Master's thesis in International Education and Development

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"Could you be the teacher now?"

- Sámi youth's experiences with education about Sápmi in Norwegian schools

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Abstract

This thesis explores how Sámi students following the Norwegian educational programme in school have experienced the education about Sápmi. The Norwegian education system has played a key role in the colonisation of Sápmi, which has had a devastating effect on Sámi communities and culture. At the same time, the education system is today commonly thought to be a core institution in the process of recognition and gaining equality for the Sámi population within Norway.

The empirical material of this thesis is based on five semi-structured qualitative group interviews of 13 young adults who identify as Sámi. Through the group interviews, the participants look back at their schooling between 1st and 13th grade to reflect on their perspectives of the education and their experiences of being Sámi in the classroom during the lessons.

The participants' dominating stories are experiences of teaching that is insufficient, distant, and stereotypical. Sápmi tends to be reduced in size, diversity, and relevance, while teaching about colonisation and contemporary structural oppression has been vague, avoiding, or non-existent. Some counter-stories of good experiences exist, but they are due to the effort of individual teachers and not representative for any of the participants' overall schooling experience. A direct link between the teaching content and the students' position in the classroom is drawn by the research participants. Stereotypes in the education led to an increase of micro aggressions, bullying and harassment during and after the lessons. Some research participants had experiences of erasure of the Sáminess in the classroom, while other participants had experienced being assumed to be a knowledge-holder, and sometimes even given the responsibility for the teaching.

This master thesis uses critical pedagogy and postcolonialism as theoretical lenses to understand the education from a marginalised point of view. With theoretical frameworks from post-colonial and indigenous scholars, colonial narratives in school as well as marginalisation happening in school are made visible through the stories of the research participants. Like Sápmi is being Othered through the narratives, Sámi students experience Othering and structural oppression by teachers and classmates through the lessons.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Sápmi is the North Sámi word for the homeland of the Sámi people, which are recognised as an indigenous people in Norway. Sápmi has experienced a process of colonisation where the Sámi territories have been divided between four countries. Sápmi spans from the northern parts of the Norwegian county Innlandet, all the way to the eastern tip of the Kola peninsula in Russia, including areas in the Northern parts of Sweden and Finland. Within Norway, Sápmi covers parts of, or all of, the counties Innlandet, Trøndelag, Nordland and Troms og Finnmark.

The Sámi people have been devalued as an inferior culture and suffered significant losses of culture, languages, and land. The Norwegian colonisation of Sápmi is in Norway commonly referred to as the Norwegianisation process. Like in many processes of colonisation around the world, schools played a key role in the Norwegianisation process. Sámi children were taken out of their home context, forbidden to talk Sámi languages in school and taught narratives that made Norwegian culture superior to Sámi culture.

Today, education is seen as an important strategy to build equality in Norway, in contrast to the educational system's historical role. Three aspects of schooling in Norway are relevant when looking at the educational system in relation to Sápmi. First, many Sámi students follow a Sámi educational programme. This is a programme made for Sámi students, and somewhat indigenised in the sense that Sámi representatives and institutions have contributed to the development of the programme (Gjerpe, 2017). The programme is most common in parts of rural Sápmi where a significant part of the population is Sámi (Gjerpe, 2017). Second, the Sámi students in following the Norwegian educational programme are entitled to Sámi language classes and culturally appropriate education (Gjerpe, 2018). Third, all students in Norway, regardless of ethnicity, are to learn about Sápmi through their primary and secondary schooling (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). Both the Sámi and the Norwegian educational programme states the importance of Sámi culture and history being integrated in all teaching and all subject in schools in Norway (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015a, 2017, 2022a).

In this master thesis, education about Sápmi in schools following the Norwegian educational programme are investigated through the perspectives of Sámi youth. When talking about education about Sápmi in the thesis, I refer not only to education about Sápmi as a territorial

area, but also education about the Sámi as a people and education about the Norwegian state's relation to Sápmi and the Sámi.

The research methods are inspired by indigenous methodologies. Sámi students hold alternative knowledges about the education that can give important contributions to a critical view on Norwegian schools, in line with indigenous scholar's call for indigenous perspectives on knowledge production (Smith [1999] 2012). Group interviews were done to reduce the position of the non-indigenous researcher, and as an acknowledgement of learning as a collective process. Critical pedagogy, post-colonial perspectives and theories from indigenous studies are applied to discuss the narratives in the teaching and the experiences of the participants.

The title of the thesis, "Could you be the teacher now?", is a quote from a participant that retells a meeting with a teacher in primary school. The title touches upon several central aspects of the thesis; how the teacher's awareness about and knowledge of Sápmi is understood by the participant, how the participants describe their teacher's abilities to take care of them as Sámi students, and how the Sámi students are positioned in the classroom. The perspectives of the research participants give valuable information on how the perspectives and knowledge in the teachings correlated with the participants' perspectives, as well as how the experiences of being Sámi during the teaching were.

1.2. Research questions

The aim of this master thesis is to provide knowledge about how students who identify as Sámi experience teachings related to their identity and the communities they are a part of, and how being Sámi in the classroom during these lessons are experienced. This leads to the following research questions:

1. How is the education about Sápmi, the Sámi and Sámi-Norwegian relations experienced by Sámi young adults?
2. How did the education about Sápmi correlate with the students' self-understandings as Sámi?
3. How may the participants' experiences with education about Sápmi be understood in context of the historical legacy and societal consequences of Norwegianisation?

1.3. Structure

The first chapter is a general introduction where the thesis with necessary context and research questions is presented. The relevance and research gap is also addressed in this chapter.

In chapter two I continue with the context necessary for the reader to follow the thesis. I first present Sápmi and the Norwegian state's to relations to Sápmi in a historical and contemporary perspective, with an emphasis on the school's role in the colonial process. Following this, an introduction to the global and national situation for indigenous students before the Norwegian educational context is presented.

In chapter three, previous research is presented. An introduction to what we know about the quality of the education about Sápmi is followed by a presentation of what we know about being Sámi in school.

Chapter four presents the theoretical framework used for the thesis. I place myself within a field of critical pedagogy, post-colonial studies and indigenous research, and will go through relevant theories used in later discussions.

In chapter five I present the methods used to get the empirical material. Methodological choices are described and accounted for, the research participants are presented and ethical considerations are discussed.

The sixth chapter makes the first of two chapters where the empirical material is analysed and discussed. The chapter explores the experiences the participants had with the content of the education, including which narratives were created during the lessons.

In chapter seven, the empiric material on how the participants experienced being in class is presented. Othering, micro aggressions, and identity-based bullying and harassment is addressed, and paths to a dignity safe space for Sámi students in classrooms will be discussed.

In chapter eight, I return to the research questions to discuss the findings of the thesis. I end with a conclusion of the thesis.

1.4. Significance and research gap

The indigenous researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) has taught me that indigenous people too often have been made into objects in research. Indigenous peoples have not had their

voices heard, had their perspectives twisted, or their agency have been ignored. While there has been research done on how the education about Sápmi is done in Norwegian schools from the perspective of the teachers (f. ex Lile, 2011, Røthing, 2017a, Sæther, 2021, Kavli 2019), little has been done to make visible the Sámi students' perspectives of this education. Indigenous scholars have lifted the importance of listening to indigenous counter stories to colonial narratives (Fjellheim 2020, Smith 2012). This master thesis will provide knowledge in how Sámi students perceive the perspectives of Sápmi that they have gotten presented during their primary and secondary education. The research participants hold valuable positional and experience-based knowledge on how the education correlates to their self-understanding as Sámi. By exploring the differences in understanding, narratives and structures of power can be unveiled and analysed. This knowledge is useful both for achieving general goals of schooling in Norway, such as working against discrimination and for democratic values (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2015a), but also to improve the education about Sápmi for both Sámi students and other students in Norwegian schools.

Second, the master thesis will provide necessary knowledge of the position of Sámi students in the classroom during this teaching. There is some qualitative research that shows an over-representation of experienced bullying and discrimination among Sámis (e.g. Hansen, 2011, Bals, Turi, Skre & Kvernmo, 2010, Hansen & Skaar, 2021), but this research does not look at the connections between teaching and racial discrimination. The knowledge will give perspectives on how marginalising patterns work in school, and how they might become triggered when Sápmi is addressed. Narratives about Sápmi in the teaching affect whether students are experiencing erasure or Othering during the teaching. The importance of considering Sámi students' specific vulnerability of racial discrimination, identity-based bullying and internalised racism will be addressed, and dignity safe spaces will be discussed. This will provide knowledge about how oppressive patterns towards Sámi students are repeated in school, knowledge that is essential when working towards a school free of structural discrimination.

Chapter 2: Context

The colonisation of Sápmi and the Norwegianisation policies affect both the school history of Norway and Sámi students in school today. To get a better understanding of the context of Sápmi today and Sámi students, I present the historical and contemporary context of Sápmi as well as the educational frames of Sámi students. A short summary of what Sápmi is starts the context chapter. A historical perspective goes through the Norwegianisation process, where the education system had a central role in the implementation process of state policies, and how this led to racialisation of and racism towards the Sámi people. I follow this up with a part on how resistance has led to recognition and pride of Sámi identities. The second subchapter presents indigenous students' situation, first in a global and then a national perspective. Third, a current educational context, rights and frameworks for Sámi students following the Norwegian educational programme today.

2.1. Sápmi

There is assumed to be between 60.000 - 70.000 Sámis living in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia today, where approximately 40.000 of these are on the Norwegian side of the country borders (Gjerpe, 2018, p. 6). The Norwegian state recognises the Sámi people as an indigenous people through the signing of ILO 169, The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, as well as in the Norwegian constitution. This is a recognition of historical and current geographical areas of Sápmi, as well as a recognition of Sámi culture and language (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018).

The Sámi people is divided into several cultural-linguistic groups. Sápmi on the Norwegian side of the land borders has historically been divided into six different language areas. The Sámi languages are Finno-Ugric languages and not related to Norwegian or any other Indo-European language (Berg-Nordlie & Andersen, 2022 p. 32). Today three of the languages, Pite Sámi, Ume Sámi and Skolte Sámi, are extinct on the Norwegian side of the border (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2022). The three Sámi languages currently spoken in Norway are South Sámi, Lule Sámi and North Sámi, with the latter being the dominant Sámi language (Eberhard et al, 2022, Berg-Nordlie & Andersen, 2022).

Sápmi is also known as Sábme in Lule Sámi or Saepmie in South Sámi, the two other officially recognised Sámi languages in Norway. I have chosen to use the North Sámi word

Sápmi because it appears to be both the most used term within Sami communities and the most well-known term outside of the Sami population. A weakness with this approach is that the Lule Sámi and South Sámi words are consequently excluded from the general description about Sápmi. An alternative would be to consequently use Sápmi / Sábme / Saepmie, but I have chosen to use only one term to better the readability of the text. For places within Sápmi, I use the name of the place as given in the local Sámi language, with the Norwegian name in parenthesis when needed.

Due to colonisation, many Sámis do not speak any Sámi language (Berg-Nordlie & Andersen, 2022). This makes an important cultural division within Sámi organising. Other important cultural divisions within Sápmi are between interior and coastal Sámis, and between Sámi traditional industries such as fishing and reindeer husbandry.

In the thesis, I often use Sámi and Norwegian as two ethnic categorisations, where Norwegian refers to the dominant ethnic group in Norway. Using "Norwegian" as an ethnicity contrary to a Sámi ethnicity is commonly done in matters of indigenous issues in Norway. This can be problematic since Norwegian also might refer to citizenship or national identity. The use of Norwegian as an ethnically different group than Sámis is not in any way indicating that Sámis are not a part of the diversity of a multicultural Norway, or that Sámis cannot identify as Norwegians by virtue of being from Norway or being Norwegian citizens.

2.1.1. A history of racism and Norwegianisation

The colonisation of Sápmi was a gradual process. Historically there are various examples of Sámis and Norwegians living within the same areas or in neighbouring areas as more or less equal peoples (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020), but these dynamics changed particularly during the 18th and 19th century. During the 18th century, missionaries started arriving in Sápmi in a more organized manner than earlier. Participation in school became mandatory, which included Christian worship ceremonies (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). The arrival of missionaries reduced the possibilities of practicing the Sámi religion through for example prohibiting drums used in ceremonies (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). The national land borders of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia got drawn through Sámi areas, dividing people that spoke the same language, shared reindeer pastures and traded between each other (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020, Nergård, 2019). This led to an increased vulnerability for Sámi communities (Nergård, 2019, p. 114).

A social Darwinist understanding of race and ethnicity was strongly influencing European politics during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century. Biological explanation models of human races defined racial hierarchies with superior and inferior races, which were used to legitimise imperialism and colonialism. In a Nordic context, the racial hierarchy placed the Norwegians above the Sámis, with the understanding of the Sámi people as more primitive and less intelligent (Kyllingstad, 2012, Fjellheim, 2020). A racism that disfavoured the Sámis in favour of the Norwegians emerged, argued through both biology and culture. Sámis were understood as having a lower biological development and as having an inferior culture, including among academics and decision makers (e.g. Andreassen & Olsen, 2020, Fjellheim, 2020, Kyllingstad, 2012, Evjen, 1997, Larsson, Cubrilo, Larsen, Schanche & Varsi, 2017).

During the 19th century, the Norwegian state implemented an active policy to eradicate Sámi culture. The concept of a cultural nation, with one language and culture, had a significant influence in parts of Northern and central Europe during this time period (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2014, p 99). Norway went through a nation-building process where the national unity was strengthened (Østerud, 2015), and a wave of Norwegian nationalism became culturally influential, seeking independence from the union with Sweden (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2014). Language skills in Norwegian were understood as a central indicator of loyalty towards the Norwegian state, and a key factor for participation in society (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2014).The introduction of the Norwegianisation policy represented a shift in the colonising pattern from making Sámis Christians to making Sámis Norwegian (Keskitalo & Olsen 2021). In 1851, the Norwegian state established *Finnefondet*, a fund for changing Sámi and Kven language and culture (Minde, 2003). From 1902, "The land sale law" (Jordsalgsloven) prevented ownerships of land to anyone that did not speak, read and write Norwegian and used the language on a daily basis (Bull, 2011, Nergård, 2019, p. 120).

The policies were argued to be beneficial for the well-being of the Sámis. The Norwegian politician and later prime minister Johan Sverdrup stated in 1863 that *"The only salvation for the Laps is that they are absorbed in the Norwegian nation»* (NOU, 2016:18 p. 54). Ideologically these policies were based on a view of a modern national state with one people, one language and one nation. The cultural traits of minority groups were considered in conflict with a homogenous, united, and modern nation (Lien, 2017). This meant that the Sámis as indigenous groups, as well as the Kvens, a national minority, were meant to "become Norwegian". They were meant not only to learn and adapt Norwegian language and culture, but also to forget their own languages and cultures (Niemi, 2017).

Parallel with the devaluation of Sámi culture, Sámis were also understood as "exotic". This is most clearly illustrated by living exhibitions of Sámi families or individuals taking place in different locations in Europe and North America (Baglo, 2011). Although these exhibitions might have included a form of colonial appreciation of another culture, the exhibitions dehumanised the Sámis participating in the exhibitions (Baglo, 2011).

The policies of Norwegianisation lasted officially until 1959 (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). While the Norwegianisation as a state-initiated process is usually dated as policies taking place from the 1850s and until the 1950s, the process of colonisation can be understood as a longer process, stretching at least from the missionaries' arrival in the 17th century and lasting longer than the ending of the official policies, for example with assimilation through compulsory schooling (Gjerpe, 2018). The rebuilding of Norway after the Second World War included an idea of a welfare state based on an ideology of equality. In this ideology of equality, differences of social, economic, or ethnic characteristics were seen as opposed to a modern, united nation with wealth and economic development. Sámi culture and traditions were associated with poverty and stagnation and did not match the idea of the modern and equality-based welfare state (Lien, 2017).

2.1.2. The role of schools in the Norwegianisation process

The education system played a key role in the implementation of the Norwegianisation policy (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). Schools in Norway have had a severe impact in both Sámi pupils dramatically reduced possibilities to learn and to develop the Sámi languages and literacy, and to learn about Sámi culture, tradition, and knowledge on Sámi terms. In addition, textbooks have made a significant contribution to the nation-building process in Norway (Vollan, 2015). Between 1889 and 2000, all textbooks needed to be approved by the state (Vollan, 2015, p. 180).

In 1880, «Instrux for Lærere i de Lappiske og Kvænske Overgangsdistrikter i Tromsø stift», an instruction for teachers in Sámi and Kven areas was implemented in Northern Troms and Finnmark. This instruction represented a dramatic change in the education system in Sámi areas, where Norwegian was to be the only language of instructions. Textbooks that previously had been produced both in Sámi and Norwegian, were now only printed in Norwegian (Niemi, 2017). Although Sámi as a language of instruction was allowed in cases

of necessity, the language instruction clearly stated that this was not desirable (Nergård, 2019). A teacher in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) had to leave his position because he used Sámi as a language of instruction (Nergård 2019 p.116).

From 1905, an extensive introduction of boarding schools introduced a new school reality for Sámi children (Nergård, 2019). Norwegianisation was a central stated motivation for the establishment of boarding schools, as the language instructions were not by themselves considered "efficient" enough to Norwegianise the Sami and the Kven population (Nergård, 2019). The first boarding school were placed in Neiden, an area with primarily Skolt Sámi and Kven population (Nergård, 2019). Most of the boarding schools were establishes in Finnmark, but a boarding school was also established in the South Sámi area in 1910 (Berg-Nordlie, 2021b). The manager of education in Finnmark from 1923 to 1933, Christen Andreas Brygfjeld, argued that a Norwegianisation of the Sámis were a prerequisite for further development of the Sámi population. *"It (the Sámi people) had no abilities to on their own rise to a higher level of culture without the path through Norwegian language and Norwegian culture. They are hopeless and belong to Finnmark's most backward and wretched population and provide the largest contingent from here to our mental asylum and mentally retarded schools."* (Brygfjeld in Tjelle, 2000 p. 15, my translation)

Many Sámi students were not allowed to speak Sámi at the boarding schools, including during their spare time, and teachers were prohibited from using the language (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). A former student at Karlebotn Internat, a boarding school in Nesseby, tells how he experienced systematic discrimination of Sámi children at school compared to their Norwegian peers (Tjelle, 2000). Most of the teachers at schools with Sámi students were Norwegians with little or no knowledge of Sámi culture or the local context (Jensen, 1990). Some of the teachers at the boarding schools did not know in advance that most of the students did not understand Norwegian and had no educational training in how to deal with these challenges (Tjelle, 2000). The boarding schools increased the distance between language and culture in school and at home, as well as limiting the possibilities of learning language, culture, and indigenous knowledge at home. The prohibition of Sámi languages in school lasted until the ending of the Norwegianisation policy (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020).

In recent years, the boarding schools has been repeatedly criticised as a colonial strategy of assimilation and for its negative effects on Sámi culture, language and identity (Nergård, 2019, Niemi, 2017). Nergård (2019) argues that the boarding schools had a devastating effect on Sámi communities, including having a central role in the disappearance of the North Sámi

language in many Costal Sámi areas and the Skolt Sámi language in Neiden. Many Sámi children developed a destructive self-identity, as a rejection of everything Sámi also is a rejection of them as Sámi (Nergård, 2019). Other scholars have argued that boarding schools did not contribute significantly to the Norwegianisation process (Niemi, 2017). The boarding school had an effect as a meeting point for Sámi students, which may have contributed to a form of community building and shared Sámi identity making. The practices also varied from school to school, which made the negative effects greater in some schools than in others. Boarding schools that had less of a Norwegianising role must be understood as having that despite of state policies. Regardless of how central the boarding schools are considered as a contributor to Norwegianisation, the state policy of changing school childrens' identities from Sámi to Norwegian is a violation by itself (Nergård 2019).

2.1.3. Consequences of Norwegianisation

The Norwegianisation process had devastating consequences on Sámi individuals, families and communities all over Sápmi. The Norwegianisation process changed many Sámi individuals' feelings towards being Sámis, and shame made many Sámis hide their Saminess (Minde, 2016). In Kvænangen in Troms, the percentage of inhabitants stating a Sámi or Kven identity in the Norwegian Census changed from 50 % in 1930 to 2 % in 1950 (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). Many Sámi parents and grandparents, particularly in coastal Sámi areas, hid Sámi language, culture and identity from their children and grandchildren.

The process took different shapes and had different consequences in different parts of Sápmi. In the Southern and Coastal areas of Sápmi, Norwegianisation had particularly hard effects on Sámi communities. Norwegianisation started earlier in South Sámi areas and along the coast than in the inland north and effected language and culture in an earlier stage (Johansen, 2019, p.34, Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). The Pite, Ume and Skolte Sámi languages disappeared as a home language on the Norwegian side of the state borders, South Sámi and Lule Sámi got severely reduced in usage and number of speakers and several coastal dialects of North Sámi disappeared (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020, Eberhard et al, 2022, Andersen, 2003). Today, the part of the population that has Sámi descendance does not speak any Sámi language in large areas of South Sápmi and along the coast (Berg-Nordlie 2021a). The Norwegian state has left a division in the Sámi population between those who had their language and culture taken from them due to Norwegianisation, and those who managed to preserve their language and

culture (Berg-Nordlie 2021a). Today, a specific form of North Sámi rural culture from innland Finnmark has gotten a hegemonic position within Sápmi in defining what the Sámi means (Gjerpe, 2017), erasing a bigger diversity of what Sámi culture is and what it means to be Sámi.

The Norwegianisation policy also had long-lasting damages considering Sámi students' possibilities of having Sámi as a language of instruction is schools, of learning to read and write in Sámi or to learn Sámi for those students who did not have the possibility to learn it at home Boarding schools made knowledge from home or communities more difficult to be taught to the next generation, and many Sámis therefore lost traditional or local knowledge (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). The Sámi religion disappeared in its pre-Christian shape (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). In addition, territorial conflicts worsened the conditions for reindeer husbandry, a traditional livelihood in parts of Sápmi (Fjellheim, 2020).

The consequences of the Norwegianisation polity continues to affect Sápmi today Racism towards Sámi persons is commonly experienced in Norway (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). Nergård (2019) has criticised public institutions for meeting Sámi people in their daily life without having the necessary knowledge in Sámi languages or an understanding of Sami culture in meetings with Sámi inhabitants. Discrimination against Sámis are frequently reported in various surveys. A 2019 survey in Troms and Finnmark showed that 1 of 3 Sámi persons had experienced discrimination, where the majority gave "ethnicity" as the reason (Melhus & Broderstad, 2020). A 2021 survey showed that among young Sámi persons, only 5,2 % answered that they never met prejudice for being Sámi while almost 60 % answered "often" or "very often" (Hansen & Skaar, 2021). A survey done among members of Sámi organisations from 2019 showed that 65 % of the respondents had experienced condescending comments and 53 % had experienced hateful comments within the last year (Fladmoe et al, 2019).

2.1.4. Resistance and recognition

The Norwegianisation process has been met with resistance from Sámi movements and communities. A well-known example is the Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) rebellion, taking place in 1852. The first Sámi congress in Tråante (Trondheim) in 1917 marks the beginning of a more organised Sámi rights movement that had representation from various parts of Sápmi. The congress was initiated by Elsa Laula Renberg, an important pioneer in organising

a movement for the rights and interests of Sámis. On the agenda was the school situation for Sámi children and the conditions for reindeer herders (Lien, 2018).

During the 1980s, the Sámi movement protested the planned building of a hydroelectric power station in the Álttá (Alta) / Guovdageaidnu River together with environmental activists. Both reindeer pasture areas, fishing spots and the Sámi village Máze (Masi) were planned within the dammed area. Although the hydroelectrical power station was built, the massive mobilisation both saved Máze and lead to an increased focus on Sámi rights. (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020).

The Álttá / Guovdageaidnu mobilisation gave the Norwegian state negative publicity both nationally and internationally (Lien, 2017). The mobilisation led to a series of legal recognitions of the Sámi people as the indigenous population in Sápmi. The official recognition of the Sámi languages South Sámi, Lule Sámi and North Sámi as official languages came in 1987. In 1988 Norway included a paragraph in the constitution that recognised the Sámis as an indigenous people in Norway, and in 1989 Norway ratified the ILO Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal People (Niemi, 2017). The recognition of the Sámis as an indigenous people in Norway also meant recognising Sámi rights to culture, language, and territories (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). The Sámi Parliament opened in 1989.

From the 1980s until today, a blossoming of Sámi cultural expressions has taken place, both through Sámi musicians with commercial success and through the many Sámi cultural centres around Sápmi (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). The Sámi conference in Helsinki in 1992 declared the 6th of February as the Sámi National Day (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). This day has been an important tool to rebuild Sámi pride, create awareness on Sámi issues and celebrate Sámi culture and traditions. Visible Sámi expressions can be understood as an action of Sámi resistance, as unequal power relations between Norwegians and Sámis had made Sámi a home culture and home language and stayed for many hidden in the public sphere (Minde, 2003).Younger generations are reclaiming Sámi culture, traditions, and languages that their parents, grandparents or great grandparents have hidden. Areas heavily affected by Norwegianisation, such as South Sámi, Lule Sámi, Marka Sámi and Coastal Sámi areas, have gotten a strengthened Sámi visibility and presence. The reclaiming and work to strengthen the Sámi languages has played an important role in a collective Sámi identity building and the building of a Sámi movement (Seurujärvi-Kari, 2011).

2.2. Indigenous students

Indigenous students have the right to an education that is culturally appropriate for them, free of discrimination. The UN declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has a right to an education that is "*directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups*" (United Nations, 1948, article 26). The right to equal opportunities in education is also stated in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989, article 28). Indigenous students are however less likely to succeed in school than their non-indigenous peers (OECD, 2017), risks meeting racism and discrimination in school (Bodkin-Andrews, O'Rourke, Grant, Denson & Craven, 2010, Sharif et al, 2021, Fowler & McDermott, 2020) and are more likely to meet perspectives in school that differs from the knowledge their families or communities have (Breidlid, 2013, Salinas, 2020). In many cases, historical injustice towards the local or national indigenous groups is not addressed or not addressed sufficiently (e.g. Bellino, 2016, Reynolds, 2000).

