

The indigenous Sami citizen and Norwegian national identity: tensions in curriculum discourses

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Abstract: The paper explores citizenship positions for the Sami as citizen in the overarching policy document for the Norwegian school. Informed by the perspective that policy documents hold discursive productivity in the Foucauldian sense, this document is regarded vital for locating normative cultural ideals. The analysis points to three discourses: indigeneity, multiculturalism and the common Norwegian cultural heritage perspective. Although the analysis suggests that there is a variety of possible citizenship identity positions, tensions are located in their ontological and epistemological claims regarding what it means to be Sami. The paper argues that indigenous perspectives might both challenge and complement current ideas of citizenship and human rights education. Notably, indigeneity accentuates the tension between universalism and recognition in human rights education. The paper also points to how the curriculum has great ambitions for the possibilities of inclusive practice within an educational system that lacks sufficient competence on Sami culture.

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to discuss different citizenship positions for the Sami as citizen in the main foundational policy document for common Norwegian and Sami schools. As the recently accepted regulation, The Overarching Curriculum (O-17), makes clear, 'protecting the minority is a vital principle in a democratic state and society. A democratic society also shields indigenous peoples and minorities' (Norwegian Directory for Education and Training [UDIR], 2017, p. 9). The educational system is one of society's most pervasive institutions, discursively reproducing ideas of national identity and citizenship (Van Dijk, 1993). In the Norwegian context, schools were one of the main vehicles for a brutal assimilationist policy directed at the indigenous Sami and other minorities during the 19th and 20th centuries. The formal recognition of indigenous peoples in educational policy is a turnaround. However, there is a clear risk that such intentions remain merely symbolic (Gjerpe, 2017). Much research points to a Norwegian school system still strongly invested in monoculturalism and whiteness (Biseth, 2012; Røthing, 2015; Svendsen, 2014). What is more, fostering citizenship through education is not merely a matter of juridical recognition; the informal construction of identity is vital (Erdal & Strømsø, 2018). This is further actualized by the inherent paradox with the central role of human rights in citizenship education between universality and recognition (Osler, 2015, 2016). In this paper, I ask

What citizenship positions are located in The Overarching Curriculum for the Sami as citizen?

My perspective is that major curriculum documents hold power and discursive productivity in the Foucauldian sense; they are vital for locating normative cultural discourses about the ideal citizen. This is not to say that policy is deterministic, and translation from policy to practice happens through complex processes of appropriation by social actors. When aspiring to understand the formation of citizenship identity, structural positionality is nonetheless a central consideration. This entails on the one hand how the individual is positioned as citizen-subject through discourse, but also how the individual constitutes her citizenship identity by and through the terms and circumstances accessible (Dahlstedt, Fejes, Olson, Rahm & Sandberg, 2017).

In this paper, I explore the contributions of educational policy in the construction of imagined national communities and citizenship. As Anderson (1991) observed, the community of a nation is a social construction. Nations are 'subject to and the product of existing power hierarchies but, simultaneously, they are inherently dynamic, co-produced by ordinary people in their everyday lives' (Erdal & Strømsø, 2018, p. 29). This study addresses the vital topic of how educational discourse positions and conceptualizes minorities in general, albeit with a clear sensitivity for the particularities of the Sami as indigenous people. In the first sections, I present the historical and juridical background for the situation of the Sami in Norway, with special attention to the education system. I then account for the conceptual framework of understandings of citizenship, identity and the role of human rights. In the following section, the main principles of the mode of critical discourse analysis (CDA), as well as the material, are presented. Positioned within a critical epistemology, I reject any positivist view that the study represents objective 'findings' of social reality, and thus the results and discussions are presented as inseparable entities. In the concluding section I point out how indigenous perspectives both challenge and complement conventional perspectives on education for citizenship and human rights, and reflect on how the policy document holds quite ambitious goals for mainstreaming Sami culture in education.

