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From indigenous education to indigenising mainstream education

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Abstract

The purpose with this article is to discuss the concept of "indigenous education" in Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand. The point of departure is that both states face a common challenge with regard to indigenous education: Valuable resources are used on indigenous schools, but the majority of indigenous students attend mainstream schools. The article claims that the emphasis on indigenous schools has been necessary and important as part of the indigenous political movement. Nevertheless, in order to achieve culturally appropriate education for all indigenous pupils, this article argues that there is a need to indigenise mainstream education.

Introduction

In this article, I discuss the concept of "indigenous education" in Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand. The point of departure is that both states face a common challenge with regard to indigenous education: Valuable resources are used on indigenous schools, but the majority of indigenous students attend mainstream schools. Despite the existence of Māori medium education[1], studies have shown that the majority of Māori students in Aotearoa New Zealand attend mainstream schools (Bishop, 2011; Ray, 2009). Although statistics from the Norwegian side of Sápmi are ambiguous, studies indicate that the majority of Sámi students also attend mainstream schools (Gjerpe, 2017). This issue is also linked to the challenge of accessibility to Sámi schools, as they are primarily located in small, rural communities. I argue that if most indigenous students are enrolled in mainstream schools and/or classes, these schools play the most important role in indigenous education. The aim of this article is twofold. First, I outline and compare indigenous education in Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand, respectively. Second, I discuss the indigenisation of mainstream education. Nakata (2006) uses the term "indigenisation" to describe the process of creating an indigenous space within a non-indigenous setting. In keeping with Nakata, I argue that one possible solution to this challenge is to indigenise mainstream education.

The main point of departure for this article is indigenous education in Norway. Sámi are the indigenous people living in the northern regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of northwestern Russia. This borderless cultural region is commonly known as Sápmi, Sábme, and Saepmie in the three official Sámi languages used in Norway. A wide variety of research on indigenous education across all states exists (Keskitalo, Määttä, & Uusiautti, 2013; Keskitalo, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2012; Kortekangas, 2017; Lantto, 2005; Svonni, 2015). However, for the purpose of this article, I focus on the Norwegian side of Sápmi; therefore, the context will be the Norwegian educational system. To conduct a comparative analysis, I also examine indigenous education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Māori identify themselves as the Tangata Whenua, meaning the people of the land.

The establishment and development of indigenous schools have often played a crucial role in the revitalisation of indigenous cultures and languages, as well as in the process of gaining political recognition for indigenous peoples. Smith (2012) argues that indigenous peoples have had to claim essential characteristics and emphasise their "otherness" for them to be able to claim human and indigenous rights. Jens Dahl (2012) argues that strategically essentialising cultural characteristics can create dichotomies by emphasising differences such as between "indigenous" and "the West". The creation of dichotomies can, therefore, be understood as a political coping mechanism, whereby strategic essentialism, the deliberate essentialising of cultural traits in order to create "otherness", becomes an effective political strategy to achieve certain goals (Dahl, 2012). In terms of education, the indigenous education discourse has created and emphasised a dichotomy between informal, often community based education and formal, state-led education (Huaman & Valdiviezo, 2012). There are two main challenges related to this dichotomy. First, it reinforces the idea that there is a distinct difference between a "formal education" and an informal "indigenous education." However, this is not necessarily applicable to all indigenous peoples. Many indigenous peoples in Western countries have been exposed to a combination of the two; in other words, the line between a "formal" education and "indigenous education" may not be as clear-cut. In both Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand, indigenous education exists within the framework of formalised education, thereby suggesting that the line between the two is not necessarily easy to distinguish. Second, the dichotomy creates a hierarchy between

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[1] Māori medium education is where students are taught all or some curriculum subjects in the Māori language for at least 51 percent of the time.

"formal" and "indigenous education." I argue that this hierarchy is not set in stone; rather, it varies, depending on context. What constitutes the privileged and less privileged types of education depends on the eye of the beholder.

I argue that as part of the political process of gaining recognition as indigenous peoples, it was important and even necessary for Sámi researchers and policy makers to distinguish "indigenous education" from formalised public education. In Norway, this is one of the strategies that led to a separate Sámi curriculum and the consequent establishment of Sámi schools (Hirvonen & Keskitalo, 2004). Although the strategic essentialist approach was necessary at a certain point in history, I argue that the current political and academic situations necessitate a rethinking of the entire concept of indigenous education.

For the purpose of this article, I distinguish between the separate fields of "indigenous education" and "mainstream education". In line with Olsen & Andreassen (2017), I use the term "indigenous education" to refer to education that is primarily for indigenous students, while I use "mainstream education" to describe the formalised, state-run education in both states.