2.2.1. Indigenous students in an international perspective

ILO 169, The Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, states that indigenous peoples have the right to participate in the shaping of educational platforms (Olsen & Andreassen, 2018). The convention is signed by 23 countries around the world. However, indigenous experiences from around the world witnesses of educational systems still influenced by coloniality, assimilation and state monocultural ideologies (Keskitalo & Olsen, 2021). Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar (2010) argue that the global problem of indigenous students not getting culturally appropriate education can be seen as a crime against humanity.

There are various studies from around the world, both on an international level (OECD, 2017) and on national levels and both from the Global North and the Global South, showing that indigenous students are less likely to succeed in school. If you are indigenous in Guatemala, for example, you are more likely to live in poverty and less likely to access post primary education than non-indigenous Guatemalans (UNPD, 2012). In Australia, a study shows that

even though some indigenous students do well in school, indigenous students did in average score lower on literacy skills in primary school. Indigenous students also tended to be more absent from school. (Australian Government, 2016)

Australian research also shows that indigenous students experienced racial discrimination as a major barrier to achieve their schooling goals (Bodkin-Andrews et al, 2010, Sharif et al, 2021). A Canadian study showed that racial discrimination and structural racism contributed to a higher school absence among indigenous students (Fowler & McDermott, 2020). Indigenous students in Canada often see education as a possibility to improve life quality for themselves and their communities, but often meet an education that does not reflect their identity and experiences (Battiste, 1998).

Topics within the curriculums of history and social sciences are often tightly connected to suppression and injustice towards the indigenous population but is often not addressed as historical injustices and structural oppressions. Bellino (2016) addresses the "lack of historical memory" in Guatemalan school, which includes an unwillingness to address the structural oppression against the indigenous population. Reynolds (2000) addresses the same tendency in Australia, where colonisation and indigenous history is excluded from the teaching about Australian history.

2.2.2. Education for Sámi students

ILO 169 gives Norway certain responsibility when it comes to education for Sámi students. "*The Sámis in Norway have a status as an indigenous people according to the ILO convention. The Constitution stipulates that the state shall create conditions for the Sámi to secure and develop the Sámi language, culture and social life, which is followed up in the Education Act.*" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017, p 2, my translation). This means that Norway has committed to a school that works towards reversing some of the consequences that the Norwegianisation process had on Sámi languages and culture. Norway has also committed through ILO 169 to give culturally appropriate education to Sámi students (Gjerpe, 2018 p. 7). Teachers have an obligation to preserve the rights of Sámi students (Olsen, Sollid & Johansen, 2017).

The definition of who is a Sámi student is somewhat unclear. Norway does not register ethnic identities in their censuses, and there is not a legal definition in Norway who define Sámi individuals (Berg-Nordlie, 2021a, p. 3). In the Education Act, a Sámi is defined as a person

that qualifies to register in the Sámi Electoral Registry, or that has parents that are entitled to register (Gjerpe, 2018) . The criteria of the Sámi Electoral Registry is to self-identify as Sámi and either have Sámi as your home language, or have parents, grandparents or great grandparents that had Sámi as their home language, or have parents that are registered in the Sámi Electoral Registry (Berg-Nordlie, 2021a). The Sámi Electoral Registry must however not be understood as a definition of who is Sámi or not, as it is not meant as a complete Sámi registry (Berg-Nordlie, 2021a). Gjerpe (2018) points out that the term "Sámi students" are sometimes also used to refer to all students that follow the Sámi educational programme, regardless of whether they or their parents qualify for Sámi electoral rights.

Education for indigenous students were absent or ignored in school policies between 1959 and until 1970 (Keskitalo & Olsen, 2021). Sámi students in Norway now study through two different educational programmes: The Sámi educational programme and the Norwegian educational programme. The first version of the Sámi educational programme was introduced in 1997 (Keskitalo & Oslen, 2021). Important work from the Sámi movement has been done in pushing for a Sámi educational programme built on Sami culture and with Sámi as languages of instructions (Keskitalo & Olsen, 2021). The Sámi educational programme can also be argued to be an indigenisation of schools, meaning that the schooling changes towards being on the premises of the indigenous population (Gjerpe, 2018) .

Many Sámi schools are in rural areas that are inaccessible for many, and most Sámi students are therefore spread out in schools following the Norwegian educational programme (Gjerpe, 2017). Gjerpe (2018) defines two models for Sámi education for Sámi students in following the Norwegian educational programme: The schools that offer Sámi language lessons, and the schools that offer Sámi as a language of instruction in at least some classes. The possibilities of Sámi students following the Norwegian educational programme to learn about Sámi culture, knowledge and language has had a lower prioritizing than the Sámi educational programme, and Gjerpe (2018) estimates that the majority of self-identified Sámi students in Norway do not follow the Sámi educational programme nor have Sámi classes in school.

The right and possibility to have classes in Sámi languages in school have been an important claim from the Sámi movement, and an obligation the Norwegian state has towards an indigenous people. Students with Sámi as their first language have had the rights to have Sámi language classes in school since 1969, and the right to have Sámi as the language of instruction since 1985 (Hirvonen & Balto, 2008). The Norwegian Education Act § 6-2 grants all Sámi students within Sámi districts the right to have South Sámi, Lule Sámi or North Sámi

language classes in schools, and to have Sámi as a language of instruction (Opplæringsloven, 1998). The rights are somewhat restricted outside of Sámi districts, where you need to be at least ten students to start a physical Sámi language class or a class with Sámi as a language of instruction, and at least six students to continue the arrangement. Due to being too few Sámi students in school to start classes, many Sámi students have digital classes. You can have the Sámi languages as a first or as a second language in school. Outside of Sámi districts you would most commonly either have the Sámi lessons in addition to the classes that non-Sámi students have, or you would lose time in other subjects (Nutti, 2014).

2.3. Educational rights and framework

Norwegian schools have both legal responsibilities to be safe for Sámi students to attend, educational ambitions to work against discrimination and teaching requirements on what all students should learn about Sápmi. First, I will present all students' right to a safe education. Second, I present what all students are supposed to learn about Sápmi and Sámi issues in Norwegian schools according to the educational framework.

2.3.1. A safe school environment

The Norwegian Education Act, chapter 9A, declares the right for all students to a safe learning environment that has a positive effect on the student's health, well-being and learning process (Lovdata, 2020, chapter 9A-2). Third section in chapter 9A also declares that *"The school must have zero tolerance for violations such as bullying, violence, discrimination and harassment. The school must work continuously and systematically to promote the pupils' health, environment and safety, so that the requirements in and pursuant to this chapter are being met.(...)"* (Lovdata, 2020). The second sentence tells us that the school are not only obliged to report incidents that happens, but to be actively working for preventing bullying, violence, discrimination, and harassment from happening. The fifth section of the same chapter declares that the obligation to report of incidents are even stricter when a teacher is the one violating a student (Lovdata, 2020).

The Education Act also needs to be seen in the context of the general laws against discrimination in Norway. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act prohibits all discrimination based on ethnicity, which in this context incudes national origin, descent, skin

colour and language, and also applies for educational institutions (Lovdata, 2022). The school also has an educational ambition of preventing discrimination and working for equality in the long term. The overarching part of the LK06, the relevant educational framework during the period the research participants attended school, says that *"the education must counteract prejudice and discrimination and promote mutual respect and tolerance between groups with different ways of living"* (Utdanningsdirektoratet ,2015a p. 5, my translation). The overall goals for the education also includes to build solidarity (p. 17), equality and democratic values (p. 3-4), and to learn *"characteristics and values that facilitate cooperation between people"* (p. 15).

2.3.2. Learning about Sápmi

As a teacher in Norway, you are obliged both to teach about Sápmi to all students (Olsen, Sollid & Johansen, 2017). The relevant curriculum for understanding the school experiences of the research participants is the LK06 educational framework, which were in effect between 2006 and 2020-22. The overarching part of the LK06 stated that Sámi culture is a part of the cultural heritage in Norway, and that Norway has a responsibility in preserving this heritage (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015a p. 5). In addition, this is also stated in the framework plan for the teacher education (Olsen, Sollid & Johansen, 2017). The LK educational framework applies both to primary and secondary education, and to both public schools and some of the private schools receiving public funding.

Learning about Sámi culture, history and rights is mandatory for all students in Norwegian schools, regardless of indigenous status. The overarching part does however give a special responsibility to schools where Sámi students are present: *"This heritage must be allowed space for further development in schools with Sámi students, so that it strengthens the Sámi identity and our common knowledge of Sami culture."* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015a, p. 5, my translation).

The LK06 educational framework includes a variety of teaching requirements involving Sámi topics and Sápmi, covering the subjects of social science, Norwegian, science, food and health, history, KRL / RLE / KRLE (Christianity, Religion, Life views and Ethics), geography, music and religion (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022a, 2013a, 2013b, 2015b). I will not go through all of them but have chosen some key teaching requirements that are particularly relevant for the thesis.

The teaching requirements about Sápmi in social science are broad. According to the competence goals in social sciences, you are supposed to be able to *"explain the main characteristics of Sámi societies today"* after 7th grade (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013a, p. 10, my translation). After upper secondary school you should be able to *"present the main characteristics of Sámi culture today and reflect on what it means to be an indigenous people»* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2010, p. 7 and 10). The competence goals in LK06 in both Social sciences and Religion and Ethics refers to Sámi societies in plural (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013a, p. 7, 2006, s 3). This indicates a diversity within Sápmi that should be a part of the education about Sámi societies. Sápmi or indigenous peoples are not mentioned specifically in social science in lower secondary school

Norwegian is the subject that addresses Sámi languages. After lower secondary school, the students should be able to *"give an account of the prevalence of the Sami languages and of rights connected to Sami language in Norway"* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013b, p 7). After the last year of study-preparatory upper secondary school, the students should be able to *"give an account of features of the Sami language and culture (...)"* (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013b, p. 10). The competence goal for upper secondary school can be criticised for being unclear, as it conjugates language and culture in singular. The term can in Norwegian also be interpreted as plural, but this could easily have been written clearer. The competence goal for upper secondary school is however much clearer when conjugating Sámi languages in plural.

Two competency goals address the Norwegianisation policy. After finishing History in upper secondary school, the students should be able to "*give an account of the Norwegian national state's policy towards indigenous peoples, national and ethnic minorities in the 19th and 20th centuries and discuss some consequences of this policy*" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2009, p. 5, my translation). In Norwegian, high school graduates should be able to *"give an account of (...) consequences of Norwegian language and Norwegianisation policy"* *(*Utdanningsdirektorate,t 2013b, p. 13). Previously mentioned competence goals related to the understanding of Sápmi, Sámi culture and Sámi languages today could arguably also be hard to achieve without looking into the Norwegianisation policy at some point during the education.

When it comes to education about racism, there is no teaching requirements that directly connect these requirements to Sápmi or the Sámi. In social science during upper secondary school, you were to "*discuss the reasons why prejudice, racism and discrimination arise and what intervensions that could counteract this*" (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013a, p. 13). During

lower secondary school, teaching requirements of LK06 included to "*discuss ideals on human dignity, discrimination and the development of racism in a historical and contemporary perspective*" and "*explain the terms attitudes, prejudices and racism and assess how attitudes can be influenced, and how the individual and society can counteract prejudices and racism*" in social science (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2013a p. 11 & 12, my translations) after 2013. The same teaching requirement was also valid between 2006 – 2013 with minor adjustments.

In total, the teaching requirements in LK06 should have given the students knowledge about a variety of perspectives on Sápmi, including languages, political institutions, geographical reach, historical cultural traits, cuisine, traditional music and traditional religion (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022a). The teaching requirements should also have given students perspectives of how state policies Norwegianised parts of Sápmi and how racism affects society today.

Chapter 3: Previous research

To understand the context of the Sámi youths' perspectives, I have chosen to first look into what we know about the teaching. I first look at what we know about education about Sápmi. I then look at research done on teaching materials, both to get a context on the resources that the teachers and students have. I then look more generally on what we know about teaching on racism, to get a perspective on how structural discrimination is taught about. I continue with addressing research on how Sámi students experience being in school.

3.1. Education about Sápmi

The implementation of the educational framework is a challenge towards the goals of good quality teachings on Sámi subjects (Olsen, Sollid and Johansen 2017). To reach the teaching requirements about Sápmi, teachers need to have the relevant competence and knowledge.

Previous research has shown that many teachers consider their own knowledge about Sápmi insufficient (Lile, 2011). In a PhD thesis on what children learn on Sámi topics in school, 77 % of the 188 teachers in the survey answered that they needed to learn more on Sámi topics to be able to give the students good education on Sámi topics (Lile, 2011 p. 346). An interviewed teacher expressed *«We have an indigenous people in Norway, and we know almost nothing about it. I feel it now when I answer questions that I should know more about this. I think children have had very little about this at school, and we should learn more about this»* (Lile, 2011 p. 365, my translation). Only 9 % of the teachers meant that the teaching on Sámi topics during their teacher's education was sufficient (Lile, 2011 p. 366).

Qualitative group interviews with students in upper secondary school showed that the students did not remember much from the lessons they had had on Sámi topics (Røthing, 2017a). Some of the students also expressed embarrassment of how little they knew on Sámi topics. The students tended to consider Sámi topics a phenomenon that was not currently relevant, not urban and not present. This might leave the impression that Sámi topics are considered a historical phenomenon and not that relevant to understand society today.

In the same research project, interviews with teachers indicated that some of the teachers had insecurities about vocabulary on Sámi topics and in general showed little knowledge on the topic (Røthing, 2017a). According to the teachers, the students were not particularly interested in Sámi topics, but got more interested when they got visits from the Sámi educational

workshop “Samiske Veivisere”, which could be translated to Sámi Pathfinders. Røthing (2017) argues that in the meetings with Samiske Veivisere, the Sámi topics are transformed from something historical towards something relevant for people their own age and a culture that currently exists. Røthing also found that students in Northern Norway considered Sámi topics more relevant and present than students in Southern Norway. (Røthing, 2017a)

There has been a couple of master thesis exploring the teachers’ perspectives of teaching about Sápmi. Sæther’s (2021) “Sámi on the school schedule” reports that the teachers interviewed found it difficult to balance a diversity perspective with singling out core information on Sápmi. If the focus is on illustrating every possible way to be Sámi, the students might not be able to explain important characteristics of Sámi society. On the other hand, if teachers use a less diverse discourse on Sámi culture, they might leave a stereotypical, reducing and partly incorrect perception of Sápmi. Kavli’s (2019) master thesis shows that teachers often have too little relevant competence and knowledge to teach about Sápmi.

3.2. Textbooks and learning materials

After the implementation of LK06 in 2006, there is a shift in the textbooks in how Sámis and other ethnic minorities are addressed. According to Midtbøen, Orupabo, and Røthing (2014a), the language is more nuanced after 2006, and there seems to be an intention to challenge stereotypes. The descriptions in the textbooks have also become more inclusive and are less likely to create a clearly exclusive “we”. The textbooks still had room for improvements, for example because they in some cases still created an excluding Norwegian “we” that did not reflect the diversity in the classroom (Midtbøen et al, 2014b).

Previous research has shown that the diversity within Sápmi is not represented in satisfying ways in Norwegian textbooks (Gjerpe, 2021, Eriksen, 2018a) Gjerpe (2021) argues that the Norwegian textbooks create a distant and exotic “textbook Sápmi”, a Sápmi that does not exist in real life. In a n discourse analysis on textbooks used in Norwegian primary school, Eriksen (2018a) criticises a lack of diversity in images of traditional clothing. A master thesis analysing texts and images in RLE (religion, life stance and ethics) also indicates the same tendency: A small part of the diversity among Sámis is made representative for all Sámis. One example mentioned is how laestadianism is presented as something Sámi, while failing to mention that most Sámis are not laestadianists (Kolpus, 2015).

Topics of historic and current conflicts and oppression tend to be downplayed or avoided in the textbooks (Gjerpe, 2021, Askeland, 2015, Olsen, 2017). Olsen (2017) criticise textbooks in History and RLE for presenting the material from a majority perspective and excluding issues of conflict and colonisation. The word "colonisation" is only used when addressing processes in other continents, and not used at all about Sápmi. Political aspects of conflicts are downplayed. Similarly, in a comparative analysis of Norwegian and Sami textbooks in social sciences, Gjerpe (2021) finds that the Norwegian textbooks gives a more superficial description than the Sámi textbooks of the Álttá (Alta) / Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) activism against the planned hydroelectric power station.

There are tendencies of essentialism of Sámis in the textbooks and constructions of Sámis as "the other" in opposition to the Norwegian model reader (Gjerpe, 2021, Eriksen, 2018a, Ekeland, 2017, Kopus, 2015). Eriksen (2018a) found a tendency to address Norwegians with the inclusive "we/us", while Sámis were addressed with "they/them". Another study using discourse analysis of textbooks in social sciences showed that the pictures of Sámi persons created more distance towards the reader, for example by not having eye contact, than comparable photos of Norwegians (Mortensen-Buan, 2016).

The textbooks tend to address Sámi issues as challenges in the past, and address very little on challenges for the Sámi population today (Midtbøen et al, 2014b). Eriksen's (2018a) discourse analysis found that Sámi perspectives and examples were not mentioned when describing important events in social science and history, such as the 17th of May, the Norwegian Constitution Day, as well as early Norwegian history. Textbooks also risk reproducing stereotypical ideas through their visual presentations (Mortensen-Buan, 2016).

Kolpus (2015) argues that Sámis are given a passive role in history when the textbooks are crediting Norwegian missionaries for work done by both Norwegians and Sámis, or mainly by Sámis. One example mentioned is how the creation of a written Sámi language was credited the Norwegian missionaries, although many of the persons working with creating the written language were Sámi. Here Sámis are not seen as acting individuals with agendas, but as a people in need of Western knowledge made possible by Norwegians (Kolpus, 2015).

3.3. Teaching on racism

Research on teaching about racism from Norway and other Nordic countries indicates a danger of individualising or distancing the racism in time or space. Structural racism, particularly when happening in Norway, is often not addressed.

Stine Helena Bang Svendsen criticises the lack of in-dept understanding of racism in Norwegian schools. "*In Norway, (...) issues of 'race' and racism are largely discussed without the benefit of both relevant historical and geopolitical perspectives.*" (Svendsen, 2014, p 10 – 11). A common perception that "race" does not exist is affecting the teaching about racism (Svendsen, 2014, Eriksen, 2022a). Yet, marginalised groups still experience othering based on skin colour, racial features, ethnicity, and religion in Norway (Myrdal, 2010). The dialogue in school about race and racism becomes blurred in the absence of central terms, and the recognition of racism in school appears to be a taboo for teachers (Svendsen, 2014, Osler & Lindquist, 2018). Osler & Lindquist (2018) criticise the absence of central vocabulary and pedagogical tools when dealing with racism in school.

Lack of addressing of racism often is tightly connected to which narratives get to describe Norway. When issues of structural oppressions are not mentioned when teaching about the Norwegian history, a narrative of an exceptional democracy without a history of oppression is strengthened (Jore, 2018, Eriksen, 2021). Jore (2018) addresses the tension between teaching about the Constitution Day, May 17th, as a day that exclusively symbolises democratic values, and the Jew paragraph in the original constitution that excluded Jews from the kingdom.

Similarly, Røthing (2015) argues that the addressing of racism in Norwegian schools often is exemplified by events geographically far away from Norway. There is also a lack of contemporary examples of racism, and when contemporary examples in Norway are mentioned, they are extreme and individualised. The word racism often is avoided, and white privileges are not addressed. The understanding of racism as a present-time societal structure with colonial roots seems weak or absent in most of the textbooks. Research from Sweden also shows that individualised perspectives and understandings of racism dominates the teaching given on racism (Arneback & Jämte, 2022). Racism is seen as something the students brings to school, not something that is present in education systems or among teachers, while systemic racism is often not addressed (Arneback & Jämte, 2022).

3.4. Being Sámi in school

Students' rights to a safe school environment (Lovdata, 2020) means that teachers have a responsibility to prevent identity-based discrimination happening in schools. When it comes to Sámi students, this means to make sure the school is a safe environment for Sámi students.

Sámi students seems to be overrepresented when it comes to experiencing bullying in school. A PhD thesis from 2011 showed that Sámis experienced bullying twice as often as Norwegians, and most of the experienced bullying happened in school (Hansen, 2011). The experiences of discrimination and bullying were higher outside of Sámi language areas. Other research also backs up that Sámis are significantly more likely to experience bullying and discrimination compared to Norwegians (Hansen, Mintorn & Sørlie, 2016, Bals et al, 2010, Hansen, Melhus, Høgmo & Lund, 2008).

The vulnerability of Sámi students during teaching on Sámi topics of meeting racial discrimination or identity-based bullying during or after class, is exemplified by a man from Áhkánjárga (Narvik)'s experiences from school: *"I remember two classes in the eighth grade where we were to learn about the Sámi . . . I sat staring into my desk for two long hours, wishing I was somewhere else, being afraid that my Sámi background would be revealed. I remember a girl in my class, she whispered to somebody else, touched her cheekbones and pointed at me. I've since thought about how the others in the class didn't speak to me for some weeks after that."* (Berg-Nordlie, Andersen & Dankertsen, 2022 p 151). The quote is from a grown man that went to school some decades ago, but the tendency also has newer examples. The Sámi artist Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen writes in her autobiography about how fellow students and teachers considers her too focused on Sámi issues, and too sensitive when protesting the lack of focus (Isaksen & Svendsen, 2021). This correlates with a participant's story in a research project on Sámi urban identities, where "Márjá" says she has been called touchy, sensitive, and easily offended at school, by both students and teachers (Dankertsen, 2022).

Sæther (2021) points out the specific vulnerability of Sámi students when learning about Sámi topics. Teaching about discrimination, current territorial conflicts and rights struggles were seen by the teachers as conflicting with having a positive focus on Sámi topics. Several teachers described the fear of negative reactions from students, or of heated discussions as a reason to not teach about current conflicts between Sámis and Norwegians. Due to the ambiguousness of the racial position of Sámis and whether racism is an accurate word for

structural oppression of Sámis, majority students might have less fear of being understood as racist when racializing Sámi students than students of colour (Eriksen 2022a). Observations from primary schools indicated that the students hesitated when describing skin tones, while openly discussing skin tones and racial features of Sámi persons (Eriksen, 2022a).

Ella Marie Hætta Isaksen tells how local Sámi history was left out of the teaching content during her time in upper secondary school in Alta. Her wish to focus on her own family's experiences during second world war was not appreciated by her teacher, and this is described as a particularly vulnerable experience (Isaksen & Svendsen, 2021). This tendency is reflected in research. Lile's (2011) PhD thesis showed that teachers in Finnmark expressed negative attitudes towards the Sámi often than teachers from other parts of Norway. The teachers' lack of knowledge on Sámi topics also became a barrier in dealing with an identity-based case of bullying of a Sámi student (Lile, 2011).

Being Sámi might still be considered a taboo in some schools or in some areas. Røthing's (2017) interviews from a school in Northern Norway shows that although the students state that being Sámi is not a big deal and that most of the students have some Sámi roots, a teacher at the same school says that they would not be comfortable with asking a student whether they were Sámi or not. This might indicate a taboo, but it might also indicate an uncomfortableness in stating minority or majority positions if the teacher is not Sámi themselves.

Mortensen-Buan (2016) argues that the visual presentations in Norwegian textbooks do not have Sámi students as their ideal reader, and that this risks creating an us—them-division in the classroom, where Sámi students are no longer a part of the "us". While Sámi students in core Sámi areas, following the Sámi educational programme, will use other textbooks, Sámi students following the Norwegian educational programme will meet portraits of "the Sámi" that they either do not recognise as similar to their own identity or heritage, or portraits that divide them from the community in the classroom (Mortensen-Buan, 2016). This correlates with Eriksen's (2018a) findings, where textbooks for social sciences in primary school were "othering" Sámi students.

When students are presented to stereotypical ideas of Sámi persons in textbooks, they might not have the language or the voices to argue against these ideas. (Mortensen-Buan, 2016) This might also be true for students that are Sámi themselves. Teaching that provides nuanced knowledge and historical context might however give both Sámi and non-Sámi students tools to recognise stereotypes and unnuanced information. Sæther (2021) argues that teaching about

discrimination of Sámis and historical context might have a positive effect against discrimination in schools. She does, however, warn about having this as a dominant or exclusive focus, as it might leave negative associations on Sámi culture amongst the students.

Research shows how teachers can be unaware of racist structures in the classroom. Hauan and Anker's (2021, p. 94-95) classroom observations and interviews shows that the teacher is not considering the vulnerability of Muslim students when discussing Islam in school. Svendsen's (2014, p. 10) research from schools in Oslo shows that racialised students had a broader understanding of what racism was than their white teachers. While their white teachers mostly included severe cases of racism, often linked to an understanding of biological races as a fundament for the racism, the racialised students included a broader perspective of culture, skin tone, religion and ethnicity in their understanding. Crittle & Maddox (2017, p. 174) argues that persons belonging to non-stigmatised groups are more likely to be unaware of marginalising processes when they happen, and that teachers consequently will need training to see marginalisation of groups that they do not personally belong to. Teachers might also be knowingly or unknowingly avoiding confrontation of oppressive behaviour out of fear of a backlash from students (Crittle & Maddox, 2017, p. 175).

Discrimination, bullying, and racism are structures that might prevent Sámi students from achieving their full potential in school. There are not much, if any, quantitative research done on how Sámi students as a group are doing in school in Norway. The results from the national tests for 5th grade between 2015 – 2019 shows that three municipalities with a high percentage of Sámi population, Deatnu (Tana), Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) and Kárášjohka (Karasjok), scored a bit lower than average in reading and mathematics, but around average in English (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022b). It is questionable whether this can be used to conclude about learning outcome for these students, as the national standardised tests used are based on Norwegian and not Sámi premises. The statistics do not say anything about Sámi students as a group, since not everyone in these municipalities are Sámi and this only makes a small part of Sápmi.

Chapter 4: Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used is critical approaches to pedagogy and social sciences. Critical studies base themselves on the principle of the existence of a structural injustice that research needs to recognize. The purpose of critical research is to challenge this injustice (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Postcolonial theories are central in understanding colonial heritage and its traces in societies today. In addition to including classics, theories from a Norwegian and Nordic context are added. Further, theories to understand racism are described, both in a Norwegian context and from indigenous studies. Critical pedagogy takes the societal theories into an educational situation, and I will here look at theories of how education marginalises, but also holds the potentials of indigenisation and democratisation.

