

# From the Shadows of Civilisation and Racist Ideologies Towards Post-assimilation Reconciliation Through Sámi Education

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## INTRODUCTION

Pamela Rose Toulouse (2013), an Ojibwe woman from the Sagamok First Nation, Ontario, Canada, refers in her paper, *Beyond Shadows: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success*, to themes focusing on equitable educational environments based in social justice philosophies, inter-agency approaches, culturally relevant pedagogy, system-wide change

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and inclusion. We have borrowed a part of the name of her article, as ‘shadows’ refers to long-term effects such as poverty, mortality, limited access to education, abuse, lack of self-worth, loss of language, loss of culture and neo-colonialism. We observe that the Sámi are in a post-assimilationist situation, which must be dealt with to avoid continuing assimilation and to revitalise the Sámi language and culture. Other indigenous people in Arctic regions have encountered approximately the same schooling history as the Sámi. In a post-assimilationist context, there is obviously a need to discover pedagogical instruments, which, as Norma Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2008) state, accentuate hope, love and shared community in indigenous contexts. Pedagogy and education are interested in all human activity and experience; an indigenous research orientation displays a human voice to allow the development of practices from experienced knowledge. In a multilingual and multicultural context, it is important to find educational and pedagogical measurements, which help to solve the assimilation history of the Sámi people. The need to develop indigenous schooling is internationally recognised (Balto 1997, 2008; Hirvonen 2003; Keskitalo 2009; Lipka et al. 1998). At present, the Sámi are conducting their own teacher education in Kautokeino, Norway, at *Sámi allaskuvla* (Sámi University of Applied Sciences).

This chapter aims to problematise the legacy of the Sámi’s assimilation and colonisation and try to solve the resulting problems through mediating Sámi education, discovering how mediating education can remedy the legacy of assimilation and racism. The word ‘mediate’ means to arbitrate, make peace, resolve and negotiate (Auburn et al. 2012). Mediation encompasses inclusion and caring in addition to participatory and conclusive motives. Peter Berger (1979, p. 169) means by mediating structures ‘those institutions which stand between the individual in his [sic] private sphere and the large institutions of the public sphere’. Mediation is a versatile concept from these perspectives (Sarivaara and Keskitalo 2016).

In this chapter, we will first examine the folk schooling history and the school history. We will describe the context in which Sámi history has evolved and will present today’s situation. Then, we will look at the ideological processes the Sámi have faced. We try to find solutions to enact in a post-assimilationist era through the Sámi education philosophy. Our examples and solutions to Sámi education are based on our former research about people’s experiences within the Sámi language situation and schooling contexts. Our focus of concentration is mostly

in Finland. We describe the church and school processes used with the Sámi, combine the different school history results and explain the ideological basis of the assimilation. We employ people's experiences regarding school and life in multiple contexts in Finland. In the end, we suggest how the Sámi and indigenous education could remedy the long, hard historical results. In this context, mediating structures are presented alongside issues regarding mediating Sámi education.

The Sámi people live in the mid and northern areas of Sweden and Norway, in the north of Finland and in Russia's Kola Peninsula. The Sámi are recognised as indigenous peoples and are thus protected under various international conventions guaranteeing their rights. However, there is no universal definition of the concept of indigenous peoples. This concept was created for international agreements applied to certain populations and communities in certain areas. Often indigenous peoples are referred to as the disadvantaged descendants of the peoples that inhabited a territory prior to colonisation or to the formation of the existing state (Joona 2012; Sarivaara et al. 2013). There are approximately 100,000 Sámi, depending on the definition criteria applied (Sarivaara 2012). The Sámi were previously known as the Lappish, although this word has now been replaced by the Sámi's own name, the Sámi people (*sápmelaččat*). According to current estimates, the Sámi languages developed, at the latest, during the second millennium BC, and during that period, Sámi culture was also seen to arise (Aikio 2004, 2012). Sámi livelihoods have traditionally been based on nature-sustainable usage. Hence, originating from hunter-gatherer tribes, Sámi people have been involved in fishing, hunting and seminomadic reindeer herding. However, only about 10% of the Sámi are currently connected to reindeer herding (Solbakk 2006). Today, the Sámi are part of the globalised world and its various cultural flows (Seurujärvi-Kari 2011, 2012). Rauna Kuokkanen states that 'for indigenous peoples around the world, economic globalisation is not merely a question of marginalisation but it represents a multifaceted attack on the very foundation of their existence' (2008, p. 216). The Sámi have experienced the phase of cultural colonialism, which is a central manifestation of assimilation, a word which refers to the active merging of minorities into the mainstream population (see Battiste 2000; Keskitalo et al. 2016). Due to centuries of assimilationist policies and policy measures, Sámi languages are now endangered. Today, the Sámi have more or less embraced urbanisation; already 60% of Sámi live outside the Sámi homeland area. For example,

about 1000 Sámi live in Helsinki, the capital of Finland (Lindgren 2000).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA

We have studied the effects of assimilation, revitalisation and education in Norway and Finland (see Keskitalo 2010; Keskitalo et al. 2013, 2014, 2016; Linkola 2014; Linkola and Keskitalo 2015; Paksuniemi 2009; Sarivaara 2016; Sarivaara et al. 2013). In addition to research work, we have extensive teaching experience both at the elementary and higher education levels, and thus we have been able to follow and initiate the development of Sámi education and the Sámi language situation in a minority and indigenous context.

Research data has been gathered in two phases. School history data was gathered by Pigga Keskitalo, Inker-Anni Linkola and Merja Paksuniemi. They interviewed five persons about their Sámi school history experiences. Data was gathered between 2014 and 2016, and the school memory data concerns the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (see Keskitalo et al. 2016). Erika Sarivaara has interviewed over 100 Sámi individuals in an ongoing research project at the University of Helsinki.<sup>1</sup> The focus of Sarivaara's original study was to discover the cultural identity, Sámi memories and way of life of Sámi-descended individuals in North Finland (Sarivaara 2016). We have anonymised the memory data due to sensitivity and for reasons of research ethics.

With the help of memory data, new approaches to indigenous peoples' history have turned the research focus from big national stories to indigenous peoples' alternative memory histories (Keskitalo et al. 2016; Nugent 2005; Wilson 2003; Wright 1992). According to Valerie Yow (2005), people will remember things from their lives, which have special meaning to them. Memory data refer to the person's story of her/his life from the perspective of the present (Portelli 2004). From this point of view, memory data is not a precise report about what really happened but is a retrospective on the events and experiences of a person's lifespan, estimated from the present frame of reference (Keskitalo et al. 2016; Scott and Alwin 1998).

Next, we position ourselves as researchers. This is seen as important, especially when dealing with research on indigenous peoples and minority language speakers, to respond to the ethical needs of indigenous peoples, to be sensitive and to engage in responsible research (e.g. Absolon

and Willet 2005; Bull 2002). We decided to write this chapter together, as we have had common research projects and have gathered research material both together and separately. We share a common research interest in social justice.

Pigga Keskitalo has an insider position, having a Sámi background and being a native speaker of the North Sámi language. She lives in North Finland, Peltovuoma village, and her husband is a reindeer herder. She was born 1972 in Nuorgam village, Utsjoki municipality, located in the Sámi Administrative Area, to a Sámi-speaking family. Her father worked as an elementary school teacher and rector, and her late mother was a homemaker. At that time, they were living next to her mother's parents, who kept a farmhouse. Fishing, berry picking and small-scale reindeer herding was also part of their life. After graduating high school, she chose to attend a teacher education program and then had a chance to participate in a Ph.D. program. She has been working 16 years within Sámi teacher education at Sámi University College in Norway. In her Ph.D., Pigga Keskitalo (2010) focused on studying Sámi school practices, with the aim of contemplating the role of the Sámi culture at school. The main point in her research was to seek mediating structures, which could repair the cultural conflicts which typified Sámi education during cultural colonial history and assimilation and which could repair the skewed power relations. These factors have had a retarding effect on the ability of Sámi to build their own school culture. Successful indigenous schooling must be based on the concerned people's own cultural premises and values. The cultural bases of learning vary in different contexts, and as a result, cultural conflicts are formed between the human microculture and the social macroculture. In Sámi education, a particular situation may arise between individuals or between family enculturation and societal socialisation. In general, the aim of education is to socialise individuals into a society, a goal that could be criticised in the Sámi context.