Comparative research and dominant research themes

Andrew Armitage (1995) addresses two main reasons for conducting comparative research. Although his examples are from aboriginal assimilation policies, I view them as transferable to educational research. According to Armitage, the first reason for conducting comparative research is to obtain new perspectives. He argues that social policies are too complex and difficult to be studied on their own. Comparing cases, therefore, helps in obtaining another perspective and identifying similarities and differences in policies (Armitage, 1995). This makes it possible to discuss indigenous education generally and to focus on specific cases. The second reason is that "it assists in the search for new ways to conduct social policy" (Armitage, 1995, p. 8). In the context of indigenous education, I understand this as learning from different cases to create change and hopefully improve the educational system. Crossley and Broadfoot (1992) argue that comparative research in education can also deepen the understanding of our own education and society (Crossley & Broadfoot, 1992).

One of the main challenges associated with conducting comparative research is that no two contexts can ever be entirely comparable. Nevertheless, I have chosen to compare Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand because they share certain characteristics. Both countries are relatively small geographically and in terms of their approximate populations (five million). Their socioeconomic situations are also similar, and, as opposed to, for instance, Canada and Australia, both countries have one indigenous people. In terms of education, both countries have formalised structures for indigenous education, but as we will see, they are structured somewhat differently.

As the main point of departure for this article is Norway and Sápmi, I will primarily emphasise research on Sámi education. A limited amount of comparative educational research on Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand exists. Olsen and Andreassen (2017) analysed the curricular content in both Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand, focusing on their comparative aspects. Regarding Sámi educational research, it is possible to identify core themes: the development of the Sámi school (Balto, 1997b; Hætta, 1997; Keskitalo et al., 2013), the development and implementation of the Sámi curricula (Bergland, 2001; Folkenborg, 2008; Hirvonen, 2003, 2004; Hirvonen & Keskitalo, 2004; Hætta, 1997; Solstad et al., 2009; Solstad et al., 2010; Solstad, Nygaard, & Solstad, 2012; Øzerk, 2006), and the use and development of Sámi language in schools (Todal, 2004).

As part of the Sámi political and cultural revitalisation that occurred from the 1970s onwards, Sámi scholars saw the necessity of formulating a distinct Sámi education. This created a

foundation for new pedagogical research and literature focusing on the creation and development of the "Sámi school." Sámi scholar Asta Balto has been a key voice in the development of Sámi pedagogics (Balto, 1986, 1997a, 2005). Balto has focused on child-rearing and creating a "way of thinking in pedagogical terms" (Balto, 2005, p. 88). She uses the following traditional saying to describe Sámi child-rearing: "Gal dat oahppá go stuorrola (I am sure he or she will learn little by little as he or she grows up)" (2005, p. 89). She argues as follows:

> The characteristic feature of this traditional way of raising children and passing on knowledge and culture between generations is the great variety of indirect communication and indirect approaches to rule or guide the young ones. Outsiders and people visiting Sámi societies often see this style of behaviour as free and irresponsible. (Balto, 2005, p. 89)

She also mentions other important aspects of Sámi child-rearing that are characterised by an indirect approach, such as a network of extended family as significant others, storytelling, diverting strategies, and *nárrideapmi*. Balto describes nárrideapmi as a form of teasing but with several important social functions. It is an indirect form of teaching children to master social interactions and familiarise themselves with their feelings in social contexts. Balto argues that these principles of Sámi child-rearing can be the basis for a culturally responsive pedagogy for both schools and kindergartens. Balto's research on child-rearing has had a significant impact on Sámi education and is often referred to as the foundation of research and practice in the field. However, one challenge related to Balto's research is that it is founded primarily on northern Sámi perspectives and does not address the variations among Sámi societies all over Sápmi. It is, therefore, important to conduct more research on other parts of Sápmi to fill the gaps in Sámi pedagogics.

The key pedagogical voices in Māori education do not define the field in the same manner as Balto does regarding Sámi education, as the amount of research done on Māori education is thematically wider and includes a much larger group of researchers. One of the more important themes in Māori education has been associated with research on Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori schools) (G. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 2012) or related topics (Bishop, 2011; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Penetito, 2010).

Education and colonial history in Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand

Norway does not have a database of statistics based on ethnicity (Pettersen, 2014). This suggests that many statistics concerning Sámi issues are unavailable, consequently affecting the comparative aspect of this paper.