4.1. Postcolonialism

Post-colonial studies investigate the aftermath and consequences of the colonial rule or look at post-colonial societies from a more general perspective. Imperialism and repression have left both ideological and structural scars, and post-colonial researchers are interested in how these scars affect current societies (Cohen et al, 2018).

Edward Said's classic "Orientalism" (1978) is a key to understand post-colonial theory. In "Orientalism", Said criticised how the West mirrored itself in the construction of "the Other". While the West was seen as civilized, modern, and rational, the Orient was seen as uncivilized, traditional, and superstitious. Said argues that this was used as legitimizing conquest and domination of "the Others" (Said, 1978). The Sámi people has also been portraited as "uncivilised" as an opposition to a civilized Norwegian society (Baglo, 2011) and Said therefore offers a useful theory to understand postcolonial narratives about Sápmi and Sámis.

The Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith ([1999] 2012) addresses how indigenous peoples have been exploited and Othered through science. Colonisation has lead to a dehumanisation of indigenous peoples and a disconnection to language, culture and history. Smith calls for a decolonisation of methodologies and knowledge. There is power in how history is told and who's perspectives get to define history, but indigenous people's histories rarely achieve acknowledgement as valid interpretations of historical events (Smith, 2012, p. 36).

Western knowledge is often considered rational and generalisable, while local or indigenous knowledges are often considered only locally relevant, irrelevant, or superstitious (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, Breidlid, 2013). When indigenous knowledge is included in Western knowledge production, it is often done in an appropriative way which either changes the significance of the content or does not refer to its original roots (Smith, 2012). The exclusion and underrepresentation of traditional indigenous knowledge effects what kind of and who's knowledge are taught in schools (Breidlid 2012).

4.1.1. Nordic exceptionalism

In Norway, as well as in other Nordic states, a widespread denial of a colonial history is present (Gullestad, 2005, Svendsen, 2014). The understanding of Norwegian history as "innocent" of colonialism ignores the colonisation of indigenous land and culture in the Sámi areas in Norway (Fjellheim, 2020), as well as how Norwegians participated in colonial practices in other continents (Gullestad, 2005, Eidsvik, 2012). This narrative of a colonial-free history is sometimes referred to as *Nordic exceptionalism* (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012, Eriksen, 2018b). Norway is often portraited as a victim of colonisation instead of a colonial power, with reference to previous unbalanced unions with Denmark and Sweden (Gullestad, 2005). The responsibility of colonial practices becomes externalized, they are perceived as practices existing only in other countries or regions (Svendsen, 2014, p. 13).

The denial of a colonisation of Sápmi has forwarded a coloniality in the Norwegian education system (Eriksen & Svendsen, 2020). Coloniality refers to how colonial practices continue to influence contemporary institutions and society (Quijano, 2000). A characteristic of coloniality in education is when knowledges are reproduced in a way that maintains colonised people's knowledges as inferior, backwards or ignores the existence of these knowledges (Eriksen & Svendsen, 2020). In the Norwegian - Sámi context, the construction of "the Other", including the duality of the modern West vs the traditional "Others", is relevant to understand how a colonial history affects the narratives on Sámi culture and history within the education system today, and whether Sámis are a part of the "us" or the "other" in the classroom.

The Norwegian state has been understood as a homogeneous nation, not a state consisting of various ethnicities and nations (Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2014, Eriksen & Svendsen, 2020, Ånensen, 2021). An idea of a Norway that has historically been culturally homogeneous

before the modern-time arrival of immigrants might be in discursive opposition to understanding Norway as a historically multicultural society of people with different ethnicities (Nutti, 2014). The idea of Norway as a homogeneous society might function as a barrier to a successful integration of Sámi topics and perspectives in teaching on Norwegian society and culture. For students to build an understanding of the Sámi as a part of the Norwegian society, information on Sámi culture, history and knowledge needs both to be given specific attention to create in-dept knowledge as well as integrated and included in general topics about Norwegian culture, history, and knowledge.

4.2. Racism, racialisation, and ethnicity

Theories on racism and racialisation are relevant to understand how colonisation and Norwegianisation affects the construction of race and ethnicity in Norway today, and the effect this has on Sámi persons. Critical race studies look at race as a socially constructed hierarchy that privileges some skin colours, physical features, and ethnicities over others. Critical race theories are useful to understand how racism and ethnicity-based privileges functions in Norwegian-Sámi interactions. The counter-perceptions and resistance against challenging the Norwegian self-image as non-colonial and the lack of focus on racism as a societal structure or of Norwegian privileges can be better understood by the usage of critical race theories.

Racism happens on both macro and micro levels. Public institutions, including educational institutions, may carry colonial structures of racial and ethnic hierarchies (Quijano, 2000). But racism also plays out in everyday meetings between humans. The Dutch-Surinamese scholar Philomena Essed (2008) uses the term everyday racism to understand how regular experiences with structural racism plays out on a micro level. She criticises the European tendency of connecting racism to a moral problem, leaving just individualised and extreme cases as racism. Essed argues that the term everyday racism is useful to connect regular events to racial hierarchies, white privileges and structural violence. Everyday racism can vary from graver incidents to for example micro aggressions, casual and often subtle actions used to degrade marginalised groups (Sue, 2010). Belonging to groups that experience racism can lead to an extra layer of stress (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999), often referred to as minority stress (Meyer, 2003).

4.2.1. Racial and ethnic structures in Norway

Racialisation and racism have different mechanisms and triggers depending on geographical and cultural context. The term "racism" will be used in a way that includes structural oppression experienced by Sámi people based on ethnicity. Structural oppression based on ethnicity is commonly included in definitions on racism in Norway, including the definitions used by Amnesty International Norway (2022), The Norwegian Centre Against Racism (Antirasistisk senter, 2022) and The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud (Likestillings- og Diskrimineringsombudet, 2022).

The understanding of Norway as an exception is closely related to the self—image of Norway as an equality-based country, free of racism and other forms of structural oppressions (Gullestad, 2006). Various scholars have criticised the Norwegian lack of willingness to address the various forms of racial and ethnic oppressions in past and present (for example Gullestad, 2005, Eidsvik, 2012). The uncomfortableness of addressing racism is exacerbated by Norwegian national self-image as a nation of tolerance and peace, free of colonial history (Gullestad, 2005, Eriksen, 2018a) This ignores the racism that has taken place against Sámis as well as other minorities in Norway (Eriksen, 2018a). This undermines the relevance of race and ethnicity as social categories in Norwegian society today. (Eriksen, 2018a).

The Norwegian colonisation of Sápmi included a racialisation of the Sámi population, as many scholars have pointed out (Dankertsen, 2019, Fjellheim, 2020, Kyllingstad, 2012, Heith, 2012). This affect Sámi persons' position in Norway today, where Sámis are positioned outside of the Norwegian whiteness (Dankertsen, 2019). Based on school observations, Eriksen (2020) concludes that *"The Sami appears as not quite Norwegian, but not a foreigner, often white in the physical sense, but not conceptually white."* (p. 67). Although physically white, Sámis are excluded from the Norwegian construction of whiteness.

How Sámi persons are racialised, experiencing racism and navigates Norwegian whiteness norms are however complex, as Sámis have a different navigation room than many other racialised people. Many Sámi individuals have the experiences of being read as white and/or Norwegian in some contexts while being racialised as Sámis or indigenous in other contexts. This creates a racialisation process that often differs from other indigenous groups, as Sámis have the possibility to "pass as white" (Dankertsen, 2019). Astri Dankertsen (2019) argues that while Sáminess is excluded from the Norwegian whiteness, Sámi persons might also experience white privileges in the meeting with indigenous peoples around the world. This

makes the exclusion Sámis experience from whiteness situational. Sámi students in Norwegian schools have also usually grown up in Norway and are “fluent” in Norwegian culture, which means that visibility can be navigated, and some choose to hide their Sáminess (Nutti, 2014). Belonging to a minority which can choose to be invisible does however have other effects that visible racialized groups do not experience. Hiding culture and identity has had a series of damaging psychological and cultural effects, such as feelings of shame, loss of language, culture and knowledge, and lack of community and Sámi solidarity and resistance within some parts of Sápmi.

4.2.2. The burden of representation and responsibility

“The burden of representation” is a term that refers to the representation ethnic minorities and racialized groups get when they are expected to not only speak on behalf of themselves, but also as a representative of their ethnic or racial group (Nadim, 2017, Eide, 2010).

When it comes to being seen as a representation from a minority group, studies done on media representation can provide useful theories that also can be useful in understanding a minority position in a classroom. Nadim (2017) warns against the effects that assigned group representation can have. When individuals are understood as a representative of a group, it can lead to individual action from a person redefining or shaping the understanding of the group in question (Philips, 2009, in Nadim, 2017) This can lead to essentialising of the group and ignores the differences and potential conflicts of interests within the groups (Nadim, 2017). If a person is understood as a representative of for example Sámis as a group, this must mean that there is something essential that all Sámis share or a common interest that all Sámis have. This ignores the diversity that exists within Sápmi and the potensial conflicts of interests between for example different Sámi industries or language groups.

Nadim argues that ascribed representation might cause the abilities and knowledge of the person to be overlooked, reducing the person to a representative of the group. An ascribed identity includes being ascribed opinions, beliefs and culture that is associated with the group you are believed to represent (Nadim, 2017). The same tendency is shown in Midtbøen’s (2016) interviews with children of immigrants showed a potential danger of self-censorship due to a fear of being reduced to only a representative of the group, as opposed to an individual with various fields of interests.

The Canadian sociology professor Jasmin Zine uses the term “the burden of responsibility” to understand how Muslim students in Canadian schools responds to misrepresentations and essentialisation of Islam and Muslims as a group (Johannessen, 2021 p. 3) Both external pressure and an internal sense of duty leads to Muslim students contributing against negativity about Islam or essentialising of Muslims. The burden of responsibility and the burden of representation are interlinked, because the feeling of responsibility is a result of wishing to be a good representative for Muslims.

Pressure of representation can also come from within the community. Nadim’s (2017) research showed that religious minorities worried that their contributions to the public debate did not represent the group in a way everyone within the group recognised. In interviews with Muslim youth at Grønland in Oslo, the informants discuss a felt responsibility of being good representatives of Islam (Vassenden & Andersson, 2011).

In addition to the informants that did not want to participate in the public debate at all, Nadim outlined two other paths of representation. Strategic group presentation is when you are aware of the minority position you are placed in but use the position strategically to for example get media access (Nadim, 2017). Individual representation, however, allows an individual to participate without being reduced to a representative of their identity (Nadim, 2017).

4.2.3. Oppressive authenticity

Smith (2012) addresses the Western concept of who gets to be “authentic” representatives of an indigenous community. If indigenous communities are changing, as all societies change over time, they are no longer considered “really” indigenous (p. 77). The social anthropologist Jeff Sissons (2005) similarly argues that indigenous peoples are expected a cultural purity that non-indigenous peoples are not expected to the same degree. Indigenous individuals live diverse lives around the globe, both in cities and rural areas. Oppressive authenticity lock indigenous peoples to an image of a primitivity opposite to a modern society, where approaching things that are considered «modern» or «Western» questions the person’s indigeneity (Smith, 2012).

Oppressive authenticity creates a clear dualism between indigenous and non-indigenous, and everyone in between these categories becomes out of place, an excluded middle (Sissons, 2005, p. 39). Labels such as «Westernized», «mixed» or «half-blood» excludes most of the

world's indigenous population from being «authentically» indigenous (p. 39). Many communities and individuals also operate in a cultural interface between indigenous and non-indigenous, meaning an overlapping space of complex as opposed to two dichotomous spaces (Keskitalo & Olsen, 2021). Oppressive authenticity is a part on a colonial structure, where the privileged non-indigenous group gets the power to decide who is indigenous and who is not. This both labels parts of indigenous communities as non-indigenous base on blood quantum or cultural practices, as well as limiting the lives and practices of indigenous persons.

Essentialism has also been used strategically by indigenous movements to oppose colonial paradigms and claim indigenous rights (Smith, 2012 p. 77). Strategic essentialism must be understood as a political strategy that has proven efficient (Gjerpe, 2018) . The Sámi identity has been shaped by the necessity of Norwegian – Sámi dichotomies, where being unified as a people was central to claim collective rights (Gjerpe, 2018) . A problematic aspect of this dynamic is that it might increase a Western – indigenous dichotomy and downplay diversity within the indigenous people (Gjerpe, 2018).

4.3. Critical pedagogy

Critical pedagogy centres how education and knowledge forward structural inequality and injustice, but also how pedagogy can be a tool to challenge these inequalities and injustices (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 46-47). Critical pedagogy is often critical to a more established multicultural pedagogy, where learning about cultural differences is understood as a key factor to improve the understanding and solidarity between people of different ethnicities, religions, nationalities etc. Multicultural pedagogy has been criticised for tending to under-communicate how racism, structural inequalities and unequal power relations affects marginalised groups (Røthing, 2019, May, 2009). Knowledge about cultural differences alone does not change structural inequalities. Critical educational theories are normative, meaning that they have an agenda of achieving social justice and equality in our education and knowledge systems (Cohen et al, 2018). This means that learning why structural inequalities exist, how they work and learning tools for changing them are central in critical pedagogy.

4.3.1. The school as an oppressor

The Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire's ([1968] 2017) classic "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" has been significant in the development of critical pedagogy. Freire explains how the educational system mirrors the dominant power dynamics in society. The school contributes to a dehumanization of the oppressed student. Freire is particularly critical to what he refers to as "the banking method" of education, where teachers are active knowledge holders, and the students are passive learners without any valuable inputs. This structure makes the students obedient to the oppressive power structures and makes them less likely to protest the system. The oppressed must identify their oppressors to liberate themselves. Freire argues for conscientização, a form of critical consciousness, to become aware of the oppression as well as taking actions against it. To be able to regain humanization in school, a critical dialogue between the oppressed student and the oppressing teacher must take place, so that educator and learner together can investigate the problems and solve them. Freire mainly focused on a capitalist suppression from a Marxist perspective, but the analysis is relevant to understand other forms of suppressions as well.

As a newer contribution building on critical pedagogy and postcolonialsm, Salinas (2020) describes a pedagogy of detachment as a colonial strategy used against indigenous students and other marginalised groups. In Salinas' school experiences, ethnicity, race, and socio-economic status makes her far away from the model student that the school centres. The colonial school structure detaches the students from the holistic world that they live in, divided their knowledge into parts and teaches them that their home and community knowledge is not valuable. When indigenous student's knowledge from home is not considered valuable, it creates a distance and potential conflict between the home knowledge of the student and the school knowledge. This might make it harder for the student to succeed in school or makes the student reject indigenous knowledge and narratives. It affects the viewed value of the indigenous knowledge when the indigenous student's home or community knowledge is not valued in school (Breidlid, 2013, Salinas, 2020).

4.3.2. Anti-oppressive education

Post-structural perspectives on critical pedagogy expanded the understanding of how oppression and marginalisation in education works, and which power dynamics that take place. The Asian-American educational researcher Kevin Kumashiro (2002) builds on

postcolonialism and queer theory when he criticises the school system's marginalisation of queer and racialized students in the book *Troubling education*. Similar to Said, Kumashiro uses the term Other *"to refer to those groups that are traditionally marginalised, degraded, or violated in society"* (p. 32). He recognises schools as one of the spaces where oppressive structures cause harm for the Other. Oppression is caused by discourses that get cited repeatedly, leading to a continuous reproduction of harmful structures in society (p. 50). Oppressive structures are however just not marginalizing the Other, they are also making the normative into a privileged position (p. 37).

He maps out four ways of working towards an anti-oppressive education. Education for the Other is learning spaces and processes exclusively for the Other, where the oppressed group can for example seek support, be empowered and find resources. Education about the Other is for all students and are meant to challenge the oppressive teaching where you learn exclusively and uncritically about what the society defines as the normal (p. 39). Privileged students often carry knowledge about the Other from other sources, information that might be based on stereotypes or misinformation. Education about the Other can provide for example nuanced stories about diversity within marginalised groups or knowledge about historic or contemporary oppression.

Information about the Other is in itself not enough to change oppressive structures. Kumashiro's third way, education that is critical of privileges and Othering, centres knowledge on how social structures and ideologies oppress some while privilege others. This includes critiquing the normative, but also unlearning oppressive patterns (p. 46). The fourth path, education that changes students and society, calls for a structural change in the education system, as well as other parts of society. Harmful discourses must be challenged and not repeated. Teachers need pedagogical skills to help students through the crisis that might occur on a personal level when unlearning oppressive patterns (p. 63).

4.3.3. Norm critical pedagogy

Norm critical pedagogy developed mainly in Sweden during the 2000s and is based on queer pedagogy and other forms of critical pedagogy. Norm critical pedagogy explores how the school reproduces societal power structures through narratives and practices and how this affects marginalised groups (Bromseth, 2019). Norm critical pedagogy is inspired by Kumashiro, which questions the centering of normality in teaching: *"Although a curriculum*

that aims for inclusion may succeed in teaching that the other is as normal or important as the norm, it does not necessarily change the very definition of "normal" and ways in which we traditionally see ourselves as such." (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 57).

Norm critical pedagogy emphasizes the function norms have in socialising processes, which in schools comes both from the student, the teachers and from an institutional level (Bromseth, 2019). Many norms might forward discrimination and prejudice towards specific marginalised groups or might not include the marginalised groups' perspectives and positions. (Bromseth 2010) When education is divided into history and women's history (Bromseth 2010), or sexuality and gay sexuality (Røthing 2007), it indicated who is the norm and who is the Othered. Norm critical pedagogy has been used particularly within gender studies and queer studies to point out indications of heteronormativity and sexism in schools and learning processes. However, norm critical pedagogy is useful to also address other forms of structural oppression that might be indicated in the materials, such as indications of norms of Norwegian whiteness that does not include Sámi persons. By using norm critical pedagogy, the premises and norms indicated or assumed in the teachings can be made visible, challenged and changed (Bromseth, 2019).

4.3.4. Indigenising education and indigenous education

Torjer Olsen (2017) and Kaisa Kemi Gjerpe (2018) argue for an indigenisation of the Norwegian educational system as a decolonial process. Olsen (2017) differentiates between three ways that indigenous peoples have been represented in education, absence, inclusion, and indigenisation. Absence means that indigenous topics or perspectives are not addressed at all. This leaves two ways of doing education about indigenous issues, inclusion and indigenisation. Inclusion involves including indigenous peoples, but still on the premises of the Norwegian majority. Indigenisation would mean including indigenous perspectives or that the education happens on the premises of the indigenous population (Olsen 2017).

In order to give indigenous students culturally appropriate education, there is a need for indigenous schools, but also for an indigenisation of mainstream education (Gjerpe 2018). This means that the education in mainstream schools need to include the perspectives of the Sámi population in the educational system.

Sollid and Olsen (2019) argue for a cultural interface between indigenous and mainstream education. The cultural interface is a multi-layered space where people can have complex identities and affiliations to an indigenous group. (Keskitalo & Olsen, 2021). The cultural interface rejects a clear dichotomy between non-indigenous and indigenous. In an educational context, the cultural interface could provide positive interactions and overlaps between mainstream and indigenous education.

4.3.5. A safe classroom?

“Safe space” is a term that developed within feminist and LGBT activism in the 1970s, and means a space free of discrimination, exclusion and marginalisation (Callan, 2016, Hauan & Anker, 2021 p. 89). Translated into a classroom setting in Religion and Ethics, Hauan & Anker (2021 p. 89) understands a safe space as a learning environment where the students can talk openly while being met with respect for their religious position. In a context of learning about Sápmi, a safe space would consequently be a space all students could talk freely while meeting respect and an absence of discrimination regardless of ethnic and indigenous status.

According to Hauan & Anker (2021), it will take specific securing of the teaching environment for such a safe space to take place in a classroom. When the classroom is not a safe space for marginalised groups to share thoughts and opinions, it might lead to marginalised groups withdrawing from the conversation (Hauan & Anker, 2021).

A common critique against “safe space” theories are that they might limit conversations, in an educational context classroom discussions and reflections, that could potentially hurt marginalised groups. To meet this critique, Callan (2016) separates between dignity safety and intellectual safety. A dignity safe space is a space where you are “*free of any reasonable anxiety that others will treat one as having an inferior social rank to theirs*” (Callan 2016 p. 65). Intellectual safety, however, is not experiencing stress of having your knowledge, beliefs and values challenged. To have a good education, it is vital that existing knowledge, beliefs, and values are challenged, and experiencing uncomfortableness or stress connected to having to change your perceptions is a part of the learning process. Being intellectually unsafe does however not question your human value, while a dignity unsafe space undermines your humanity.

Chapter 5: Method

In the fifth chapter, I present the methodological choices I have made to get and process the empirical material. I first discuss my choice of doing qualitative semi-structured group interviews, as well as my recruitment process and sample. Second, the research participants are presented with their school context. A diverse group with different Sámi identities has participated in the project, with school experiences both within and outside of Sápmi. Third, the conducting of the interview and the processing of the material afterwards is presented. I continue with presenting what kind of knowledge can be created based on this kind of research, the validity of the material. Towards the end, the ethical foundation of the process is presented. As a non-indigenous researcher, doing research always come with a risk of forwarding coloniality, and I describe the measures and reflective work I have done to attempt decolonial strategies.

5.1. Qualitative interviews

As methods for gathering data, I used qualitative interviews. The main function of qualitative interviews is to lift the perspectives of the interviewees, and the nature of qualitative interviews is consequently subjective and not objective (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The interviews give an insight to the perspectives of 13 young adults in how they experienced education about Sápmi and Sámi topics in Norwegian schools.

5.1.1. Semi-structured group interviews.

I have conducted five group interviews with a total of 13 participants, divided into groups of two or three participants. All the interviews were planned with three or four participants, but because of cancellations due to sickness and quarantines related to the Covid 19 pandemic, none of the interview had four participants and two groups ended up having only two participants. I planned for groups of a maximum of four participants, as I considered five participants to be too many to have time for detailed descriptions from all participants.

The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. The interview guide was followed during the interviews, but in a flexible manner. This left space to follow up with

more detailed questions if something particularly interesting came up. An interview that takes form as more of a conversation might also make the participants more relaxed (Brinkmann & Kvale 2015 p. 157).

An advantage of group interviews is that you detect information on how the participants agree or disagree with each other, support each other, or build on each other's experiences (Cohen et al, 2018). One of the reasons for choosing group interviews were that the interviews were focusing on events from several years ago. A joint conversation might help other participants remember relatable experiences that they would have forgotten otherwise. Listening to another participant's arguments might make a participant see their own experiences in the light of knowledge or perspectives that other participants hold.

The latter advantage is also a disadvantage. Some participants might limit the space for other participants to share their perspectives. This can happen either timewise, with one participant taking up most of the available time for doing the interview or discursive-wise, that some participants self-sensors for example out of fear of making discussions that could make the space uncomfortable (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 527).

To prevent some of the potential weaknesses of group interviews, all the participants were informed that if they remembered anything after the interviews that they would like to add, or if they had information that they were more comfortable with sharing privately, we could set up a private conversation afterwards. Although available to all participants, none of the participants chose to have one-on-one conversations with me afterwards.

Group interviews might make the moderation of the interviews difficult for the interviewer (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 176), which in one of the interviews led to me having to interfere to be able to allow a more equal time sharing between the participants. There were some differences in the dynamic in the two interviews with only two participants. The two-participant-interviews tended to have a less fluent conversation between the participants, and were more actively led me as an interviewer, compared to the physical interviews with three participants. When the interviews was more actively led me, some of the effects of having a conversation between the participants disappeared. On the positive side, the participants tended to answer the questions more directly in the interviews with two participants.

Four of the interviews were done physically and one digitally. The digital interview gathered participants that lived in areas where I did not find enough participants to have a focus group

interview physically. In this way, people had the possibility to participate regardless of where they currently live.

The digital interview was the shortest among the interviews. This might be a coincidence, or the digital form might affect the possibilities to have a live conversation where you respond to each other. There was a tendency of less conversation around the question in the digital interview, conversation that did not directly answer the question asked. This might mean that the respondents answered more directly at the question within the digital interview form, while the digital form also made it more difficult to listen to conversations that gave the questions a thicker description (Geertz, [1973] 2008), information of the context that will give depth to the understanding of the content.

5.1.2. Recruiting and sample

The participants were recruited by using three strategies: volunteer sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling. Six of the participants were recruited through volunteer sampling, five through purposive sampling, and two through snowball sampling.

Volunteer sampling is a recruiting strategy where the participants sign up themselves to participate (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 222). I contacted various Sámi groups and organisations in Norway and asked if they wanted to spread information about the research project within their channels. In addition, I posted, or got Sámi friends or acquaintances to post for me, in various social media networks for Sámi persons. I was also interviewed in the Sámi newspaper Ávvir about the project (Anti, 2022). Six of the participants contacted me and wanted to participate after having read information about the project.

Purposive sampling is when the researchers handpick the participants (Cohen et al, 2018). I asked 12 persons directly whether they were interested in participating in the project. Seven of them were interested, but only five ended up with participating. One had to cancel due to the Covid 19 pandemic and one person responded positively after the group interviews were completed. The persons were acquaintances of me or people in my network, or people I knew of as active in Sámi organizing or networks. The handpicking of participants to ask directly made it easier to secure a diversity of identities among the participants. For example, it made it possible to directly ask South Sámi and Lule Sámi persons to participate. All the self-recruited participants were women, and purposive sampling made it possible to ask people of other genders to participate. A potential weakness of purposive sampling is that relies of the

interpersonal relation of the researcher or the researcher's network (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 221), which meant that perspectives outside these networks are unavailable. Having done the broader volunteer sampling first, I hope to have avoided some of this effect.

The last two participants were recruited through snowballing sampling, a method where participants recruit other participants. Two participants had friends within the target group that also wanted to join the research project. Snowballing was therefore not an active strategy on my behalf, but an effect of the other recruiting strategies. One of the participants recruited through snowballing was participating in the same interview as their friend, the other participated in another interview.

I wished to have representation from several Sámi groups. Due to the limited number of participants in qualitative research, the participants are never representative of a broader population (Cohen et al, 2018). Consequently, having a diversity within the participant sample is not a matter of making the sample representative, but to broaden the perspectives of the material. The project was open for Sámi students identifying themselves within any of the Sámi groups, but my focus was primarily on having a variety between the areas of the three officially recognized Sámi languages in Norway. Considering the outnumbering of North Sámis compared to South Sámis and Lule Sámis, it turned out to be difficult to have a balanced representation between Sámi groups. Unfortunately, I failed to have Lule Sámi representation in the project, even though I chose to locate one of the interviews within the Lule Sámi area and actively searched for Lule Sámi participants.