Background: The Sami and the Norwegian Educational System

The Sami are the indigenous people of northwestern Europe, and the ancestral homeland of *Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie* covers parts of Northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Northwestern Russia. As a category, the Sami encompass several different groups with distinct self-identities. As the Norwegian state does not register information about the ethnicity of its residents, there is no official number of the amount of the population identifying as Sami. The official approach to this topic is geographical, and ten Norwegian municipalities, with approximately 55,000 inhabitants, are defined as 'Sami management areas'. As Gjerpe (2018, p. 6) points out, the Sami have, historically, had continuous contact with the non-Sami, and are thus not a 'treaty people' such as indigenous peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand, USA or Canada. Norwegian minority policy is partly based on the structure put forward by Kymlicka on differentiation of citizenship rights within liberal democracies (1995). The Sami hold particular rights regarding their collective and formal status as indigenous peoples in Norway. In accordance with this, the official curriculum in

Norway has since 1997 appeared in two parallel and equal versions; the Norwegian and the Sami (UDIR, 2013a, 2013b). In line with the United Nations Convention of The Rights of the Child [CRC] article 29 b), c) and d), the goals of education do not only entail that education shall be directed to development of the child's cultural identity, but shall also prepare everyone to live in tolerance and to respect the different groups in the country (United Nations [UN], 1989). This is also reflected in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples [UNDRIP], which states that indigenous perspectives 'shall be appropriately reflected in education and public information' (UN, 2007, article 15). In Norway, the importance of human rights education is stated in the curriculum as well as in the Norwegian Constitution, declaring: 'The education shall safeguard the individual's abilities and needs, and promote respect for democracy, the rule of law and human rights' (The Constitution, 1814 [2014], §109).

Lile (2011) argues that knowledge about the oppression of the Sami and their fight for human rights is vital for all pupils in Norway. It is crucial to make the distinction between knowledge about cultural and indigenous groups and their cultures, and the responsibility of education for 'strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms' (UN, 1966, article 13). This resonates with the emphasis in human rights education on teaching *for*, not only *about* human rights (Osler, 2016, p. 40). Mere inclusion of knowledge about different cultures can sometimes do more harm than good in terms of reproducing epistemic violence (Eriksen, 2018). The formal recognition of Sami culture as part of a common Norwegian national identity is ridden with challenges, not least because of the complex relationship between indigenous groups and nation states. The Norwegian school system from the outset played a central role in nation-building and democratic patriotism in a culturally homogenous imagined community (Telhaug & Mediaas, 2003). The construction of the Norwegian imagined community also draws on a history of aggressive assimilationist policies towards the Sami (Erdal & Strømsø, 2018, p. 28), and is deeply embedded in an ideal of unity through homogeneity and sameness. Several researchers have suggested that this discourse is still very much present through the externalization of current racism within educational discourse (Osler & Lindquist, 2018; Svendsen, 2014).

On a global scale, there were powerful movements of revitalization and resistance among minority groups after World War II; these movements were active in attempts to have multiple histories and cultures reflected in mainstream education (Banks, 2008). This was also the case in Norway, where the longstanding mobilization to recognise the Sami led to an emerging multicultural pedagogy (Engen, 2014). During the *Norwegianification* politics of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Sami had gradually lost influence in areas where they had been living for thousands of years. Sami languages were strongly discouraged in school and laws that undermined traditional Sami ways of living were passed. Social-Darwinist and racist theories were applied in arguments that posited the inferiority of Sami culture (Niemi, 2017). In recent decades, educational policy has been central to efforts by the Norwegian government to better the situation for Sami language and culture (Olsen, Sollid & Johansen, 2017). These efforts have followed two interrelated but somewhat different avenues. Firstly, several schools within the Sami management areas are Sami schools, providing all teaching in Sami languages. This represents a strategy of *indigeneity*, enabling distinct schools based on Sami cultures. This also accentuates the juridical difference between the Sami and other minorities. Although the CRC

applies the term ‘persons of indigenous origin’, ‘indigenous peoples’ is commonly accepted in Norwegian law and official discourse. Being the object of much debate in the UN, the term ‘peoples’ refers to the indigenous as distinct groups or nations, and thus denotes stronger claims for self-determination (Lile, 2012). Secondly, Sami culture is to be integrated in all subjects in school in both Norwegian and Sami schools, representing a *mainstreaming* tendency (Engen, 2014). Studies of Norwegian state education suggest that pupils in non-Sami schools learn little about Sami history and culture, and that the Sami are commonly presented in stereotypical ways (Lile, 2011; Mortensen-Buan, 2016). While the existence of a Sami curriculum has made it possible to distinguish between Norwegian and Sami schools, the inclusion of Sami culture and history in the Norwegian school might have been downplayed (Gjerpe, 2017). This is problematic, not least because in an increasingly urbanized society, most children with Sami affiliations probably attend mainstream schools.

