufficient. It could also be a humorous end to a story and was met with laughter and nods from the other actors. In the same way that people corrected my Sami language, I also noticed that some were particularly keen to correct someone else's Norwegian.

Ravna explained that not only the fear of saying anything wrong, but also the stigma associated with the dialect, was a challenge for her when she spoke Norwegian. She thinks there's a stigma to the way people talk in the area. The way people speak here often has the same bouncing tone of voice as in the Sami language. The pronunciation can be characterized as a mixture between bokmål and nordnorsk⁵⁸; Many of the words are pronounced almost as they are written, while other words are affected by the pronunciation typical of the counties of Nordland and Troms. Ravna speaks Norwegian with a dialect that is typical of people in this area. It is often described as singing or jumping, and has some of the same tone of voice as the North Sami language has. She speaks without hesitation, and in my understanding, she speaks Norwegian very well,

⁵⁶ "Oi, ok, hei, jeg er ikke så god i norsk, eller jeg kan jo norsk, men jeg prater egentlig mest samisk, jeg er ikke så god i norsk, hei jeg heter John. "

⁵⁷ "vi samer vet vel ikke/skjønner vel ikke. "

⁵⁸ Bokmål (literally "book tongue" is one of two official written standards for the Norwegian language. Nordnorsk (northern Norwegian) is a name for the group of dialects in the Northern parts of Norway.

but sometimes she searches for the words and gesticulates to explain what she wants to say.

The words she uses are a mixture of bokmål and northern Norwegian dialect. She says "jeg, meg og seg" (*I, me and himself/herself*) rather than "æ, mæ og sæ". Ravna describes it as "crow's Norwegian"⁵⁹; "It's embarrassing to talk like that, you're stupid when you speak crow's Norwegian. It's probably a big part of it that I did not like to speak Norwegian, because I was afraid I had, like, Jompa Tormann Norwegian"⁶⁰. Jompa Tormann is the main character and anti-hero of the parody films *Kill Buljo*, a low-budget parody of the American action movie *Kill Bill*, set in Finnmark. Jompa clearly speaks broken Norwegian. Ravna explains that she for a period considered trying to speak another Norwegian dialect, a dialect from another part of the country. She had not thought about what dialect it should be, how she should learn to speak it, or how this could have been received by the local people. She further explains how the language has become something positive for her: "I consider myself as a little special. When you think positively, you learn to accept. I'm talking the type of Norwegian that you do here, like *dun dun dun dun dun dun dun*".⁶¹ She laughs and mimics the typical bouncing or singing tone of voice in the area.

Positive Discrimination—a Solution?

During my research, I met Marit, who herself was Norwegian, but was still subjected to same "requirements" as she resided in inner Finnmark. Her accounts illustrate a "real rivgu" that has not mastered the Sami language, as opposed to the previously described rivgus. Marit had grown up in another part of the country and had no prior experience with the Sami language or culture before she met her Sami husband with whom she had now been married for over twenty years. She jokingly pointed out that the only Sami

⁵⁹ "kråkenorsk"

⁶⁰ "Det er flaut å prate sånn, man virker jo dum når man prater kråkenorsk Det er nok en stor del av det at jeg ikke likte å prate norsk, for jeg var redd for at jeg hadde sånn Jompa Tormann-norsk"

⁶¹ "Jeg ser på meg selv som litt spesiell. Når man tenker positivt, så lærer man å godta. Jeg prater sånn norsk som man gjør her, sånn *dun dun dun dun dun dun*."

item she had encountered until then, was the joikakaker⁶². She and her husband visited Karasjok during the Easter festival. They lived further south, outside of the core Sami areas, and neither Marit nor her children spoke Sami. Still Marit was able to understand some Sami, so that she could follow the general theme of the conversation. She pointed out that "everyone here is speaking Sami, it has always been like that, as long as I've had contact with this area"⁶³.

She proceeded to give me an account of a recent family gathering with her husband's family, in which everyone but herself were Sami-speakers. They were all gathered around a dining table as well as in a coach within the living room. The conversation was in Sami. "Such contexts are a trial for me"⁶⁴ she added. She explains that she has mixed feelings about these types of situation: "I understand that people speak Sami and I think it's okay". She further explains that she is especially aware of her husband's need to practice the language as he does not get to speak Sami in his everyday life at home. Still, she underlines that she feels this as a matter of respect (or the lack of it) "I'm sitting there quite lonely in a room filled with people because I do not master the language"⁶⁵. She elaborates by describing how the conversation is only occasionally including her by switching to Norwegian, but that it turns back to Sami just as quickly. Marit explains that exclusion happens often, she says it's the rule rather than the exception. I ask Marit if she has ever considered trying to learn Sami, but she replies that it is "easier said than done". She and her husband have always spoken Norwegian among themselves, and the children do not speak Sami either, which makes it harder to both practice and maintain the language.

The situation that Marit describes is highly familiar to me. Although my own experience of inner Finnmark is that people usually change to Norwegian to include me. But as I argued earlier, the Sami language is in Hovlands terms "golden" in this area. Still, Marit's explanation of how the conversation switches between the languages is relatable. In my

⁶² canned meatballs, partly containing reindeer meat. The box is decorated with an illustration of a Sami boy dressed in a gákti.

⁶³ "alle her snakker samisk, slik har det alltid vært, så lenge jeg har hatt kontakt med dette området"

⁶⁴ "Slike sammenhenger er en prøvelse for meg".