I did not have difficulties to find participants for the interviews in Oslo but had more challenges finding participants in other cities. My original plans of having interviews in Oslo, Trondheim and Tromsø were replaced with several interviews in Oslo, one in Bodø and one digital. I believe that having a Sámi network in Oslo, including a partner involved in Sámi activism, made me appear more trustworthy for potential participants in Oslo than in other cities in Norway where I do not know the Sámi communities.

5.1.3. Validity

As with all qualitative research, this thesis cannot be generalized into being valid for all Sámi students following the Norwegian Educational programme. The thesis creates knowledge on how school was experienced by some Sámi students, and analyses some tendencies mentioned

by several participants. This gives us knowledge about some experiences of being in a minority position as Sámi when your identity is a central part of the teaching. The thesis does not address how the lessons were experienced by Norwegian students or by the teachers.

Flyvbjerg (2006) claims that the possibilities of social sciences of creating general laws are limited, and that therefore the generalizability in social sciences is limited. Within all research you can, however, accumulate knowledge that will be useful also when related to other individuals, groups, areas, or cultures. Within this logic, qualitative interviews with Sámi students can accumulate valuable knowledge about the experiences of ethnicity-related topics in school without necessarily claiming representativity of a wider population. Although not generalisable for all Sámi students, the interviews will illustrate possible reactions to teachings on ethnicity-related topic that is likely to exist also among other Sámi students.

The interviews have a retro perspective dimension. Nine of the participants had finished their basic education, while four participants were still in upper secondary school. The interview questions made the participants reflect on experiences that happened several years ago. This affects the validity of the content both positively and negatively. On one hand, the participants are older and can reflect on experiences on a higher level than when they were in primary or lower secondary school. The participants that have finished upper secondary school also get a better overview of the total experience when they are not in the middle of the discussed school context today. On the negative side, details or even whole situations might have been forgotten. Time is also a factor by itself, since school practices might have changed since the participants went to school. Another factor is that humans often tend to remember the extremes and forget the average. The participants are consequently more likely to remember lessons they were very satisfied or unhappy with and forget lessons that they felt more neutrally about.

One aspect of validity is the truthfulness of the material (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), meaning that I have a responsibility of presenting the material as truthfully as possible. To minimise the risk of potential misunderstandings that can occur because of cultural and positional differences, I chose to let all participants receive a draft of the thesis four weeks before delivering, so that misunderstandings were possible to correct and other perspectives might be considered. Seven of the participants have answered, whereas some minor clarifications have been made. I am aware of criticism towards respondent validation, such as change of minds or selective memories (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 649), but believe that making it possible to respond is an important aspect of a decolonial research project. Research on indigenous people has

often been twisted to the point of no recognition for the people in question (Smith 2012) and allowing responses with corrections and other perspectives to a draft creates a channel for the participants to give feedback minimise the risk presentations that are not recognisable. This is not to say that this is any responsibility of the participants, as I hold the responsibility of presenting the information as truthfully as possible.

5.2. The research participants

Definitions of who belongs to an indigenous people have too often come from the colonising people (Berg-Nordlie, 2021a, Sisson, 2005, Smith, 2012). This master thesis does not define who is Sámi beyond self-identification, as I do not consider it my place as a non-Sámi to define boundaries of Sámi identities. The research participants are self-identified as Sámi, meaning that they understand themselves as Sámi. The group-based dynamic of the interviews does however make it less likely that a complete outsider to the Sámi communities and without any Sámi family ties would claim a Sámi identity within the space.

The 13 participants are presented with Sámi identity, gender identity, and schooling location. The geographical component must not be confused with where they currently live. The participants are presented as:

- Coastal Sámi man, Nordland
- Coastal Sámi man, Trøndelag
- Coastal Sámi non-binary person, Northern Norway
- Coastal Sámi woman, Troms and Oslo
- Coastal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo
- Coastal Sámi woman, Eastern Norway and Troms
- Coastal Sámi woman, Troms
- Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland
- Coastal Sámi woman, Viken
- North Sámi woman, 19, Oslo
- North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo
- South Sámi woman, Oslo
- South Sámi woman, Trøndelag

In line with standpoint theory (Harding, 1986), giving space for marginalised voices has been important for me in the process of finding research participants. An intersectional approach will also tell us that each cross-point of identities makes a new position of oppression that needs to be understood by itself (Crenshaw, 1989). Marginalised genders, sexual orientations, trans statuses as well as more marginalised Sámi identities are well represented among the participants. By having participants that have complex and intersectional experiences with marginalisation, the material for understanding oppressive pattern becomes broader.

There are ten women, two men and one non-binary persons among the participants. There is a diversity of cisgender and transgender statuses among the participants, including the participants with binary gender identities. From a gender perspective, this means that the current gender category is not always the same as how the participants were read in school. There is also a variety of sexual orientations among the participants. Cis/trans status and sexual orientation are identity markers that have not been asked for, but information that came up initiated by the participants themselves, either during the interviews or in conversations before the interview.

Among the participants, two are South Sámis and eleven are from or have family background from the North Sámi language area. Among the North Sámis, nine identifies themselves or their heritage as Coastal Sámi. The participants that both described themselves as Coastal Sámi and were from the North Sámi language area were asked how they wanted to be presented, whereas everyone that responded wanted to be presented as Coastal Sámi. One participant was from a North Sámi family that had lived in Ume and Pite Sámi areas, and therefore felt connected to these Sámi cultures as well. Although some of the participants have family connections to reindeer husbandry, none of the participants described a close connection to the industry.

Choosing self-identification as a criterion excludes students that for reasons such as shame due to Norwegianisation does not identify as Sámi but still have family links to Sámi communities. It also limits the insight to only include participants that have a Sámi identity during the age span I have chosen and then does not include the perspectives from students that will shape a Sámi identity later in life. I have still chosen to have identity as a criterion because I consider seeing yourself as a part of the group as an important factor when you reflect on your school experiences. Having had a Sámi self-perception during the entire basic education were not a criterion, so some participants did not understand themselves as Sámi during their first years in school.

The age span of the participants was 18 – 25, with a majority on the lower age span. Over half of the participants were between 18 and 20 years old. I have chosen an age span that either are in upper secondary school or have finished secondary school relatively recently. Four of the participants were in upper secondary school at the time of the interviews.

I have chosen to not give the participants pseudonyms for two reasons that I became aware of during an informal dialogue with some of the participants after one of the interviews. First, pseudonyms would make the identities of the participants less visible than using identity categories. Second, I did not want as a Norwegian to choose the degree of Sáminess in the pseudonym name and leaving the decision of degree of Sáminess to the participants could potentially be a burden for some of them, particularly the ones from more Norwegianised families.

5.2.1. The participants' school context

By focusing on the Norwegian educational programme, I have limited the school experiences to outside some of the core Sámi areas. I believe the dynamics of identity construction, and likely also education about Sápmi, could be quite different in an area where most of the students, and possibly also the teacher, are Sámi. Limiting the pool of participants to outside some of the core Sámi arena makes the focus more centred on the experiences of being Sámi in classrooms there most of the students are not sharing the same Sámi identity. All the participants were in a minority position as Sámi during their Norwegian schooling.

The participants have attended school in a variety of municipalities within and outside of Sápmi, within the counties Oslo, Viken, Innlandet, Trøndelag, Nordland and Troms og Finnmark. I have used the county divisions as they are at the time of writing and not the time when the participants went to school, except for Troms and Finnmark. Due to the grand size of the county and its centrality within Sápmi, I have chosen to follow the county borders between Troms and Finnmark that existed before 2020. For reasons of anonymity, some participants are referred to on a regional level and not a county level. Some of the participants have had their schooling in several parts of the country. There is a diversity of urban and rural schooling. There is an over-representation of attendance at schools in Oslo compared to other counties among the participants. There is no presence of school attendance in Finnmark, an area with a relatively high percentage of Sámi population. Except for the first one and two

years of primary school for the two oldest participants, all participants have had their schooling during LK06.

Between 1st and 10th grade, eight of the participants were the only Sámi student in their class. Some of these said there were other Sámi students in other classes at school, while others said they were the only Sámi at school that they knew of. During upper secondary school (11th – 13th grade), five of the participants did not have Sámi classmates. Four had one Sámi classmate, and three had several. One of the participants has not been to upper secondary school. Two of the participants went to the same upper secondary school.

Ten of the participants had only non-Sámi teachers while learning about Sápmi, as far as they are aware of. For two of the participants, one of the teachers had been Sámi, and one participant had had several, but not exclusively, Sámi teachers while learning about Sápmi.

5.3. Conducting, transcribing, and analysing the interviews

The process of doing the interviews is described here, among reasoning for the choices made in the process. Then the process of working with the empirical material trough transcription, analysis and translation is accounted for.

5.3.1. Conducting the interviews

The interviews were conducted during February and March 2022. Geographically, three interviews with a total of 7 participants took place in Oslo and one interview with three participants took place in Bodø. The digital interview had three participants. The interviews lasted between 1,5 and 2 hours.

The participants got access to the interview questions between 3-7 days before the interview. This was done so that the participants had the opportunity to think through the questions in advance. This might help the participants activate old memories, and might lead to thicker, more detailed descriptions with more context information (Geertz, 2008). The participants were asked to consider experiences from 1st to 13th grade when answering the questions.

The interview guide started with a broad question about overall-perspectives, then followed more concretely in specific topics. Based on the conversation, I followed up with more questions if the participants said something that was unclear to me or toughed upon something I found particularly interesting for the thesis. In a retro perspective I would have reconsidered

having the broader question on overall experiences at the end. The order of the questions might affect the answers and having a more detailed conversation first might have taken that conversation into the overall answers. The reason why I chose to open with the overall perspectives was that I didn’t want the more detailed questions to lead the participants into specific tracks or focuses, and I found it less leading to start with overall perspectives.

The interviews were audio recorded. All participants were informed about this in advance, and when the recorder was started and stopped. Two advantages of audio recording are that the accuracy of what the participants said increases compared to making notes during the interview, and the interviewer has the possibilities to be more present during the interview (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). A disadvantage is that the awareness of the audio recorder might limit the flow of conversation at the interview.

The interviews were conducted in Norwegian. Conducting the interviews in the same language as the teachings discussed makes the language more accurate when discussing experiences with the participants. Since the experiences in schools also are likely to have happened in Norwegian, it will be an advantage to retell the experiences in the same language as the occurred. Also, enabling participation from Sámi persons with Norwegian as their first language ensures a wider representation of Sámi experiences and backgrounds. The group interviews would unfortunately not have been possible to conduct in its current version in Sámi. Not all the participants, nor the interviewer, speak a Sámi language. In addition, among the participants speaking a Sámi language, not everyone speaks the same language. There are however some weaknesses to the choice of language. Some participants had Sámi as their home language, and there might have been aspects that they could have expressed more easily or had worded differently in Sámi. The fact that the interviews will be done through the colonial language means that there is a risk that this might influence the participants’ possibilities of expressing Sámi culture, history, or traditional knowledge. This risk is also increased by the fact that the interviewer does not speak any of the Sámi languages.

5.3.2. Processing the data

The processing and organising of the empirical data went through several phases. First, the material was transcribed in Norwegian. Then the content was organised based on topics and concepts. After the organising, the analysing of the material took place. Direct quotes that

were to be used in the thesis were translated from Norwegian to English during the analysis process.

All interviews were transcribed in Norwegian. Transcription is a transformation of communication from one platform to another, and always carry the risk of changing meaning in the content (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 523). An interview is also a social setting with visual and other forms of non-verbal communication that might be lost (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015, p. 204). A completely literal transcription might reduce this risk of losing content and might also be more difficult to read and work with. I tried to stay close to a literal transcription but did some small adjustments for the readability of the material. Dialects were transcribed in Norwegian Bokmål, meaning that small adjustments in vocabulary and grammar took place to make it correct written language. Small adjustments were also done to the sentence structures some places to make correct sentences in a written language. The aim was to make as little changes as possible but still have a correct and easily readable language. Transcription means that some non-verbal communication will inevitably be lost (Cohen et al, 2018 p 523). I included non-verbal sounds that I found important, such as laughter or ironic tones, but most non-verbal communication was not transcribed.

The empirical data is organised by issue. The advantage of organising by issue is that it is easier to get a full overview of the different perspectives on the same issue, which gives a better understanding of the totality of the perspectives on the issue. A risk of such a response is that individual wholeness and integrity can be lost when the totality of individual comparisons disappears (Cohen et al, 2018). You also risk decontextualizing the data. For the first risk, the anonymity of some of the participants would have been threatened if the material were organised in a way which separated the participants clearly from each other consequently through the material. As for decontextualising the material, this is a worry. In group interviews, a lot of communication happens between participants in a context. They respond to each other, react to each other and help each other. When context is particularly relevant, I have included longer parts of the dialogue in the quotations. Data reduction has been necessary to avoid data overload (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015), and organizing the data around issues central to my research questions has helped me in excluding data that does not answer these.

Direct quotes are translated into English in the text, but filling words or repetitions without meaning to the content is excluded. Languages are never directly translatable, and different wordings might give a different association or impression of the quote. I have tried my best to

find a balance where I translate as directly as possible but still catches the meaning in the quotes in a best possible manner. It would have been an alternative to do the interviews in English, so that the participants themselves had gotten to choose preferred translations of the school context into English instead of having the conversation translated by me afterwards. A disadvantage is that for the participants to both translate the school context into English while having a conversation about it might affect the fluentness of the conversation and become a barrier against gathering the wanted information.

5.4. Research ethics and the researcher's position

The master thesis research is approved by NSD, Norwegian Centre for Research Data, and follow their criteria for research. This includes that all sensitive data is treated confidentially, and that informed consent and anonymity are bases in the interview process. Ethical considerations include my positionality and reflexive work done while doing research related to the experiences of individuals from an indigenous people.

5.4.1. Informed consent and anonymity

Participation in the project is voluntary and based on informed consent. Participants were informed both orally and written that they have the right to withdraw their participation without this having any negative effects for them. The participants were also informed written and oral that they did not have to answer all questions if they did not want to. Informed consent also involves giving relevant information about the project, so that the participants knew what they were consenting to. All participants were sent an information letter in advance, explaining key factors of the project such as purpose, process and usability. All participants got the interview guide between 7 and 3 days before the interview, for them to be able to read through them. There were no expectations of preparation other than reading through the questions, and this was also communicated to the participants. Getting the research questions in advance gives the participants a better possibility to decide to reserve themselves against specific questions or to decide to not participate at all.

The participants are guaranteed anonymity in the project. The Sámi population is so small in some municipalities in Norway that combining identities such as ethnicity, age and gender with geographical location would threaten their anonymity. Geography is therefore organized on a either county or regional level. For some participants, geographical references are made

more general to secure anonymity. Age is included where it is needed to separate individuals, but not included for most of the participants since combining age, ethnicity, gender identity and school location can threaten the anonymity of some of the participants.

Quotes are modified to exclude concrete geographical information in cases where this information might threaten the anonymity of the participant. A name of a municipality would then be changed to the/my/our municipality, while the name of a school would be changed to the/my/our school. To further secure anonymity, quotes that include several participants does not include information about school location but instead marked with numbers. These numbers are only given to separate the participants within one quoted conversation, meaning that the next conversation where for example the label "Participant 1" is used, it might be a different participant. After quotes with sensitive material, the information about the participant is completely removed.

Third parts that are discussed in the material, for example teachers, have not had the possibility to consent to participation, nor to give their version of the events. Anonymity is therefore also vital to maintain out of respect of third parts in the material. Audio recordings and transcriptions were stored in different locations than both each other and the rest of the material of this thesis.

5.4.2. Doing research as a non-indigenous person

Western research methodology has been criticised of carrying colonial heritage, and various scholars calls for a decolonisation of research methodologies (Smith, 2012, Chilisa, 2012, Lavallée, 2009). The Māori professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith has famously called research *"one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary"* (2012, p. xi). Research has contributed to misrepresentations of indigenous communities, appropriated traditional knowledge and an exotification and othering of indigenous persons (Smith, 2012).

I do not have a Sámi ethnicity, nor indigenous of any other sort. In relation to Sámi persons, I am in a position of whiteness (Dankertsen, 2019). Whiteness is in this context referring to a position of coloniality for the researcher (Quijano, 2000, Eriksen, 2022b, Dankertsen, 2019), and does not mean that I don't recognize that some Sámi persons can have positional whiteness in relation to other groups, as Dankertsen (2019) has pointed out. As a non-indigenous researcher with positional whiteness that is aiming at doing decolonial research, it is essential to do reflexive work (Eriksen, 2022b), meaning that I continuously need to reflect

on my positions of privilege and non-privilege in relation to the participants. Being Norwegian and doing research on Sámi youth carries a colonial heritage where research has played a central part and requires some ethical considerations.

I do have social links to Sámi communities. My partner is Sámi, and through them I have Sámi friends and a Sámi network. Although I am far from an insider in Sámi communities, I am also not a complete outsider. My Sámi links led to some ethical dilemmas, as I did not want my partner or friends to feel like exploited connections for a non-indigenous person to do research within indigenous spaces. Finding a balanced and respectful approach required dialogue and honest communication.

Being an outsider, meaning that you are not a part of the same group as the research participants, has its advantages and disadvantages. As an outsider, you might be able to approach topics that could be difficult for an insider to approach due to for example taboos within communities or marginalisation (Cohen et al, 2018, p. 260). You might also see or question patterns that an insider would not see or question. An insider might have normalized or considers a phenomenon or structures to be normative, which an outsider might consider questioning (Cohen et al, 2018).

However, being in a position of whiteness might also create blind spots of oppressive patterns in the meeting with the research participants (Eriksen, 2022b). As a (mostly) outsider and a non-indigenous person, it is difficult to achieve the same depth of understanding and to perceive contextualized knowledge fully that a Sámi person might have (Kanuha, 2000 p. 444). An insider in a community will have acquired depth understanding of culture and references over time (Kanuha, 2000, Cohen et al, 2018 p. 260), and a Sámi person might also have developed a better intuitive understanding of when oppressive patterns against Sámi persons outplays (Sibeko & Eriksen, 2022). If I were a Sámi person, I might have had a better understanding of the underlying meanings and cultural references and would possibly have gotten more out of the material. I might also have seen patterns of coloniality that I currently do not see due to my whiteness. This does of course not mean that all Sámi persons have the same cultural understandings, references, or abilities to see oppressive pattern, just that my knowledge of culture, references and experiences might be limited or have blind spots compared to many Sámi persons.

5.4.3. Positions of privilege and marginalisation

Categories of privilege or marginalisation based on social identities such as gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or bodily abilities shapes the perspectives of the researcher and might increase or decrease the distance between researcher and researched (Cohen et al, 2018). I'm educated as a teacher and I'm currently part of a project that aims to build competence on gender diversity and sexual diversity in schools. I have a background in queer and trans activism and seeing how students are marginalised in school based on gender identity or sexual orientation have made me interested in learning more about how other marginalised groups experience the Norwegian educational system.

As a queer and trans person, I am in a position of marginalization compared to straight and cis persons. This might however give an insight of structural oppression that is valuable in the meeting with both other queer and trans people and with other marginalised groups. Sandra Harding (1986) argues that knowledge cannot be separated from the position it comes from. Knowledge coming from marginalised positions, such as women, indigenous persons, or queer persons, have often been considered bias in research, while the knowledge of privileged positions has been considered more objective. Harding argues, however, that marginalised people hold a unique position in understanding societal patterns that the privileged does not see. Having experienced homophobia and transphobia in school myself gives insight in how educational institutions can be systemic violent.

Of course, structural oppression of queer and trans people functions differently than structural oppression of indigenous peoples, and my position as trans and queer does not give knowledge about *racist* systemic violence. My social identities of privilege, such as male, white, Norwegian educated, able-bodied, and older than the participants might also affect the trust of the participants, the information that they are comfortable with sharing and the accessibility of the information given.

My research questions are closely linked to the ethnic identities of the participants. This might both make the interviewees more vulnerable, since I do not have personal experience with the identities being discussed. My strategy for overcoming this was communicating clearly about the usage of the material and how it can and cannot be used, the voluntariness of the participation and that it can be redrawn, and that all research participants would get to read a draft of the thesis before it was delivered. Clear and honest communication about structure, intentions and expectations might contribute to building trust.

Interviews are organized by the researcher and takes the interviewee out of their familiar settings (Cohen et al, 2018). This might affect the power dynamic between interviewer and interviewee, where the interview setting is a much more familiar zone for the interviewer (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). By facilitating conversations through group interviews, where the participants spoke together instead of directly to me, I wanted to make the space as close to an exclusively Sámi space as possible and reduce the position of power for the researcher. I wished to become more of an observer than an active conversation partner, observing conversations between Sámi young adults. Of course, this does not mean that the researcher's presence could not have affected the conversation. The spaces are not entirely Sámi spaces if I am present. The interviewees were of course aware of my presence, but hopefully less affected than by a two-way-conversation.

A common critique on Western methodologies is that participants In research are reduced to objects of research that must share their knowledge without gaining anything either personally or on a community level (Smith, 2012). TallBear (2014) criticise the idea of "giving back" as a concept that forward an unbalanced dichotomy between the researcher and the researched and suggest instead to "stand with". A demand of "distanced objectivity" might prevent the possibility to contribute in ways that are meaningful for the given community or group (p. 6) To "stand with" requires allyship from a white researcher, where terms of what is good allyship is defined by the marginalised group rather than the researcher.

With having group interviews, the focus groups created a space for sharing experiences with other Sámi persons. This was an experience some of the participants afterwards expressed that had been a needed and positive experience. I do not know if this is representative for all the participants, as this was not something the participants were asked about. In the long term, I of course hope this master thesis can contribute to knowledge in both how to better the general teaching on Sámi issues for all students and to lower the chances of Sámi students having experiences of marginalisation, exotification, or discrimination in school. I consider to "stand with" a continuous process without an end date, and this means continue a dialogue on how the material can be useful for Sámi communities and organisations also after delivering the thesis.

Chapter 6: The teaching

This chapter presents the research participant's experiences with the content of the education about Sápmi. A conversation between two of the participants touches upon the variety of problems that many other participants also touched upon while reflecting upon the totality.

> Participant 1: Very little teaching.
>
> Participant 2: And very stereotypical. It's like…
>
> Participant 1: Yeah
>
> Participant 2: It's almost as if you get an image of somebody else. You do reindeer husbandry and sing Sámi Ædnan.
>
> Participant 1: It's a misguiding image.
>
> Participant 2: Yeah
>
> Participant 1: And it is very much like, if you are Sámi then you are exactly like that. Within a box.
>
> Participant 2: And often very degrading...

The further analysis of the empirical material will touch upon several of the aspects mentioned by these participants. The interviews showed a tendency that the teaching distanced the Sámi students from the Sápmi they knew, both in terms of geography, time, culture, history, and experiences of structural discrimination.

I first present the tendency of having experienced teaching that was inadequate and stereotypical. This was an overall and dominant experience among the participants. A lack of variety in representations from Sápmi leads to the image of Sápmi being reduced to a specific type of North Sámi inland reindeer husbandry culture during the participant's schooling. Many participants also criticised a lack of contemporary and local perspectives on Sápmi.

Second, the participants have described a general tendency of avoidance of addressing of coloniality and racism during the teaching. Structural oppression and colonial history were not addressed or addressed briefly. When the colonial history is presented, it is often presented in a way that isolates it from the contemporary situation in Sápmi.

6.1. Inadequate teaching

All 13 participants meant that the totality of the teaching they had gotten on Sámi topics between 1st and 13th grade was insufficient. Most participants argued that the overall quantity

of teaching had not been sufficient, that most topics were just handled superficially, and more time would have been needed to get more dept in the teaching. None of the participants were overall satisfied with the quality of the content, although some students were satisfied with the teaching from specific teachers or during specific grades. Several participants expressed frustration regarding lack of depth and meaning in the teaching activities.

> I think that a lot of the teaching that I have received, except for one Sámi teacher, there is a lot that is very useless, really. Like the fact that I know what the Sámi flag looks like, what am I going to do with that? Like, by itself. That I have coloured some pictures. What am I going to do with that? Right? It says very little, and there has been little insight. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

This illustrates the importance of context in the teaching. Why are the students doing what they are doing? What is the meaning behind the flag they are colouring? Another participant had a similar frustration connected to watching the movie the Kautokeino Rebellion. *"I did not feel that we were talking about the points behind the story after we had seen the movie"* (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms). Without a contextual frame, the activities become meaningless and not suitable to achieve the teaching requirements by themselves.

None of the participants were in total satisfied with the knowledge level of the teachers on Sámi topics, although some of the participants had positive experiences with individual teachers that they perceived as knowledgeable.

> It was as if a music teacher had been a substitute in a class of T-math [theoretical mathematics]. Only a lot of misinformation or vague information was given. Very superficial that could be misinterpreted. (Coastal Sámi non-binary person, Northern Norway)

The quote illustrates the importance of teachers having precise and knowledge-based information when teaching. One consequence of vague information is that the interpretation of the information is more dependent on the learner. Vague information might for example be interpreted differently from a Sámi student than a non-Sámi student. The general feedback from the participants on the teachers' inadequate knowledge levels is pursuant to previous research on previous research on teacher's knowledge levels (Lile, 2011, Røthing, 2017a).

6.2. Lack of diversity in the presentation of Sápmi

A lack of diversity in the way Sápmi were presented during the teaching was mentioned as problematic by all 13 participants. All the participants had heard stereotypical content about Sámis presented by teachers in ways they found problematic. The participants told stories of lessons influenced by stereotypical images of inland North Sámi reindeer herders. Most of the participants described that one of the overall impressions they are left with is that the teaching was based on stereotypes of what it means to be Sámi or stereotypes of Sámi communities.

> I noticed that it was a very one-sided perspective on the Sámi. So, when they talked about Sámi, what they really meant was North Sámi. And when they talked about Sámi traditional professions, then that was Sámi reindeer husbandry. (…) Yes, it's good to include that too, but they lifted a very small part of all the big and diverse things that the Sámi really are. I think that was a bit misleading. (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

This participant decodes the content behind general labels in the teaching for us, according to him, which says something about what was included but also excluded. When Sámi refers to North Sámi, it does not refer to Skolte, Lule, Pite, Ume or South Sámi culture, language and people, or Sámi language areas and cultures outside of Norway. When Sámi traditional professions are reduced to reindeer husbandry, Coastal Sámi traditional livelihood and professions are excluded. Several participants argued similarly that Sápmi had been reduced in geographical size during the teaching.