Conceptual Framework: Citizenship Education, Rights and the Subject

The extensive rights and formal visibility of the Sami throughout the curriculum elucidate how the situation for the Sami in Norway is, to some extent, seen internationally as a success story. The Sami are among the highest educated indigenous peoples, and Sami individuals mainly staff Sami institutions (Stordahl, 2008). Surveys indicate that the Norwegian Sami have relatively high trust in existing democratic bodies, as well as high levels of formal participation (Selle, Semb, Strømsnes & Nordbø, 2015). However, this focus on formal citizenship status is related to a thin concept of citizenship, or citizenship-as-legal-status (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994). In this paper, it is the normative contents of citizenship-as-desirable-activity, or thick citizenship, that is in focus. Within this, cultural aspects related to social positioning, identity and belonging are core. Belonging is about feeling at home and secure, but also about being recognized (Wood & Waite, 2011). Thus, the relationship between citizenship and education concerns not only the development of formal democratic knowledge, but also empowerment through possibilities for *subjectification* of the individual (Biesta, 2009, 2014). In this regard, the position of the Sami appears more ambiguous. Today, there is not only talk about revitalizing Sami culture but also about processes of cumulative discrimination and decolonization (Vars, 2017). Studies of current living conditions indicate that as many as one third of the Sami in Norway still experience discrimination related to ethnic identity, including structural and indirect discrimination (Hansen, Minton, Friborg & Sørli, 2016). A singular focus on formal and thin aspects of citizenship might fail to take into account more tacit exclusion and epistemic violence.

Early discourses on citizenship emerged within the framework of nationalism as political doctrine in the 1800s (Dahlstedt et al., 2017). The hegemony of this concept led to minorities positioning themselves or being positioned as the Other, and this was often accompanied by a homogenous cultural understanding of the nation-state. A core idea of this dominant liberal assimilationist view has been that it increases equality for all when it expands from the civil and political into the social sphere. In the Norwegian context, this ideology has been manifested through a self-image of ‘Norwegian exceptionalism’, where Norway is seen as a champion of democracy, anti-racism and human rights (Eriksen, 2018; Gullestad, 2004; Vesterdal, 2016). Within this discursive construction, national values and human rights are commonly proclaimed as the same thing (Osler & Lybaek, 2014). However, Banks

(2008) emphasizes that in postcolonial contexts the conception of citizenship should be expanded to include group rights, in order to resist prevailing processes of marginalization and racialization. This actualizes the inherent tension between human rights as a universal project, and recognition and equal protection as spelled out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) articles 6 and 7 (UN, 1948). Legal recognition is insufficient, and there might be considerable gaps between rhetoric and lived realities (Osler, 2016). Post- and decolonial frameworks inform us about how colonization is an ongoing process of violent epistemic expansion (Andreotti, 2011, p. 62). The modern human rights project is also embedded in a modern epistemology that might function to standardize culture and regulate the colonized Other (Spivak, 1999). This is also accentuated by the paradoxical role of the nation-state as safeguarder of human rights. As Arendt (1968) highlighted through her seminal expression ‘The right to have rights’, national citizenship is the enabler of legal entitlements in spite of the claim of human rights as moral entitlements possessed by all individuals through their humanity. Although this is a question of legal status, the idea can also be understood in epistemological terms, related to who are allowed recognition as full citizen subjects through discourses and power structures. Nakata (2006) here talks of the possibility of creating a recognizably indigenous space that is, nonetheless, pluralistic. Bhabha (2003) captures this role of recognition and pluralism through the idea of ‘the right to narrate’, which allows learners to place themselves within collective histories. In this, a common tendency to reification of diversity must be replaced with hybridity, to avoid essentialism (Bhabha, 1990).

