

Research articles

Indigeneity versus diversity

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Abstract

The article deals with the representation of the Sámi in the new national curriculum for primary and lower secondary education in Norway. More precisely, it focuses on a specific formulation in the fourth core element of the curriculum for religious education, in which an awareness of Sámi perspectives is presented as part of the diversity competence which pupils are supposed to acquire. Based on a critical analysis of governmental documents dealing with education it is argued that the term 'diversity' as it is used in the fourth core element addresses Sámi perspectives in a way that may induce readers to think of the Sámi as one of an increasing number of minorities in an originally Norwegian society. This implication, even if unintended, is highly problematic. It can be interpreted as a violation of both ILO 169, Article 31 and CRC, Article 29 (1), especially since the Sámi are a people indigenous to Norway.

Keywords

Human rights education, Sámi, indigenous people, curriculum, diversity, decolonisation.

Introduction

'The Norwegian state is founded on the territories of two peoples – the Norwegians and the Sámi' (Mellgren, 1997). This statement made by the King of Norway, Harald V, in opening the third Sámi Parliament in 1997, points at a fundamental feature of Norway: it is a nation consisting of and belonging to two peoples whose initial equality seems unquestionable. The history of the Norwegian state, however, is a history of two peoples of which one is the coloniser and the other the colonised.

Today the injustice inflicted on the Sámi people is acknowledged by the Norwegian government. In 1990 the Norwegian state ratified International Labour Organisation (ILO) convention 169—the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. Norway thus both recognised the Sámi as an indigenous people and acknowledged the state's responsibility to promote the full realisation of their social, economic, and cultural rights and to take measures to facilitate the revitalisation, maintenance and development of Sámi languages, culture, and traditions. Education plays a vital role in this process of decolonisation. Education policy documents, especially curricula, provide essential tools for building up a collective identity based on equality and mutual acknowledgement (Vesterdal, 2019). In Norway the process of decolonisation has had a short history compared to the long-lasting process of assimilation and humiliation of the Sámi. It is still the case that many Norwegians are unfamiliar with this part of Norwegian history and there is still a considerable lack of knowledge about Sámi history and culture. It is therefore important that Sámi history and Sámi issues are sufficiently represented in the curriculum. Furthermore, the way in which they are presented may be even more important. The severe humiliation and denunciation of the Sámi in governmental documents up to the 1960s (Andresen, Evjen & Ryymin, 2021) calls for great care and a complete lack of ambiguity whenever Sámi issues are dealt with in today's governmental documents. The choice of terms and formulations in those parts of the curriculum dealing with Sámi history, culture, and perspectives is therefore of particular significance. Against this background the article focuses on a specific formulation within the new national curriculum, which applies from 2020 (Norwegian Directory for Education and Training, 2020).

In the following I will discuss a passage in the new Curriculum for knowledge of Christianity, religion, philosophies of life and ethics (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2020), which is the curriculum for the subject of religious education (RE) in Norwegian primary and lower secondary schools. In all subject-specific curricula in the new national curriculum (Norwegian Directory of Education and Training, 2020), the most essential content, perspectives and methods are presented as core elements in the first part of the document. The RE curriculum contains five core elements: (1) Knowledge of religions and philosophies of life, (2) Exploring religions and philosophies of life using different methods, (3) Exploring existential questions and answers, (4) Being able to take the other's perspective, (5) Ethical

reflection. Indigenous perspectives are mentioned in the first core element and Sámi perspectives in the fourth. In the first core element, diversity is one of the topics in focus. It is mentioned in the immediate context of indigenous perspectives, but indigenous perspectives are not explicitly linked to diversity. In the fourth core element (Being able to take the other's perspective), however, Sámi perspectives are explicitly linked to diversity competence:

The subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included. Topics related to gender and functional ability are also included. (Norwegian Directorate of Education and Training, 2020, p. 3)

The categorisation of Sámi perspectives as diversity competence is highly problematic. The main objective of this article is to explain why.