⁶⁵ "Jeg blir sittende ganske ensom i et rom fullt av folk, fordi jeg ikke behersker språket"

experience, conversations often took place in what I would call a dynamic shift between the two languages; it seems that people that master both languages changed, consciously and unconsciously, in both single words or whole sentences. In particular, I noticed that conversations included the rendering of specific events, where the speaker takes on the tone (and even sometimes the body language) of another person and "play out" a scene, the speaker tends to take on also the language of the person they imitate.

However, I did experience an event myself, where it was obvious that I was being exposed to someone who insisted on speaking Sami to me. After an event at the Sámi allaskuvla (Sámi University) in Kautokeino, I was given a lift home. Before we got into the car, I shook hands with the driver, a man in his sixties, and the other two passengers; the driver's daughter and an acquaintance, both in their twenties or early thirties. When I greeted the younger man, I noticed that he made a number out of speaking exclusively Sami. I explained in Norwegian that I did not master the language, but he nodded and continued in Sami.

During the short trip to my place of stay, the driver also turned to speaking exclusively Sami. Contrary to the description Marit gives where she feels (as I understood it) invisible, the two men continued to approach me in Sami. I did get parts of the questions that were being asked, but it felt quite uncomfortable being put on the spot, not knowing if my replies truly answered their questions or not. I did consider trying to search out signs that the men were making a joke off me, but in their demeanor I could not sense anything pointing to this. The language barrier also created some practical problems for me; I tried to explain where I lived, but could not make out if they knew where it was. The driver's daughter, who sat in the passenger seat in front of me, turned to face me and explained in Norwegian that her father was very concerned with preserving the Sami language, and so he preferred to speak Sami. After trying to explain, still in Norwegian, where they might drop me off, I fell silent. A couple of minutes later we got to the spot, I got out of the car, and said goodbye.

Later that evening, Ristin explained to me that what I had been "exposed to" was a form of "positive discrimination". She described it as a tactic to encourage learning Sami, by forcing the language as the only alternative. It is an active measure to preserving the

language, and it was a common practice, she said, especially in Kautokeino⁶⁶. She found that people often chose to speak Sami even though they were aware that some members of a group would not be able to participate in the conversation. Although the experience I described above was perceived to be uncomfortable I also felt uncomfortable forcing them to speak Norwegian. Ristin described the experience strikingly fitting for what I felt myself; "You understand with your head why it must be so, but it still hurts within your heart, it's never feels good to be excluded, even when you understand why."⁶⁷

As Ristin put it, the positive discrimination was meant as a kind of forcing encouragement. I wondered if it could be based on my own ethnicity. Although I had not actually disclosed this fact to my traveling companions in the car, they might have assumed it. On a later occasion, I asked Ristin for her thoughts of the matter. She, however, did not think that this was necessarily of importance for the men in the car. She described a comparable situation happening in her place of work. A man had visited them from Canada. While having lunch the man had been excluded in the same way as Marit describes above.

In either way, it is obvious that the Sami language is a powerful identity marker, also amongst Sami people, and not just something that is part of the Sami parliaments lists of criteria. We know by now how important it is for Sami people to preserve the Sami language, and that there is a genuine fear of losing one's language. In this sense the Norwegianization is still ongoing, not as something the government wants, but as something that actual happens when for example children in the kindergarten that ought to speak Sami, clearly are adopting Norwegian words and even ways of structuring sentences. There is clearly a much needed emphasis on the Sami language, and it is not surprising that the axis of purity has a stronghold in the Sami community, and maybe especially in inner Finnmark, as this is considered a bastion of the Sami language. Being such a bastion must generate a very strong sense of responsibility, and I can empathize with my drivers.

⁶⁶ Kautokeino was often contrasted by Karasjok, both in terms of pronunciation of verbal words, but also when it came to more correct Sami language and more willingness to hold the language.

⁶⁷ "du forstår med hode hvorfor det må være slik, men det gjør vondt med hjertet, det er aldri godt å bli utestengt, selv om man skjønner hvorfor"

At the same time, I also sense that being Marit and Anders, as I described in the beginning of this thesis, one cannot allow the Sami language this position, when one does not want to feel inferior. Because one does feel inferior as a Sami, or amongst Sami people, if one does not speak the Sami language. As a reaction I will argue that a new and more dynamic axis is being born, where one is exploring different ways in redefining Sami identity markers. The use of the gákti might be one of those identity markers that might become more accessible, alongside other Sami handicraft, as well as Sami fashion.

Chapter 5: The Gákti

Clothing is "the most efficient means of non-verbal communication of cultural identity as well as cultural-specific values and standards" (Tom Svensson (1992:62, see also Hansen). Bjørklund (2000:32) describes the gákti as probably the most significant Sami cultural expression in recent times. Though it gained new popularity during the revitalization process, in inner Finnmark the gákti was not completely out of use throughout the Norwegianization process either. As an emblem, the gákti has a reinforcing power, that might be described in the same terms as Hansen and Olsen (2004) as they describe the basis for the earliest creation of the Sami ethnicity; It implies a reflexive relationship between articulation of ethnicity and the effect that certain material expressions like the gákti holds by being recognized as Sami. The gákti signalises both unity (within) and boundaries (towards the "outside" of the group). The effectiveness of the gákti in doing both these tasks at the same time, is dependent on the continued use and actualization of it as an emblem. The reflexive processes at play then works by the gákti signaling Saminess and the use of the gákti to as a signal continuing its relevance. As there is no real way to spot that one is Sami, the gákti becomes a clearly visible and easily recognizable way to signalise Sami ethnicity. It is generally recognized as Sami by the outside world. Inside the Sami category it can convey specified geographically based belonging, as well as personal preferences and taste in style.