Research Methods and Material

The analytical approach in this paper is multidisciplinary, applying insights from critical pedagogy (Kincheloe, Maclaren & Steinberg, 2011), post- and decolonial studies (Andreotti, 2011; Bhabha, 2003), and indigenous studies (Nakata, 2006; Gjerpe, 2017; Smith, 2010). The boundaries between these perspectives are not clear-cut. In the groundbreaking book *Decolonizing methodologies*, Linda Tuhiwai Smith declares that indigenous methodology is ‘about centring our concepts and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes’ (Smith, 2010, p. 39). Scholars of critical pedagogy, post- and decolonialism share, with indigenous methodology, an acknowledgement that research is always positional, situational and must be committed to fight unjust power relations. Within indigenous methodology, such a perspective might also take on an extended form as epistemic privilege or even ontological exclusivism. This entails that that indigenous lifeworlds are ‘unknowable’ from a Western epistemological standpoint (Oskal, 2008). In a broader sense, indigenous research includes various approaches to understanding, empowering and decolonizing the position of indigenous peoples. Such approaches need not be restricted to indigenous individuals, but are united by the ethical notion that such research should always ensure that it is respectful, ethical, correct, sympathetic and beneficial seen from an indigenous point of view (Porsanger, 2004). In this regard, it is imperative to state my background as non-indigenous and what might be described by the somewhat dubious term ‘majority-Norwegian’. My concern about these issues is informed by the will to participate in continuously destabilizing systemic and epistemological inequity through anti-racist education.

The paper does not imply that power and dominance are imposed on individuals through discourse, and a broader analysis of socio-cognitive processes of negotiation and resistance would be needed for a fully-fledged analysis (Van Dijk, 1993). In a study of citizenship and subject positions in education, the experienced curriculum perceived by pupils is also vital (Goodlad, 1979), but this is outside the scope of this paper. Although the focus is on the limiting function of the discourses embedded in policy text, the paper also aims to locate fields of opportunities for resistance and change. The analysis was guided by principles from critical discourse analysis (CDA), paying specific attention to conceptualization through language use. The analytical questions applied were inspired by and based on Fairclough's (2001) practical guide to CDA (See Table 1 below).

Table 1. Analytical questions

- What classification schemes are applied?
- How is agency allocated?
- Does the text presume particular subject positions? If so, which?
- Are there ideologically significant meaning relations between words (synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy)?
- Which topical connections are made, and what logic do they follow?
- How do the texts conceptualize the Sami and Saminess?

In Norway, the curriculum is recognized as part of national law, and O-17 is a precept to, and thus legally sanctioned by, the Education Act. In Norway, the curriculum has since 1974 had a 'general part', now renamed an 'overarching part'. The new O-17 was commissioned by the Government and passed on 1 September, 2017. It underwent a thorough political process before being passed as a national law in Parliament, and so signals a public as well as a political consensus. Thus it is above all a regulation with extensive symbolic value, as it expresses the main ambitions of the Norwegian state with regard to education. It is a public expression of official policy, and contributes to the state-led construction of truth regimes (Ball 1994). A revision of this curriculum document thus signals a political change (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). The political passing of this new document was the first step in a currently ongoing major curriculum reform in Norway. In legal terms, all subject curricula must be in line with O-17. Although there exist separate curricula for the Sami and Norwegian schools, O-17 is a shared principal document. In the analysis, I identified core concepts related to citizenship and the Sami, and, in line with CDA, I paid attention to topical connections and how the terms were conceptualized through language use (See Table 2 below).

| Term | Occurrence | Topical connections |
|-------------------|-------------------|---|
| Democracy | 29 | Values, practices, governance |
| Sami | 21 | Language, The Sami school, culture, cultural heritage, indigenous |
| Identity | 13 | Individual identity, self image |
| Rights | 12 | Human Rights, minorities, Sami |
| Diversity | 11 | Community, unity, living together |
| Cultural heritage | 8 | Christianity, humanism, Sami, history |
| Norwegian | 5 | Language, cultural heritage, society |
| Citizenship | 4 | Democracy, rights and duties |

Discussion: Indigeneity, Multiculturalism and Common Cultural Heritage

The new 0-17 positions itself in a long tradition of emphasizing education for democracy in Norwegian common education; in fact, it strengthens this emphasis by highlighting democracy and citizenship as one of the main focus areas for all educational practice. Although in some subjects there is more weight placed on citizenship education than others, the particularity of the Norwegian and Nordic traditions is how democratic citizenship is regarded as part of the overall mandate to secure a broader human education (Huang et al., 2017). In this, the role of education in fostering democratic citizenship is interrelated to larger processes of identity and subjectivity. Throughout 0-17, there is a logical interconnection between 'belonging', 'identity' and 'diversity' in conceptualizing the democratic citizen. The text indisputably includes paternalistic statements such as: 'knowledge of our history and culture is important for developing identity and belonging for the pupil in society' (UDIR, 2017, p. 6). However, it is repeatedly stated that belonging is dependent upon recognizing society as fundamentally pluralistic, and acknowledging individual differences:

Schools should be sensitive to the diversity of pupils and facilitate experience of belonging in school and society for all. Everyone might experience feeling different. That is why we depend upon diversity being recognized and valued (UDIR, 2017, p. 6).