6.2.1. Sámi language areas

Several participants mentioned teachers talking about Sámi language in singular when it is in fact several languages, or not distinguishing between different Sámi cultures. Some of the participants said that Lule Sámi and South Sámi languages and cultures had not been mentioned at all. Some participants meant that language and cultural differences following the Sámi language areas had been mentioned, but that the main focus was on North Sámi. Several participants said that Sámi were talked about as one language. Some participants expressed frustration that the similarities between the languages were exaggerated by the teacher.

> It was North Sámi, that's the biggest, and then you have South Sámi and Lule Sámi, and there is no difference, other than that they speak almost the same, as Norwegian

> and Swedish. There was zero communication of differences between culture and language, really. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

Several other participants also meant that the teaching left an impression that the language differences were smaller than they are, and closer to dialectal differences than separate languages. Comparing Norwegian and Swedish with South Sámi and North Sámi is, as the participant states, misguiding. The two first are mutually understandable languages, while the two latter are not.

It is worth noticing that while most of the participants tended to talk about Sámi languages and cultures in plural, some of the participants tended to conjugate the Sámi language in singular in settings where it would be more correct to conjugate it in plural. This is a similar type of simplification of the diversity within Sápmi that the teachers are criticised to do. Of course, the teachers carry an educational responsibility through their profession that the research participants do not have but this also indicates that this simplification might also happen among Sámis. Another example of this is Gjerpe's (2021) analysis of social science textbooks for the Norwegian and Sámi educational programme, where the Sámi textbooks have a similar type of narrow perspectives of where and what Sápmi is as the Norwegian textbooks do.

6.2.2. Traditional industries and livelihoods

All participants argued that there was either a lack of or too little emphasis on the diversity of traditional Sámi livelihoods or industries in the teaching. All participants said that Sámi reindeer husbandry had been the central focus when having education about Sápmi, in a way that overshadowed other Sámi industries and livelihoods. Some participants meant that reindeer husbandry was presented as the only Sámi livelihood or industry. Several participants meant that Costal Sámi culture and traditional industries had not been mentioned at all during their schooling. The participants that had had about Coastal Sámi culture did however criticise other lacks in nuances. One participant argued that even though Coastal Sámis were mentioned, the information was too superficial. This led to an exclusion of farming as a part of Coastal Sámi culture, and an unnuanced division between Sámi and Norwegian communities and traditional industries in coastal areas.

> It is as if one has to have the reindeer as livelihood to be Sámi. It's like, farming and fishing, that's something that everyone else is doing too, so why is that Sámi? (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms and Oslo)

The quote illustrates that a stereotypical image of who is Sámi limits the perspectives of which Sámi traditions are being presented as Sámi. The Sámi here seems to be constructed in the opposition of the Norwegian. Reindeer husbandry is marked as Sámi because it is different from Norwegian culture, while fishing and farming has also been a part of Norwegian traditional livelihoods and is therefore not marked as Sámi in the same way. This is an example of how what being Sámi means is presented from a Norwegian and not a Sámi point of view.

The findings correlates with research on textbooks, where a limited diversity of geography and cultural variations leaves a limited impression of Sápmi (Eriksen, 2018a, Gjerpe, 2021, Kolpus, 2015). The limited understanding of traditional Sámi livelihoods made it more difficult for some of the participants to see themselves or their families in the material.

> I have a family that is Sámi who runs a farm. That, we have always talked about as a Norwegian industry. And it was not mentioned that it is also a Sámi industry. (North Sami woman, Troms)

If Norwegian and Sámi are used as dualities without understandings of overlap or that some traditional industries are practiced both by Norwegians and Sámis, there is a risk of industries such as farming is being portrayed as an exclusively Norwegian traditional industry. The lack of understanding farming as something Sámi can be understood theoretically as a lack of what Sissons (2005) refers to as an oppressive demand of indigenous authenticity. While reindeer husbandry gets to be represented as an authentic Sámi traditional industry, farming is something Norwegians also have done and therefore not a part of an indigenous – non-indigenous duality. Farming is not something that differs the indigenous and non-indigenous population, therefore it is not framed within the "authentic Sáminess".

6.2.3. A Sápmi far away

As a general tendency, the research participants had experienced a lack of local Sámi culture during the education about Sápmi. All the participants having their primary and secondary education within Sápmi expressed a wish to connect the material to the local Sámi culture and

history to a larger degree than today. Most of the participants argued that the teaching had a limited focus centring the inner parts of Finnmark. Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) and Kárášjohka (Karasjok) were frequently mentioned as areas of defining focus when talking about Sami issues.

> I wish we had learned something as simple as the Sámi place names in ... If only in the municipality. Or the meeting between the language areas. Because they were not such hard borders. And the interaction between the different groups, then, and how it ... then you of course go a little in depth, but even here! The municipality is in the middle of Sápmi, really. Geographically. And even here it was surprising how much there were still, like, the Sámis live in Finnmark. Or like, far away. But we are the heart of Sápmi too. Supposedly there didn't live any Sámis here, but the traces are everywhere around us. (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

The same participant also argued that geographical perspectives were simplified, ignoring that Sámis and Norwegians affected each other's communities and that some areas were mixed of Sámis and Norwegians.

> And then it was like, Norwegians live on the islands and Sámis lived in the fjords, sort of. But it was much more complex than that. You lived very much side by side. Around each other. (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

These two quotes seen together tells of teaching that is not situating itself in the context of the students. The students are situated in a local context of both Sámi and Norwegian presence, while the teaching ignores the Sáminess of the area or isolates the communities more than the participant thought was accurate. Another participant commented on the same tendency and pointed out that this also ignored the Sámi individuals in the local context.

> Considering my family, who have all been fishermen, for the most part, and have spoken Sámi, it is almost a bit offending that somehow it is not talked about at all when there is so much Sámi history where I come from. Sámi industry, families with Sámi speakers in. Not anymore, though. And then we talk about other Sámis than those who are here. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

Local Sámi culture and history is possibly more relevant for the participants that had gone to school within Sápmi, and most participants with their schooling outside of Sápmi did not comment on local perspectives.

A participant meant that prejudice and racism might affect the willingness to teach about local Sámi culture, because the teachers might be afraid to trigger negative attitudes in the classroom.

> I think it is a bit understandable that nothing was mentioned about the local Sápmi. I cannot count how many times, after we put up Sámi signs with location names in Sámi, about how many times there has been vandalism on them. So I would say that it is a bit understandable considering how people are treated here, that it is not talked about in schools. The local aspect is not really taught about. I think it's a bit understandable because it is ... It's probably a bit due to poor knowledge, but I think also because you want to protect. That it should not get worse. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

Another participant similarly commented on how areas with a Sámi presence also had more negative attitudes against Sámis.

> I have noticed that in some areas where there is more Sámi presence, in really, in the population, people are more against it. Because then it gets so close to yourself, and then it becomes difficult. While in areas where it has traditionally been less, people care less as well. I have experienced less stigma in areas where there is less impact, you are less visible then. (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

As pointed out by these two participants, local Sámi connections might be avoided because of fear of triggering negative attitudes and potentially harmful conversations in class. Problematic outcome might have good intentions from the teachers and might be a risk calculation. Research from teaching on Islam in Religion and Ethics show that teachers often avoid controversial topics out of fear of having escalating and Islamophobic situations in class, and that teachers lack professional training in how to handle extreme and oppressive statements in the classroom (Hammer & Schanke, 2018).

6.2.4. A past Sápmi

The interviews unveiled a tendency of connecting Sápmi to past issues and ignoring contemporary perspectives. Most of the participants argued that they had had little about how Sápmi is today. Several participants also criticised a tendency of speaking about Sámi topics as it was no longer a current issue.

> I remember that they talked about it, but then it was more like "before there were Coastal Sámi here". And then that was misinformation. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms).

Today's consequences of historical events were characterized as lacking or insufficient by all participants, including the participants that had had teachers that they found knowledgeable while teaching about historical events. A lack of perspectives of today's consequences of the Norwegianisation policy were mentioned by several participants.

> How it affects today is not much talked about, other than that the language is dying out. Not so much about the traumas people carry. Many do not know that they have a Sámi heritage because they have grandparents and great-grandparents who have become so Norwegianized that they do not want to talk about it. (Coastal Sámi man, Trøndelag)

The indications of a lack of contemporary perspectives on Sámi issues in the participants' education has an interesting correlation with Røthing's study from 2017. In the 2017 study, teachers meant that students did not find teaching about Sápmi in a contemporary perspective relevant. This is however disproven when the students get visitors from the program Samiske Veivisere, or Sámi Pathfinders (Røthing, 2017a p. 38).

6.3. Norwegian colonial history is not addressed

As a general tendency, the participants tell of experiences of teaching that avoids the addressing of Norwegian colonial history in Sápmi. The participants meant that the Norwegianisation process was either not talked about at all, covered very briefly or not covered in a way that made their classmates understand the graveness of it. Out of the thirteen participants, eleven could remember having education about the Norwegianisation process in school. The empirical material of narratives of the Norwegianisation process is based on these eleven participants. Two of the participants could not remember the Norwegianisation policies being addressed in school at all. One participant could not remember the Norwegianisation process being addressed as an initiative from teachers but rather through student-based initiatives.

> With the Norwegianisation process and such, no, there has been nothing. And because of that we don't teach anything about it because that ... It seems as if it hasn't

> happened, then. And then you must seek out the information yourself. (Coastal Sámi woman, Eastern Norway and Troms)

Four of the participants that could remember that the Norwegianisation policy were mentioned, said this was only briefly covered. Lack of details, depth and understanding were criticised by these participants.

> When we learned about Norwegianisation it was very poor. We did not learn anything about racism against the Sámi, and we did not hear anything about boarding schools and how people were treated there either. That was when it was not allowed to speak Sami, basically. We didn't learn anything about it. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms and Oslo)

The remaining six participants described more of a coverage of the Norwegianisation process than a short mentioning. Three of these argued that the coverage was brought up by only one teacher. One of these participants had a Sámi teacher that had brought up the Norwegianisation process. Even though the teacher was Sámi herself with a close family member that had been to one of the boarding schools, the participant still argued that the coverage had been given too little time. The Norwegianisation process was also not included by other teachers during the participant's schooling.

Two participants remembered a broader coverage of the Norwegianisation process in school. One of them said that at their school, they went through several of the central factors during the Norwegianisation process, such as name changes, land laws, boarding schools and racial research.

6.3.1. Biases

All participants that could remember having about the Norwegianisation process expressed that the brutality and reality of it was under-communicated. The under-communication of seriousness was argued as taking place both because of a lack of details and because of the focus in the taught content. *"I don't feel that they told the truth"* (Coastal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo) and *"it's not like you get a sense of what really happened"* (South Sámi woman, Oslo) are examples of participants not agreeing in the perspectives presented in the lessons.

Several participants also expressed that the teaching was biased towards Norwegian perspectives when addressing the Norwegianisation process.

> We learned about scientific racism and the Norwegianisation policy and the Alta conflict, but it was somehow from the Norwegian perspective and not from the Sámi side. So you learned to see it from the Norwegian side, but you never learned the Sámi side of the case in the first place. It has somehow been a bit useful, but it does not feel that useful for someone sitting here on the opposite side and is trying to figure out how this was for my parents and grandparents (…) They do not want to bring out the dirty stuff that was done. That is, everything from Christianization and the execution. That they burned down lavvos and Sámi drums. The fact that they physically took children from their parents and put them in a school and never got to speak Sami again. That if you dared to say something in Sámi then you were chased, mostly. You did not learn about that. You did not learn about the ugly side of it, you learned an embellish version of it. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

This participant's frustration of Norwegian biases can be understood in a perspective of opposing colonial narratives. Fjellheim (2020) and Smith (2012) expresses that counter stories from indigenous people might change the perspectives of an event. The participant is protesting that the concrete cases of grave oppression during the Norwegianisation process were not taught about. Second, she points out that her position in this is different from most of her classmates Ie she has a family connection to the material. The teaching does not give her perspectives of the Norwegianisation process in a way that can help her understand experiences that her family might have. Considering the loss of Sámi identities along the coast of Sápmi during and after the Norwegianisation policy (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020), this information might not be available for many Sámi students at home, particularly in Coastal Sámi areas. The family might be Norwegianised, or family traumas might prevent them from telling younger generations about previous events.

The perspectives of bias teaching about Sápmi are not compatible with the Norwegian schools ambition of having an anti-discriminatory effect, or to build solidarity between people (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015a). Solidarity and equality requires to challenge the consequences that the Norwegianisation process had, which would require decolonial counter stories. The participants' accounts tells of untold stories and perspectives in the narratives of the Norwegianisation process. Or, as a participant expresses it, *"it is not necessarily a*

negative thing to learn from the Norwegian [perspective], but the problem is that it is only the Norwegian perspective" (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland).

6.3.2. Lack of long-term consequences

A lack of focus on the long-term consequences of the Norwegianisation process were critisised by most of the participants. While many of the participants understood the Norwegianisation process as an ongoing process, these participants argued that the Norwegianisation process was taught as something that had a hard finish and did not affect policies today.

> There is a lot of focus on the fact that things have been difficult before ... Things have been bad, but now we are all friends. (…) Colonization continues in my eyes, and so does Norwegianisation. I do not think that the policy is finished today. I think it continues. And then in a way you have someone standing there and just, "the country of Norway is founded on the territory of two peoples. Before, things were difficult, but now we are all friends and love each other". (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

> It was very, like, yes, it has happened. We do not do it anymore because we found out that this was not a good thing to do. Now we're nice. (Coastal Sámi man, Trøndelag).

These two participants both communicate that not only had the teaching under-communicated contemporary consequences of colonisation, but it had been actively communicated during the teaching that there is a low tension, or no tension at all, between Norwegian and Sámi communities. This can be understood as a communication of Norwegian exceptionalism (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012). Even if there is a recognition of a colonial history, there is not a recognition of this colonial history affecting the relationships between Norwegians and Sámis today. This creates tension with the participants' perspectives of both today's consequences of the Norwegianisation process and the relationships between Norwegians and Sámis.

In line with the previously described general absence of local content and contemporary content, a participant missed a connection to local history and current communities in the teaching of the Norwegianisation process.

> It is very much about the past, and not the present, or how Norwegianisation affects the Sámi today. (…) And to link it to our Sámi area, where the school is, which has Sámi persons and which has Sámi history. And nothing was linked to that at all. (…) The way we talked about it, I never understood the seriousness of it. It was never set in our geographical area. Nothing was said about the Norwegianisation there. Or it was mentioned in passing. What they did not talk about was that this happened to my grandparents, and very many others' grandparents, and what it meant. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

The lack of focus on contemporary consequences of the Norwegianisation process must be viewed together with Sápmi being described as distant in time and space, as described in sub-chapter 7.2. The participants' statements correspond with Røthing's (2015) research on racism as a topic in Norwegian schools. Textbooks use examples from the USA instead of from Norway and focus on events from the beginning and middle of the 20th century instead of contemporary examples (p. 80). This contributes to leaving an impression that structural oppression belongs to the past in distant places, much like the participant's accounts tells of lessons that has given the impression that the Norwegianisation process is an ended process without contemporary consequences.

6.4. Avoidance of contemporary structural oppression

The lack of lines from past oppression and to today's consequences is in line with a broader question of how contemporary structural oppression is dealt with. The participants have not experienced contemporary discrimination and racism towards the Sámi population as a prioritised topic. This leaves a narrative in school of Norway as more equality-based than it is in reality. None of the participants remembered Sámis being mentioned while having lessons about racism, but some could remember teachers talking about racism against Sámis while having lessons about Sámi topics. Some participants could not remember any addressing of discrimination or racism against Sámis at all. A lack of temporary perspectives was criticised, such as today's consequences of the Norwegianisation policy or what discrimination against Sámis looked like today.

The teaching requirements are not directly requiring that teaching about Sámi and teaching about racism and discrimination must overlap, but one can easily argue that to learn about

racism in Norway and to learn about Sámi society today requires that they are put in context with each other.

6.4.1. Teaching about contemporary discrimination and racism

As with contemporary perspectives on Sámi issues in general, contemporary perspectives were also lacking when talking about structural discrimination of Sámis. Many participants described discrimination or structural racism against Sámis as something that were considered a past issue. "*When it comes to racism against Sámis in teaching, it's like, they have been discriminated against and have had racist experiences.*" (Coastal Sámi non-binary person, Northern Norway). This indicated an understanding of racism towards Sámis as an ended phenomenon. Few of the students could remember contemporary discrimination of Sámi people being addressed directly.

> In primary school, there was no talk of it. Not in lower secondary school either. But in upper secondary school, there was a little more focus in the history lessons. That it has been. She brought it up as a shock, we have had oppression of minorities here in Norway we too. That it was kind of like, oh, wow! We have that too! It came as a shock to many, I feel. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

The "shock" effect could be seen as an indication that the teacher believes that the students are not aware of oppressive structures in Norway. Bringing up structural oppression as a shock may also indicate that the situation is extraordinary, that this is an exception from an equality-based Norway. When brought up, the teacher is disturbing the Norwegian exceptionalism. The participant's reaction, however, seems distant to the shock that others felt. The participant had a different level of awareness of oppression against Sámis than her non-Sámi classmates, which could be understood through Harding's (1986) standpoint theory as well as norm critical pedagogy. The personal position of the participant makes her see oppression that is invisible to others.

Prejudice and negativity towards Sámis were discussed by all focus groups as a potential negative affecter of the quality of the teaching. The focus group in Bodø was the one where the participants most clearly believed that negative attitudes in the local community had affected their teaching in a negative way. Taboos on speaking about experiences with

discrimination, or discrimination in general, were discussed by this group as a reason for the lack of focus on discrimination in school.

> It is very looked down on to talk about the discrimination against Sámis. Particularty here in Northern Norway. (…) The norm here is not to talk about the discrimination that has been carried out. And then it gets reflected quite well in the teaching you get. (Participant in the Bodø focus group)

None of the participants could remember any examples of Sámis being mentioned as a group experiencing racism while learning about racism in school. Two participants did however point out that racism against Sámis were mentioned while having about Sámi issues.

> The times I was taught about racism, it was mainly focusing on skin colour. And it had nothing to do with indigenous peoples. I do not know if, I have a little theory that there has been very little teaching about it, especially in Norwegian, then, because it is actually a very painful topic for our Norwegian national pride. (Coastal Sámi woman, Eastern Norway and Troms)

Here, the racism taught in school differs from the participants' own understanding of racism. The participant describes racism as a concept that includes indigenous peoples, while the teaching left it out of the conceptualisation of racism. Another aspect the participant points out is that she believes national pride might be an obstacle for teaching about Norwegianisation. This is expressed by several other participants as well.

> When we had about racism ... We learned about the slave trade and about how things went with Columbus and about when they went to the USA, and also .. We learned about the indigenous peoples in Australia, aboriginal I think they were called, and there we found out much more about how brutal it was for them than what we learned about our own indigenous peoples. And I remember that I kind of questioned that. That, very good that we learn about more indigenous peoples, and what they have been through, that it was terrible, but why did we not talk about how we treated our own indigenous people? (Coastal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo)

Colonialisation might be easier to teach when it occurred far away. Criticising the USA or Australia does not challenge an image of a peaceful Norway and might create less discursive conflicts to teach about.

One participant criticised how economic and territorial aspects of the consequences were not addressed at all.

> I think there has been little focus on maybe, like, the land conflict in everything. What it has meant for industry, land and water, and so on. I think it has been a bit too focused on maybe language and ... or, it hasn't been focused on that either, but that you in a way it loses a lot of the bigger picture that make you also understand why this happens. Losing the big picture of colonization, loss of land ... These things. That there may have been more focus on people being ashamed of being Sámi, than that it is like, people lose their livelihood, people lose their land. Their areas. That I think have been completely missing. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo).

The tendency of avoiding recent structural oppression is also found in the textbooks used in the same period. While looking at the descriptions of the Álttá / Guovdageaidnu conflict, Askeland (2015) found that the Norwegian textbook was more avoiding and unclear than the Swedish and Sámi textbooks on the same event.

If sensitive topics such as power-critical perspectives, experiences of racism or Norwegian colonisation are being avoided in class, or if the content differs from what the students learn in their communities, then the school system risks creating a divide that might affects the student's trust to the school system and feeling of belonging to the school community.

6.4.2. "Reversed" racism

One participant had experienced the teacher focusing on how Norwegians experienced oppression from Sámis. Because of the detailed descriptions, I have chosen to completely anonymise this participant.

> The whole lesson was about the Sámis having rights that Norwegians do not have. Like with reindeer husbandry and such. And that all Sámis in [a municipality] were alcoholics. (…) So he was very condescending. And there were some in the class who joined him as well. And then there was someone in the class who was very like, you cannot say that, you judge everyone now. (…) It became a big deal. It was discussed with the principal and everything. But it was not constructive. It was just negative. And it is very bad towards... Well, I do not think he was used to the fact that suddenly

> there was a Sámi there, because he didn't know that. But it was dealt with. It was. But I do not know what he is doing now, whether he continues to do the same or whether he is more careful. (…) What happened was that we told. And then I wrote a letter of complaint. And then we had a conversation with the principal and with the teacher. And then I was taken out of that class. (…) It was a bit like a bullying case where the victim of bullying has to go. It was a little weird. And then I was also told not to talk loudly about it in class, that there had been such drama with that teacher. But I said I couldn't do that. Because I have to defend myself. I have to tell my classmates that this was completely wrong. (Participant)

There is two aspects I would like to dress on this quote. First, a narrative of reversed racism, that it is now Sámis that are oppressing Norwegians, were brought up in school by a participant's teacher. As there are a broad documentation of discrimination of Sámis in Norway and not the other way around, this narrative is not supported by research. This leads to a question of how the Norwegian school system understands racism. If racism is understood as any kind of discriminatory behaviour based on race and ethnicity, then any person can experience racism, also white and non-indigenous people. However, if racism is understood as structural oppression based on race and ethnicity, then white Norwegians are not experiencing racism. The teacher does however seem to have taught students that Norwegians as a group experience structural oppression from the Sámi community, which has no support in research.

Second, the school took this participant seriously when they complained to the school management about the lesson. This means that there is a form of recognition from the school that the situation was unwanted. Yet, the participant felt that they had of carry the weight of being a whistle blower, and that the event did not have any consequences for the teacher while the participant had to change class. To confront racist or in other way oppressive language often comes with a cost. Crittle & Maddox (2017 p. 175) argue that confronting oppression can lead to irritation, anger, and loss of privileges, especially if the confronter belongs to the marginalised group. In this case, the fact that the participant had to change class can be seen as a negative consequence of calling out teaching that they found problematic.

6.5. Emotional responses and identity work

I will now look at some of the emotional responses that got triggered by the participants from the teaching. I start with the participant's perspectives of how the teaching triggered feelings of shame and pride, before looking at some specific cases related to identity development as Sámis. A central question is how the education about Sápmi affected the participants' process in building and developing a Sámi identity.

6.5.1. Feeling shame

In general, few experiences of teaching that triggered pride were shared, while the feeling of shame was more commonly triggered during the lessons. While some participants had concrete memories of pride during the teaching, the experiences of feeling shame outnumbered the experiences of feeling pride. Several participants meant that the teaching had made them internalise racism. This section only considered the feelings triggered during the lessons and does not tell anything about general feelings of pride and shame connected to Sámi identities. Several participants explained how the shame felt connected to the teacheingteaching made them internalise racism towards Sámis.

> I felt almost a little more ashamed after the lesson, more than that I felt proud. (…) I felt that they portrayed the people as uncivilized, and that was not something I wanted to be a part of. (…) It was like, this is not me. And I did not feel any pride, I rather felt shame that I later had to work to get rid of. (Coastal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo)

The participant's statement indicates an Othering of Sámis during class, where Norwegians are the civilized unity in the classroom and the Sámis are the uncivilised Other. The Othering led to shame of belonging to the Othered group.

> I internalised a negative image. Not an image of a resistance struggle, a living culture... Either it was really bad, or it was really distant. And nothing fitted, and nothing was somehow constructive, then. And I think that was difficult. (…) I did not do that as a child. I did not do that when I started school or when we started Sámi language lessons. But I kind of did it after a couple of months. I was like, no, you know what, I'm not Sámi. I take it back, I take back everything I said. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

The experiences of feeling shame and internalise racism is in grand opposition to the students' entitlement to a safe and health-promoting school community, and very far away from the educational system's ambition of having an anti-discriminatory effect. While the school is making this participant internalise racism, she is also giving the recipe of a strategy that would change this: images of resistance and a living culture.

6.5.2. Feeling pride

Eight of the participants could not remember any moments where teaching on Sámi topics had triggered a feeling of pride of being Sámi. Some participants did however have concrete memories of pride being triggered. One participant had felt pride when a family member visited the school as a guest and held a lecture on Sámi topics. Two participants mentioned teaching about the Sámi cultures' relationship to nature as something that made them proud. The Sámi National Day, Sámi resistance and Sámi movements were mentioned as other topics that had triggered feelings of pride when mentioned during teaching.

> I felt that I was proud when they started talking about the Sámi National Day. (…) When she explained about the National Day and why we had it, it made me feel good to hear that it was recognized in a proper way. And then I was left with a very proud feeling. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

> When there were Sámi women camping outside the Norwegian Parlament. And it was the first time I have been able to say that I am proud to be Sámi, when that was included in the teaching. But then again that it was only women, Sámi women. It was presented as if they were strong women. It was not presented in a way that they were strong Sámi women. And then again, you get more that feeling of being proud to be a woman than being proud to be Sámi. Because when everything else is presented in such a negative way, and that you always are to be less valuable than a white Norwegian, to say the least, then you somehow can't be proud when you get the teaching and the facts that you do. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

One potential explanation of why the National Day and Sámi organising triggers feelings of pride might be that they are connected to Sámi agency. The National Day and Sámi

movements happens on term from the Sámi community and centres Sámi issues. This is in opposition of a position as Othered, distant or belonging to the past. The feeling of pride was in the last quote triggered despite the school not connecting the strength to the Sáminess but got triggered because the respondent made this connection herself. The participant states quite clearly that being proud did not appear to be an intention in the lecture.