Sámi history

The Sámi were living in Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie—an area which today covers substantial parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia—long before national borders were drawn. They have been present as long as any of the other peoples living in this area. From the middle of the 1600s, Danish-Norwegian kings' efforts to gain sovereignty over Sámi settlement areas led to an aggressive Christianisation of the Sámi. In Lutheran Denmark-Norway, in which the monarch was also head of the Church, the building of churches and Christianisation were effective ways of marking sovereignty (Henriksen, 2020). The Sámi were forced to dissociate themselves from their religion and, consequently, from an essential part of their culture. Practising Sámi religion was condemned as witchcraft and sorcery, and accordingly persecuted and punished. Sámi drums, which in addition to being key religious objects are expressions of Sámi culture, were either burned or confiscated (Hansen & Olsen, 2004; Rydving, 1993). During the 1700s the Sámi's basis of existence was more and more affected by tax regulations and other changes to the legal framework (Hansen & Olsen, 2004). At the same time, missionary work was mainly carried out in Sámi. Priests were supposed to preach in Sámi, spiritual literature and hymns were translated and in the beginning of the 1800s the process of translating the Bible into Northern Sámi was started (Henriksen, 2020). Thus, the missionary offensive led to a considerable strengthening of the Sámi language. This changed in the middle of the 1800s.

In 1814 Norway left the union with Denmark and entered a union with Sweden in which it had extensive internal political freedom. From 1850 to 1970, Norwegianisation was official government policy (Minde, 2003). More than one hundred years of forced assimilation of the Sámi into a culturally uniform Norwegian population resulted in the disparagement and near extinction of Sámi culture. Norwegianisation, which was pursued by both the Norwegian government and the Norwegian State Church, aimed to wipe out the Sámi religion, culture

and languages within the borders of Norway (there were similar processes in Sweden, Finland, and Russia). Norwegianisation meant that the Sámi had to disown their Sámi identity to avoid punishment, social exclusion, and shame (Minde, 2003; Eidheim, 1996). Many stopped using their Sámi language and considered it to be better for their descendants not to be recognised as Sámi or even to know they were Sámi. Boarding schools for indigenous pupils, a means of assimilation in many countries (Stavenhagen, 2015), were also established, separating Sámi youths from their families and cultural roots. Consequently, the natural process of learning and developing Sámi languages, Sámi culture and traditional knowledge was interrupted. This has led to the current situation in which the revitalisation of Sámi languages and culture must be safeguarded through national legislation and educational measures (Bull & Gaski, 1994; Lile, 2008, p.36).

The so-called Alta conflict, a controversy over the construction of a power plant in the Alta River, was essential to Sámi resistance against the government's Norwegianisation policy (Andresen, Evjen & Ryymin, 2021). It led to a massive people's movement in which Sámi and non-Sámi stood together. The Norwegian State's use of force to remove the protesters received massive international attention and was strongly criticised (Minde, 2008). The Alta conflict (1968 -1984) undoubtedly put Sámi indigenous rights onto the political agenda. In 1988, the right of Sámi citizens to secure and develop their language, culture and social life was included in the Norwegian constitution (§110 later changed to §108). With the Sámi Parliament, established in 1989, the Sámi people got their own political body. This meant that the right of indigenous people to participate in decision-making in matters concerning their own cultural development, language, and education—as laid down in ILO convention 169 and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Article 18) (United Nations, 2007) —became a reality for the Sámi in Norway. The ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention 169 (International Labour Organization, 1989) was adopted in 1989 and in 1990 Norway was the first nation to ratify it. The convention includes crucial obligations concerning Sámi children's right to an education that ensures they can maintain or regain and develop their Sámi identity. In accordance with the convention the Norwegian Education Act (1998) contains a specific section (§6) on Sámi education, which establishes Sámi children's right to receive education in Sámi and through the medium of Sámi. Curricula for instruction in the Sámi language and curricula for specific Sámi subjects are issued by the Sámi Parliament. Since 1997 new curricula are always published in both Norwegian and Sámi versions. The Sámi version is for use in the Sámi administrative area, which encompasses 13 municipalities where Sámi languages have the same legal status as Norwegian. It emphasises Sámi traditional knowledge and Sámi perspectives, and is also available in Norwegian. Even though there is still a long way to go, over the last 30 years essential measures have been taken to facilitate a revitalisation of Sámi language and culture (Andresen, Evjen & Ryymin, 2021).