The gákti is a powerful tool in maintaining the Sami culture, and creates deep emotions of belonging, as expressed in the introduction by both Anders and the old man he encountered. It is something that hold such a deep position within the Sami culture that its emblem naturally conveys boundaries. As the gákti is also an emblem for the Sami unity, it is relevant to the Sami purity axes, or can also be described as the inner core of a "Sami cell" embodying the Sami culture. In such a manner, the use of the gákti by Sami people who might not be considered as "Sami enough", is stretching and redefining its use, and the boundaries of the "Sami cell". When the old man was criticizing Anders for wearing a gákti when he could not speak the Sami language, I believe he did so because in his mind, it is essential to keep its purity to maintain its position as an emblem for the survival of the Sami culture. When maintaining the purity of the gákti, by restrictions of

the use connecting it to the other Sami emblem – the Sami language – its purity and survival as a culture is reassured.

The gákti is an especially interesting item to consider as a means of expressing Sami ethnicity. Firstly, it is a very important item, as Bjørklund (2000:32) points out, probably the most important Sami emblem. As such it is used for varied occasions where one's Sami ethnicity is "on display". For instance, during the Parliamentary meeting in the Sami Parliament, the gákti from different regions of Sápmi were worn by the vast majority of people. At the Permanent Forum in New York, most of the Sami participants also wore gáktis for all the different occasions they went to (the daytime meeting, the side-events and the cultural evenings). It became an important means of spotting each other amongst all the other participants. There was also an obvious tendency of Sami people to stick together, especially among the youth. Linne, who had gotten some guidelines from the organisation that she travelled through, had been told to always greet the other people wearing gáktis. She did not know why this was important to do, but she advised me to do the same.

The gákti used as an emblem in political contexts, as in the Sami Parliament and the Permanent Forum, might thus be more comparable to each other than the means of why the gáktis are worn only a couple of hundred meters for the Sami Parliament at the local store. I will get back to some aspects of this different uses of the garment later. But, first it is important to describe what we are actually speaking of when referring to the gákti, and how it is made.

The Creation of the Gákti

Duodji, Sami handicraft, are handicrafts for everyday use, like knives, carved wood cups (guksi), different kinds of tools, and also handmade jewellery and ornaments, the gákti, and the other pieces of clothing and accessories, are all included in duodji. The items are often from nature and are based on old tradition (www.saamicouncil.net). The makers of duodji are called duojárat (duojár in singular form) (Hansen, 2015). The difference between the gákti and the other duodji products is that the gákti is a more personal identity marker, signaling one's Sami ethnic identity, whereas the other types of handicrafts are more accessible and interested in buying as a non-Sami. In this way, the gákti has a special and more central place as an identity marker in the Sami community.

The skills involved in doing *doudji* has traditionally, and is still to some degree still today, passed down through generations. Today, however, there are also courses, single classes and even university degrees available to continue the traditional handicrafts. To be considered a *duojár* then, one needs to possess certain techniques and knowledge.

The sewing work has traditionally been regarded women's work. In Karasjok there is one shop selling ready-made *gáktis* as well as fabrics. However, it is common for women to sew their own garments for themselves and their families or have them made by a private self-employed *duojár*, making and selling the clothes from their own homes.

According to Hætta (1975:222) there is a difference between Karasjok and Kautokeino in this regard: In Karasjok it is more common to order the different parts of the *gákti* attire from a professional, resulting in more women specializing in making and selling them, while in Kautokeino, demands are rather made on the skills of women within each family. The *gákti* attire consists of many different pieces of clothing. Thus, different *duojárat* can specialize in making specific parts. The main piece of clothing that constitutes outfit is worn on the upper body; it is a dress-like costume for women and a shorter one for men. In Karasjok, it is usually made of wool cloth in the primary colours blue, red and yellow, which creates a strong colour contrast. The skirt on the women's dress is expanded with wedges of the same coloured fabric, and a folded red edge, called *holbi*, which makes the skirt voluminous. Both the women's and the men's garments are decorated with red and yellow details along the neck, arms, hemline and back. In addition to this basic part of the outfit, it usually consists of a belt, either woven from wool, or sewn in leather and decorated with silver buttons. The shoes are sewn out of reindeer skin, with or without fur. Nowadays, most people wear machine-tanned leather shoes with rubber sole made by the Swedish manufacturer Kero⁶⁸ (Guttorm, 2006:292). The shoes are attached and decorated with woven bands, which are twisted around the ankle to about halfway up to the knee. The men's bands are more intricate in the pattern than the women's. The headgear also clearly distinguishes between the sexes; the women's hat consists of a cap with a flap in front of the ears, while the men's hat has a very distinctive shape with four pointy tips, giving it the nickname *stjernelue*

⁶⁸ The *bikso* or *kero* shoes are the only part of the *gákti* that is usually manufactured this way.

(star hat) in Norwegian. Women also wear a triangular silk shawl with fringes around the shoulders attached with safety pins in the front and decorated with silver brooches.