6.5.3. Relating to own identity as Sámi

While feelings of pride might strengthen a Sámi identity, the triggered feeling of shame might lead to participants distancing themselves from being Sámi. When the participants didn't relate to the Sápmi being taught about in school, several participants distanced themselves from a Sámi label during or in the aftermath of the teaching. All participants said that lack of diversity made it difficult to recognise themselves in the information about Sámis being taught in school.

> I quickly experienced that it was like, "Oh, this is certainly not me!" That it was very much like, it was not known at all. (...) It never felt close when the teachers talked about it. It never felt like this was something that happened to my family and so. It was very distant. Everything with reindeer husbandry and speaking Sámi and stuff, so it was a very distancing of it all. What it means to be Sámi today, for example. (…) For me, who is also Sámi, it feels like an interesting adventure, to hear about someone who had lots of reindeer and believed in a completely different religion. It didn't feel close to me at all, really. At least that's how I felt during parts of primary school. (North Sámi woman, 19, Oslo)

Stereotypes distance the Sámi students from the image of a Sámi person, which is portraited to the point of no recognition for the participant. Kumashiro (2002, p. 40) describes knowledge based on stereotypes as an oppressive knowledge. Stereotypes leads to only partial truths or misrepresentation about the Other from the perspective of the normative, in this case Norwegians. Stereotypes about Sápmi does not only affect the Norwegian student's view of Sápmi, but also how the students understand their Sámis classmates. Several participants drew a direct link between stereotypical content in the teaching, and how that forwarded stereotypical ideas to the other students about them as Sámis.

> Showing pictures of Sámis with lavvos, then you give a lot of children that, like, “You live in lavvos! You have reindeer in the garden!” I feel like that is very much the image that is created of us through the teaching. (…) “Oh, do you live in a lavvo, do you live in a lavvo!” is shouted from the entire classroom. And then the teacher says, “No, you must remember that not all Sámis live in lavvos”. And then I say, “No, in fact, I don’t think you can find that many Sámis living in lavvos right now”. Unless they’re moving the reindeer, sort of. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

This participant’s story from primary school tells of a direct link between stereotypical teaching and the children’s logical conclusion that all Sámis belong within this stereotype, and consequently also the Sami student in the class. When the teacher tries to correct this, the impression is still not corresponding with the participant’s experiences with Sámi communities. The participant is then left in a position where she needs to correct the perception given in class. This position was referred to and recognised by many of the other participants. Another participant referred to this position as a position of defence.

> I felt that you had to put on the shield a little bit. You went in and prepared for having to defend yourself, or to get a slightly sore comment, or some misleading story of what the Sámi really is. (South Sámi woman, Oslo)

One participant believed that the school had not affected her views on Sápmi despite the teaching, thanks to her Sámi network.

> The image the school, or the teaching, has created of Sápmi for me was distant from what I knew before. That I previously had been quite a lot exposed to what it is, and then I am told that this is not that big. It’s not that good. It’s not as much as you should want it to be. And then I’m like that, yes, I think that’s what I know. I felt I knew so much more. It was not like I felt pulled back, but I was a little more locked inside. My social circle. But then I’m lucky because I’m from such a large family that is so engaged that it did not affect my perspective very much. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

Drawing from the importance of indigenous counter stories (Smith, 2012, Fjellheim, 2020), the participant has alternative stories about the Sámi and Sápmi that she trusts more than the information from school. Like her, some other participants also expressed little trust in the

information from school. This led to the students in doing their own research to deconstruct learned information, or to build up a positive self-image and Sámi identity.

> "I have really had to work to somehow deconstruct everything I have learned. And pull things apart. And what was actually right, and what was wrong?" (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

A stereotyped narrative of what a Sami is reduces the possibilities of having space for the complexity of identities that any human has. This is particularly relevant when people experience multiple layers of marginalisation. One participant mentioned an idea of all Sámis being Sámi-speakers as making it more difficult to recognise themselves in the material. Two of the participants said that the representation of what it meant to be Sámi in school made it more difficult for them as queer Sámi persons to recognise themselves.

> What was missing is that there are Coastal Sámis, there are queer Coastal Sámis, there are trans Sámis, and all of them apply to me. I feel that I am such a completely different outcome than the diversity, in quotation marks, which was told at school." (Completely anonymised participant)

> I'm also queer. And trans. And Coastal Sámi. And live in the city. So that's not what you learn about at all. (Completely anonymised participant)

Education that addresses identity-based oppression often fails to recognize oppression experienced by students that experience marginalization based on several identities (Kumashiro, 2002, p 38). This is here exemplified by participants that are queer and trans, but also applies to for example Sámis of colour, Sámis with disabilities, Sámis from families with low socio-economic status and other intersections of marginalised identities. When identity is treated as a singular, only some specific individuals get to count as an authentic representative from the given group (p. 56).

6.6. Sámi language lessons

As an example of a structural coloniality in the school, I will now address the conversations various participants raised in the focus groups on how Sámi language classes had been denied them in school. Five of the participants expressed frustration and anger that they did not get

Sámi classes in school. Some did not know they were entitled to language classes, and others did not get it although they requested it.

One participant sums up her attempts to get Sámi language classes here:

> I think I asked a teacher during sixth grade, can I get Sámi language education? Please! And then she says, um, it's going to be a bit difficult. (...) Then, in lower secondary school I said, ok, now I've read up on it, I'm entitled to it. And then she says, yes, but, you should have had it sooner. And then I was like, but, when? No, you should have had it from primary school. Then I tried to explain that, well, how am I supposed to, with a mother who is Norwegianised and a father who doesn't know anything about this, be six years old and be like, I want Sámi language education! And now I, as a six-year-old, will fight for it! And then I started upper secondary school, and they say, like, now we can't actually do anything. You should have gotten it in lower secondary school. Sorry.. (North Sámi woman, 19, Oslo)

Some of the participant that had had Sámi language lessons, were frustrated by the quality of the lessons. The critique was that they had a lack of continuity, did not have a logical or good system for progression or that it was digital.

> I have had Sámi 4 for three years. And I feel that I could have progressed a lot further if I didn't have to continue to every year have the basic that goes over and over. Although you show that you can move on, you are not allowed to move on. (Coastal Sámi non-binary person, Northern Norway)

Speaking a Sámi language can be a vital part of building up a Sámi identity. Sámi languages functions as an important identity marker, and many Sámi persons consider language a vital part of what it means to be Sámi and (Berg-Nordlie, 2021 p. 12). Familiarity to a Sámi language opens gates into the Sámi spaces where these languages are spoken.

The denial of or insufficiency of the Sámi language classes built a more complicated relationship and weakened trust between the given participants and the schools. It is also relevant to understand some of the frustration that some of the participants expressed when having teaching about racism while feeling poorly treated as Sámi students.

> "I think it [racism towards Sámis] is quite emotional topic. But also because of how close it is. It was taken up when we learned about the Norwegianisation policy, then.

That was when there was racism against the Sámi, that was what we learned. And it's quite tragic to say that, really, but it was kind of only when it was brought up. I think it's quite comical considering what kind of school I went to and how you were treated there by them. Because I was denied Sámi language classes at school, even though all Sámis are entitled to Sámi language education." (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

The participant here points out how teaching about structural oppression is emotional because it is experienced. The lack of access to language classes can be understood a structural coloniality that is not allowing her access to developing her language, which is also a denial of a Sámi identity marker. The participant points out the tension in learning about structural oppression while at the same time experiencing it from the same school. Research shows that Sámi youth that know how to speak Sámi and that have a strong Sámi identity are less likely to experience minority stress (Bals et al, 2010). Eggebø and Stubberud (2016) argues that Sámi language skills can help building a Sámi community, a stronger Sámi identity for the individual and reduce the risk of experiencing minority stress.

Considering the centrality of destroying the Sámi languages in the Norwegianisation process, the lack of access to learning Sámi in school exemplifies a result of at coloniality in the educational system. The previous forced language shifts in schools during the Norwegianisation policy appears to be continuing in new shapes.

6.7. Counter stories: good experiences and wanted content

While the overwhelming majority of the participants' stories were negative experiences, much can also be learned from positive experiences and examples. In this section first I present a couple of counter stories, where participants had good experiences with education about Sápmi. The first example is from an external visit. The second example is when doing is the centre of the learning activity. I then present some key aspects from conversations about what the participants would have liked to learn in school.

Several participants mentioned visits from Sámi persons as positive experiences during the interview. As a counter story, the elaboration of one of the participants is particularly interesting.

> I had a good experience in upper secondary school, where we got a… It was a Norwegian class, where we had a Sámi person there, who taught us a lot of Sami and talked about Norwegianisation in a very good way. And there was no such thing as “who here are Sámi” and sort of “what is your experience?” And it was a guest. She was not a teacher at school, she just visited. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

This participant seems to appreciate the visit for two reasons. First, the visitor was knowledgeable on Sámi topics and the Norwegianisation process. Having Sámi representation and role-models is mentioned as positive, but the participant’s focus on why this was a positive experience is on competency and not on identity. This means that all teachers, regardless of their ethnicity, can create better experiences for all the students. Second, the guest lecturer did not divide the room between Sámis and non-Sámis or made the space about individual Sámi person’s experience. In that sense they avoided Othering the Sámis in the room. This example shows two aspects that was important for the participant, knowledge about Sápmi and pedagogical skills to not Other anyone in the room.

The second counter story is a baking activity from Food and Health from when the participant was about ten years old

> Person 1: Maybe it was just that we cooked. Did something physical. Because that’s how the Sámi culture really is. So it’s with your hands. And you don’t just bring up heavy stuff, maybe. Now we make something that is Sámi, and that is bread. And it’s not even reindeer meat, it’s bread.
> Person 2: Something simple.
> Person 1: Yes, something very simple. It’s kind of positive.

Learning through doing here becomes a more neutral ground, where an activity is allowed to be Sámi without being stereotyped or exotified.

Many would have liked to learn more about the Norwegianisation process, including its consequences today. Sámi resistance and organising were also something many participants would have liked to learn more about. One of the participants questioned why the Norwegian got so much more place in school, and wanted an equal weighting of the focus in school.

> It is not unreasonable to ask that the distribution between the Norwegian and the Sámi [content] to be equal. Because there is a lot to tell, and I think that many had a much

> more nuanced picture of not just Sámi history, but also our common history and our common cultural heritage. About the Sámi language and culture and way of life today, but also the different ways of life that were, and what has disappeared and what has been continued. Feel free to integrate it in several subjects. (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

A more throughout and honest description of the Norwegianisation process were wanted by most of the participants. The current effects of Norwegian nationalism and the Norwegianisation process were mentioned as wanted focuses. Two participants mentioned green energy specifically, and its consequences for Sámi communities today.

> Where's the bigger picture? What is the background, the motivation? It doesn't come out of the blue, does it? What economic interests does the Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, or Russian state have of Sámi territories? Why did they start building mines there? How is this connected? Mineral extraction, access to water areas, fishing resorts, right? What economic interests does the Norwegian state have in the Norwegianisation policy? To take land because you do not have Norwegian surnames, for example. And that you look at that side too, maybe at higher education, secondary school, look at the motivation behind politics, learn about scientific racism and its history, all these things, and see the bigger picture. I think that is important. (…) Or if you talk about environmental struggle today, why is Riehpovuotna, Repparfjorden, important? What is the Sámi perspective here? Why is this a Sámi struggle, and not just a climate struggle? To understand that there are conflicts internally in Sámi society, but also conflicts between Sámi societies and Norwegian societies today. What conflicts do wind turbines create? This is very relevant in science class, now we will talk about renewable energy sources and so. Then you should also learn about the social conflicts that come with this policies. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

Several participants requested more current and historical role models. Three participants mentioned Elsa Laula Renberg specifically.

> I would have liked if we could have learned more about those who have fought for Sámi rights. Like Elsa [Laula Renberg], for example, to learn more about her. (Coastal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo)

Several participants called for education about Sápmi to be more mainstreamed into the general education.

> What is presented as Norwegian and Scandinavian history never includes Sámi history at all. It's just about Vikings and Denmark and Sweden. (Non-binary person, Eastern and Northern Norway)

A common tread in the wanted content is that it challenges the perspectives of who is centred. To understand this, I turn to Kumashiro (2002) and more contemporary norm critical pedagogy building on Kumashiro (e.g. Røthing, 2017b, Bromseth, 2019). Normcritical pedagogy questions how gets centred in the teaching. Who gets to be the norm, while who are positioned to be the Other? Asking for an equal share of the time challenges a normative assumption that Norwegian perspectives are given more time in school than Sámi perspectives. Learning about Sámi resistance and Elsa Laula Renberg centres Sámi agency and organising. Questioning who gets to represent Scandinavian history means asking who gets erased when taking about Scandinavia.

Chapter 7: Being Sámi in school

In chapter seven I will present findings about how the participants experienced being present in school, followed by discussions about its significance. Although the content of the teaching and the participants' experiences with school presence are presented in two different chapters, they must be seen as closely linked. The content of the teaching affects the social position of the students and affects their social relations to their classmates and teachers. I will therefore start to address some of the direct consequences of the teaching for the participants.

The participants have experienced a schooling where Sámi students are experiencing Othering and erasure. I continue with addressing the positions that the participants have been put in by teachers during the lessons about Sápmi. While Sámi students sometimes are expected to participate as knowledge sharers in class, their Sáminess are in other contexts erased from the classroom.

The participants also drew links between not learning about structural discrimination and oppression of Sámis, and not being able to recognise identity-based bullying and harassment towards Sámis. I will address how Sámis describe an increased presence of micro aggressions, bullying and harassment during and after the teachings about Sámi issues. The teacher's inabilities to prevent this is understood as connected to the denial of oppressive structures. It also illustrates a tension when students experience the teacher or educational system as oppressive instead of learning about structural oppression.

7.1. Expectations of being knowledge sharers

A recurring experience during the interviews were that teachers had expectations of Sámi students to contribute as knowledge sharers. Ten of the participants told of being given special tasks or questions by the teacher when having about Sámi topics. Some participants clearly stated that this was not a task that they were happy with were given to them. One participant didn't express the same degree of negative feelings towards being expected to share information in class but did not express it to be a positive experience either. None of the participants stated positive feelings related to contributing with knowledge on Sámi topics when initiated by the teacher, but some had positive feelings about contributing when they themselves had initiated it. Some of the participants had been given special tasks or questions

about Sámi issues already in primary school, but most examples were from lower or upper secondary school.

> As soon as it was about Sámi, a lot of the attention in the classroom turned to me. And that it was teachers and students who together ended up asking me questions, which I in primary school did not have much capacity to answer, really. (….) As a student, I got the questions. And those were the stupid questions that the teachers should have raised from the beginning. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

This participant clearly stated that she felt that she from a young age got a teacher-like responsibility in class when having about Sámi topics. The feeling of having a teacher-like position was mentioned by several participants, including two other participants that felt that they had gotten this position already in primary school.

> And then you get it there, "but you're sitting here. You're Sámi. Could you tell us a bit." You cannot do that when you are eight years old and almost do not even know what it is to be Sámi yourself. What are you supposed to say, then, in a teaching context? Suddenly you become the teacher yourself. (…) It's almost as if you had asked, "Yes, I could take this lecture, if I get your salary. (South Sámi woman, Oslo)

The participants' statement can be understood in the light of a burden of representation given to them by having to answer questions solely because they belong to a specific ethnic group (Eide, 2010, Nadim, 2017). By getting questions and being expected to contribute solely because they have Sámi affiliation, they go from being individuals to being representatives on behalf of the Sámi people.

> When there has been talk of something Sámi, it has often, that is, in upper secondary school, after what we have talked about, it has always been like, ok, we ask her. In class. "What do you think of this? Do you think this is correct?" So then they kind of used me. And we have not talked about this, it has not been planned. Ok, we'll ask the Sámi, then. (…) "Is this true?" And I felt that I wasn't in a position where I could say anything about it. I did not know much about the history of the Sámis from, like, the Stone Age and up to now. (…) It was uncomfortable to just suddenly be given responsibility, and then I would speak for all the Sámis, suddenly. I go to school here, you're the one to teach me things. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

The participant refers to the expectation of knowledge as uncomfortable. The assumed knowledge that comes from simply being Sámi is again indicating a burden of representation. When asked, the participant is not only assumed to have knowledge about Sámi issues, but to represent Sámis as a group and to give a balanced perspectives that other Sámi persons would recognise. This can be understood within Nadim's (2017) analysis of ascribed identity. The participant is not allowed to participate with perspectives as an individual, with individual or potentially controversial opinions. Instead, she is made into a representation of Sámis in the classroom. What she says will affect the classmates' view of all Sámis, not only on her. Another participant referred to this situation as a burden herself

> But you still carry a bit of that burden. That you are the only one in the classroom, and that you may have to defend yourself or take another round where you have to explain what it really is, and then you do not even know for yourself what to say. (South Sámi woman, Oslo)

Another participant expressed a similar uncomfortableness in being given responsibility that was unasked for.

> I also experienced in high school that the information you get was so poor, that when it came to Sámi topics, it was like "yes yes, the Sámi bastard can take care of the teaching, she has so a lot of knowledge about it ». And I'm sitting there and really have very little. I have no idea what it is like to be a Sámi in the reindeer husbandry, to say the least. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

The participant expresses that she was not only expected to know about her local or family Sámi culture, but also about other types of Sámi experiences. The expectation overlooks the great variety of Sámi experiences, cultures, and traditions that exists, parallelly to how the teaching overlooked the same aspect. Another aspect of the quote is how the participant refers to the situation with the usage of slurs, indicating that she did not experience the request as respectful neither on behalf of herself nor Sámis as a group.

Being asked to contribute without the possibilities of preparation was a recurring topic during the interviews, and most of the participants expressed familiarity with this phenomenon.

> I've also been a little surprised by someone suddenly just ... You sit a bit in your own thoughts in class, and then you hear your name. And then just, what happens now?

> And then the Sámi is taken up. And then, “Can’t you tell us a bit about that?” Then it comes very suddenly. And it’s very uncomfortable. (North Sámi woman, Eastern and Northern Norway)

The suddenness of the situation does not only limit the possibilities of preparations, but also of consent. If the teacher had asked the student in a private setting whether the student was comfortable with sharing experiences about a specific topic, the student would have had possibilities of thinking through in advance what they were comfortable with sharing. Saying no to contributing in a private setting with the teacher might also be easier for a student than in front of an entire class.

Several participants expressed that they believed being expected to share knowledge about Sámi topics was a common experience among Sámi youth.

> When you are an adult, you realize how little the adults know. Or, the teachers have not learned anything. And they have been good at pushing it over on the children. And it’s like that with everyone. Everyone who has met this has had the task in the classroom to explain what a Sámi is. (South Sámi woman, Oslo)

The position of having to explain appears here to be coming from a lack of knowledge from the teachers, not as a supplement to a well-prepared and knowledge-based lesson from the teacher. If teachers from the participants’ point of view appears to not have sufficient knowledge about Sápmi to hold the lesson themselves, then they might also not have the necessary understanding of structural discrimination towards Sámis to care for the Sámi students that are asked to participate. One of the participants experienced the teacher’s lack of knowledge as a direct obstacle when having to present about Sámi topics.

> I feel that the primary school teachers have had a frame, and I perceived that they did not know so much outside that frame. And that I have been a source of fact. (…) I remember, during the 30 minutes where we talked about Sámis in primary school, it was so simple. Then after I said that I was Sámi, I was every year pushed in front of the classes to teach that half hour at different grades. That I was to take responsibility for that. And all the teachers thought that it was such a good thing. And then I came for the first time, after having fourth grade for half an hour, and the teacher says, oh, but can you tell me about the alphabet? And she brings out a North Sámi alphabet. And I just must explain, as I said, I am South Sámi. Oh yes, but that’s the same, isn’t

> it? And I'm like, those are completely different languages. All the things and books she had brought with her were in North Sámi. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

In the last case, the participant herself draw a direct line between the teacher's knowledge level and the lack of ability the of teacher to be able to secure the student's safety in class. The participant is put in an uncomfortable situation due to misinformation from the teacher, and the primary school student is left with the responsibility of correcting the misinformation.

In the absence of what they considered good teaching, four of the participants described a felt responsibility that their fellow students would learn anything useful on Sámi issues. Even though this was described as both positive and negative experiences, all four participants expressed that it should not have been their responsibility.

> You sit there as youth, and you are not quite sure who you are and what you can and cannot say and things are a bit insecure. And then you are to be a teacher. Because the teacher you do have, has no knowledge of this, or has not read up on it or does not want to read up on it. I don't know that, but yes. I have become a bit of a teacher myself, from my own family's experiences. (Coastal Sámi woman, Eastern Norway and Troms)

> What the people in my class have learned about it is what I have told about my own family's experience. (…) So I had nothing. And when people know that I'm Sámi, they come and ask me, because they're curious. And then I end up having to teach them. But it's just, well, I have not learned about the whole picture. I only know about my family and what we have experienced. (…) My family has been subjected to it, and it has ended up with me having to sit in class and explain what happened to my grandfather in the Norwegianisation process. Because there is no teaching. (Coastal Sámi woman, Eastern Norway and Troms)

The participant contributed out of a hope that classmates would learn new perspectives on Sámi issues, and that this would contribute to some change.

> In a way, it's just me who pushes it and hope that someone can learn something. Because I don't want the same thing to happen to anyone else. I want us to be good people, and that my fellow students can leave upper secondary school with knowledge of the indigenous people in Norway. (…) No one knows anything, and there is no one

else who dares to step forward, and there are no teachers who have any knowledge of it, and then you feel that you must be the one who steps forward. (North Sámi woman, 19, Oslo)

The experiences of feeling responsibility for what other students learn about Sámi issues, either to correct misunderstandings or because of a lack of information, can be understood as a "burden of responsibility" (Johannessen, 2021). Responsibilities that formally are the educational system's, such as knowledge-based information that challenges stereotypes and racism, are left with the students. Even though the participant contributed voluntarily, the contribution still must be understood as an ascribed representation that leads to a burden of responsibility (Nadim, 2017). The participants' felt responsibility for the bettering of the situation is clearly linked to her Sámi identity.

While most participants did not appreciate a pressure of sharing knowledge or perspectives, several participants also criticised a lack of possibilities to be allowed participation. For example, in a conversation about racism towards Sámis, a participant said that *"The school does not initiate giving a perspective on how I experienced it"* (Coastal Sámi non-binary person, Northern Norway). The participant does not give a direct indication of wanting to share directly to the teacher or in class, but it indicates that there is a tension between not being allowed to share experiences and perspectives and feeling obligated to share experiences and perspectives. The problematic aspects of being positioned as a knowledge holder are the conditions on which the sharing of experiences and perspectives happens, not that the students are given possibilities to share experiences and perspectives in class. One of the participants that had felt exploited as a Sámi knowledge holder in school, also shared a positive experience related to being able to share experiences on contemporary discrimination:

> She made an opening for me to talk about my own experiences. I think I took the initiative to tell that, we know how it has been before, but do people know how it is now? And I think that if it hadn't been for the fact that I had asked if I could talk about that, they probably would not have known that you experience it today as well. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

This example illustrates the important difference in opening for the students to share perspectives on their own terms and as individuals, and not pushing students to share as

representatives of a group. Being defined as a minority carries the risk of being othered from the community in the classroom (Røthing 2017a p. 57), but done on right terms and with consent, being able to share from a minority perspective can be a positive and empowering experience.

7.2. Erasure of the Sáminess in the classroom

The participants had experienced different types of erasure of their Sáminess in the classroom. The experiences of not being recognised as Sámi is presented in various forms. Some participants had experiences where the teacher has actively argued against the Sámi identity of the student. The experiences of being a "not representative" type of Sámi were another way of teachers not recognising Sámi identities.

The narratives of Sápmi in the teaching presented in chapter 6 is an obstacle for understanding that Sámis might be present in school. Most participants described how Sámis were talked about as a group outside of the classroom. Various participants argued for example that Sámis had been addressed as "they" as opposed to "us" or "those of us". Both participants having been in school within and outside of Sápmi had this experience. *"They did not acknowledge that there were Sámis at this school. It was still the "other", sort of."* (Costal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo). *"It was very different, very "they" in a way. It was a given that you were talking about someone else. Not someone who was present in the classroom."* (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms).

These participant's statements correspond with how several participants retell their experiences. When a participant retold about the teaching on contemporary discrimination in subchapter 6.4.1 and used the phrasing "*they have been discriminated against*", Sámis are referred to as "they". Although the emphasis from the participant were on the past tense of the discrimination, the quote is told as if the teacher referred to the Sámi students as "they". Similarly, when another participant retold the teaching about the Norwegianisation process as *"we do not do it anymore"* (p. 71), Norwegians were referred to as "we". This tendency also happened several other times when participants retold teaching stories. When Sámis are described as "them", Sámis as a group are distanced from the unity of the classroom. Hence, Sáminess is not something described as a natural part of the diversity among the students.

This can be understood as coloniality in school, where colonial structures erase the considerations of the marginalised Other (Eriksen, 2001 p. v).

The experiences of the teachers not considering the possibilities of there not being Sámi students present is something that is described by 12 of 13 participants, both within and outside of Sápmi. The participants talked about how they were assumed to have a Norwegian ethnicity, and that the teachers should have considered the possibility and likelihood of Sámi presence in class.

> My teachers did not initially know that I was Sámi. They know my family. Or, my parents. And is was not something I told them. I feel like they could have known that there were Sámi students in the class. And it was. But no, they did not consider, like, are there Sámis here? And there are Norwegianized Sámis here as well, guaranteed, who are to learn about this. All were treated as Norwegians who had no connection to Sámis. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

Even though this participant went to school within Sápmi, in an area with Sámi history and presence, she argues that the teachers still did not consider the possibilities of Sámi persons in class. The classroom was constructed as a Norwegian sameness that were not mirroring the actual diversity of the area. One participant explained how this ignoring of potential Sámi identities or experiences in the classroom affected him personally.

> What I experienced was more to be ignored. I really felt that here I'm sitting and not being Sámi enough to be recognised. Something that is very much with me, was that there were some who asked if there were Sami in the municipality. And she just said no. And then I'm sitting there and thinking, ok. Me, mom, grandpa .... No. Several I know do not exist. (…) I have felt a lot that I was non-existent. (...) Your view is somehow not so relevant. Because I don't have that reindeer husbandry experience. Or lived in Karasjok. So I experienced a lot of that. That I was ignored. I was not included when we talked about Sámis as such a mysterious thing that exists up north. (…) I experienced that in the classroom there are no Sámis. So therefore, you do not exist. It was somehow not taken into account what I could have experienced. (Coastal Sámi man, Trøndelag)

The participant is in the quote describing experiences of not being allowed to be Sámi on his own terms. Not being considered "Sámi enough" is also described by some of the other

participants. One participant had the teacher actively arguing that the participant was not Sámi, which made her question whether she was “Sámi enough”.