Erika Katjaana Sarivaara also has Sámi background; moreover, she has revitalised her family's ancestral language, North Sámi. Erika was born in 1976 in Posio and grew up in a family where the father had a working class background with a depth of knowledge of nature and traditions, whereas the mother had an academic education and worked as a teacher. At home, Erika learned both the traditional way of living and the academic way of knowing. This sowed the seed for her academic career but also connected her to her ancestors' land and culture. Erika first attended teacher education

and later studied in an indigenous study program. She defended her dissertation in 2012. Currently, she is working as associate professor at the University of Lapland. In her Ph.D., Sarivaara (2012) presents a rather exact picture of today's Sáminess, which can be characterised as diverse and fragmented. The research presents and analyses the themes, which arose from interviews, such as cultural continuity and the issue of identity over generations. The concept of ethno-stress also arose; this may occur when one is not able to fulfil the claims of ethnic identity and is afraid to express the Sámi identity in public. Ethno-stress may also occur in sociolinguistic situations such as language choice and language-learning contexts. Sarivaara's research visibly brings up internal tensions within Sámi society and exposes the complex consequences of Sámi history (see also Lukin 2014).

Inker-Anni Linkola has Finnish background and comes from Helsinki in the south of Finland. She graduated from a Finno-Ugric languages program as a master of philosophy; her advanced studies concerned the Sámi language. Her master's thesis dealt with the Skolt Sámi situation in Finland. After graduating, she also gained a degree in educational studies at the University of Helsinki, the University of Tromsø and the University of Lapland. She did her Sámi language subject studies at the Sámi allaskuvla, Guovdageaidnu. Before starting her doctoral studies, she worked as a teacher for over 10 years, and at the same time, she continued studying the Sámi language and society and Sámi educational subjects. Sámi research was part of her childhood, as her father worked as an ethnologist travelling in Sámi areas. She has worked as a teacher and researcher in both Finland and Norway and has lived for a long time in those countries. Now, she works as Senior Officer at the Sámi Archives, Inari, Finland. She is going to start to work as a Associate Professor at Sámi allaskuvla on August 2017. Inker-Anni's (Linkola 2014) doctoral research focused on the position and visibility of the Sámi language at an upper secondary educational institution, through the concept of the linguistic landscape. The concept of a linguistic landscape is utilised to describe written language featured on public premises. The study analysed the appearance, producers and forms of the Sámi language in the linguistic landscape of school. The study also focused on the students' perceptions of Sámi language usage at their school. What is special about the study is that it was located in an indigenous context and focused on the position of a minority language and the linguistic practices related to it. Both the position of the Sámi language and the analysis of the hierarchical relationship between the Sámi and national languages are central to the study.

Merja Paksuniemi finished her Ph.D., in 2009. She studied teacher education in the north of Finland in the 1900s. She learned that the purpose of teacher training was to educate model citizens who would teach and civilise the Finnish people and strengthen the young country's national identity. In practice, this meant that teaching should encourage an interest in various activities, which would develop citizens' diligence and would excite students to adopt hobbies and develop strong character. Another common goal was to arouse a regionalism, which would invoke a love of country among the pupils. Religion, literature and history were mainstays of the classroom, forming together the cultural-historical foundation on which teaching was progressively built. The aim of instruction was to improve citizens' morality and Christianity. A teacher was clearly the head of the classroom, and his or her role as a model citizen was important. Teachers were also expected to act as model citizens during their free time (Paksuniemi 2009). Paksuniemi works as a university lecturer at the University of Lapland. She was born in Rovaniemi and, as a Finnish scholar, cooperated in Sámi school history project with some of the team members.

## HOW THE EDUCATION WAS INTRODUCED TO THE SÁMI?

The Sámi operate under four countries' administration and educational systems and practices. The current situation has been influenced both by the distant past and by the events of recent history. The Sámi educational conditions were formed and evolved first in all countries as part of processes of national construction, while at the same time, the Sámi population in each country was affected by the differentiated education and the resulting ethnic policies. According to Svein Lund (2014), Sámi school history can be divided into four wider periods:

1. Missionary period. The aim of this period was public civilisation through Christianity.
2. Assimilation period. The aim was assimilation through the national language.
3. The period of accepting. The aim of the school was to provide schooling for everybody; the Sámi language was a pedagogical assistance language, and in some cases, it was a teaching language for Sámi-speaking children.

4. The period of revitalisation. Typical thinking for this period is that among other aims, school should give Sámi children possibilities for revitalising the Sámi language and culture after the assimilation period (Lund 2014, p. 11).