Máret is a duojár, how makes gáktis and also specializes in sewing and fringing shawls. The shawls have long fringes composed of several threads along two of the sides; these are knotted together in rows to form a mesh pattern. The shawls are a separate fashion item motive within the "gákti fashion" (Guttorm, 2006). It is perhaps the easiest and cheapest way to transform the outfit's look. Most women therefore own several shawls that they can vary between. The shawl is attached using needles through the fabric with make the silk look worn after some time's use. There is a good market for the sale of shawls in Karasjok, and Máret often has costumers visiting her home. She has a ready-made stock of shawls hanging in her workroom, and several boxes of ready-cut fabric pieces stacked along one of the walls. Máret describes this work as a "kosejobb" (cosy-work). She likes to listen to the radio while working. Sometimes she also leaves the door for the work room open so she can speak to visitors while they are still sitting in the living room. She fastens the shawl under a heavy book on her work desk, to keep it still, while tying the small knots one at the time. The repetitive and time-consuming work gives Máret rough and dry skin on her fingertips. She explains that she has looked for means to treat it, but that she also accepts that the work requires her to sacrifice her hands. Her small workroom is packed with hanger stands with ready-made garments and shawls, a desk, two sewing machines, and several boxes of materials. Spread around the room are also big spools of thread in a variety of colours. Silk-like fabrics are the most common for shawls; but the colours and patterns of the fabric may vary. Máret picks up a shawl and shows me how she selects the colours for the fringes; She has a large colour chart from the manufacturer of the thread, and she puts the shawl up against it to determine which colour is the best fit. Often the shawls are woven with lots of colour and the fringes must match these.

Distribution, Displaying and Pride

As it is common for people to own more than one gákti as well as many shawls, there is a constant demand for these products. Máret uses her personal network to advertise her products. She posts pictures of ready-made shawls on Facebook, with the price written underneath. The customers can reserve a particular piece by writing in the

comment section. She has a base of regular customers, but is also frequently contacted by people who have been tipped off about her business. Some periods of the year are especially busy. From New Year towards Easter, many customers need⁶⁹ new gáktis and shawls. Easter is a big celebration in itself in both Karasjok and Kautokeino; there are different events going on in both villages during the Easter week. It is also the time for confirmations. Máret explains that it is not only the confirmand, but also often the whole family who will wear new gáktis for the occasion.

The use of Facebook as a space to show off and advertise one's products is relatively new, it has opened new possibilities not just for advertising, but also as a means for general recognition of one's work. There is a close relation between the doudjár and the product, and Máret invests time and effort into every shawl. Both Máret and Ritta display a great deal of pride in their work. Facebook also becomes a source of recognition for the women's work, as many of the comments that people post are positive approvals of their products. It might also be interpreted as an internal quality control system; as the women post the pictures of their products online, for "everyone to see", they also run the risk of critique. Máret is able to point out her own work multiple times, while watching the Sami news *Ođđasat*, she proudly pointed out that she had made the shawl that was worn by the person on TV.

Continuation of Knowledge

The knowledge of the gákti might be studied both within a standardized system and as a more person-based knowledge; there are several schools that offer different types of doudji classes. Still, much of the knowledge is also passed down through generations. Guttorm (2006:213) refers to the distinction between the areas that have had a continuous use of the gákti, where doudji techniques have been passed down through generations, and the areas where traditions have disappeared and been reconstructed. Running the risk of relying on the dichotomization of the core Sami areas and the coastal areas of Finnmark (cf. Andersen 2003, see chapter 3), I still believe this distinction is to be a beneficial way to illustrate a relative differences that enables comparisons. In inner Finnmark, the garment has a traceable link to both Arctic

⁶⁹ Máret describes it as a need. This is something that I notice people often do; it is not about wanting a new shawl, but about needing one.

Siberian and Scandinavian clothing traditions (Guttorm, 2006:207). In the coastal areas, the traditions for both wearing and crafting of the garments has to a greater degree disappeared and been replaced. Through research and interpretation, the gáktis of these areas lack the direct link to previous traditions, and are considered as reconstructions (ibid:213). Bjørklund (2000) points out that both pictures and museum expeditions have provided valuable knowledge in this research⁷⁰.

Both Máret and Riita spoke of their doudji knowledge as having been passed down from the previous generations. I became aware that they sometimes used this as an explanation; if I asked detailed questions for the reason behind the traditional choices in materials and techniques, to which they did not know the answer, both women tended point out that it was how our ancestors did it, and they must have had a reason.

Máret had learned the technique of fringing shawls from her mother and her grandmother. She grew up with her grandparents in the same house, and especially credits her grandmother for teaching her both to sew, fringe and braid. She herself did not have any daughters to pass the knowledge onto, but jokingly suggests that her son was about the right age now to provide grandchildren. Although doudji was spoken of in terms of both importance and pride, many of the youth did not find the activities interesting and fun. Biret, a girl in her twenties, proudly told me that her mother mastered many different doudji techniques, and was able to make different parts of the gákti attire for her family. She was proud that both her mother and several other family members mastered different doudji techniques⁷¹; "It's nice, really, to come from a family with so many duojárat⁷²". Biret added on a humorous note that she might need to start doing doudji later on, since it might make her a more attractive "wife material". Yet, although she has fringed her own shawl, she did not like the activity. She explains that it is nice to know how to do it, but that she is not going to start production on a regular

⁷⁰ In some cases, collections and knowledge held by museums abroad have helped fill in the blanks. The work of reconstruction therefore involves an extensive amount of travel and research (Bjørklund, 2000)

⁷¹ Biret's mother's family is from Kautokeino, and the fact that many of her family members master different doudji techniques might support Hætta's (1975) claim that it is more common for the women in Kautokeino to make the clothes themselves as opposed to order them for people outside the family.

⁷² "Det e fint egentlig å komme fra en familie med så mange duojárat"

basis like her mother. Many of the young girls with whom I discussed this topic expressed themselves in similar terms. Ravna told me that "of course" she had made her own gákti once, but she did not really like it. Still, she thought she might be more interested in learning more techniques and make clothes for herself and her family later on. She felt it was important, and viewed it as a responsibility to carry on the knowledge to her own children.