Norwegianisation, however, not only affected the Sámi: it had a profound impact on the entire population. A devastating effect of Norwegianisation was the negative attitude towards the Sámi that was planted in the minds of everyone who grew up and lived in Norway. This was nurtured by the way in which the Sámi part of the population was treated by institutions, government officials and in schools, and how the Sámi were presented in government documents. Norwegianisation was a political program aimed at extinguishing the Sámi culture, the Sámi way of life and any Sámi consciousness through convincing not only the Sámi but also the Norwegian population that the Sámi were culturally and mentally underdeveloped. The prejudice that was officially spread and, over many decades, allowed to take root in the population takes time to eliminate (Lile, 2019b). This is a challenge many indigenous peoples face. Accordingly, a central claim in the ILO convention No. 169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention is that educational measures should be taken in order to eliminate prejudice. It is emphasised that ‘... efforts shall be made to ensure that history textbooks and other educational materials provide a fair, accurate and informative portrayal of the societies and cultures of these peoples’ (ILO 1989, Article 31). A corresponding claim is also found in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007, Article 15). Stavenhagen, the former United Nations Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, points out that inappropriate and disrespectful representation of their cultures in educational texts and materials has been a considerable problem for indigenous peoples in different countries (Stavenhagen, 2015). A critical analysis of the way in which Sámi perspectives are presented in the Norwegian national curriculum is therefore both justified and imperative.

Previous research and the concept of diversity

Decolonial critique in both indigenous research and research in general has raised questions concerning the way in which reality is presented in academic research and official documents. In her ground-breaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Smith casts light on the ways in which academic research is dominated by Western thought and how imperialistic perspectives influence research methods and contribute to maintaining established power relations (Smith, 2012). A central concern of decolonial approaches to education is how indigenous perspectives, values and cultural knowledge are or should be represented in teaching materials and curricula and taught about at school or university (e.g., Yumagulova et al, 2020; Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2018; Nutti, 2016). An overarching goal is to ensure that indigenous people are given the possibility to regain and develop their indigenous identity and dignity through education. One of the things discussed is whether the transfer of indigenous knowledge to indigenous students should mainly take place in indigenous-based schools or be integrated into mainstream education (Gjerpe, 2018).

In her comparative study of Norway and Aotearoa/New Zealand, Gjerpe points out that Norway—like Aotearoa/New Zealand—has established indigenous-based education within the national education system (the Sámi-based curriculum for use in the Sámi administrative area). However, most Sámi students attend mainstream schools. On this basis she argues that an indigenisation of mainstream education is essential—not only to ensure culturally appropriate education for Sámi students but also for non-Sámi students. Based on this perspective, the mainstream curriculum must satisfy the two criteria required by ILO 169: on the one hand it has to ensure that Sámi students get the possibility to gain Sámi cultural knowledge and develop their Sámi identity (ILO, 1989, Article 2,2(b); 27,1; 28,1; 33); on the other hand, it must ensure that all students learn about the Sámi and their culture (ILO, 1989, Article 5(a), 5(b); 31). The way in which the Sámi are represented in the national mainstream curriculum affects both Sámi students' self-image and the way in which non-Sámi students conceive the Sámi and their culture. This must be kept in mind when we discuss the specific passage in the RE curriculum.

Discussion of the curriculum's representation of the Sámi should be placed within a decolonisation discourse, not least since it concerns the relation between the Sámi and the non-Sámi parts of the population. The Norwegian studies of Andreassen and Olsen (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020b; Olsen & Andreassen, 2018; Olsen & Andreassen, 2016) and Eriksen (Eriksen, 2018) as well as the Swedish study of Svonni (Svonni, 2015) are examples of research on the representation of the Sámi or Sámi issues in national curricula. All these studies are related to the decolonisation discourse. The text passage in the fourth core element of the RE curriculum, however, categorises Sámi perspectives in terms of 'diversity competence' and thereby places them in a diversity discourse. Discussing Sámi issues from a diversity perspective means that the focus is on anti-discrimination and the empowerment of minority groups in general. The dimension of indigeneity is left out. Considering that the text passage in question addresses Sámi perspectives, this is problematic. There is good reason why international legislation singles out indigenous people as a group needing specific protection, as Wiessner underlines:

This *differentia specifica* of indigenous peoples, the collective spiritual relationship to their land, is what separates them also from other groups generally, and diffusely, denominated 'minorities', and what has created the need for a special legal regime transcending the general human rights rules on the universal and regional planes. (Wiessner, 2011, p. 129)

The fact that implementation of indigenous rights in Norway to a great extent is linked to the question of self-determination (Weigård, 2018; Henriksen, 2008) shows a fundamental difference between indigenous rights and human rights and highlights the context of

colonialism. To discuss representations of the Sámi in the curriculum within a diversity discourse, therefore, is incorrect. However, in order to better understand what is implied when the term diversity is used in national educational documents it is necessary to consider how the word has been used.