> “I went on the internet and searched “am I Sámi enough” because my teacher had told me that I wasn’t. (…) The fact that my teacher told me that I was not Sámi enough, it ruined me. It has been a wound that has been there for a long time. I have had to fix it myself. No one has come to me and helped me. And that’s why I’ve also found it difficult.” North Sámi woman, 19, Oslo.

The feeling of not being “Sámi enough” to count can be viewed in the light of Sissons’ (2005) theories of oppressive authenticity. Not being considered “Sámi enough” would exclude the Sámi students from the “exotic other”, instead assuming Norwegianness as an opposite position. The participant is denied social recognition for being Sámi based on ideas of what “authentic” Sáminess is, viewed through a gaze of a Norwegian majority position. To be considered indigenous, you need to be the invisible other (Sissons, 2005, p. 42). A Sáminess based on other premises, including an identity based on both Sáminess and Norwegianness, lands in the space of in-betweenness that Sissons argues is out of place and disturbes the indigenous – non-indigenous dichotomy.

Lack of knowledge of the diversity within Sápmi leads the student to feel that they are not the normative or expected type of Sámi.

> Participant 1: The teaching is like a fixed story all the way. And then the students can use it against you the way they did against you, or if you do not live up to what you have learned about this story about the Sámi, then you are not a valid Sámi, in a way. You’re not the Sámi we hear about at school.
>
> Participant 2: You are not Sámi enough.
>
> Participant 1: Yes.
>
> Participant 2: It is often used in the Sámi community that you are not Sámi enough. Because you do not speak Sámi and you do not engage in reindeer husbandry.
>
> Participant 3: And you probably meet that as much inside the Sámi environment as outside. There is a lot of focus on being mostly Sámi. And then it is Sámi based on the

> Norwegian-told narrative we have been told through school. It is somehow not based on the diversity that being Sami can be.”

It is worth noticing that the criticism is here not only directed towards the schools, but also towards the Sámi community. The ideas of an “authentic” indigenous person does not affect only the school environment, but also creates stress within the Sámi communities for the participants in this conversation. Oppressive authenticity (Sissons 2005) affects the participants both in their school environment and in their indigenous communities.

One participant from a Norwegianized family said that the school had made it more complicated to find a Sámi identity.

> “It’s really a process I’ve had to figure out for myself. I rather think the school has slowed this down. The way it was told, it was that if you were Norwegianized and when you had grown up as Norwegian, at the same time as I knew that I was from Sámi and had, there are some things you have inherited, then I was told that, oh, no, but you are Norwegian! Why should you have any need to ... There is no reason why you should want to take back the Sámi, sort of? Why does anyone want that, sort of? It's like it's a handicap, then, or something no one who's right in the head would claim. It was told as if I was lucky to be Norwegian. That you then don’t have to go through a lot. But it is very difficult to take that step and admit things to oneself. I think maybe the school made it take longer, because it is something you have wanted to do for a very long time, but which you have not dared.” (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

In this quote, it is a bit unclear what «you’re told that» refers to, if it is a general attitude in society or something that was said in a concrete manner in school. What is clear in the quote, however, is that the participant did not experience the school as an arena where negative attitudes towards taking back Sámi culture and identity were challenged.

One of the participants stressed various times during the interview that the teachers had over-communicated how similar Sámis and Norwegians are, and that this undermined the actual differences between the ethnicities. This made the space to be Sámi on their own terms smaller.

> I also think it would have helped if there was not a constant pushing on, like, the Sámis are Norwegian as well. Personally, if someone asks if I am Norwegian, I say no.

> (...) It was incredibly erasing for our culture, because we have a completely different way of being to be in my family. I do not speak the same way with my family. And then I'm not talking about language, but just thinking about how we are with each other, the way we show emotions, how family structures work, gender roles, all these things. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

Insisting that Sámis are just like Norwegians might be done with the intentions of inclusion, or with the intension of trying to prevent and othering or us/them-effect for Sámi students. In this case the effect is, however, that the student experiences a lack of acknowledging differences. The erasure of Sáminess can be understood through norm criticism, as a norm of Norwegianness where the students were assumed to be Norwegians until proven otherwise (Bromseth, 2019, Røthing, 2017b,), and by postcolonial approaches to pedagogy, where the marginalised student's experiences are made irrelevant in school (Salinas 2020). This lack of willingness might signalize taboos or negativity to Sámi culture as something fundamentally different than Norwegian culture. It can be considered a form of verbal Norwegianisation of Sámi culture when Sámi culture is not allowed to be different from Norwegian culture.

7.3. Slurs and identity-based bullying in school

Many of the participants had stories of identity-based bullying and the usage of slurs that were directly linked teaching on Sápmi and Sámi topics. Bullying and the usage of slurs for being Sámi tended to increase during and after the lessons about Sápmi. There were no direct questions on identity-based bullying during the interviews, so this was an issue the participants raised at their own initiative. Particularly the conversations about teaching on racism were by many followed by stories on how participants experienced identity-based micro-aggressions and bullying. A school context where Sámi student experience identity-based bullying or slurs affects how much the lessons on Sámi topics are experienced as a dignity safe space, regardless of whether the slurs are said during the specific lessons about Sámi topics.

7.3.1. Slurs

Five of the participants had experienced a school context where they had regularly heard slurs about being Sámi, either directed towards themselves or towards others. One participant addressed how slurs towards Sámis were not addressed in school in the same way slurs on sexual orientations were addressed.

> I remember that among the slurs that were used at school, they often addressed in some environments that children used gay like a slur. But I experienced “you fucking lap”. That those things were used, and that the worst you could call someone was Sámi. That it was an insult. And it is discrimination to think that it would be so horrible to be Sámi. (Coastal Sámi man, Nordland)

To understand the dynamic in the usage of slurs in school, I will look at research done on sexual orientation. The usage of various words for gay as slurs in school is often used by boys to distance themselves from the targeted identity (Myrebøe,, 2021 p. 218, Phoenix et al, 2003, p 188). Using slurs then becomes a way of communicating that the person is not gay themselves. Like being gay, being Sámi is an identity that is often not visible for others. This means that it is possible that the words for Sámi used as slurs has some of the same function. It could potentially be a way of communicating that “I am definitely not Sámi”.

> “Lap” was very common to hear, for me that is. I know that there were many who did not dare to be open about being Sámi at my school. But I understand them very well considering that it was “oh, there comes the lap”. “Oh, that damn lap is going to do that.” “Oh, we have to work in groups with that lap.” And that was never properly addressed. It was never stopped. It was kind of normal to walk around being called a lap all the time. It is a painful word to be addressed as. Because it’s a slur, it’s degrading, really. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

The connection between the usage of slurs and openness about Sámi identity or heritage has another interesting parallel to slurs based on sexual orientation, as that is also a category of marginalisation where people navigate in openness. Research shows that openness about sexual orientation has a positive effect on your mental health (Anderssen og Malterud, 2013). Considering the historical and contemporary dynamics of shame that has made people of Sámi descent hide their Sáminess, it is not unreasonable to assume that hiding Sámi identity or family connections might have a negative effect on the mental health of the Sámi students.

Most of the participants that highlighted having heard slurs for Sámi commonly during their schooling had had their schooling in Northern Norway. It is possible that a felt need of communicating that you are not Sámi are higher in Northern Norway simply because you are more likely to be Sámi in Northern Norway, due to the presence of both Sámi communities and Norwegianized Sámi families. In line with this theory, one of the participants believed that internalised racism could be a reason for the mocking of Sámi language and culture.

> I feel like I understand my classmates better after upper secondary school. When I learned about things afterwards, I see a lot of the internalised racism people have, and how it emerges. There was no one who was bullied specifically, there was no one who was targeted by this mockery-yoiking and nonsense Sámi language and sort of made fun of. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

This is indicating that some of the people using slurs and other forms of aggressions towards the Sámi students might themselves have Sámi descendance.

7.3.2. Identity-based micro aggressions, bullying and harassment

Identity-based bullying and harassment were a reoccurring topic during the interviews. Eleven participants talked about having seen, heard or experienced identity-based bullying or harassment at school, targeting Sámis. Six participants said that they frequently heard mockery-yoiking at school. Another example mentioned were being called «the Sámi» in settings others were referred to by name. One of the participants had witnessed a picture of a box of Joika being put together with a fellow Sámi student's name. Some participant drew a direct link between stereotypes in the teaching and the general school environments afterwards, particularly related to mockery-joiking after lessons related to Sápmi.

> It [the teaching] is very much based on stereotypes. Also, the way teachers have not addressed stereotypes in the classroom. So, it's probably more like… My classmates, and especially in primary and lower secondary school, there was a lot of joking when it was talked about, a lot of mockery-yoiking, for example, when you started talking about Sámis. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

> Taking a lot of students to a concert with yoik is not necessarily a good idea for other Sámi students, because then it suddenly becomes, well, then everyone starts yoiking after you. People look at it as such a silly thing. So, I actually stopped saying for quite some time that I was Sámi when I went to school. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

The experiences of identity-based micro aggressions and bullying can be understood as ways that everyday racism is expressed (Essed, 2008). Teaching that might have had the best of intentions, like taking students to a concert with yoik, becomes a trigger for micro aggressions and bullying that follows a racist pattern. When a participant stops saying that she is Sámi, it must be understood as an action to avoid how structural racism plays out in everyday situations.

> I experienced that I became the clown in the class by that teaching. My classmates got pretty good knowledge, but now they were not exactly that good with the knowledge. And it turned into "you should just be executed, like your ancestors". And it was used in such a negative way, the knowledge they gained. And that's based on the prejudices their parents have, that's where it comes from. But that teaching and as bad as it was, it made it worse. And that's probably why I did not realize that I had classmates who were Sámi before I started upper secondary school and everyone got away. (…) But the fact that the teachi'g the students received was so little that they could use it negatively against the Sámis, that is what I am left with on what it was like to get that teaching. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

Even when the participant considers the teaching good, the information from class gets twisted into information that is used to harass the participant. This shows the importance for teachers and other school employees to be aware of how everyday racism might affect Sámi students when teaching about Sápmi, in line with the students' entitlement to a safe school environment (Lovdata 2020, ch. 9a).

> We had a lot of Sámi topics, but it probably really led to me feeling more stigmatized and skipping class more. Because as soon as it became a topic, it meant that I became... Because she [the teacher] was unpopular, I was exposed to more problems due to the fact that she was Sámi and had Sámi teaching with us. So the teaching itself got much better, but I refused to participate, because it led to a lot of social problems for me. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

Even though the teaching is considered good by the participant, it still resulted in a less safe school environment for the participant. The unpopular status of the teacher is affecting the participant based on them both being Sámi. When the actions of one individual is affecting the position of another member of a marginalised group, it must be understood as a part of structural racism. Crittle & Maddox (2017, p. 176) argue that marginalised teachers experience a harder backlash from students when they confront marginalising or oppressive behaviour than their non-marginalised colleagues. Minority teachers also risk being seen as less professional and harm their possibilities of teaching effectiveness. Crittle & Maddox writes from a U.S context that might differ from the Norwegian one, but the participants experience is pointing in the direction of the same tendency for Sámi teachers in Norway.

7.3.3. Teachers' interferences

Several of the participants had experiences with teachers not interacting when fellow students did identity-based micro aggressions, harassment, or bullying. When the students addressed events to teachers, the experiences were understood as innocent, playful and even as curiosity on Sámi culture, not as racism or as a sign of identity-based bullying. Several participants also criticised the teachers for not being aware that teaching on Sámi topics might trigger bullying towards Sámi students.

> I think that I and the other students who were Sámi were poorly taken care of, because the teachers were not aware of the racism and bullying we have experienced after learning about Sámi topics. And I think maybe the teachers should have been more observant on how it might affect Sámi students. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

The participant addresses the issue as an awareness problem. The teachers appear to not be aware of the potential everyday racism that might occur towards Sámis in school. Another participant believes that this differed from how other types of racism were dealt with.

> I experienced that they treated racism against Sámis differently than they treated racism against other cultures and ethnicities. My school has been, like, you have to be inclusive, because we have a lot of people from the introductory classes who go to school. And racism is a no go. But still, I have complained and heard the classic lap jokes and heard the word been used against others and myself, and it is not taken as

> seriously. Because it’s kind of something that’s so normal. (Coastal Sámi non-binary person, Northern Norway)

Several of the participants pointed out that discrimination happening in class or in school would have been an opportunity for the teacher to address the discrimination of Sámi people.

> There were many in the class who yoiked as a joke. Had like that Kill Buljo, had star hat and sort of… I remember it was a running joke as always… I do not feel that the teachers saw it. And did not see it for what it was. Did not look at it as discriminatory. Nor did we talk anything about discrimination against the Sámis. And I feel that the position of the teachers, even though they never said it, I feel that they did not like the Sámis. The way they talk about it. If they had talked more about discrimination and how discrimination against Sámis takes place, I might have been able to use that lesson myself and recognise that this is discrimination. And that maybe that’s something you can be proud of. But unfortunately, I did not learn it. (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms)

The participant draws lines between the lack of awareness of discrimination against Sámis, the lack of addressing of the issue and her own process of yet seeing the discrimination. The participant shows little trust in the teachers, indicating that the teachers also might have contributed to the everyday racism. Essed (2008) warns against the danger accepting or internalising the racism occurring when racism becomes a regular event.

Several participants did not experience that the teachers did efforts to stop the usage of slurs or identity-based bullying and harassment.

> The teachers said nothing about all the behaviour that my classmates did that was not okay, that can be discriminatory. Or can, it was discriminatory what they did. The teachers never cracked down on it. That never happened, there was never anything wrong with it. Because teachers lack so much knowledge and they do not understand it. But it has, on the other hand, my primary school claimed that they were a bully-free school. (Coastal Sámi woman, Viken and Oslo)

Students that are experiencing structural oppression and racism might have a better intuitive understanding of and recognition of racism when it happens but might not have the vocabulary or academic knowledge to explain why this is racism in a way that makes sense to

a white teacher (Sibeko & Eriksen, 2022). Sibeko and Eriksen (2022) recommend teachers to try to explore the student's perspectives to find out whether a situation is racism or not, instead of rejecting the idea of an action or a statement being racism just because the teacher I does not recognise the racism.

7.4. Potentially triggering content

This section addresses how the participants had experienced being in class during emotionally triggering content. When you are a part of a marginalised group, content that might not be triggering for other students might trigger trauma or strong emotions among the minority group. While for example communicating the injustice and cruelness of the colonisation of Sápmi might be an eye-opener for non-Sámi students, a detailed and descriptive focus on this topic might affect the Sámi students differently and more intense than the Norwegian students.

Movies are a common educational tool among the participants when teaching about Sápmi (Olsen, 2017, Sæther, 2021, p. 60). The usage of movies often includes strong visual effects and sound effects. During a conversation about using the movies The Kautokeino Rebellion and Sámi Blood in class, one of the focus groups were asked directly whether the teachers has done anything to prepare them that this might be a hard movie to watch, and whether they felt safe.

> Not at all. Not for me, at least. I have a lot of feelings about that. Because I even asked the teachers several times if I could go out or have some other teaching arrangement. And then I just got that, no but you have to handle it. Or no. Or it was not something they considered at all. And it's not just that it hurts us as Sámi hearts, but it's not good for anyone to sit and watch someone being executed in Kautokeino. (Coastal Sámi woman, Viken)

Several other participants, also from other focus groups, had shared the experience of having a difficult time being in class during the movies.

> I didn't get any facilitation either or felt that I was taken care of during those movies. (…) When we were going to see the Kautokeino Rebellion, I sat and cried in the classroom. And was told by my classmates that I had to pull myself together. And that

> it was not so bad. It’s an action movie. So there was very little understanding that it could hurt to sit and watch a movies like that. And the same when we were to see Sámi blood. It is a movie that strikes me quite hard in the soul, because it is a pretty good movie to bring up the perspective of the Sámi population. But it is also very reminding of what my ancestors had to go through. So I sat there crying and was told I had to pull myself together and deal with it. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

The reactions from the participants on watching the movies can be understood as expressions of minority stress, stress that they experience because they belong to a marginalised group (Meyer, 2003). The content is closer to the participants than to their Norwegian classmates due to shared identities with and family links to people experiencing racism in the movies. Seeing racism towards a group becomes also different when you know that you yourself belong to the same group and might encounter marginalization or discrimination based on this.

According to the participants, the classmates and teachers are not recognising the minority stress that becomes triggered from emotional and violent expressions of racism towards Sámis in movies. Instead, emotional expressions on racism are dealt with as irrational. This has an interesting parallel to Said’s (1978) Orientalism, where one of the methods of structural oppressions addressed is to understand the Orient as irrational while the West is rational. A Said-based analysis would here indicate that the participants deviate from an expectation of rationality from a Norwegian perspective when expressing emotions while being shown violent expressions of racism connected to historic events. The analysis is in line with Olsen’s (2017) research on textbooks, where Sámi religious movements are portraited as irrational while Norwegian movements in the same time period are described in a much more rationalising manner.

One participant argued that it was difficult to make the teacher understand the vulnerability of Sámi students during potentially triggering topics. *“It is difficult to explain to a teacher how things can be very triggering to watch. (...) There are many lessons where I have been sitting there and, like, I just want to leave.”* (Coastal Sámi woman, Troms and Oslo). Several participants explained how the addressing of emotionally sensitive issues connected to Sápmi made it difficult for them to be present in school.

> I think it has at times been difficult to participate in all the teaching, especially because I myself do not come from a normative family. (…) Many do not know their fathers, single parents, alcohol abuse, that type of things, is common in my family, and is something that is often brought up in the Sámi context, for example through the thematising of alcoholism, drug abuse, violence and so on. I think that it has been difficult to participate in that. So I think that in many ways it has been difficult for me, especially because when I went to school, these things were very close to me. (Completely anonymised participant)

This is an example of how minority stress is increased by the combination of identity status and that society problems are connected to the participant's identity. The participant's story also tells of how triggering content can make marginalised groups more vulnerable for school absence.

7.4.1. Negative stereotyping

Three participants mentioned specifically that a negative stereotype of Sámi persons being addicted to alcohol was brought up in class without being challenged. In two of the cases the teacher brought this up, in the third case a student brought this up and the teacher did not comment it.

> It's kind of one of the worst episodes you can actually get over when you're 17 years old and have to sort of find out who you are and sit there in class and suddenly are from a people who's just alcoholised.

> When I went to lower secondary school, we learned about the Kautokeino uprising and saw the movie. And that is a very generalized view of that case. It is a case about the Norwegianisation policy and the Christianisation of the Sámis in Finnmark, then of the alcohol problem. You got to learn, then, that the Sámis were alcoholics and violent. There was a lot of focus on that when we learned about it. (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland)

Another participant had a comparable experience with watching Sameblod in class:

> The fact that the teacher chose to do it as the last thing we did, and we had no time afterwards to discuss what we had seen. And I feel very attached to that movie. (…) So I was so proud and eager, and I wanted everyone to see it. And sort of have that understanding of the movie that I have. But it ended up that we had no talk about it afterwards. Then there are a lot of people who use a quote from that movie, I heard it most recently today, when I asked like that… We were joking about what we should have as the name of our graduation hats, and there is a boy in the class who loves to joke with one sentence when she says "take back what you said". When those sisters quarrel. So he wanted me to write it on my hat, then. And then I sat like, this is what happens when a proper conversation is not made about it. (South Sámi woman, Trøndelag)

The two quotes show the importance of supplementing external materials such as movies with a context and with critical questions afterwards. When left undiscussed, the movie allowed already existing stereotypical and negative perceptions to be confirmed. Kumashiro (2002 p. 60) stresses the importance of critical reflections if education is to change oppressive patters, such as who's perspectives are included and what is not told in the story.

7.4.2. Racism from the teacher

Several participants had experienced situations where they described the teacher as racist or oppressive. Several participants expressed how negative attitudes from teachers affected the quality of the general education about Sápmi. *"There was a lot of racism in my school when I was growing up. And you were looked down upon by both teachers and fellow students, so it became very narrow, then, what we learned at school."* (Coastal Sámi woman, Nordland).

> What I have experienced is that teachers have been racist towards me. Instead of thematizing it, I have experienced that they have been that. There has generally been a lot of generalisation and so, a lot of strong opinions about what a Sámi is, what we are doing, at times like clownish and parodying behaviour about Sámis. That they in a way use the classroom as an arena to joke a little about the Sámi and come up with some jokes that often go on intelligence, appearance, culture. (North Sámi woman, 22, Oslo)

Several participants mentioned examples of racialisation of Sámi bodies in class, based on ideas of typical Sámi features.

> When we talked about the Sámis, a teacher said to me ... Or, she read out loud, “Sámis are usually short, chubby, and have narrow eyes.” (…) And then I said, “oh, but I’m Sámi”. And then I was quite tall for being as small as I was, and she looked at me, like, “but then you are not Sámi”. (North Sámi woman, 19, Oslo)

The physical descriptions are examples of racist and colonial stereotypes similar to the historic racialisation of the Sámi people (Kyllingstad, 2012). According to the participant, these were forwarded in class without the teacher questioning them. This is an example of the presence of a racialised idea about what a Sámi person look like, despite the taboo of speaking about race and racialisation in Norway (Svendsen, 2014).

Chapter 8: Discussion and conclusion

For the eighth and final chapter, I will return to my research questions and discuss further the implications of the answers. The participants perspectives on the teachings tells of a tendency of narratives that creates a stereotyped, distant, and past Sápmi. The narratives can be argued to carry coloniality, particularly when combined with the narratives of Norwegian exceptionalism. Coloniality is also visible in how the Sámi students were met in school, particularly when having lessons about Sápmi. Frequent positioning as the Other through stereotyping or being positioned as a knowledge sharer are distancing the Sámi students from their Norwegian peers on the terms of Norwegians.

8.1. Experiences of the teaching

With my first research question, *How is the education about Sápmi, the Sámi and Sámi-Norwegian relations experienced by Sámi young adults?,* I wanted to understand Sámi students' perspectives of the education about Sápmi. I have through chapter six addressed findings of inadequate and stereotypical teaching. Some counter stories have been told, but most of the stories creates an image of narratives during their schooling of a Sápmi that is homogenous, distant, and something in the past. Colonial history and contemporary structural oppression are not addressed or often under-communicated. An overall problem with the teaching appears to be too little time and focus on Sápmi. Kumashiro (2002) argues that when only the normative is in focus, in this case Norway and Norwegians, oppressive knowledge is being formed (p. 39). Too little focus on Sápmi and Sámis will then strengthen the colonial image of Sámis as a positioned Other. The tendency of holding separate lectures about Sápmi, while not integrating it in the general lessons, is can be understood with norm-critical pedagogy and criticism towards what is the norm and what becomes marginalised (Bromseth 2010).

The research question has two dimensions, how the Sámi students experienced the content of the teaching, and how they experienced being present during the teaching. The implications of the narratives created in the teaching are further discussed under the third research question. The second aspect can however never be understood separately from the first. The narratives in the teaching and the positionality of the Sámi students at school are intertwined. When the Sámi people is stereotyped, the Sámi students in class are also stereotyped. Stereotyped

education puts Sámi students in a position of defence, having to provide counter-narratives at a young age. The participants describe how their Sáminess was erased or how they experienced to be Othered as Sámi. Some of the participants had been used as knowledge holders, a position that did not allow them to define their Sáminess fruitful for both the marginalised and the privileged on their own terms and that many were uncomfortable with. The participants had also experienced an increase of identity-based microaggressions, bullying and harassment increasing during and after the teaching about Sámi topics.

8.1.1. Erasure or Othering

The participants' experiences of having to contribute as knowledge sharers does not make a dignity safe space (Callan, 2016). The participants' experiences as knowledge sharers, either becaused they were asked or requested, or because of a position of defence, have made them experience a significant amount of minority stress due to their ethnic identity. Røthing (2019) argues that when teachers use students as resources or lecturers, there is a risk of also leaving the responsibility of the content of the teaching to the student. This correlates to the participants' experiences of feeling responsible for the content. The student might have limited knowledge or only knowledge about a small part of the group is issue. The structure might also silence other students within the same group that might have different perspectives. This is an issue that the participants express frustration of and in general seem aware of. They were aware, or they have become aware later, that they lack knowledge about other Sámi cultures and experiences than their own.

The burden of representation is also found among other marginalised groups. A PhD thesis on Muslim women shows that they are made into representatives of Islam in their workplaces and studies, having to explain Islam to their classmates and colleagues (Eriksen, 2020, p. 2). The presentations from Sámi students appears in some cases almost exhibition-like, particularly in the cases where primary school students are put in front of other classes in school to tell about their experiences. Viewed in the light of historical events of exhibitions of Sámi families as entertainment (Baglo, 2011), schools should be careful not to forward a narrative about Sámi students as the exotic Other.

The erasure of the Sáminess in the classroom as described by the participants has parallels in research on other minority positions in school. Røthing and Svendsen (2009) argues that when teaching about sexual orientations, heteronormative expectation made teachers speak as if people with same sex attractions were not present in class. Queer students were Othered from the classroom through both not being presented in the education and not assumed present while the teaching happened. LGBTQI students are often, but not always, invisible as a minority unless they choose to be visible. This also go for Sámi students, as well as some of the national and religious minorities in Norway. Many Sámi students, though not all, can pass as Norwegian. This leaves the burden of correction to the student, having to decide whether to do disclosure or not when assumed to not be Sámi.

Kumashiro argues that for education to be working in an anti-oppressive way, it should be fruitful for both the marginalised and the privileged (2002, p. 39). As few of the participants learned new knowledge about Sápmi during the teaching, the teaching must be given in ways where Sámi students are assumed receivers as much as the Norwegian students. Due to urbanisation, a significant part of the Sámi population lives outside of Sápmi (Berg-Nordlie & Andersen, 2022). Teachers must consider the possibility of having Sámi students present also when they are outside of Sápmi.