Sámi school history is shaped by the national schooling histories of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. Each country has special features when it comes to its own schooling history. The research conducted in these countries forth, how in these countries, the national school histories have constructed the Sámi school history (e.g. Afanasyeva 2013; Alleman 2013; Andelin 1858; Anderzén 1997; Boine et al. 2005; Henrysson 1992; Huuva and Blind 2015; Keskitalo et al. 2014; Kortekangas 2014; Koskamo 2013; Kylli 2012; Kähkönen 1982, 1984; Lassila 2001a, b; Lehtola 1996, 1997, 2012; Liukkonen 1993; Länsman 2007; Nyssönen 2013, 2014a, b; Rasmus 2008). Church activity was twofold; it both actively destroyed the Sámi culture but civilised the Sámi through the Sámi language at the same time. As a result, it produced Sámi books, and the special features of the Sámi culture were also documented.

Christian contact with Sámi people occurred in the heart of the Middle Ages; in Lapland, single missionaries appeared during that period. At that time, the first monastic institutes were established which were in touch with the areas in which the Sámi lived. The key element in the meeting between the church and the Sámi people was that the Sámi nature-based religion changed gradually to Christianity. This was a long and complex process. Royal Swedish and Lutheran church deportation action in Lapland started at the end of 1500, and church activity intensified in 1550 when Gustav Vasa imposed miscellaneous measures to start in the Lappish villages (*siida*). In 1574, King Juhana III demanded that multilingual priests be sent to Lapland; these priests visited Lappish villages a couple of times per year, and tax authorities and traders found their way to the villages. Duke Charles's target in the late 1500s was to set up a church and priest in every Lappish village. As of no later than 1500, half of the Sámi Kemi were under a religious service district, and they met a priest about once a year in their winter villages. After the church implemented the external framework for its operations to function, the Sámi way of life became more difficult. The Sámi learned the catechism doctrines by heart, as the language of instruction in Kemi Lapland was Finnish. Christian expulsion of non-Christian Sámi was quite effective in the late 1600s, and after the era of Gabriel Tuderus, all villages in Kemi Lapland were considered Christian (Koskamo 2013).



Catechist schools functioned until after World War II. Laestadianism was introduced at the end of the 1800s, when charismatic revivalism induced many Sámi to turn to Christianity (Kylli 2012). Whether the language of instruction was Finnish or both Finnish and Sámi depended on the place. For example, in Utsjoki, Sámi functioned as a help language, and during times of instruction, only Sámi was used, due to the teacher's language ability (Keskitalo et al. 2014).

The Primary School Act of 1866 allowed the systematic development of the school system to start. Outakoski in Utsjoki municipality as well as Inari founded elementary schools from the 1880s onwards, but most Sámi teaching activities in the late 1800s were based almost entirely on catechist work efforts by a church representative. Proceedings were established, and elementary schools were founded in Utsjoki in 1878, in Enontekiö in 1888, in Sodankylä in 1889 and in 1894 in Inari (Lassila 2001a, b).

Sámi areas also saw the building of Finland folk schools with dormitories. Children had to stay in these dormitories, because these schools were located in sparsely populated areas, so the children had to travel considerable distances to school. In fact, the organising of teaching in Finnish Lapland proved challenging due to these long distances. Therefore, travelling catechists continued to work as teachers. The transition from catechist teaching to folk school facilities occurred in Lapland throughout the first half of the twentieth century, with the last catechists ceasing operations only in 1956.

Although teaching the people began to move from being the responsibility of the church to being the responsibility of the State in the early 1900s, the change was slow. However, the aim was to build central schools quickly, so that the catechist institution could be disassembled and all children could be covered by general compulsory education. This began in the 1947 Compulsory Education Act, which also covered school-aged children living more than 5 km from the central schools. The secondary school system first covered Lapland in 1972, and after that, the reform progressed in stages to southern Finland (Lehtola 1997).

## RACISM AND THE SÁMI PEOPLE

From the late 1700s until the Second World War, the Sámi were a central target of thriving research. Hundreds of researchers measured, assessed and classified them. In the study of the Sámi people, researchers hunted for answers to questions about the formation of races, past Europeans and racial diversity. Some of these racial theories and classifications were racist

(Schanche 2002). In studying racist terminology, Pekka Isaksson (2001) simplified those claims, opinions and attitudes that met three conditions: there are races, races are different and they are unequal. In his doctoral dissertation, Isaksson examined the racism in the racial research and in the racial theories used in researching the Sámi. The dissertation is the first very impressive presentation about racism towards the Sámi over the centuries.