In terms of education, the "enhetsskolen" (comprehensive school) is an essential component of the Norwegian social democratic state and has a long history of being highly centralised (Volckmar, 2016). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the schools developed in isolated colonial settlements and through provincial organisation. This implies that the schools developed around, and became strongly rooted in, the local communities (Stephenson, 2008), though they later became more centralised.

Geographically and historically speaking, Sámi have lived in the northern regions of four states: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Consequently, Sámi people have been diverse not only historically but also culturally and geographically (Eidheim, 1987). The fact of living in four different states implies four diverse approaches to Sámi and indigenous education at both the local and national levels; therefore, the conceptualisation of "a Sámi education" per se is problematic. Similarly, it is problematic to speak of essentialised Sámi pedagogics, as this also varies within Sámi communities. Consequently, it is necessary to emphasise the variety within Sámi education.

Historically, Māori have lived all over Aotearoa New Zealand and, therefore, do not face the same challenges associated with national borders. However, Māori identify primarily with their *iwi* (tribe) and *hapū* (sub-tribe); therefore, historically, there was never a pan- *Tangata Whenua* (people of the land) collective, so to speak. Although there were no national borders, as we understand them today, there were "borders" between the different iwi and hapū, thereby implying cultural diversity.

The cultural and geographical diversity among Sámi is reflected in the Sámi languages. When speaking of the "Sámi language" spoken on the Norwegian side of Sápmi, there are, in fact, three official languages—North Sámi, Lule Sámi, and South Sámi—all of which are in danger of extinction. Of these three languages, North Sámi has the highest number of speakers. The language differences cause practical challenges—for instance, when recruiting teachers and when creating new textbooks for schools. In contrast, Māori speak one common language, with only minor dialectical differences.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the aim of the school curricula is for non-Māori (*Pākehā*) students to learn about Māori culture, history, and language, while the Norwegian curricula only recently incorporated similar aims (Olsen & Andreassen, 2016). One reason for this may be that the Māori population is significantly larger than the Sámi population. According to the 2013 census, 598,602 people, or 14.9% of the Aotearoa New Zealand population, identified themselves as Māori, while 125,352 people, or 21.3% of self-identified Māori speak Te Reo Māori, which is the Māori language (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). In the Norwegian context, no comparable statistics exist. However, a common assumption is that there are approximately 40,000 Sámi in Norway. Adding to Sámi living in Sweden, Finland, and Russia, the total is assumed to be around 60,000–70,000 (Solbakk & Varsi, 2015).

In terms of colonial history, the first wave of European settlers to Aotearoa New Zealand, in the late 1700s and early 1800s, consisted primarily of whalers and missionaries. More settlers gradually arrived from the early 1800s onwards, which, in turn, heightened the conflict between Pākehā and Māori. On February 6, 1840, representatives of the British Crown and some Māori chiefs from various tribes signed the *Te Tiriti O Waitangi* (Treaty of Waitangi), which established a relationship between Māori and Pākehā. The document can also be understood as the basis upon which the nation of Aotearoa New Zealand was founded (Owens, 1992). The content of *Te Tiriti* (the Treaty) is still a subject of discussion today, mainly due to different understandings of key terms in the treaty. In contrast, historical sources show that Sámi have had continuous contact with non-Sámi. The Sámi are not a "treaty people" in the same way as Māori or indigenous peoples in the United States and Canada. The 1751 Lapp Codicil, an agreement between the states of Norway and Sweden, acknowledges Sámi rights, but it is not a treaty per se. These similarities and differences between the two cases are mirrored in their relationship to the states and the majority populations, as well as in regard to their respective educational systems.

Indigenous education in Norway

Sámi education in Norway has to be understood in a national context. I will, therefore, begin with a brief historical review of Sámi education before providing a comprehensive overview. Since the beginning of the 1700s, structured, formalised education, including for Sámi students, has been common in Norway. After declaring its independence from Denmark, the implementation of the Constitution in 1814 became a turning point for the Norwegian nation. The ensuing period is considered the birth of romantic nationalism, and the school played a significant role in the state-driven nation-building process (Volckmar, 2016). The official assimilation policy, known as the "Norwegianisation" policy, was implemented in 1850. The Norwegianisation policy can be seen as a direct result of the events of 1814 and the

subsequent nation-building process. The influences of Social Darwinism meant that schools were given a significant role in assimilating Sámi children into Norwegian society.

The political climate in the north also affected Sámi education. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Finland was seen as a serious threat to national security, and citizens in the north were perceived as possibly disloyal and, therefore, a danger to national security. In the early 1900s, state boarding schools were built in the eastern regions of Finnmark as a result of the so-called Finnish threat (Jensen, 2005; Minde, 2005).