I believe my observations on this last point are affected by the age of many of my informants; the girls were in their early twenties, and might not be thinking about continuation of knowledge just yet. Even though Ravna spoke of this, it was in terms of a responsibility rather than an activity she enjoyed. It is also interesting to note that they both emphasized that they had actually made shawls or gáktis, though they did not like it. I interpret this as though mastering or having completed it once carried meaning, and might in itself have been a means of recognition and pride. Stretching this point further, I would argue that by emphasising the fact that "of course" she had made a gákti, Ravna points to the making of the gákti (and doudji in general) as something to be considered along the "purity" axis; one does "of course" know how to make a gákti whether one likes it or not, since it is such an important means of expressing Saminess. As I interpret it, the girls seek some recognition by pointing out that they have actually made some kind of doudji, and know how to do it although they did not like it. As I shall soon argue, the notion of "real doudji" being made by a Sami person is even framed within a certificate for doudji-makers, which among other things points to the making of the gákti and doudji as emphasised as an emblem of Saminess.

Standardization of Cultural Expression

Compared to the Norwegian *bunad*⁷³, the creation of the gákti is less regulated; Eriksen (2004) describes how The Bunad and Folk Costume Council; "a state-funded advisory body under the Ministry of Culture" (ibid. 2004), has the function "to offer advice and to stimulate an enhanced understanding of the traditional dress practices that are the foundation of today's *bunads*." (ibid. 2004). The making of the garment, and thus also

⁷³ The bunad is the Norwegian national costume, mainly constructed during the nationalization period in the 19th century.

the technique and material, are regulated to a certain degree within the retail chain *Husfliden*, which has local outlets in many Norwegian cities. The garment is expensive, so people predominantly own only one. To save money, women⁷⁴ can take courses to learn how to sew as well as embroidering the bunad. Eriksen notes that the courses are given with the "condition, the participants had to sign an agreement promising that they would only make bunads for themselves and for first-order blood relatives" (ibid. 2004). This way of trying to control both the appearance of the attire, as well as production and business of the bunad, Eriksen (ibid. 2004) puts in the context of Harrison's (1999) representation of ethnicity as a scarce resource; one can buy the product and to some degree the "right" to make it, through regulated courses, while at the same time agreeing to strict restrictions to the use of this knowledge.

Even though the *gákti* is less "protected", the Saami Council has created a certificate of authenticity for *duodji*: The Sámi Duodji certificate. The Council's web page states that the certificate should "(1) communicate to buyers that the product is made by a Saami⁷⁵, (2) protect Saami handicraft from being copied and from unfair competition, (3) promote a continuous improvement of the quality of Saami handicraft (4) show that Saami handicraft is a living tradition" (www.saamicouncil.net, numbers added by me). The Council also adds that the certificate is not meant for "Souvenirs - products that are reminders of travel and that don't have a traditional use" For a *duojár* to apply for a certificate, she has to be able to show for either a formal *duodji* education or experience (ibid.) The certificate was established in 1983, yet not many *duojárat* has taken it to use (Olli, 2014).

The description of Máret's production is representative for most of the *duojárat* making *gáktis*. Considering the description of her production and distribution above, the certificate does not seem to be relevant neither to her nor to her costumers. Indeed, I do not believe the certificate targets the making of *gáktis* as the most significant area of focus. Given how the knowledge and techniques are continued through generations, and the production being based on such close-knit personal basis, the buyer can be pretty

⁷⁴ As in the Sami case, women most often make the bunad

⁷⁵ The Council states that Sami in this case refers to the same criterion as the Sami Parliaments census criterions. (www.saamicouncil.net)

sure that the doudjár is actually Sami. Despite there being some manufacturing of "fake" gákti-like wear (see Siversten ----), in inner Finnmark, these are not threatening the "real thing", as the marked for "tourist gáktis"⁷⁶ and gáktis for actual use are not the same. By "tourist gákti" I mean a garment clearly inspired by the gákti, but mass-produced, often in cheaper materials, as it is meant as a souvenir. Although they are obviously inspired by it, these garments are not however very similar to the gákti to a trained eye, and therefore not easily mistaken. Eriksen (2004) presents an interesting case involving Chinese mass-produced bunads, which is more to the point on the actual copyright problematics and the controlled knowledge of making it.

As for the doudji certificate, everyone that has the "right" to consider themselves Sami, based on the Sami Act's criteria might also become doujár and apply for the certificate. One does need to have either experience or education in doudji, but it does not limit people, since there are several schools and courses in doudji available. Still, it might be interesting to note that some of the schools, like the Sami University in Kautokeino, teach doudji in the Sami language, thus making some limitations to whom might actually be able to take the classes.

Further on I will elaborate on some ways in which the gákti is used both as a measure of boundaries, a way of rooting, while at the same time allowing for stretching of the Sami ethnic expression.

Connecting to a Fixed Place

During the BICP meeting in Tromsø, I noticed a woman wearing a gákti-like dress decorated with small pieces of reindeer fur and with a skirt much less voluminous than the gákti of Karasjok. I complimented her on it, and she told me that she had designed it herself. She liked to wear it for occasions like this, since it was more practical. I drew a sketch of it in my notebook, as I thought I might try to make a similar type of dress myself.

Later on, as I had gotten to know the two doujارات Máret and Riita, and on one of my visits I brought with me the sketch and told them of my plans. However, both of the

⁷⁶ By "tourist gákti" I mean a garment that is obviously inspired by the gákti, but meant for sale as a souvenir.

women reacted with the same sceptical feedback; Riita pointed out that I had to be careful not to make a dress that looked too much like the gáktis from the Lule Sami area, since that was not for me to wear.