The first time the Sámi were mentioned was in the famous Germania (98 AD) text; they were described as wild people who lived like animals, had no permanent housing and dressed in furs, unlike the author's compatriots. Byzantium expressed a disdain of nomadism; thus, in the spirit of the time, a lack of grain and wine rather than climate meant primitiveness. However, a hard and cold climate was also believed to generate a tough character and wild and aggressive people. The concept of wild nature and the wild man settled into classical and Middle Age texts as opposites to a cultural and civilised man (Isaksson 2001). Isaksson (2001) highlights the fact that as early as 1684, the French medical doctor and orientalist, Francois Bernier, described the Sámi people's racial status in his short article. Therefore, the Sámi were mentioned in first race typology. Bernier's race typology clearly draws a picture: The Lappish (the Sámi) were wretched animals, stunted creatures with thick legs, broad shoulders, short necks and enormously lengthened faces. In short, according to Bernier, they were very ugly.

In the most famous study of the Sámi in history, *Lapponia*, Schefferus describes the Sámi people as large-headed with broad foreheads, grey-blue eyes, eyes from the deep, with short, flat noses and, for most of the Sámi, wide, protruding mouths. Further, the people are said to be of a rather small stature due to the cold as well as the food, which is not nourishing and does not develop the body structure (Schefferus 1963/ 1673). Johannes Torneus (1983) and Jean-Francois Regnard (1982) describe the Lappish to their readers as whimsical, with partly alienating features.

Physical anthropology has undoubtedly left its mark. All the classical race theories were somehow hierarchical and appraising. In the classifications of the 1800s, the Sámi were considered far from the intrinsic values of the true and beautiful European tradition. The debate condenses to a question of conquerors and conquered, the winners and the extinction of the condemned and the power of the Aryan elite and the conviction of breeds. The discourse led to the Sámi being closed outside of nationhood (Isaksson 2001).

Since the 1800s, during the building of nationhood, the Sámi were defined as others, external, strange, exotic and an undeveloped,

disappearing people. Vesa Puuronen (2014) researched how this starting point has affected the Sámi by interviewing Sámi people. Speaking the Sámi language was not allowed widely in education until the 1950s, and this led to assimilation. There are also many kinds of discrimination; for example, Puuronen mentions linguistic discrimination at present-day schools. Sámi linguistic rights are realised to varying degrees.

The Sámi people have encountered more or less conscious assimilation aspirations for centuries, first with the Christian church and continuing through to measures instituted by the school system. Education focused on the Sámi people has left behind chains of lost generations with respect to Sámi language and culture. Each country in which the Sámi people live has implemented either written or non-visible forms of assimilation. A large-scale language exchange occurred due to nationalist aspirations, especially after the Second World War (Seurujärvi-Kari 2012). The language change is confirmed by the fact that school education did not use the minority language on a large scale before 1980. For instance, in Norway, the teacher's task was to urge parents not to use the minority language in their families as a home language. However, in recent decades, the large national stories and the emphasis on homogeneity have given way, as previously assumed assimilated ethnic or other minority groups have become visible in a new way in the society. Criticism is directed *inter alia* towards church and school activities. At the same time, the politicised and lived discourse about socialisation and identification has been enhanced within the Sámi's own culture and among their ethnic group members (Anttonen 2010).

I remember when I was in school, there were also Sámi speaking children who were in the Sámi class, and always wore Sámi traditional clothes during festivities, so I recognized them as fully Sámi. And I myself was only a quarter of that, because I did not know the Sámi language properly, I only studied it in school. I had Sámi traditional clothes, but I did not use them so often. I naturally compared (myself) to those others. They had much more Sáminess, it was much more visual in their life, and consequently they are Sámi, but I am nothing more than part-Sámi. (Interview 2014)

## SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

We have gathered Sámi experiences in post-assimilationist situations in Finland, where Sámi schooling has been realised to varying degrees at different times. The enlightenment period created people with ecclesiastical teaching, and at that time, it was stated that educating the Sámi people was more appropriate than repressing them (Lindmark 2014).

By this, it was meant that the Sámi people were chosen as active targets of civilisation instead of repression. During the nationalism period, the Sámi were not the targets of straight assimilation, yet as a result of the *One nation, one language* policy, attempts were made to make them Finnish through putting in an effort to emphasise the Finnish language and Finnish nationhood, despite the Sámi language. J.V. Snellman and Uno Cygnaeus were conducting schooling ideology, which emphasised through Finnish nation-building and Finnish language (Paksuniemi 2009). In the early periods of church folk education, before the beginning of formal schooling, in linguistically powerful Sámi language areas except Sodankylä, the Sámi language was given attention at least as an auxiliary language (e.g. in Utsjoki). In sociologically weak linguistic areas, such as in Enontekiö, the Sámi language was taught only every now and then before recent decades (Lassila 2001b). Christian texts served as learning materials (Capdeville 2014).