In 1947, a tribunal board, "Samordningsnemnda for skoleverket," was asked to review issues related to Sámi schools and education. The board advised that, in accordance with the international human rights movement at the time, the Norwegianisation policy should be eliminated. However, the establishment of the welfare state in the post-World War 2 period proved to be a far more effective tool of assimilation than the official policies. The emergence of new standards of living, from standardised housing to healthcare and education, were all based on the ideals of the majority population. Compulsory schooling was implemented, and many Sámi children continued to reside at boarding schools due to their tremendous distances from their family homes. The ideal postwar standards left little room for minority perspectives. Many Sámi believed their "Sáminess" to be unnecessary and shameful (Jensen, 2005; Minde, 2005). It is, therefore, possible to distinguish between the Norwegianisation *policy*, as the applied policy, and the Norwegianisation *process*, which continued even after the Norwegianisation policy was eliminated.

In the late 1950s and onwards, there was a growing interest in Sámi matters, which was connected to indigenous movements internationally. The so-called Alta conflict can be understood as a highlight of the indigenous political movement on the Norwegian side of Sápmi. The conflict refers to a series of protests concerning the building of a hydroelectric dam in the Alta River in Finnmark through the late 1960s to the end of 1980s. This consequently led to the Norwegian state acknowledging indigenous peoples' rights through the Sámi Act of 1987, which again resulted in the establishment of the Sámi Parliament in 1989 and the signing of International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 on Tribal and Indigenous Peoples in 1990.

Sámi education today

The legal framework for Sámi education in Norway involves both national and international law. In 1990, Norway ratified ILO Convention 169, which was an important step towards acknowledging Sámi rights. ILO 169 states, among other stipulations, that indigenous peoples have the right to participate in developing and implementing culturally appropriate education, which should "incorporate their histories, their knowledge and technologies" (International Labour Organization, 1989). The United Nations (UN) Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states that indigenous peoples have the right to "establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning" (2008).

Regarding national policies, Article 108 of the Norwegian Constitution, which was implemented in 1988, states that the Norwegian state shall provide terms that enable the Sámi people to secure and develop their language, culture, and society (Grunnloven, 1814). The Sámi Act is significant; although it does not directly touch upon Sámi education, it lays the legal groundwork for the Education Act. One of the key concerns is that the law identifies the Sámi and Norwegian languages as equal (Sameloven, 1987). The Education Act relates to primary and secondary education and training, and it includes a chapter on Sámi education. It defines a Sámi person as someone who can be registered on the Sámi electoral roll or the child of someone who can be registered. The Sámi language is defined as North Sámi, Lule

Sámi, and South Sámi. The act states that in so-called Sámi districts (municipalities that have a special responsibility to retain the Sámi language), "all children at the primary and lower secondary level have the right to receive their education both in Sámi and through the medium of Sámi" (Opplæringslova, 1998 "author translation").

In 1997, a new national curriculum was implemented alongside a Sámi equivalent called "Læreplanverket for den 10-årige grunnskole 1997 Samisk" (L97-S). They were considered parallel and equal, with the Sámi curriculum being aimed at so-called Sámi schools. It has been argued that L97-S is the first curriculum to refer to "Sámi schools" and "Sámi students" as separate entities and the first to institutionalise them into the educational system. L97-S has been praised for its Sámi content, but its implementation process has been highly criticised (Hirvonen, 2004; Hirvonen & Keskitalo, 2004).

Implemented in 2006, "The Knowledge Promotion" (Kunnskapsløftet) is the current national education reform, and it resulted in the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training, known in Norwegian as "Læreplanverket for Kunnskapsløftet" (LK06). Together with LK06, the second Sámi curriculum—The Sámi Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training (LK06-S)—was implemented. LK06 and LK06-S can be understood as one joint curriculum, but they are more commonly referred to as two separate, yet equal and parallel, curricula. LK06-S is used in the administrative area for Sámi languages, which currently consists of 10 municipalities, and in some cases, it is used in Sámi classes in other municipalities.

Some of the few available statistics relate to students learning Sámi as a subject and students for whom Sámi is the language of instruction. In the 2014/2015 school year, 2,116 students in total had Sámi as a subject: 1,943 had Northern Sámi, 99 had Lule Sámi, and 74 had Southern Sámi. Of these students, 915 had Sámi as their first language: 878 had Northern Sámi, 22 had Lule Sámi, and 15 had Southern Sámi. The remaining 1,201 had Sámi as a second language: 1,065 had Northern Sámi, 77 had Lule Sámi, and 59 had Southern Sámi. Throughout the country, 812 students had Sámi as the language of instruction, though the division between the languages is not clear. Of these students, 746 were in the administrative area for Sámi languages (Todal, Broderstad, Brustad, Johansen, & Severeide, 2015).