The design of the gákti, like the bunad, is associated with particular geographical places. Both the cut and some of the details can be used to pinpoint where the costume and (then most likely) also the wearer of it "originates from"⁷⁷. As Eriksen (2004) notes considering the bunad, many people might have some sort of family history connected to different areas of Norway, thus giving them a couple of choices in bunads. Even though technically no one can prevent one from buying a bunad based on "looks" rather than "origin", but this would certainly be considered both strange and incorrect behaviour. As the episode described above illustrates, this is also the case with the gákti. The basic design differs along the lines of the Sami subgroups; North, Lule and South Sami, but there are also some more or less noticeable differences within these main categories; the gákti of Karasjok is almost identical to the one worn in Tana, Karigasniemi and Utsjok (Guttorm, 2006), while the Kautokeino gákti carries more resemblance to the ones worn in Karasundo and the area of Inari-Enonteki (Hætta, 2006:278). For most people, it seems that there is a relatively straight forward "choice" of which gákti they should wear; most people in Karasjok wear the Karasjok gákti, and most in Kautokeino wear the Kautokeino one. Still, of course, there are cases where someone has the "right to" wear more than one, based on their background. For instance, Biret, as mentioned above, had her mother's family from Kautokeino; she wore the Kautokeino gákti. Seen as the gáktis are often made by the women in the family, this might be relevant for dictating which gákti the children of the family will wear.

By connecting the gákti to place, it creates a symbolic connection that roots the wearer both to the place and to the local community. It is a visible marker that acts as a signal both inward to the individual itself and addressed to the rest of the group. This rooting might be interpreted with the basis of human needs to fix itself in a world characterized by rapid changes and floating categories (Eriksen, 2008). Both the use and the making of the garment are highly localized. It also refers to local communities that create distinctions between us and the others, at a very local level. By the fact that this

⁷⁷ As with the bunad, there is a choice to me made in this matter.

knowledge is so specific and locally based, these markers are especially intended for other Sami. The knowledge of the different gáktis and their specific geographical connection is thus something that can be described as specific Sami cultural knowledge, which is actively used to create distinctions and social maps at local level, and it is used as a way of creating unity and fellowship through uniformity and determination of expression.

Márte's and Riita's reaction as described above was directed specifically at the fact that I, being a North Sami, could not use a gákti that resembled too much a gákti from another area. The example thus shows an interesting paradox regarding the gákti: despite the fact I have now shown, that the form is relatively standardized, based, among other things, on the way the gákti is used to root the wearer to a certain place, so are other aspects of the garment, like colors and materials, very free, which has led to what one might characterize as a specific gákti fashion.

Sticking to the Recipe?

In mid-February, the Sami Fashion Week took place in Alta. In the underground parking garage of Parksenteret (a shopping mall, centrally located in Alta), an area was closed off from traffic and a catwalk was put up. The stage was elevated about one meter off ground, in the middle there was a ledge with a mixing table and a microphone. A few hundred people had turned up to witness the event, and where no pushed close together surrounding the stage completely. Speakers on each side of the catwalk played modern joik with a pop music beat.

The fashion show was separated in two separate parts; traditional wear, and new Sami design. In the traditional part, the models showed off their own gáktis from different parts of Finnmark. The thirteen models were fairly evenly distributed across age and sex. They entered one by one or in couples. The gáktis they modelled were not all in the "traditional" colour combination as described above; one man wore a black gákti with grey and white details, and a woman showed a burgundy base gákti with blue and white details. The host of the show stood on the ledge of the catwalk. She wore a black gákti with lots of gold studs and chains hanging down from each shoulder. As the models entered the catwalk, she presented each by name, and pinpointed where their gáktis where from. She also added additional information as the models walked up and down the catwalk. As a man in

his thirties entered dressed in a gákti from Kautokeino, she added that all the girls in the audience needed to take notice of his belt, which had round studs on it, meaning that he was not yet married⁷⁸. The man smiled noticeably a little embarrassed. The last gákti to be shown evoked a cheering roar from the audience as the host explained that the model, a woman in her fifties wearing gákti from Alta, had made it herself and that it was her very first gákti.

As the show shifted over to the second part, the music changed to a more upbeat tune as the host introduced the first Sami design brand to enter the catwalk. The Karasjok based brand Graveniid showed knitted sweaters, skirts, hats and scarfs, decorated in a pattern similar to the weaving pattern on the belts of the gákti. As the show progressed, the next host, the Sami stylist and makeup artist Erlend Elias from Tysfjord, entered the stage. He had himself styled the models for the next part of the fashion show; in a style he defined as "Fifty Shades of Gray meets a mix of Sami, Indians (Native American), indigenous people, yes we are all the same"⁷⁹. The next model to enter wore tight fitting leather pants, a red leather belt, similar to the ones used in the gákti attire, furry Sami shoes (skaller), and a silver necklace with silver leaves similar to the ones on the silver brooches. A black carnival mask covered her eyes. The models that followed her had matching outfits; all wore Sami shoes and belts combined with Western clothes. The rest of the show had different clothes, all with some kind of Sami inspiration. One dress had some clear similarities to the Karasjok gákti, with the colour combination of blue, red and yellow, as well as the three decorative lines down the back inspired by the men's garment. Another dress had the holbi, usually found on the skirts edge of the women's gákti, wrapped around the chest and neck.

As the example above shows, there are stretches within the category that might be described as "Sami fashion". On the one hand, there is the gákti fashion, which is played out within a creative space that the gákti allows. On the other hand, there are also

⁷⁸ It is common for people in both Karasjok and Kautokeino to wear round belt-studs until they are married, then they will change to square ones.

⁷⁹ " Fifty Shades of Grey møta en blanding av samisk, indianer, urfolk, ja, vi e jo alle de samme"

different types of clothing which draw on inspiration for the gákti attire, and that combine these in new ways and with Western clothing.