In practice, the folk school instruction of Sámi areas took place in Finnish, although in principle, the Act of 1871 stated that the language of folk school instruction should be adapted according to the local population's language ("sovitettaman väestön kielen mukaan"). In 1934, an ABC book in the Sámi language (*Samikiel abis*, T.I. Itkonen) was published, but it had little effect on the language of instruction, since this was often the Finnish language despite the act (Capdeville 2014). Nationalism, which started in the mid-nineteenth century, culminated in the post-Second World War period when the Sámi language was even forbidden at schools in some places, where pupils were not allowed to speak Sámi to each other. According to Veli-Pekka Lehtola, the reason for using Finnish language in Sámi areas with Sámi pupils was the lack of Sámi-speaking personnel and the lack of Sámi teaching material. Hence, Sámi parents resisted and sometimes officials resisted Sámi-speaking instruction (Lehtola 2012). Instruction at folk schools was not held in the Sámi language, even not by a Sámi-speaking teacher:

When I went to folk school in the Utsjoki municipality, I already could speak Finnish. I learnt from neighbours. The Finnish language at that time seemed to be obvious at school. At school, it was nice, even though the discipline was tough. In PE teaching, you got a pointer on your back if you did not stand straight — beaten with a stick on the back. Some children were beaten on the fingers. The Sámi-speaking teacher spoke the Finnish language when teaching. (Interview, 2016)

Minna Rasmus (2008) writes that the prohibition against Sámi language usage was not unconditional in the schools and dormitories, but the Sámi

language usage area became smaller until it was almost non-existent. The reason was the negative atmosphere towards the Sámi language and the fact that the folk schools' instruction language was Finnish. The result of these Sámi school history experiences was a large-scale language shift. In Finland, there are now three threatened Sámi languages: The North, Inari and Skolt Sámi languages. Assimilation has also sped up through modernisation, industrialism, urbanisation and migration (Bull 1994). The language shift has affected individual motivation; the language shift stems from people's own desire to adapt to the weak support of society (Perridon 1994). According to Marjut Anttonen (2010), despite a conscious choice, the language change is usually an emotional and painful process.

The language change has been confirmed through the ages as the Sámi language has not been used in teaching in schools at all times. In the research material, there is a clear difference between the folk school and elementary school. One interviewee has gone first to a folk school and later to an elementary school. About the Sámi language, she says:

Only Finnish was used at folk school. There was no possibility of using Sámi. When the folk school ended and the elementary school started, at junior high school, then we had an hour or two per week of lessons about the Sámi language. This was North Sámi. In addition, there was teaching in Inari Sámi, but not in Skolt Sámi. (Interview 2015)

In the teaching of subjects other than handicrafts, there was little Sámi content:

We learnt song 'Lake Inari' in Sámi and a Christmas song during the whole school. In handicrafts, there was more Sámi content: we made narrow reed tape, a Sámi garment and a coffee bag made from reindeer leather. In the boys' class, horn work was taught. (Interview 2015)

In addition to feelings of losing the mother tongue, homelessness and mental violence describe the school experiences of Sámi children. Catechist institutes finished their activities in 1954, but the transition from solid circulating schools to integral school system brought no improvement in Sámi education. Often, even small Sámi children were forced to leave their homes and move to dormitories (Lehtola 2012). Dormitory experiences were traumatic, as illustrated in the following quotation:

We went to citizen school in Inari. It was a horrible time. On weekends, we took a long trip home by bus. Bullying between children was hard. It

was mental abuse, but not physical. Bullying was practised among children between the villages. I did not enjoy living in the dormitory, because discipline was tough. However, it was bound to be. We had to clean up public spaces. (Interview 2016)

The dormitory and school system can be said to have participated in the forced assimilation of the Sámi (Rasmus 2008). Skolt Sámi person describes school experiences in the 1950s through the contemporary accent of Finnishness and the Finnish language, which has been responsible for part of the Sámi language shift:

I went to school eight kilometres from home. At our school, there were approximately 100 pupils, and they came there from nearby and from farther off areas. The dormitory was next to the school, and many pupils lived there. I did not want to stay there. I stayed only a couple of times, when the outdoor temperature was terribly cold or we had a skiing competition. We spoke Skolt Sámi at home, but we were not allowed to speak it at all. At school, only Finnish was spoken, and we were taught in the Finnish language. There were two Sámi language-speaking children, who spoke Inari Sámi and Skolt Sámi. It was very hard when the speaking of Sámi was forbidden. And many of children stopped speaking Sámi entirely. It was the Finnish-hood that dominated. (Interview 2014)

According to Raija Erkkilä and Eila Estola (2014), going to school meant that you had to be away from your home the whole time. According to Rasmus (2008), dormitory life was often hard for Sámi children, and in extreme cases, it meant abandoning the Sámi language and culture. Dormitory life brought Sámi children a new life with new customs, food and culture (Rasmus 2008). In our interviews, the removal from home was mentioned; this move was often very hard for small children. At school, the experiences varied. Being a pupil could mean children being left to survive alone. The school and dormitory system distanced children and youth from their homes and from Sámi culture, and among other reasons, these experiences have often led to the youth moving from Sámi areas to South Finland. After school, it was hard for students to adapt themselves to home, and many of the youth decided to leave home early in life (see Huuva and Blind 2015):

Once I ran away home by walking 30 km, when I missed home so much. Next day, they brought me back to school by horse. After dormitory life,

I did not feel home as a home any longer. I left as a young person, going to South Finland, early in life. I have not returned. (Interview 2015)

Children spent a large part of their childhoods in a foreign growing environment, so they faced a wide range of loading factors, such as being away from family, bullying and dormitory staff negligence. According to the data, minors living in the dormitory were exposed, for example, as targets for sexual acts:

Dormitory children were forced to be sexually involved with older children of the dormitory. No one was taking care of dormitory children, because the young dormitory custodians did not look after them. The children were by themselves. (Interview 2015)

Although experiences of being bullied and a lack of proper pedagogy are not minority-specific experiences, they are significant; however, as Sámi children endured negative treatment for a long period during their childhoods (Keskitalo et al. 2016). In addition, most Sámi were affected by dormitory life as a negative phenomenon, while only a small portion of the majority of the population went to school dormitories. Thus, the dormitory experiences' impact on the entire Sámi population and culture is significant. On a large scale, negative treatment has extensive and far-reaching psychological, economic, social and societal consequences up to the present day (Laiho 2006; Turunen 2004).

The emphasis on competition and success brought about bullying. No one provided support for pupils in difficult situations. They were left all alone:

Between the pupils, it was a tough race. If you got a bad grade on any examination, the pupil was bullied. The teacher said the number aloud as the grades were ready. I remember when I was sick, and then we had a math test when I came back to school. Therefore, I got a bad grade, of course. The teacher shared the results, and I got five and a half. The gang went behind me after school and shouted all the way home, "Ha, 5.5." It continued for many days. In fact, I did not bother to tell of the bullying at home. I did not want to burden the parents, and on the other hand, I was afraid of the risk of penalties at school because of possible snitching. (Interview 2016)

Sámi school experiences caused frustration for the Sámi people, because of the ethnic mobilisation in the 1960s. The revitalisation of Sámi

languages emerged as a key objective of the 1990s (Nyyssönen 2014a). Today, Finnish education is provided in the student's native language, Sámi. The development of Sámi language teaching took place in the 1970s, at the time of the establishment of a primary school. Bilingualism has been stressed since the 1980s (Aikio-Puoskari 2014).

## MEDIATING STRUCTURES

Empowerment, revitalisation, education and research are the core components of the transformation of and a future for indigenous peoples. Today, Sámi pupils are members of a future society. It is necessary to explore what kind of Sámi society is desired, what kind of values are important and what kind of issues should be changed. The objective of research is to identify issues of oppression and indignity and to try to solve them (see Suoranta and Rynänen 2014). In addition, mediating structures corroborate human rights, which aim to include all peoples and involve them in the development of society. Language revitalisation benefits mediating structures, since it enforces individuals' language learning and hence increases language domains. Mediating structures also aim to tackle—at a societal level, at a practical macro and micro level and at an individual level—the complicated practical and psychological issues that may help or hinder language revitalisation.