Based on the Sámi curriculum, it is possible to identify three models of Sámi education in Norway. The first model is mainstream schools that offer students the possibility of studying Sámi language as a subject. The second is mainstream schools with Sámi and/or bilingual classes. The third is Sámi immersion schools, where all teaching is done in one of the Sámi languages (Keskitalo, Uusiautti, & Määttä, 2014). The curriculum defines a "Sámi school" as a school or class that uses the Sámi curriculum, meaning that all schools within the Sámi administrative area, regardless of the ethnicity of the students, are regarded as Sámi schools (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2008). However, the definition of "Sámi student" is not as clear. The Education Act defines a Sámi as "a person who qualifies for enrolment in the electoral roll of the Sámi Parliament and the children of those who can enrol" (Opplæringslova, 1998, author translation). A Sámi student can also be understood to be a student using the Sámi curriculum and/or being taught Sámi language as a subject. Consequently, there are statistics on Sámi students studying Sámi language as a subject and/or using the Sámi curriculum. There are no available statistics on Sámi students who are not covered by these definitions. Using the available statistics, and considering the rapid ongoing urbanisation from the so-called core Sámi areas (Broderstad & Broderstad, 2014), it is possible to estimate that the majority of self-identified Sámi students neither use the Sámi curriculum nor study Sámi as a subject. The fact that they are not part of the existing statistics and become practically invisible in research, policy-making, and within schools is problematic (Gjerpe, 2017).

Indigenous education in Aotearoa New Zealand

It is understood that prior to European contact, Māori had institutionalised knowledge and learning traditions, which were integral to their culture, social organisation, and daily living (Stephenson, 2009). The development of what Stephenson describes as "Pākehā-style education" begins with the arrival of the early settlers (2009). Māori schooling has gone through several stages. The first mission school was established in 1816 with the main goal of civilising Māori children by teaching them about Europe and the Bible in their own language. Schools were perceived as the most effective means of facilitating this "civilisation" and "assimilation" agenda and were, therefore, subsidised by the state. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s, Māori children were taught in their own language, and many Māori began setting up their own schools. Following the signing of the *Te Tiriti* in 1840, the state was concerned with "civilising" the Māori by encouraging them to abandon their traditional cultural values, customs, and language in favour of European ones (Simon & Smith, 2001; Stephenson, 2009).

After the signing of *Te Tiriti*, there was growing tension between Māori and Pākehā over land rights and sovereignty. During the 1860s, tensions consequently led to the so-called New Zealand Wars and to the Māoris' abandonment of the mission schools. However, during the second half of the 19th century, two parallel education systems were operating. To continue the assimilation policy, the state passed the Native Schools Act in 1867. This act established the new Native Schools system, which was composed of village primary schools for Māori students. Through the Native Schools Act, Māori education was shifted from the hands of the missionaries to the state. The 1877 Education Act established the Public Schools system, in which mainstream schools were built primarily for settler and Pākehā children. Both systems were "public" in the sense that no students were excluded based on their ethnicities (Simon & Smith, 2001; Stephenson, 2008).

From 1947 onwards, all native schools were known as Māori schools. Although 159 Māori schools had been established by 1950, there was a steady increase in the number of Māori students enrolled in public schools. The reason for this increase was a combination of students living far away from Māori schools and the fact that these schools were gradually transferred to board control, thus becoming public schools (Simon & Smith, 2001). Rapid urbanisation was also a significant factor (Sissons, 2005). By 1969, all remaining Māori schools were transferred to education boards, and the Māori school system was officially disestablished, although privately (often church) owned single-sex Māori schools were allowed to continue operating (Simon & Smith, 2001). Simon and Smith (2001) point to the fact that the Native Schools system was "dynamic" and "often contradictory," as communities would establish their own relationships with teachers. The native schools, therefore, varied in how they interpreted and responded to official policies. Even if the official policy continued to be that of assimilation, the outcomes would often differ significantly.

Maori education today

With regard to the Māori context, "Kaupapa Māori" can be understood as a political movement that was part of a wider ethnic revitalisation following the rapid urbanisation in Aotearoa New Zealand after World War 2. According to Bishop and Glynn (1999), "Kaupapa Māori is a discourse that has emerged and is legitimated from within the Māori community" (p. 63). Linda T. Smith (2012) argues that the concept of *Kaupapa* implies "a way of framing and structuring how we think about those ideas and practices" (p. 190).