Such a perspective takes into account the insight from Hannah Arendt (1968) that true democracy depends upon recognizing diversity as the normal condition. It also seemingly softens the methodological nationalism that has been a tenacious feature of Norwegian citizenship education. However, there are clear anomalies in this conceptualization of diversity. The choice of wording reflects a tendency in Norwegian educational policy of applying the depoliticized 'diversity' rather than 'multiculturalism', which was more frequently used in earlier documents. According to Burner, Nodeland & Aamaas (2018), the term diversity is often viewed as positive and harmless. However, this 'celebration of diversity' might also serve to veil processes of racialization and othering, and 'diversity' is commonly reserved for matters pertaining to immigration. In O-17, diversity is highly individualized as part of our personal identities, and it is almost exclusively followed by statements of community and unity, such as the following one: 'All pupils should be able to develop their identity in a diverse community' (UDIR, 2017, p. 6). Difference is hardly associated with this, while 'unity' is the main connotation. This idea of diversity is not related to any idea of a collective or group identity, such as being part of an indigenous group, but rather represents the idea of diverse individuals living together in a society based on a set of core values. Together with diversity, democracy also appears as an uncontroversial concept, and is the term that occurs most frequently in the document. As Jore (2018) points out, the idea of being a champion of an exceptional democratic constitution is integral to Norwegian national identity. In O-17, democracy is conceptually connected with values and 'cultural heritage'. Values are partly presented as 'our values', and at one point identified as related to humanism and Christianity: 'The Christian and humanist heritage and tradition is an important part of the common cultural heritage of the country and has played a vital role in the development of our democracy' (UDIR, 2017, p. 6). Thus, on the one hand, democracy is presented as something universal and, on the other, is closely connected to the specific Norwegian national identity and history. This asserts a relationship between individual identity and citizenship formation and the acquisition of inherited norms and behaviours (Osler & Lybæk, 2014). However, although the idea of a shared cultural heritage as key to social cohesion in the nation state is still very much present, a more political conception of citizenship with some sensitivity towards the role of rights is also found: 'A democratic society rests upon how the whole population hold equal rights and opportunities to participate in processes of decision making' (UDIR, 2017, p. 9). This emphasis on rights within the conception of democratic practice and citizenship represents something new in O-17.

The strategy of indigenization is highly visible in the overarching framework document. In all paragraphs where the Sami are mentioned, the concept indigenous is also present, reflecting the strong interconnections between the development of an international juridical framework for indigenous peoples, and the legal status for the Sami in Norway (Gjerpe, 2017). The conceptualization of Saminess as such is thus intimately connected with indigeneity. This indigenization might enable a

recognizably indigenous space that works to culturally affirm indigenous people and practices (Nakata, 2006). The initial parts of O-17 affirm the existence of the Sami school by defining it thoroughly as all education that uses the Sami curriculum and is located within Sami management areas. In the statement of general values for education, one third of the paragraph is devoted to the Sami school, asserting that this education should be based on Sami values and culture, language and society. It furthermore describes the core content quite explicitly:

In Sami schools, it is important to have an all-Sami perspective and an indigenous perspective, and emphasize material and immaterial cultural heritage as traditional knowledge, *duodji*¹ and family relations (UDIR, 2017, p. 5).