In Norway, 'diversity' (Norw. *mangfold*) is increasingly used in the field of education to describe the heterogeneity of a population (Åberg, 2020); the word has frequently occurred in political documents on education over the last decade. At the same time, the term and the way in which it is used has been subject to discussion. From a critical point of view, it has been pointed out that the term diversity casts a veil over a complex and challenging subject, its positive basic tone making it difficult to address specific challenges and subject them to critical discussion (Borchgrevink & Brochmann, 2008). With reference to a 2013-2017 national campaign called 'Competence for Diversity' (Norw. *Kompetanse for mangfold*), Westrheim & Hagatun (2015) point out the inadequacy of the term diversity in critical discussions on education in a multicultural society. According to their analyses it provides an overarching perspective on minorities that is defined by the majority, a perspective that makes the affected groups invisible. Åberg concludes in her study of the term in two main education policy documents that diversity is '... an unfit tool to conceptualise difference, and therefore to discuss equity and social justice in education.' (Åberg 2020, p. 169) Given the critical voices of these researchers, we see it is problematic to categorise awareness of Sámi perspectives as diversity competence and make questions on the relationship between the Sámi and non-Sámi population part of the diversity discourse.

However, there are other, less critical voices which consider diversity competence to be a term which is well-suited for discussions on multiculturalism and education. Røthing argues that diversity is a term which opens new possibilities. Accordingly, her approach to diversity is to provide a new definition. She considers diversity, or more precisely the term diversity competence that is used in the current RE curriculum, to be a concept which enables critical consciousness and reflections on power relations (Røthing, 2020). Referring to Røthing's conception of diversity competence, Olsen & Andreassen point to the inner variety of Sámi culture and identity and argue for an understanding of diversity that also covers this inner variety of being Sámi. In Røthing's and Olsen & Andreassen's approach diversity stands out as a term which, when filled with the right content, functions as a tool for promoting equity and social justice in education. Based on this approach the actual formulation in the curriculum ('Sámi perspectives are included. Topics related to gender and functional ability are also included.') may be read as an explanation of the term diversity competence, a more precise definition of the term being given by including a list of topics. However, the definition of diversity competence is only one part of the message conveyed. By categorising topics as diversity competence, the sentences inevitably also say something about these topics. In the

present study the focus is on what the text passage communicates about Sámi perspectives. The question that must be answered in the following is, therefore, what is the meaning of the text with respect to the Sámi and their perspectives.

Method

An answer to the question above must be based on an analysis of the text passage itself: 'The subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included.' The meaning of this passage, however, depends to a great extent on the meaning of the term diversity competence, and this meaning cannot be retrieved from analyses restricted to the use of diversity in this text. Since the national curriculum is a key governmental document on education, it belongs to a group of education policy documents which constitute a larger context, sharing the same technical terminology. Therefore, an examination of the meaning of diversity in the actual text passage must rely on analyses of the term in a wider range of official educational documents. These analyses focus on the meaning of texts, which, being part of governmental documents, construct a certain understanding of reality which is meant to be normative. Accordingly, Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003), based on a conception of texts as parts of social events, is a suitable methodological approach.

Fairclough points out that '... meaning-making depends upon not only what is explicit in a text but also what is implicit – what is assumed.' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 11). Implicitness is an essential feature in the curriculum text, given the fact that the Norwegian national curriculum is both a key educational steering document and, at the same time, meant to give working instructions to teachers. This means the curriculum is an ideological document meant to communicate the government's conception of education and society which, at the same time, must be of a limited size. In order to keep the text short, meaning-making cannot rest on explicit elements but must to a considerable extent rely on implications anchored in adjacent governmental texts, which are usually much longer. Consequently, how the term diversity is understood in the actual text passage in the curriculum depends on the meaning ascribed to the term diversity in contemporary governmental documents on education. According to Fairclough (2003), meaning is, among other things, the result of implications, assumptions, and semantic and lexical relations in texts. In the following analyses of governmental texts on education I will use Fairclough's discourse analysis approach to identify and explain the meanings of diversity in these texts. I will focus on logical implications, value assumptions, semantic relations between sentences and clauses, and internal semantic and lexical relations as measures of meaning-making.