I will concentrate mainly on this first fashion, the one within the limits of the gákti attire itself. But first I will present an interesting find within this second category. Firstly, it is interesting to note that it is considered ok to wear some parts of the gákti with other, Western clothes. As described above, people in the villages of Karasjok and Kautokeino might also do that on a daily basis; wearing only the hat or the shoes while going grocery shopping. Most of the people I observed doing this in inner Finnmark were middle-aged or older women. I myself often dressed up in this way while attending Festive occasions like the Easter Festival concert in Karasjok. In this setting, however, this was met with some surprise and confusion; I got several questions of why I did not want to dress up in proper gákti. A second interesting point to make based on the Sami fashion is the fact that although the gákti is a very important symbol and has, as I have shown, deep rooted pride connected to it, it is still "allowed" to make clothes clearly inspired by the gákti, but with a somewhat distorted look, like the dress with the holbi (the decorative bottom edge of the women's gákti) wrapped around a dress. This might be an interesting point for further research as it amongst other questions begs an answer to "who is allowed to make clothes like this?"

The last find I want to point out before continuing assessing the actual gákti-fashion relates to my assumption that some of the Sami design clothes, might have bridged the boundary of culturally recognised clothes. What I mean by this, it that some brands, like Abanti and Graviniid, have established themselves within the Sami communities, especially with young people, and they are being used in much the same way as people who use only part of the gákti like Sami shoes, or other wearable markers of Saminess like thin thread embroidered jewellery. To be able to read these expressions of Saminess, one needs to have more specific knowledge, they are more subtle, and therefore mainly meant for expressing Sami ethnicity inwards toward the group itself. Dankersten (2014) describes how her informants did the same; they might wear a scarf in the Sami colours, which might only be recognised as Sami by "trained eyes". I believe the same goes for the Sami design items; the brands have been able to work out an image of "genuine Saminess" and are known well enough within the Sami youth

communities of inner Finnmark as to be worn in much the same way as "half-gákti wear", maybe even challenging the gákti itself in some aspects of their use.

On to the gákti fashion; the existence of fashion and trends within the gákti niche is based on the relative freedom of expression in colours and materials. Guttorm (2006) notes that gáktis fashion has followed some of the great fashion trends of the Western world. During the 60's, striped fabrics were "in", and the skirt of the women's garments was often made shorter to follow the mini-skirt trend. In the 70's and 80's, many girls especially made gáktis that were inspired by the disco-trend, calling them disco gáktis or disco-kofte⁸⁰, made in bright flower pattern fabrics, with puffy arms, and worn with pumps shoes (Dankertsen, 2004).

I got the impression of Riddu Riddu as a high fashion arena. Here you could see gáktis in many different fabrics and colours, like different floral fabrics, camouflage patterned fabrics, and one of the booths sold a gákti that was made of a lace-like fabric. A rainy day, as I sat in the hillside with a view of the meadow in front of the stage, I also observed a woman who had made a gákti in a strongly turquoise fabric with big owls on it. I knew the woman from inner Finnmark, she was a doujár like Máret, and was the same age as her. This gákti created reactions; I heard two middle-aged women close to me who did not like what they saw. At the same time on the lawn below, three young girls walked in the opposite direction of the woman with the owl gákti. One of the girls shouted when she saw the gákti, and threw her hands repeatedly in a motion as if she worshiped the gákti or the wearer. The woman in the owl gákti laughed.

The fact that this woman, who herself was a doujár, and thus can be described as a cultural carrier and someone who continues the tradition of the gákti, nevertheless chose to wear a gákti that was beyond what is the norm for the appearance of the gown, shows that there is no clear distinction between "the young and innovative" and "the older and traditional" when it comes to the use of the gákti. You may come across older women who use gáktis that are not within the more determined and standardized expression. For example, I remember that in the 90's in Karasjok, I observed two elderly

⁸⁰ The expression "disco-kofte" was still used by people in referring to gáktis. However, it did not necessarily describe a gákti inspired by the 80's trend, but rather seemed to be a more general description, often referring to gáktis that were made in shimmering materials or in other ways dressed up or heavily decorated.

women dressed in gowns made of a fabric covered with sequins. What is still relatively fixed, however, is the place-based expression, the shape and cut of the garments. For a trained eye, it will therefore be possible to look past owls and sequins, and still read the gáktis as belonging to a particular area.

The Use of the Gákti in Different Arenas

As Eriksen (2004) describes with the bunad, there are also some norm-based guidelines for the appropriate way to carry a gákti: you should not wear "too much" makeup.

"Stine" made an issue of this when we discussed gáktis. She meant that you should not "doll up too much" with makeup or with the hair; it should be more "natural looking".

In inner Finnmark today, the gákti is used mostly in festive contexts. It is used in many of the same arenas as the bunad: baptism, weddings, confirmations, Christmas celebrations, the national day 17th of May, and the Sami counterpart Sami National Day, 6th of February. At the wedding in Kautokeino, only a handful of the 2000-3000 guests did not wear a gákti. I cannot say it for certain, but I assume they were visiting non-Sami people. Their clothes, which were "regular western" evening clothes like suits and dresses, seemed almost out of place in this setting, like "matters out of place". In earlier times, the gown was also an everyday piece of clothing, but apart from a very limited number of elderly women, this is not a common sight today. However, as a party piece I think the gown is more commonly used than the bunad: For instance, Anna (45) told me she had been in a predicament some time ago; she was going to a social event with people from her workplace, but did not really know how to dress for the occasion. She explained that she did not know if the gákti would be appropriate or fitting since it was not really a celebration or party. Jokingly she added; "I do not have any other dresses⁸¹". Even though this might be a slight exaggeration, the point is still a valid one; it seems the gákti is a far more adaptable outfit than the bunad. It was also worn by the clear majority in the evening events at the Easter festival.