This paragraph has highly interesting implications for citizenship and national identity. As it makes an intimate connection between Saminess and the Sami school, it aligns with the concept of recognizing different peoples within the nation-state (Kymlicka, 1995). To be Sami is to be a part of the Sami peoples or nation, which is fundamentally different from being a cultural or ethnic minority within the nation-state. The concept of peoples is the foundation of much indigenous politics and legal frameworks internationally; it also provides the foundation for the existence of the Sami parliament in Norway. On the one hand, it shifts power-relations, but it also challenges the Norwegian democratic system (Selle et al., 2015). Conceptualizing the Sami school also holds implications for who can be recognized as a 'Sami pupil'. Gjerpe (2017) points out that a tendency to dichotomize the Sami and Norwegian schools might reserve Saminess for pupils within Sami schools, which is problematic since probably more Sami pupils in Norway receive their education outside Sami management areas than within. While O-17 circumvents the absence or national silence that might be said to have permeated both curricula and textbooks throughout the 20th century (Folkenborg, 2008; Olsen, 2017), it also points to a quite specific concept of Saminess. Olsen (2010, p. 169) argues that the ideology of indigeneity might for some create an image of Saminess that is not matched by the cultural competence and everyday life of all Sami. However, according to Gjerpe (2018, p. 11), although the essentialising of cultural characteristics can create problematic dichotomies between the indigenous and the West, or the traditional and the modern, it must also be understood as a political coping mechanism. Strategic essentialism has also proven effective in obtaining recognition and formal rights.

Gert Biesta expounds the idea of democracy and pluralism in pedagogical terms, through his notion of citizenship education as subjectification. He contends that education should produce citizens with certain traits or identities. The only thing education can aspire to is making possible experiences of democratic agency here and now. In order for this to happen, all individuals must be allowed to 'come into being' as unique subjects in a world that is inherently pluralistic (Biesta, 2009, 2014). In this, there is no distinction between being a democratic citizen and the experience of being recognized as a subject. In relation to the nation, this resonates well with a concept of nationality connected to belonging and recognition (Erdal & Strømsø, 2018). However, this act of subjectification is mostly described on a philosophical level, and may well be complemented by indigenous perspectives on education. Indigenous research sheds light on how recognizing cultural differences and experiencing subjectivity in real life situations is always imbued with power

structures and cultural hegemony (Kuokkonen, 2008) that lead to Othering. Not everyone accesses subjectification on equal terms. In indigenous perspectives on education, reclaiming ownership of knowledge is a key concern (Pihama, 2016; Porsanger, 2004). This includes both emphasizing the epistemological or even ontological particularity of indigenous cultures, as well as decolonization of hegemonic knowledge and institutions.

The position of the Sami as citizen might also be conceptualized through the more conventional discourse on diversity and multiculturalism, which is concerned with identity as hybrid and dynamic: 'The theoretical and empirical work of multicultural scholars indicates that identity is multiple, changing, overlapping, and contextual, rather than fixed and static' (Banks, 2008, p. 133). It is possible to locate the Sami citizen, within this field of identifications, as a multicultural, Norwegian citizen with a Sami cultural identity. Although identity throughout the curriculum document is claimed to be anchored in history, culture and tradition (UDIR, 2017, p. 6), the overall concept of citizenship identity throughout the document has more affinity with a pluralistic and political understanding. Social coherence is here connected with participation. To belong is to take part in the diverse democratic community, and diversity is a resource for society at large. Human rights are set out as the foundation of a democratic society (UDIR, 2017, p. 5), although they are still intimately connected with the idea of 'common Norwegian values' and 'humanist and Christian heritage and tradition' as well as 'different religions and worldviews' (UDIR, 2017, p. 5). Rights are also positioned in relation to minorities and indigenous peoples in particular (UDIR; 2017, p. 9). This is commensurable with classic understandings of liberal multiculturalism, where different ethnic or cultural groups should be able to participate fully in the national civic culture while retaining elements of their own culture. The dominant culture of the nation-state should incorporate aspects of minorities' experiences, cultures and languages, ensuring civic equality (Gutmann, 2004). This view also opens for the possibility that national identity and citizenship might not always overlap. The cultural stereotypes of being Norwegian and being Sami are, in this perspective, not mutually exclusive positions. This is reflected in the initial text where ownership of the overall Education Act is defined as both Norwegian and Sami: 'The values in the Education Act are also Sami values' (UDIR, 2017, p. 6). Although they enable a flexibility in identities, a challenge with multicultural perspectives is that they might be blind to more unstated processes of epistemic hegemony. As Bhabha (1990) notes, cultural relativism manages cultural difference in relation to a normative centre, thus reinforcing a hegemonic culture. Indigenous perspectives might help reveal this, by pointing to the historically asymmetrical power-relations shaping the positionality of indigenous peoples that sometimes become invisible in the multicultural nexus. In the role of school in fostering citizenship identity, such power might be operationalized as epistemic violence. Majority epistemology thus becomes dominant, to the extent that it influences strategies of identity with minorities (Gramsci, 1971). Assimilationist policies were 'effective' in Norway to the extent of displacement and almost erasure of the Sami episteme (Kuokkonen, 2008). In this perspective, a focus on recognizing individual difference and plurality must take into account the structural aspects of positions such as the indigenous.