Before analysing other governmental documents, we must take a closer look at the text-

passage in the RE curriculum itself: ‘The subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included.’ Applying Fairclough’s categories one can identify a positive value assumption of diversity competence: triggered by the presentation of diversity competence as an objective of RE lessons, diversity competence stands out as something desirable. One can also point to a logical implication concerning the term diversity itself. The fact that the term diversity constitutes the first part of the compound expression diversity competence implies that the meaning of diversity includes the notion that it is something that one must be enabled to handle. Accordingly, in the following analyses of governmental documents the focus will be on passages in which diversity appears to be something that must be handled.

Material

The governmental documents analysed consist of Official Norwegian Reports (Norw. *Norges offentlige utredninger*) (NOU) and White Papers (Norw. *Meld.St*) published by the Ministry of Education and Research from 2015 to 2018 which the database labels as ‘dealing with education’. Since this study focuses on diversity in the population as something that must be addressed, only documents that dealt with this issue were of interest. Therefore, searches were made by using the noun ‘diversity’ (Norw. *mangfold*) and the adjective ‘diverse’ (Norw. *mangfoldig*) in order to extract passages relevant to the research. The search resulted in the three Official Reports and five White Papers listed below. The document titles are presented in English with the original Norwegian text in brackets. Due to the lack of official translations for most of the documents many of the titles and quotes from the documents are based on my translation.

- NOU 2018:15: Official Norwegian Reports. Qualified, prepared and motivated. – A knowledge base of structure and content in upper secondary education and training (*Kvalifisert, forberedt og motivert — Et kunnskapsgrunnlag om struktur og innhold i videregående opplæring*).
- NOU 2017:2: Official Norwegian Reports. Integration and trust — Long-term consequences of high levels of immigration (Integrasjon og tillit. Langsiktige konsekvenser av høy innvandring).
- NOU 2015:8: Official Norwegian Reports. The school of the future. Renewing subjects and competences (Fremtidens skole. Fornyelse av fag og kompetanser).
- Meld.St. 4 (2018–2019): (White Paper). Long-term plan for research and higher education 2019–2028. (Langtidsplan for forskning og høyere utdanning 2019–2028).
- Meld.St. 25 (2016–2017): (White Paper). The humanities in Norway (Humaniora i Norge).
- Meld.St. 28 (2015–2016): (White Paper). Subjects and in-depth subject study – A renewal of the Knowledge Promotion Reform [Fag – fordypning – forståelse — En fornyelse av

Kunnskapsløftet].

- Meld.St. 19 (2015–2016): (White Paper). Time for play and learning. Improving the content in the kindergarten [Tid for lek og læring. Bedre innhold i barnehagen].
- Meld.St. 16 (2015–2016): (White Paper). From outsidership to a new chance. Coordinating adult learning [Fra utenforskap til ny sjanse. Samordnet innsats for voksnes læring].

Analysis and findings

In these eight documents, passages found to contain either the noun ‘diversity’ (Norw. mangfold) or the adjective ‘diverse’ (Norw. mangfoldig), referring to variety in the population as well as to something that must or should be addressed, were analysed. The aim of the analyses has been to identify meanings of the term ‘diversity’ that are relevant for understanding the term ‘diversity competence’, as used in the RE curriculum. Using Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis, three characteristics/features of diversity could be identified in most of the analysed texts: firstly, diversity is something that is increasing or has increased; secondly, diversity represents a challenge; and thirdly, diversity is linked to immigration.

The first mentioned feature of diversity is communicated both explicitly through the present and past participles *increasing* and *increased*, and implicitly through the adjectives *more* and *larger*, which due to their comparative forms express increase. The feature of diversity being a challenge is expressed explicitly only twice, once through the subject and once through the verb *challenge*. However, the implicit presentation of diversity as something that requires measures to be taken can be said to be strong, since it is based on quite clear logical implications: diversity is presented as something that needs to be handled—it creates a need for something or places greater demands on something. The third feature of diversity—that of it being a consequence of immigration—is mainly presented explicitly in the documents. Diversity is connected to immigration; either straightforwardly in the same sentence, in two paratactical sentences sharing the same subject, or in two paratactical clauses with an underlying causal relation between them.

The table below shows the specific occurrences in the eight governmental documents which were analysed. In the columns the occurrences within each of the NOUs and white papers are quoted, followed by the actual page number in the actual document. In cases where the same linguistic representation occurs several times in the same document, each page number represents a separate occurrence.