In the context of Sámi education, colonial history and asymmetrical power relations have prevented the Sámi from forming their own school culture. The necessary mediating structures must take account of time, space and knowledge understanding, so that school timetables, space and knowledge are rethought and the Sámi knowledge system and values are placed at the core (Keskitalo 2010). Family culture and school culture should be compounded in order to empower the people (Berger and Neuhaus 1970). Further, Kari Nurmi and Seppo Kontiainen (1995) adapted a model about mediating structures that could operate in an intercultural educational context. Generally, in an intercultural context, cultural conflict is inevitable. Mediating structures communicate between the past, the present and the future circumferentially. Families, neighbourhood groups, religious groups and voluntary associations were also mentioned in Vivian Johnson's (1994) research as mediating structures; such structures are intercultural educational tools. Through mediating structures, it is possible to resolve a school's culture and any possible cultural conflicts (Keskitalo 2010).



The Sámi people have experienced racism during their lifespan. We suggest that Sámi education, the separate research discipline, could solve the problems the Sámi people have faced. It is more than time to work on revitalisation and healing. Sámi education is a tool by which to learn diverse, interdisciplinary, unique subject matter. It also has unique aspects, challenges and responses. According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999), it is important to develop indigenous capacities, theories, methodologies, analytical categories and ways of thinking and being. She further states that it is important to develop indigenous peoples' own evidence platforms, so that the discourse is about that what makes them succeed. Indigenous people need to prioritise and respond to their own aspirations and anxieties.

Aimo Aikio (2010) comments that as Sámi education has been discoloured by the long history of assimilation, the most important Sámi educational goal is therefore the teaching of coping skills. In order to learn to cope, Sámi education aims for learners to be naturally helpful, peaceful, amicable, situation satisfied, curious in a familiar group, hard-working and imaginative (Aikio 2010). These personality traits have an inevitable impact on language revitalisation. Such revitalisation could therefore be further developed through education, which relies on these traits. Among other things, the mediation of Sámi education is interested in how education can disassemble oblique and unequal connections between communities. Another important development measure involves looking at how we can strengthen the pedagogical research concerning mediating and inclusive indigenous identities. Several issues have become topical lately in the context of indigenous education, and they will help to dismantle the heritage of assimilation (see Denzin et al. 2008).

## IN THE END

In this chapter, through school history and ideologies, we have showcased racialisation and histories of racialisation against the Sámi in Finland. Karla J. Williamson (2016) stated at the Kautokeino Arctic Indigenous Education conference that assimilation has brought to indigenous peoples a new belief system, 'better' language instead of indigenous languages, 'better' social organisation, settlement into urban areas, education, new knowledge, different values, job and wage earnings and citizenship in a nation. Williamson argues that indigenous peoples lost the power to talk about issues concerning them. Indigenous people are contesting for the ownership of their land, respect of their belief systems,

their language—at least to threatened level, has passed relocations and their indigenous social organisation and kin systems—and their identity. So the above-mentioned issues have become topical lately in the context of indigenous education and in the context of a heritage of assimilation. Research in this area would benefit from practical work with language revitalisation. Researchers and educators should thus work together to help language revitalisation to progress.

We have touched on the nature of mediating educational Sámi research, the base on which it will be built and the solutions it leads to. Systematic implementation of the role and content of the mediating education could remedy the previous racist education. The goal of indigenous education is to help people grow to be members of the indigenous peoples' community and society. Stressing the cultural background to enhance feelings of power and a sense of superiority does not acknowledge indigenous people but merely enacts aspects of essentialism and ethnocentrism, which unlawfully export racism within and against the indigenous peoples. According to our theoretical exploration, we suggest that mediating Sámi educational research adapts Sámi identity research and can serve as a means to explain the multicultural situation. Mediating Sámi research is a tool by which to explain the multicultural educational context. Mediating research points out the value of an inclusive, caring and participatory approach. Within this context, the mediating Sámi research includes many sides.

Through education, it is possible to problematise the stances of today's society and, through consciousness and activities, to pursue the greater expression of human rights. Empowerment, revitalisation and the aspirations possible through education and research are the important factors and goals of indigenous peoples' future. That is why it is important to be reflective concerning what kind of Sámi society we are building, what kinds of values are important and what kinds of things we must reverse or change. We want radical, multicultural inclusive revitalisation models, which are already in use in Norway and more or less in New Zealand. These models offer a way to increase the linguistic vitality of indigenous languages.

## RESEARCH DATA

The data includes five interviews by Pigga Keskitalo, Inker-Anni Linkola and Merja Paksuniemi about school history, 2014–2016, and 100 interviews about life experiences by Erika Sarivaara, 2015–2016.

## NOTES

1. Together with researchers Janne Saarikivi and Reetta Toivanen from the University of Helsinki.

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