Researchers on indigenous education have pointed out that education must not only be concerned with the right of the indigenous to education on their own terms; there should also be mainstream knowledge about indigenous peoples and

minorities in the majority population (Olsen et al., 2017). It is often stated that the right of minority children to enjoy and practice their own culture is affirmed through the CRC article 29. Less focus is usually put on the fact that education should prepare all pupils for:

Responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (UN, 1989, article 29 d)).

Hence, it is possible to argue that if the school system does not provide adequate knowledge about Sami culture and history; this is a violation of the right to human rights education for all. This point has also been thoroughly made with regard to the right of all children to multicultural education as such, this right is not restricted to minority children (Osler, 2016). In line with this, O-17 states that all pupils must 'gain insight into the Sami indigenous peoples' history, culture, society and rights' and that they should 'learn about plurality and variation within Sami culture' (UDIR, 2017, p. 6). This also entails recognizing that all Sami and Norwegians are natives of the Norwegian nation-state. On the other hand, it is striking that O-17 simply speaks of knowledge and insight. Paragraph 1d in Article 29 of CRC must also be read in relation to paragraph 1b, which states the importance of developing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (UN, 1989). Thus O-17 can also be said to represent a depoliticised approach to the role of indigenous rights, and might serve to veil the workings of marginalization and power structures. The emphasis is on all pupils' right to knowledge rather than the right of the Sami for their rights to be respected. This also accentuates the importance of the principle of universality of human rights to be sensitive to unequal access to recognition.

As the Norwegian nation-state was built upon land inhabited by the Sami and deeply embedded within Sami culture and self-understanding, it impossible to talk about the Norwegian nation-state without including the Sami. Such a view is reflected in the shared cultural heritage perspective: 'The Sami cultural heritage is part of the cultural heritage in Norway. Our common cultural heritage has developed through history' (UDIR, 2017, p. 6). The idea of shared cultural heritage and placing the Sami cultural heritage within the understanding of Norwegian culture is inclusive in a mainstreaming perspective, but it is also ambitious. It demands that majority teachers have a high degree of cultural competence. In addition, it is positioned within the majority perspective, and this inclusion can also be seen as a way of communicating an asymmetrical relationship (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017). Research from Aotearoa/New Zealand has pointed to the risk of mainstreaming becoming 'whitestreaming', due to the majority lacking adequate knowledge (Olsen et al., 2017). Another version of this perspective is the notion of 'the perfect stranger'. Through perceived notions of universality and meritocracy, whiteness becomes the norm, and constructs the indigenous as the cultural Other. Denial of the role that whiteness plays in shaping majority teachers' lives, as well as the claim that they know little or nothing about indigenous peoples and cultures, provides a barrier to engagement with 'difficult knowledges' (Higgins, Madden & Korteweg, 2015). Changing stereotypes and working against oppression requires disruptive knowledge, not simply *more* knowledge (Kumashiro, 2002). This entails examining not only how some are Othered in society, but also how some positions are privileged. In this

regard, a highly interesting vision in curriculum document is the following: 'All participants in the school community must develop awareness about minority and majority perspectives' (UDIR, 2017, p. 9). However, in line with the descriptions of human rights and human rights education in both CRC article 29 b) and CDESCR article 13, it is nonetheless problematic that 0-17 simply applies the term awareness.

Concluding Reflections and Implications

This paper has located normative discourses on ideas about Sami, Norwegian and Sami-Norwegian citizenship identity in the most central policy document for the public school system for years to come. The new overarching curriculum follows a process of acknowledgment and institutionalization of Sami education. Hence, 0-17 from one perspective amounts to a significant achievement in the area of indigenous perspectives on education, knowledge and epistemology. A stronger emphasis on rights and a more political conceptualization of citizenship in 0-17, compared to earlier curricula, appears promising. The document also, to some extent, unties the obstinately held relationship between national identity and citizenship that has prevailed in the Norwegian educational system. Thus, it renders possible different positions on managing a Sami and Norwegian identity within the Norwegian nation-state. However hopeful and promising, several concerns are still raised concerning the nexus of education, citizenship and identity when studying the document.