As a festive dress, then, I believe the gákti might be comparable in some aspects to the Danish flag, as Jenkins (2011) describes it; a symbol that, in the same way as the gákti is used for almost every possible celebration and festive occasion. It might therefore be

81 "jeg har jo ingen andre penklær!"

not only a symbol strongly associated to the Danish nation, but also a symbol of celebration and social gatherings. This use of the flag leads to many people associating it with happiness and joy. I think this might be the case with the gákti as well; it might be considered a symbol that is, among other things, often associated with joy due to its extensive use at joyful occasions.

If we take this comparison with the Danish flag a step further, I would also claim that the gákti in many ways can be more unifying as a symbol than the Sami flag. As Bjørklund (2000:32) describes it, the gákti is possibly the most significant, and perhaps also the strongest, Sami cultural expression in recent times. A Norwegian friend of mine pointed out to me that he believed more people (referring to Norwegians and others outside of the Sami group) would recognize the Sami gákti, than they would the Sami flag, in fact (according to him) many people did not even know there was a Sami flag, but "alle kjenner jo kofta" (everyone knows the gákti). If this is true, as a symbol of the Sami nation, the gákti might thus be more recognized and thus a stronger emblem.

This, however, also points to a very interesting ambivalence considering the use of the gákti as an emblem. As I have already argued, the geographically specific markers require a certain degree of knowledge of how to interpret them, and even how to spot them in the first place. These markers may therefore be considered as addressed to the community itself; they are expressions of unity and separation that are directed inwards into the Sami group. I would argue that the same is to some extent true for the fashion gáktis, which in their appearance might be so far from the more well-known gákti look that they would hardly be recognised as Sami for an untrained eye. The ambivalence of the expression and use of the Sami gákti, is thus regulated by the context and by the way it is used and whom and what it is meant to convey.

The gákti is a garment that allows for stretching of boundaries, but being geographically specific, there are also some limits. As there is reconstruction work going on in some Sami communities that has had a break in tradition, one could also argue that there might be a big difference in the different Sami communities related to this point; it might be easier or safer to stretch the limits of expression within a relative majority, such as the inner Finnmark communities; there might be a larger stage for gákti wearing in this area, as so many occasions are natural ones for wearing the gákti and as

there are many gákti wearers keeping the tradition alive, as oppose to the newly established coastal gáktis.

Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks

There is an ever on-going process of expressing, asserting and negotiating Sami ethnic identity within a performance stage defined by both the norms of "how to be Sami" and the innovation and adaptation involved in the process.

The Sami stage of performance in general is larger than it was during the Norwegianization period, and there is now an on-going "Sami boom", indicated by the increasing number of people entering the Sami Parliament's census. Still, the expression of the Sami ethnic identity has some limitations in how it might convey "Saminess" for it to be recognised as Sami. The stage whereupon this ethnic expression is played out might be conceptualized as the plane defined by two axes. The first axis refers to expressions of "Saminess" in which there is a relative consensus on what Sami ethnic identity is "supposed to look like", and thus the way it is often portrayed and recognized outwards. The second axis can be seen as an attempt to force this fixed image to try to expand it, so that more of those who today define themselves as Sami can express their ethnic ethnicity in ways that is both correct for them and recognized as Sami.

As I have done fieldwork in inner Finnmark, I have been in the area where most people can relate to many of the traits commonly portrayed as "real Saminess". The Sami language is used on a daily basis, and in all types of interaction. People speak North Sami, and none of my informants had ever considered learning any of the other Sami languages. As a stronghold for Sami language and cultural expressions as a whole, this area is often referred to as the core Sami area. Many of the cultural expressions that are reflected as Sami by the outside world are based on cultural expressions like the language and the *gákti*, which people actually use. Although both these expressions might be used as a means of defining Sami ethnicity, this is a contextual process – one might for instance speak Sami and still not be regarded as Sami. The basis for the analysis is that all Sami people work within the stage dictated by these two axes.

My data shows that both language and the *gákti* are highly valued in the area of inner Finnmark. The *gákti* can be seen as an important source of recognition both for the maker of it, and for the wearer. Although the making of the *gákti*s in these areas is part of an unbroken tradition passed down through generations, there is also a great degree

of innovation involved in the process. Even though cultural knowledge, like the language and the making of the gákti, might be used as excluding markers of Saminess, based on the thought that culture is about having, it might also be considered as recourses. For instance, Máret uses her knowledge and experience as a duojár in the field of gákti making. Her knowledge might therefore be considered a resource in that she carries on a tradition that is, as she herself puts it, knowledge passed down through generations. At the same time as she maintains and continues the knowledge, she is also involved in continually updating and evolving this very knowledge.

The Sami ethnicity is only one of many strands that make out a Sami person's identity. Still, it is sometimes portrayed as "the one and only identity". As such, it seems to be used as an explanation of one's behaviours, one's preferences, and one's decisions, expressed through sentences like "we Sami (people) do/like/prefer". In terms of the Norwegian language, "the Saminess" might also be presented as an excuse for one's shortcomings. Both the language and the cultural knowledge are generally spoken of in terms of having, rather than making. And the focus on preserving something that was almost lost might be exhibited as contrasting the Norwegian majority, but also the Sami people that do not possess this knowledge. As I have shown, both the language and the gákti carry deep-rooted emotions. The fear of diluting the essence is present in many of the accounts above.

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