In response to the gaps between the Māori and Pākehā regarding their levels of educational achievement, which were identified in the 1960 Hunn Report, play centres were established nationwide. However, many Māori mothers in urban areas withdrew their children from these

play centres and established their own informal playgroups with other Māori children. These were the very first steps towards "Te Kōhanga Reo," a preschool Māori language immersion programme established in 1982 (Walker, 2016). The Te Kōhanga Reo movement inspired the establishment of alternative primary schools in 1985; these were Māori immersion schools called Kura Kaupapa Māori (Māori medium primary schools) (Ray, 2009; Walker, 2016). Māori immersion schooling became part of the state system through the Education Amendment Act 1989, by means of which Kura Kaupapa Māori was accepted as a distinctive school type, differing from other special character schools (Ray, 2009, p. 22). Whare Kura (Māori medium secondary schools) and Whare Waananga (Māori tertiary institutions) have also been established since then.

Today, Māori medium education is defined as that which teaches curriculum subjects in the Māori language at least 51% of the time. It can be carried out in immersion schools, immersion and bilingual units, or classes attached to English-medium schools (Education Counts, 2018). Kura Kaupapa Māori are defined as Māori immersion schools where the education is based on Māori culture and values. Whereas English-medium schools use the New Zealand curriculum, Kura Kaupapa Māori use Te Marautanga O Aotearoa, which is a curriculum that is based on Māori philosophies (Ministry of Education, 2017a, 2017b). Te Aho Matua, which is the founding document for Kura Kaupapa Māori, "outlines how Māori values and knowledge can be incorporated into Kura Kaupapa Māori schooling" (Tocker, 2015, p. 35).

The majority of Māori students attend mainstream schools. In comparison to Pākehā students, Māori students struggle with a number of issues, including lower achievement levels, higher suspension rates, and over-representation in special education programmes for behavioural issues. Māori students are more likely to leave school with fewer formal qualifications and are less likely to enrol in tertiary education. These challenges faced by Māori students were already identified in the 1950s, and although there have been some improvements, a pattern of educational disparity between Māori and Pākehā students continues to exist (Bishop, 2012).

Indigenising mainstream education

In accordance with the development of Sámi and Māori politics since the 1970s, indigenous education has progressed from a tool of assimilation into an important tool of revitalisation. It has also played a role in gaining political recognition for indigenous peoples and building indigenous institutions. As a component of political development and institution building, indigenous education in Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand is founded within the framework of mainstream national education. Here, I will point out some of the challenges associated with the development of indigenous education and discuss these in relation to the concept of strategic essentialism.

As an analytical tool, I refer to Olsen (2017) and the use of phases to describe how indigenous issues are included in education. These phases are linked to specific historical times and contexts, but they have gliding transitions and may overlap. The first phase, *absence,* describes the total lack of indigenous content within the educational system. The second phase, *inclusion*, describes how indigenous issues are being included in education, but this is done from the point of view of the majority society and is often sporadic and highly generalised.

I will focus on the third phase, *indigenisation*, which describes how indigenous issues are included in education on indigenous peoples' terms. I argue that indigenisation has two stages. The first stage is characterised by a strategic essentialist approach, with an emphasis on the differences between Māori/Sámi and other students, which necessitate separate educational institutions. In this phase, the use of essential characteristics was necessary to build institutions and to gain recognition and rights as indigenous peoples. As a result, this

process led to the building of indigenous educational institutions, such as Kura Kaupapa and Sámi schools. The recognition of indigenous schools have also significantly influenced the indigenous content of mainstream education, which should not be underestimated. The second phase of indigenisation entails moving away from the strategic essentialist approach, thereby making it possible to discuss and acknowledge internal differences.