While the document opens for a variety of discursive positions for citizenship identity, it does not escape the danger of telling a single story. Where mentioned explicitly, Saminess is quite unequivocally connected to indigeneity and the Sami school. Strategic essentialism related to ethno-nationalist mobilization has been vital to the Sami peoples' fight for recognition (Stordahl, 2001). Although the indigenous rights discourse has constituted dichotomist categories with primordialist connotations, claiming essentialist difference has been as much a strategic utterance as ontological position (Gaski, 2008). Identity groups may try to impose images on individuals, but also enhance individual freedom by helping individuals attain goals that can only be achieved through group action (Banks, 2008). The possible flipside of this is a ranking of Saminess, and issues of who can experience subjectification as Sami. The intensity, quality and content of a Sami identity as well as the connection to indigeneity might be very diverse among Sami individuals in Norway (Selle et al., 2015). There is a risk that a quite particular understanding of Saminess and the Sami school in the curriculum document might neglect Sami pupils who do not attend Sami schools. Another aspect of this is that if Sami culture and history is understood as mostly related to the Sami curriculum, the responsibility for telling Sami history is placed on the Sami community (Gjerpe, 2017; Osler, 2016).

As shown in the discussion above, indigenous perspectives might be complementary to traditional multicultural and democratic perspectives on pluralism. They shed light on how democratic processes perceived to be just do not always recognize or support all perspectives on equal terms. In addition, focusing on diversity might serve to depoliticize power dimensions related to the hegemony of the majority culture. In this perspective, it is vital not to reserve the indigenous perspective for the Sami school. An exclusivist indigenous position might reify the us/them opposition and carry it through as a necessary condition for learning. This paradox can be approached through the vision of the 'right to narrate' (Bhabha, 2003), and the importance of the inclusion of the particular stories within the collective. In indigenous studies, this narrative space has been conceptualized as the

'cultural interface'. Nakata (2006) argues that indigenous peoples must accept the reality that the great mediator between indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge is the ontology of the Western knowledge system. The focus should be on the cultural interface, which is:

A place of contradiction and tension, constant negotiation, which is the everyday lifeworld of many indigenous people. We may learn to accept ambiguity and contradiction as part of being Indigenous (Nakata, 2006, p. 272).

Importantly, this cultural interface implies that the collective indigenous narratives consist of multiple narratives rather than a single one, and this implies multiple subject positions in relation to the categories indigenous or non-indigenous (Olsen, 2018). Indigenous studies is not just the study of indigenous histories, cultures and issues, but also the study of how they have been studied, circumscribed and represented. This must, however, also include a sensitivity to current power structures providing access to recognition on unequal terms, and thus a focus on the responsibility of the majority to respect the rights of the Indigenous. This is complementary to the concept of subjectification, which is concerned with providing agency for the individual to seek independence from the current societal order (Biesta, 2009; 2014). It also accentuates the importance of recognizing not only the particularity of indigenous standpoints and identities, but also the construction of privileged ones.

As a finishing remark, it should be noted that although the goals in O-17 are optimistically progressive, they are also highly ambitious in terms of resources, competence and the political will to follow through. Stating that all pupils should gain insight into the diversity of Sami culture is a bold declaration in an educational system that so far provides mostly superficial or problematic knowledge of this area, if any. The visibility of Sami culture and indigenous perspectives is an important and powerful symbolic message (Gjerpe, 2017), but there is a real risk that it remains restricted to merely that. A substantial effort towards increased focus and competence among schools, teachers and learning materials is required. As the construction and negotiation of citizenship and national identities might happen in cultural interfaces, there is a need for shedding more light on the actual and complex processes taking place in these spheres. This is related to the empirical question of what kind of citizenship identities and understandings are emerging among pupils' lived experiences, or the experienced curriculum. An interesting avenue for further inquiry would be to look more deeply into the understanding of Saminess between both Sami and non-Sami pupils, not least outside the Sami school. This must also be accompanied by a strong sensibility to the subtle forms of prevailing colonialism taking place through more tacit knowledge communicated in school. Such tenacious processes might easily become overlooked in the visionary endeavour of formulating overarching values for education.

Notes

¹ Term denoting a range of traditional Sami handicrafts.

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