Table 1 Occurrences of *diversity/diverse* in eight education policy documents

	1.) Diversity as increasing or having increased	2.) Diversity as a challenge:	3.) Diversity as a consequence of immigration
NOU 2018:15	‘more diverse’ (pp. 41, 57, 204) ‘Larger diversity’ (pp. 114, 157) ‘increased diversity’ (p. 248)		
NOU 2017:2	‘increased diversity’ (pp. 16, 28) ‘more diverse’ (pp. 147, 166) ‘increasing diversity’ (p. 168)	‘... handling the challenges attached to cultural diversity’ (p. 16) ‘The Norwegian society’s ability to handle diversity ...’ (p. 24).	‘Cultural diversity and value-conflicts as a consequence of immigration ...’ (p. 16) ‘Immigration leads to increased diversity in society ...’ (p. 28) ‘...work immigration ... gives them a more diverse population to employ from.’ (p. 147) ‘Cultural and value diversity as a consequence of immigration ...’ (p. 168).
NOU 2015:8	‘larger diversity’ (pp. 8, 17) ‘increased diversity’ (pp. 19, 20, 21, 31, 50)	‘Social changes attached to ... increased diversity ... lead to the need for ...’ (p. 20) ‘Features of development such as increased diversity ... lead to the need for ...’ (p. 21).	‘the immigrants’ part of the population is presumed to increase. This contributes to an increased ethnic, religious and cultural diversity in the Norwegian society’ (p. 19).
Meld.St 4 (2018-2019)	‘increased diversity’ (pp. 26, 72)		‘We have got increased cultural diversity, and Norway has received many immigrants with competence that is valuable for the country.’ (p. 26) ‘In recent generations immigration to Norway has increased This is enriching and has brought about an increased diversity.’ (p. 72)
Meld.St. 25 (2016-2017)	‘increased diversity’ (p. 71)	‘A democratic society which is supposed to function in a global reality characterized	

	1.) Diversity as increasing or having increased	2.) Diversity as a challenge:	3.) Diversity as a consequence of immigration
		by ... increased diversity, must develop ...' (p. 71) '... in a time marked by diversity ..., it will not be possible to prepare for the future by '(p. 89).	
Meld.St. 28 (2015-2016)	'increasing diversity' (p. 6) 'more diverse' (pp. 6, 21)	'Society's increasing diversity and new forms of communication challenge the education system in different ways.' (p. 6)	
Meld.St. 19 (2015-2016)	'more diverse' (p. 26) 'increased diversity' (p. 39) 'larger diversity' (p. 43)	'Increased ethnic, religious and cultural diversity will lead to an increased need for ...' (p. 39)	
Meld.St. 16 (2015-2016)	'more diverse' (pp. 14, 29)	'A more diverse population makes higher demands on ...' (p. 14).	

The meanings carried by 'diversity' in these governmental education documents are that diversity is increasing, that it represents a challenge, and that it is a consequence of immigration. Accordingly, the term 'diversity competence' in the curriculum may be interpreted as referring to having enough knowledge, judgement, or skills to handle the challenge which diversity as the result of increased immigration represents. Including Sámi perspectives in this competence means putting them in conjunction with immigration, and the challenges caused by immigration. The formulation 'the subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included' may therefore easily lead to an understanding of the Sámi being one of an increasing number of minorities in an originally Norwegian society. This is also supported by Åberg's findings in her study of the conceptions of diversity in two of the same documents. Her conclusion is: 'The implications are that notions of Norwegianness and otherness are reproduced along cultural lines' (Åberg 2020, p.169).

Discussion

Fairclough's focus is on the social effects of texts, or more precisely on the social effects of meaning, because, as he points out, '... it is the meanings that have social effects' (Fairclough, 2003, p. 11). The social effects of the meaning of diversity competence in the RE curriculum

may be devastating, depending on how the text is interpreted by the people who read it and by their individual processes of meaning-making. Considering that erroneous immigration theories developed by Norwegian historians around 1850 wrongly stamped the Sámi as immigrants and both deprived them of their land rights and provided a foundation for defining them as culturally and intellectually underdeveloped, categorising awareness of Sámi perspectives as diversity competence may be considered to verge on a violation of the ILO convention's regulations. It even may be seen as a violation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) Art 29 (1) if we consider Sámi children in Norway (Lile, 2019a), and it communicates disrespect for the rights of the Sámi as an indigenous people of Norway. Lile points out:

Teaching respect for the rights of groups that are subject to prejudice in society is genuinely difficult. There is this attitude component attached to prejudice, that functions as a shield against information and new knowledge that can threaten that prejudice. (Lile, 2019b, p.160)

Prejudice against the Sámi is still a problem in Norway (Andresen, Evjen & Ryymin, 2021). Texts which present or discuss Sámi issues or perspectives should therefore be thoroughly scrutinised and formulated with precision and care, without any room for ambiguity. The way in which the majority school system addresses indigenous issues must respect the human rights of indigenous peoples and, in the context of the CRC Art 29 (1) (United Nations, 1989), there are concerns for human rights education in Norway.

The implications outlined above are not only to be found in governmental documents but also in public usage. An example is the name of a five-year national campaign (2013-2017) initiated by the Ministry of Education and Research—Competence for diversity (Norw. *Kompetanse for mangfold*). The evaluation report states: 'The aim of the diversity competence initiative is to enable staff in kindergartens and schools to support children, students and adults from minority backgrounds in such a way that, as far as possible, they complete their formal education' (Lødding, Rønsen & Wollscheid 2017, p.12). It can be logically inferred from the formulation 'complete their formal education' that the persons in question have not been living in Norway, where there is a statutory right to education. A logical implication is therefore that the children, students, and adults referred to are immigrants.

In public usage, the term diversity is not only connected to immigration but is also explicitly linked to integration. The name of the Directorate for Integration and Diversity (*Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet*) exemplifies public usage, especially since it is frequently mentioned in the Norwegian media. This organ is 'a specialist directorate, an administrative body and the national competence centre responsible for the integration field' and its key responsibilities include the resettlement of refugees and facilitating immigrant participation in the labour

force and in local communities (Directorate of Integration and Diversity, n.d). The connection between diversity and immigration implied in governmental documents and in public usage, together with the explicit connection between diversity and integration in official usage, justifies characterising the text in the fourth core element of the RE curriculum as a colonial approach. The concept of integration is contradictory to the aims of recognising and protecting the social, cultural, religious, and spiritual values and practices of an indigenous people and of respecting the integrity of their values, practices, and institutions (ILO 169, Article 5). These are obligations which the Norwegian state has bound itself to by ratifying ILO convention 169.

The impression of the RE curriculum's text's colonial nature is strengthened if we compare it to a formulation found in an official document from 1930. In his article on Sámi history, Pedersen (2015) draws attention to a category applied by the Central Bureau of Statistics in the 1930 census: 'Sámi and Kven – Citizens of other countries. Blind, deaf mute, imbeciles, and lunatics' [Samer og Kvener. – Andre lands statsborgere. Blinde, døvstumme, åndssvake og sinnsyke] (Central Bureau of Statistics, 1930). Keeping in mind that diversity in the analysed governmental documents is connected to immigration, the text in the fourth core element of the RE curriculum is alarmingly similar: 'The subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included. Topics such as gender and functional ability are also included'.

Conclusion

The main objective of this article has been to explain why the way in which Sámi perspectives are presented within the RE curriculum is highly problematic. In order to explain what the curriculum's categorisation of Sámi perspectives as diversity competence may communicate about the Sámi it was necessary to make visible the meaning of diversity in other governmental documents dealing with education. Based on an analysis of three NOUs and five White Papers I have argued that the text passage, 'the subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included', may induce readers to think of the Sámi as one of a growing number of minorities in an originally Norwegian society: this conflicts with the ILO 169 Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention. In addition, the study has drawn attention to the fact that the utmost clarity and unambiguousness in governmental documents and official usage are essential whenever Sámi issues are addressed.

A critical discussion of the text passage in focus has also a place in human rights education which, for Sámi children and young people, implies empowering them to regain and develop their own cultural identity and to exercise and rely on their own Sámi perspectives. The way in which Sámi perspectives are presented in the curriculum may play a significant role in either

supporting or counteracting this process. The formulation ‘the subject shall support pupils in developing diversity competence. Sámi perspectives are included’ is particularly relevant in this respect, since it is the only place in the core elements of the RE curriculum where the term *Sámi* is used, or the Sámi are explicitly mentioned.

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