Strategic essentialism

A characteristic of the political development of Sámi and Māori politics is the emphasis on the "authentic" or "essential" Sámi/ Māori. One way of describing such political development is through the term strategic essentialism (Smith, 2012). Linda Tuhiwai Smith, referring to Spivak (2012), argues that authenticity is often used as a criterion to determine legitimate indigenous characteristics. The belief exists that indigenous cultures are unable to change or become internally diverse without losing their authentic indigenous characteristics. Smith relates the concept of authenticity to essentialism. To claim human and indigenous rights and to emphasise their "otherness," indigenous peoples have had to claim essential characteristics solely to be considered "authentic" (Smith, 2012). Taking a constructivist approach, Lina Gaski (2008) argues that Sámi politicians "help construct a Sámi identity by creating Sámi–Norwegian dichotomies" (p. 233) that are based on discourses with nationalistic qualities. Gaski further argues that the use of discourses to create Sámi identity and nationhood is mainly due to external factors and the need to adapt to the expectations of the Norwegian state (p. 234). Within the Sámi context, there are several examples of how the revitalisation process created an "imagined" collective Sámi community (Anderson, 1991). As a response to the political climate at the time, it was especially important to be unified as a people, as historically, Sámi have been culturally diverse (Eidheim, 1987). Political institutions were established, and young Sámi became engaged in politics, publicly wearing their traditional *gákti* and expressing their identity through traditional handicrafts, art, and music (Bjørklund, 2000).

The strategic use of essentialism is, therefore, a well-known concept within the international indigenous political movement. It can be characterised by strategic cooperation with other indigenous peoples worldwide, most notably through the UN system. Also taking a constructivist approach, Jens Dahl (2012) describes the indigenous global movement as "a network or rather a web of networks that often acts as a self-categorised group with common interests" (p. 15). He further argues that "the people who join the indigenous movement are those whom colonialism tried to treat as peoples without history and whom, in spite of their differences, are united in opposition to the state" (p. 9). The essentialising of cultural characteristics can create dichotomies by emphasising the differences between "indigenous" and "the West." This can be understood as a political coping mechanism, whereby standing united as indigenous peoples has proven strategic and effective in terms of achieving certain goals (Dahl, 2012).

Although I have argued that strategic essentialism has been necessary at specific times in history, there are consequences and challenges that need to be addressed. Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) argue that there is a tendency in indigenous studies to "lapse into essentialism." If this approach is not avoided, it can create "authentic essentialism"—that is, a romanticised image of the past. Indigenous peoples did not live in isolation prior to colonisation; indigeneity is, therefore, not fixed in history and time. Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) argue that by creating romanticised images of the past, the dichotomies between "indigenous" and "the West" are emphasised. The creation of such dichotomies is problematic, especially when internal differences are downplayed and external differences enhanced (Olsen, 2016). Bjørklund (2016) argues that the use of strategic essentialism may have more

severe consequences, as creating an "imagined community" purely on a symbolical level may challenge indigenous peoples' rights internationally.

Strategic essentialism in indigenous education

The process prior to the establishment of indigenous education in both Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand has, to a large degree, been focused on the establishment of Kura Kaupapa and Sámi schools. Although there is greater emphasis on Māori content in mainstream education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Olsen & Andreassen, 2016), research on indigenous and Sámi content in mainstream schools is almost nonexistent in Norway.

The use of Balto's research on Sámi pedagogics can be seen in the light of strategic essentialism. Balto started her work on Sámi pedagogics at a time when the field was virtually unexplored. It was also a significant period for Sámi activism, by means of which research and researchers became important figures in the political battle at the time. There was a need to position indigenous education as a distinct field within a greater educational context. As the Sámi–Norwegian dichotomies were emphasised, the research exploring a distinct Sámi pedagogy was very welcome. Balto's book on Sámi child-rearing is arguably fundamental in the field (1997a).

Balto's research is conducted primarily within a northern Sámi context, though her work is used to represent and generalise Sámi pedagogics throughout Sápmi. This is the starting point of the development of a pan-Sámi pedagogy, which is based on the northern Sámi context despite being used to represent Sámi pedagogics throughout Sápmi. The challenge with a pan-Sámi pedagogy is the lack of different perspectives, especially with regard to internal differences. By speaking of "*a* Sámi pedagogy," the cultural diversity that exists among Sámi is underplayed. It is not a given that a Sámi pedagogy based on northern Sámi perspectives is relevant or suited to Sámi students from other areas. This is mainly due to linguistic and cultural diversity but is also linked to the long-term consequences of assimilation. The assimilation process has had a far more adverse effect in the coastal areas of Sápmi than in inland northern Sápmi, where the language is still very much alive (Andersen 2003). This is further complicated by the fact that northern Sámi culture and language are often understood as "*the* Sámi culture/language" (Gjerpe, 2017), consequently overshadowing Lule and Southern Sámi. Research on Kaupapa Māori has gone through a similar phase, although the field is significantly larger in terms of its wider variety of scholars and perspectives (Pihama, 2006). Kaupapa Maori is institutionalised as a field itself, as opposed to Sámi pedagogics, which is arguably still closely linked to individual scholars.