8.1.2. A trigger of racism

Learning about Sámi topics in school has been experienced by the participants as more of a trigger of identity-based microaggressions, slurs and bullying, than a preventer of it. The close connection that most of the participants experienced between the teaching on Sámi topics and negative reactions towards Sámis during or after the lessons leaves an extra responsibility on the teachers. In addition to the teacher's general responsibility of a safe school environment, free of bullying and harassment, there is an extra responsibility on the teachers when the bullying and harassment is triggered by teaching in school. The interviews show that not only did the teachers not secure a dignity safe space for the participants in relation to other students, but many teachers also taught in manners that made the participants experience the space less dignity safe.

The close link between the teaching about Sámi topics and identity-based bullying and harassment during and after the lessons correlates to research done on teaching about racism.

Muslim students in Norway find particularly the teaching on religion uncomfortable and stigmatising (Bangstad et al, 2022, p. 24, Hauan, & Anker, 2021), and that many Muslim students feel that they need to defend themselves in class (Bangstad et al, 2022, p. 43). Research also shows that teachers lack a systematic training in skills on handling stigmatising and islamophobic discussions in the classroom (Hammer & Schanke, 2018, p. 13). Classroom observations in Oslo showed an example of teaching about racism directly leading to racist bullying of a racialised student (Svendsen, 2014, p. 19). The tendency is also found in a report about experienced racism from the Norwegian Centre against racism, where they found that teaching about a specific minority group increased racist bullying towards persons from that group during and after the lessons (Antirasistisk senter, 2017, p. 4). While the student calls out the racism from the other students, the teacher seems unaware of having triggered the situation through pedagogical choices in class and unable to prevent the racist bullying from happening.

Identity-based slurs, bullying and harassment are clear violations of the students' right to a safe school environment, which states a zero-tolerance for bullying and harassment (Lovdata 2020, ch. 9A-3). The school has a legal responsibility to fulfil the Education Act's zero tolerance policy. Myrebøe & Røthing (2021) argues that there is often a tension between the legal framework of the Educational Act and the concrete resources and practices the schools have to practice the zero-tolerance policies in the classrooms. It is then left to individual teachers to find solutions in how to practice the zero-tolerance policy when slurs and harassment take place in the classroom. Research from other countries tells us that indigenous students have a higher school absence than their non-indigenous peers (Fowler & McDermott, 2020, Australian government, 2016), where racism in school is considered one of the reasons for this tendency. Teachers need skills and training to see and counteract racism towards Sámis to avoid this tendency in Norway.

8.1.3. A dignity safe space

Zembylas (2015) points out that marginalised students' needs of safe classrooms often look different than the privileged students' needs. He questions whether it is possible to maintain a safe space both for marginalised and privileged students, as the privileged student's need of not having to unlearn oppressive behaving opposes the Other's need of not being oppressed

(p. 165). Discomfort is then an inevitable part of the learning process of changing oppressive behaviour (Zembylas, 2015). Various scholars (Røthing, 2019, Eriksen, 2022a) have argued that a "pedagogy of discomfort" can be a useful and necessary tool to learn about privileges and structural injustice. Students of marginalised backgrounds does not have a safe space during dialogues about race as a starter (Eriksen, 2022a), so uncomfortableness among privileged groups might be necessary to be able to ensure a safe space for marginalised groups. Addressing privileges and structural inequalities is necessary to make classroom environments without domination and inequalities, even though it might cause discomfort for privileged students. Turning back to Callan's (2016) expression of a dignity safe space, the safety of not being marginalised must be prioritized over the safety of avoiding a crisis when discovering your own privileges. Teachers do however have a responsibility of creating a safe learning environment for all students and need pedagogical tools in how to help students through the crisis.

8.2. Identifying with the teaching

The second research question, *How did the education about Sápmi correlate with the students' self-understandings as Sámi?* addresses the correlation between their identity and the perspectives presented in school. The participants understandings of Sápmi are often diverse, contemporary, local and present in the classroom, which differs widely from the narratives being told in class. The Norwegianisation process is understood as an ongoing phenomenon by most of the participants, which differs from the addressing of the process as a distant phenomenon. Some participants have stories of family experiences from the Norwegianisation process, which gives it a personal closeness that differs from the distance and avoidance of the topic in school. A homogenous portrait of Sápmi led to the teaching not addressing the local Sámi culture or the relevant identities for the participants. The Sámi identities that the participants have are only partly or poorly included in the construction of who is Sámi in the narratives in school.

The difference between narratives constructed in school about being Sámi and own understanding of Sámi identity can be understood as a pedagogy of detachment (Salinas 2020). It alienated the Sámi students from the construction of being Sámi that were made in the teaching. Various participants were detached from their Sámi identity through narratives in education based on what could be understood as an oppressive demand of authenticity

(Smith 2012, Sissons2005). In fact, several participants were told by teachers, directly or indirectly, that they were not Sámi. When a participant protests a colonial and racist narrative on who is Sámi and not, she is told that she is not “authentic enough” to be Sámi.

A problematic opposition to the stereotyped Other is the over-communication of similarities that was put to attention by several participant. Expressing that Sámis and Norwegians are “just the same” or that Sámis from Norwegianised families are not Sámi erases both the cultural differences between Sámis and Norwegians and the colonial wounds that need healing. Not recognising the cultural diversity of the classroom is a way of forwarding a form of Norwegianisation in an area where there are many Norwegianized Sámi families. The assumption can also be understood as an expression of coloniality, as the school is forwarding the colonial pattern of Norwegianisation. Research done in primary school has exemplified that the students did not consider the possibility of there being Sámi students in school. *“When I ask the students if there are any Sami students in their school, their immediate and unanimous answer is ‘no’. They explain that the Sami ‘live up in the North’, consistent with traditional historical narratives.”* (Eriksen, 2022 p. 67).

The fact that both addressing differences and not addressing differences might be problematic might be perceived as a tension for teachers. The criticism is however based how the addressing has been done, not on whether differences were addressed or not. To be able to give Sámi students space to tell counter stories on their own terms, without being Othered or erased, pedagogical tools and skills are needed to create a dignity safe space.

As an opposition, a couple of good examples of having been given space by teachers to be Sámi on own terms, and to be comfortable as Sámi in and educational space about Sápmi. The common characteristic with the good experiences with teaching about Sápmi, is that they have not divided the classroom between the Norwegians and the Sámis in ways that Others the Sámi students. Most of the good examples were when having Sámi teachers. I believe that the perspectives from Sámi teachers, having unique positional experiences and knowledge as both Sámi and educators, can be of great value when developing pedagogical tools to make sure Sámi students’ educational rights and entitlements are better cared for than what the stories these the Sámi students tell. This would contribute to an indigenisation of the education, changing which premises the education happens on.

Another aspect this thesis can teach us is the significance of teaching about Sámi movements, organising and resistance. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) encourages exploring history from

indigenous people's perspectives as an important strategy towards decolonisation. In the Sámi context, this mean exploring past and contemporary stories about how Norwegianisation affects Sápmi. Sibeko & Eriksen (2022) argues that by including examples of resistance and concrete tools in how to counter racism, marginalised students might feel empowered by seeing role models with agency and power, and they might have a more positive outcome of the classes.

Kumashiro (2002) stresses that different individuals belonging to the same marginalised group will have different experiences. Everybody has different intersecting identities, which affects how structural oppression takes form (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 47). Intersectional approaches to research on gender and race have showed that marginalisation might take new forms when marginalised identities are combined (Crenshaw 1989). Sámis that are for example black, queer and/or disabled will meet other challenges than Sámis that are not meeting homophobia, ableism, and other types of racism as additional layers. An anti-oppressive education then needs to take intersecting identities into account, and to explore different experiences with various forms of oppression also within one oppressed group. As the participants have illustrated, oppression might look different for Sámis depending on other identities such as skin tone and physical features, gender, sexual orientation, trans/cis status, socio-economic status, (dis)abilities and so on. In a Sámi context, additional categories such as language area, language skills, coast-inland divisions and other cultural divisions should also be considered.

8.3. Oppressive knowledge and colonial narratives

The third research question, *How may the participants' experiences with education about Sápmi be understood in context of the historical legacy and societal consequences of Norwegianisation?*, look at the participants experiences in a societal context. I will here discuss the wider significance of portraying Sápmi as distant and homogenous, as well as the Norwegian exceptionalism that were visible in the narratives retold by the Sámi students.

8.3.1. Significance of a distant Sápmi

The lack of local focus in the education about Sápmi affects the relevance that the school has for the students, but also for the local communities. Education has a potential of lessening the

effects of Norwegianisation through preserving and revitalising language and culture, a process the Norwegian schools also are obliged to contribute in (Utdanningsdirektoratet 2015a). However, if the school is disconnected from its local context, it will not have the possibility of positively affecting its local community or interact with it in meaningful ways (Darnell 1996). The local context within Sápmi can be considerably different from the context outside of Sápmi, as the history of Norwegianisation or the presence of Norwegianized Sámis or Sámis with family traumas from colonisation might be a considerable part of the local context. Sollid & Olsen (2019) argue that to have a meaningful indigenisation of local education, the indigenisation needs to reflect the Sáminess of the local communities. Even though it has been argued that some level of indigenisation has happened on a policy level (Gjerpe, 2017), teaching without a diversity understanding of Sápmi, including local perspectives, will not create indigenised teaching where Sámi students can participate with complex Sámi identities. Lack of local inputs makes the Sámi population into a people further away than they are and erase the local Sámi communities or individuals. By not addressing local diversity and local Sámi presence, the school misses an opportunity of building bridges and challenging colonial heritage. Instead, erasure of local Sáminess leads to oppressive education on the terms of the privileged (Kumashiro, 2002).

In the narratives told through the perspectives of the participants, Sápmi becomes simplified and Sámis stereotyped. A lack of contemporary perspectives means that historical perspectives get to dominate the current images of what Sápmi is today. This leads to an outdated stereotype on what being Sámi means. Ekeland (2017, p. 325) argues that placing indigenous peoples in a distant time shows traces of coloniality in the knowledge. When educational narratives are influenced by or directly forwards romanticised images of the past, the dichotomies between a Modern “West” and an indigenous past is strengthened (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008). Colonial narratives in the teaching carry the risk of reducing Sápmi to an essentialised unity without the same complexity and space for changes as the Norwegian society. Said (1978) called out the dangers of the West and the Orient exists in a dichotomic relation to each other. Although “the West” is a complex term in relation to Sápmi, the theories of orientalism as a process are relevant when understanding colonial narratives. A characteristic of the orientalism criticised by Said is that it is defined by the West and has a reducing, simplifying, exotifying and dehumanizing effect.

8.3.2. Challenging Norwegian exceptionalism

The simplifying narratives about Sápmi are combined with narratives about Norwegian exceptionalism. Avoidance of both Norwegian colonial heritage and the addressing of racial structures has characterized many of the participant's schooling. This has happened not only during teaching, but also when Sámi students experience racist bullying and harassment.

A lack of focus on the grave events that happened during and contemporary consequences that came from the Norwegianisation policy is under-communicating Norway's colonial history and present coloniality. The avoidance happens partly despite the teaching requirements, since the previously quoted teaching requirement in history is specifically centring the state policies towards indigenous peoples in the period of the Norwegianisation policy. The teaching requirement could of course be criticised for not labelling the Norwegianisation policy specifically, but it will be difficult to teach in a meaningful way about state policy towards indigenous peoples in Norway in the 19th and 20th centuries without mentioning the Norwegianisation policy.

The experiences of the participants indicate that the Nordic exceptionalism (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2012) is influencing the perspectives in the teaching. Eriksen (2020, 2021) has shown how the Norwegian educational system carries patterns of coloniality that marginalises indigenous people and people of colour. The image of Norway as a colonising power towards an indigenous population is a mismatch with a common narrative of a Norway free of colonial history. Contradicting might create insecurities among teachers in how to teach about Sápmi, particularly if the knowledge level about Sápmi and the Norwegianisation process is low.

One of the most severe consequences of avoiding historical oppression and colonisation is that the students, and the society, misses out on learning about how colonisation affects society both locally and on national levels. Research from Guatemala shows that a clear distance between the colonial past and the present prevented the non-indigenous students from seeing connections between contemporary structural coloniality and the colonial history (Dougherty & Rubin, 2016). The school context, as well as society in general, is of course different in Guatemala and Norway, but it is not unreasonable to assume that the effect on non-indigenous students in Norway could be similar. If the Norwegianisation process it taught about as an ended issue, non-indigenous students are not given tools to understand the contemporary wounds and traumas the policies have left, nor understand how coloniality can exist in contemporary policies.

Learning about the Other does not automatically cause the position of the Other to change Kumashiro 2002 p. 44). In other words, learning about Sápmi does not in itself change coloniality in school or structures of privilege and marginalisation. To change structural oppression, an important step is to recognise the processes of privileging, marginalising and Othering that happens in society, including in classrooms. This means that the narrative of Norwegian exceptionalism needs to be challenged in Norwegian classrooms in order to teach about the Norwegianisation process and contemporary racism in a meaningful way. Knowledge that makes the students understand how oppression happens involves also looking at the privileged position, not just the Other. Education that is critical of privileging have only been exemplified as experienced in school by one research participant. The given example happened during a perspective of contemporary racism that Sámis experience.

Practice and repetition of decolonial and non-oppressive practices are necessary for the critique of privileges and Othering to make changes. If the teaching is to give long-term effects, the learners need to develop a power critical response mechanism that lasts over time (Kalonaityte, 2014, in Røthing 2017b p. 21). Schools must change their practices of teaching in oppressive ways, and by that challenging what is considered the normative (Kumashiro 2002). Following this rhetoric, Sámi students must be assumed present at all classrooms and automatic considered part of school environments at all schools.

Resistance of using anti-oppressive practices might come because the privileged persons have to challenge the way they think about themselves (Kumashiro, 2002, p. 57). Dealing with the colonial heritage of Norwegianisation and of privileges are challenging dominant narratives about Norwegian values and what it means to be Norwegian. Schools need to unlearn oppressive practices, but also help students to change oppressive practices (Kumashiro 2002 p. 63), if the school is to be an arena that has an anti-discriminatory effect. This means not only to teach about Sámi issues, but to understand and change dynamics between Norwegian and Sámi persons in schools.

8.4. Conclusion

By exploring the perspectives of Sámi youth on teaching about Sámi topics in Norwegian schools, patterns of coloniality have been made visible in the practices described by the participants. Inadequate and stereotypical teaching creates narratives of a Sápmi that is homogenous and geographically and time-wise distant. The narratives have a reducing effect

on the student's perspectives of Sápmi, making it smaller and less relevant than it is. This reproduces Sápmi and Sámis as the Other, placed in the periphery of what is considered important to learn in school. This distance the experiences of the participants from the image of what it means to be Sámi. Stereotyping has had consequences both as a trigger of stereotyping of Sámi students at school and as something that has complicated the identity process for the participants from more Norwegianized families.

There has been a tendency of not addressing coloniality and structural racism during the participants' schooling. This is present both in the education about Sápmi, but also when it comes to the learning spaces and social spaces that the Sámi students navigate in in school. The participants also map out coloniality through the absence of implementing the right to Sámi language classes, which is seen in relation to a continuation of a Norwegianisation process.

The Othering of Sápmi in the teaching and the Othering and oppressive behaviour towards the Sámis in the classroom must be understood together. When Sápmi is being Othered, the Sámi students are also being Othered. These two effects cannot be understood separately from each other, as the Sámi student inhabits a part of the Sápmi that is being othered in class.

The content is understood in connection with a lack of ability to create a safe learning environment for Sámi students, which leads to the third finding. Various participants had experienced having their Sáminess erased or not considered in the classroom. On the other hand, if you were a visible Sámi you risked becoming more visible by being given extra assignments during education about Sápmi. A common experience among the participants were to be assigned the role as a knowledge holder and given responsibility for the content of the teaching. This created an unsafe space for the Sámi students. While some participants had experienced a tendency of being invisible as Sámis in the classroom, others had experienced being made over-visible. Both positions were experienced as problematic. While being made invisible did not leave space for sharing thoughts, experiences and knowledge about Sámi topics, the position of being over-visible lead to the student being assigned unwanted responsibility in the classroom that normally would be a teaching responsibility. Some participants had the experience of being invisible in some settings while being over-visible in others. Several participants expressed frustration of feeling that they had to represent all Sámi persons while being in a knowledge-sharing position, and that this is not something that should be expected from children.

The images of a Sami person presented in class were images that were difficult for the participants to identify with due to stereotypical or simplified information about Sámis. The participants had more often experienced a feeling of shame than a feeling of pride during the lessons, but among topics that triggered feelings of pride were Sámi views of and relations to nature and Sámi organising and resistance. The fourth finding is the counter-stories, the good examples.

Identity-based slurs, bullying and harassment were an increasing phenomenon during and after the lessons. The participants did not experience a dignity space but did experience learning spaces where their ethnic identity became a centre of discussion. Teachers need to have knowledge and tools on how to make the classrooms dignity safe for Sámi students.

Teachings on Sámi topics, and particularly on Norwegianisation and other forms of systematic suppression of the Sámi peoples, can be a potentially emotional topic for Sámi students. For the teaching to be empowering, it needs to break from its colonial roots. The teaching described by the participants are however structurally forwarding both colonial narratives and forwarding marginalization and oppression of the students. Teachings on Sámi topics can potentially be empowering for Sámi students and help building Sámi pride, as well as help building awareness of colonial patterns among Norwegian students. Schools can contribute to strengthening and revitalizing Sámi cultures and languages. Knowledge about past and current wrong-doings are important to help building trust-based relationships between Norwegians and Sámis and help the healing process of colonial wounds.

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Appendices

Interview guide - translated to English

1. Background information and Sámi identity

    a. What kind of Sámi affiliation do you have? (North/Lule/South Sámi, Coastal Sámi, connection to reindeer husbandry etc.)
    b. To what extent were/are there other Sámi students in the classroom during your primary and secondary schooling?
    c. Did you have Sámi [language] education at school?
    d. Can you tell a bit about how you see yourself as Sámi? (What makes you Sami / how do you feel Sámi?)
2. As far as you know, have the teachers who have taught about Sápmi, Sámi culture or the Norwegianization process had Sámi affiliation themselves?
    a. Did the teachers use experiences from their own lives in the teaching about Sámi issues?
3. What was the teaching about Sámi topics like during your schooling?
    a. Can you think of examples of education about Sápmi, Sami culture or Sami society that you found useful for yourself?
    b. Can you think of example where the education about Sápmi, Sámi culture or Sámi society that was simplified, generalising or misleading?
    c. How satisfied were you with the quality of the education about Sápmi, Sámi culture or Sami society? Why?
    d. To what extent was a diversity of Sámi people and cultures represented in the teaching?
4. How was discrimination against Sámis thematised?
    a. Can you think of examples where Sámis were mentioned as a target group when you had lessons about racism?
    b. How was the Norwegianisation process thematised?
5. How did you feel cared for when Sámi issues were taught about in the classroom?
    a. How do you think that teaching about Sápmi, Sámi culture or Sámi society made your fellow students understand you better or worse?

   b. How was your way of being Sámi (or the group you belong to) represented in the teaching?
   c. Can you think of examples where the education about Sápmi, Sami culture or Sami society made you feel misunderstood or misinterpreted?
6. How did you feel that the teaching influenced your own perspective on Sápmi?
   a. Did the teaching help you to understand how the Norwegianization process affects Sami people today? How / why not?
   b. What do you wish had been thematized in the teaching that was not thematized?

Interview guide - original

1. Bakgrunnsinformasjon og samisk identitet
    a. Kva slags samisk tilknytning har du? (Nord-/lule-/sørsamisk, sjøsamisk, tilknytning til reindrifta el.l.)
    b. I kor stor grad var/er det andre samiske elevar i klasserommet under skulegongen din t.o.m. vidaregåande opplæring?
    c. Hadde du samiskundervisning på skulen?
    d. Kan du fortelle litt om korleis du opplever deg sjølv som samisk? (Kva gjer at du er samisk / korleis føler du deg samisk?)
2. Har, så vidt du veit, lærarane som har undervist om Sápmi, samisk kultur eller fornorskningsprosessen sjølv hatt samisk tilknytning?
    a. Brukte lærarane erfaringar frå eige liv i undervisning om samiske spørsmål?
3. Korleis var undervisninga om samiske tema i løpet av skulegangen din?
    a. Kan du gi noen eksempel på undervisning om Sápmi, samisk kultur eller samisk samfunn som du opplevde som nyttig for deg?
    b. Kan du komme på eksempel det undervisninga om Sápmi, samisk kultur eller samisk samfunn var forenkla, generaliserande eller misvisande?
    c. Kor fornøgd var du med kvaliteten på undervisninga om Sápmi, samisk kultur eller samisk samfunn? Kvifor?
    d. I kor stor grad var eit mangfald av samiske folk og kulturar representert i undervisninga?
4. Korleis blei diskriminering av samar tematisert?
    a. Kan du huske eksempel på at samar blei nemnt som målgruppe når de hadde undervisning om rasisme?
    b. Korleis blei fornorskningsprosessen tematisert?
5. Korleis følte du deg ivaretatt når det blei undervist om samiske spørsmål i klasserommet?
    a. Korleis trur du at undervisninga om Sápmi, samisk kultur eller samisk samfunn gjorde at medelevane dine forstod deg meir eller mindre?
    b. Korleis blei din måte å vere samisk på (eller den gruppa du har til hørigheit til) representert i undervisninga?
    c. Kan du komme på eksempel der undervisning om Sápmi, samisk kultur eller samisk samfunn gjorde at du følte deg misforstått eller feiltolka?

6. Korleis opplevde du at undervisninga påvirka dine eigne perspektiv på Sápmi?
    a. Hjalp undervisninga deg til å forstå korleis fornorskningsprosessen påvirker samiske personar i dag? Korleis / kvifor ikkje?
    b. Kva skulle du ønske at hadde blitt tematisert i undervisninga som ikkje blei tematisert?

Letter to participants – translated to English

Would you like to participate as an informant for a master's thesis on Sámi young adults' experiences with Norwegian schools?

Participants are wanted for a master's thesis on Sámi young adults and their experiences with Norwegian schools.

The purpose of the master's thesis is to shed light on what experiences people with Sámi identity have with teaching in Norwegian schools about Sápmi or Norway's relations to Sápmi.

The master's thesis is written by Viljar Eidsvik and is a part of the master's program "International Education and Development" at Oslo Metropolitan University.

The study seeks participants who are between 18-25 years old, perceive themselves as Sámi and have followed the Norwegian curriculum at school. You will be asked what Sámi affiliation you have to ensure a diversity of representation.

The interviews take place in groups with 3-4 participants. They will take about two hours to complete, and will take place in the form of dialogue between the participants. The interview will take place physically at the agreed time, but it will be possible to contribute with additional information digitally after the meeting if this is desired.

Participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw your consent to participate at any time without giving a reason. All your personal data will then be deleted.

All information is anonymised and handled in accordance with privacy regulations. The information will only be used for this project, and will only be available to the master's student and supervisor. The information is anonymised when the project ends/the assignment is approved, which is planned to be 15 August 2022. We process information about you based on your consent.

As long as you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:
- access to which personal data is registered about you, and to be given a copy of the data,
- to have personal data about you corrected,
- to have personal data about you deleted, and
- to send a complaint to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority about the processing of your personal data.

On behalf of the Department for International Studies and Interpreter Training at Oslo Met - Storbyuniversitetet, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

If you have any questions about the study, please contact:

- Master's student Viljar Eidsvik. Phone: 97362443 Email viljar.eidsvik@gmail.com
- Department of International Studies and Interpreter Education at Oslo Met - Storbyuniversitetet by Professor Åse Røthing. Email: aserot@oslomet.no
- Our data protection officer: Jorunn Wiig Strømberg. Telephone: 67 23 71 08 Jorunn.Stromberg@oslomet.no

If you have questions related to NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:

- NSD – Norwegian Center for Research Data AS by email (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by phone: 55 58 21 17.

With best regards

Åse Røthing (Supervisor)	Viljar Eidsvik (Master's student)

Letter to participants – original

Vil du delta som informant til masteroppgave om samiske unge voksnes erfaringer med norsk skole?

Deltakere søkes til masteroppgave om samiske unge voksne og deres erfaringer med norsk skole.

Formålet med masteroppgaven er å belyse hvilke erfaringer personer med samisk identitet har med undervisning i norsk skole om Sápmi eller Norge sin relasjon til Sápmi.

Masteroppgaven skrives av Viljar Eidsvik og er en del av masterprogrammet "International Education and Development" ved Oslo Met - Storbyuniversitetet.

Til studien søkes det deltakere som er mellom 18-25 år gammel, oppfatter seg selv som same/samisk og har fulgt norsk læreplan på skolen. Man vil bli spurt om hvilken samisk tilknytning man har for å sikre en bredde av representasjon.

Intervjuene skjer gjennom grupper med 3-4 deltakere i hver gruppe. De vil ta omkring to timer å gjennomføre, og vil skje i form av dialog mellom deltakerene. Intervjuet vil skje fysisk til avtalt tidspunkt, men det vil være mulig å bidra med tilleggsinformasjon digitalt i etterkant av møtet dersom dette er ønskelig.

Deltakelse er helt frivillig, og du kan trekke samtykket til deltakelse når som helst uten å oppgi grunn. Alle dine personopplysninger blir da slettet.

All informasjon blir anonymisert og håndtert i samsvar med personvernregelverk. Informasjonen vil kun brukes til dette prosjektet, og vil kun være tilgjengelig for masterstudenten og veileder. Opplysningene anonymiseres når prosjektet avsluttes/oppgaven er godkjent, noe som etter planen er 15. august 2022. Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

Så lenge du kan identifiseres i datamaterialet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg, og
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

På oppdrag fra Institutt for internasjonale studier og tolkeutdanning ved Oslo Met - Storbyuniversitetet har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med:

- Masterstudent Viljar Eidsvik. Telefon: 97362443 Epost viljar.eidsvik@gmail.com
- Institutt for internasjonale studier og tolkeutdanning ved Oslo Met - Storbyuniversitetet ved professor Åse Røthing. Epost: aserot@oslomet.no
- Vårt personvernombud: Jorunn Wiig Strømberg. Telefon : 67 23 71 08 Jorunn.Stromberg@oslomet.no

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til NSD sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:
• NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS på epost (personverntjenester@nsd.no) eller på telefon: 55 58 21 17.

Med vennlig hilsen

Åse Røthing	Viljar Eidsvik
(Veileder)	(masterstudent)