The use of strategic essentialism has significant consequences for the development of indigenous education. I argue that the ideologies presented through strategic essentialism are not rooted in our current reality. When essentialising a culture or people, there is a (conscious or unconscious) process of choosing which cultural traits will be dominant. Consequently, it creates a dominant discourse that is not necessarily connected to the realities of said peoples. Similarly, the dominant voices in research on Sámi and Māori education emphasise Kura Kaupapa and Sámi schools, despite the knowledge that the majority of indigenous students do not attend these schools. This has resulted in a "blind spot" in terms of Sámi and Maori students in mainstream education.

Indigenise mainstream education – Some examples

Nakata (2006) questions the limits of indigenisation, especially with regard to addressing intercultural issues. He points to a paradox: Indigenisation is about creating a separate indigenous space, whereas indigenous traditions have been based on the understanding of the self in relation to one's surroundings. I argue that by acknowledging and discussing internal differences and local approaches to indigeneity, it is possible to address the challenges created by the strategic essentialist approach.

One example of indigenising mainstream education is the ongoing work to renew the curricula for primary and secondary schools in Norway. The new core curriculum (called "overordnet del" in Norwegian) was adopted in September 2017 but is yet to be implemented. The core curriculum is the basis for the subject curricula and is, therefore, a significant document on many levels (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). What is remarkable is the development from the almost nonexistent Sámi content in the former core curricula to the current core curriculum, in which Sámi themes are visible throughout the entire text. This development is also a clear indication that Sámi and indigenous content will be more visible in the new subject curricula (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018).

Another example is from Aotearoa New Zealand and the Te Kotahitanga project, which draws on the principles of Kaupapa Māori and addresses the educational disparities between Māori and Pākehā students in mainstream education (Bishop, 2008, 2012; Bishop, Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2014). The point of departure for Te Kotahitanga is the research showing that Māori students in Kura Kaupapa schools have higher rates of achievement. As the majority of Māori students do not attend Kura Kaupapa schools, it is necessary to address the Māori students who are enrolled in mainstream schools. Te Kotahitanga addresses teachers and schools, rather than students, with the purpose of creating a culturally responsive learning environment. Studies have shown that teachers often have low expectations of Māori and Pacifica students and comparatively higher expectations of, for instance, Pākehā and Asian students, although this was not reflected in the students' actual achievements at the start of the school year. Throughout these studies, the students would over time achieve according to, and thereby fulfil, their teachers' negative expectations. The detailed results of Te Kotahitanga are available for further examination (Bishop, 2008; Bishop et al., 2014), but here, I will address the results in terms of increased student achievement and positive feedback from students. What Te Kotahitanga shows is that change in student achievement is possible through the creation of a culturally responsive learning environment in which students feel that their culture is valued and that they are respected.

It is important to note that Te Kotahitanga targets specific challenges in a particular context, and it is difficult to apply the results within a Sámi context. Māori generally face greater socioeconomic challenges than Sámi in the Nordic states. However, the project specifically targets the challenges faced by indigenous students within mainstream education, and it shows the possible positive outcomes of increasing cultural awareness and knowledge among teachers and staff.

To indigenise mainstream education in Norway, there is a need for further research on the diversity and varieties of Sámi pedagogy. A pan-Sámi pedagogy based on northern Sápmi perspectives *may* be relevant in other areas, but this is not a given. Balto's research is important and can be used outside of its original northern Sámi context. There is a need for further discussion regarding whether it is transferable and, if so, in what way. However, it must be used critically and in the context of internal diversity, as opposed to a context of essentialism. For this discussion to be constructive, there is a need to conduct more research on Sámi pedagogy in other Sámi areas, with an emphasis on diversity rather than essentialism.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, I have argued that indigenous-based schools—in this context, Kura Kaupapa and Sámi schools—are highly important for a variety of reasons. Most notably, the mere existence of such schools is significant in terms of the advocacy for indigenous content in mainstream education. Although many challenges remain in regard to indigenous education in both contexts, I argue that both the Sámi schools and Kura Kaupapa Māori have achieved a significant level of recognition from their respective states. Despite the importance of indigenous schools, the fact remains that, for a variety of reasons, the majority of indigenous students in Norway and Aotearoa New Zealand attend mainstream schools, although this is not reflected in the policy and research related to the field. This calls for an approach to increase knowledge on indigenous issues in schools. This is not only relevant to non-indigenous students but will also ensure that indigenous students who, for various reasons, do not attend indigenous schools have access to culturally appropriate education. Moreover, there is a need to conduct research on Sámi pedagogics from local perspectives, emphasising the diversity within Sámi pedagogics.

Acknowledgements

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