

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

## Shaping Indigenous Identity

*The Power of Music*

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Eman Udaya

*Master's thesis in Indigenous Studies submitted in May 2017*





# **Shaping Indigenous Identity**

*The Power of Music*

A Thesis Submitted by:

**Eman Udaya**

*Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies*

*Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education*

*UiT- The Arctic University of Norway*

*Spring 2017*

*Supervised by Torjer Andreas Olsen*

Cover Photo: Kids observing the performance by Joik Ensemble Luohtemohkit (Sápmi) at Riddu Riđđu 2015. Photo By: Eman Udaya

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## Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my four amazing respondents whose stories and music made this thesis possible. Thank you for sharing your creations and thoughts with me. Your music and stories will forever be an inspiration for me

A big thank you to my supervisor Torjer A. Olsen. I am grateful to you especially for the last two weeks before the submission. Your time, encouragement, guidance and patience means a lot to me.

I would also like to thank Kajsa Kemi Gjerpe, my previous supervisor. Thank you for bearing through all my ups and downs. Without your sunny and positive attitude, it would be difficult for me to get through those tough early stages.

Center for Sámi Studies (SESAM) deserves a special mention. Thank you for giving us an opportunity to learn, share, and grow.

Shout out to my fellow MIS-14 classmates. It's been a wonderful ride with you guys.

I am grateful to my family and friends back in Nepal. Despite the distance, we are spiritually close. I am forever indebted to your love and care. I would also like to express my gratitude to all my friends here in Tromsø as well.

Special thanks to Cody. We were in this together. I can't imagine this thesis happening without your constant encouragement. Thank you for your friendship.

Last but not the least, to you, my special travelling companion Øystein. [I still can't believe you pulled all-nighters along with me for this thesis]. Thank you for giving me home away from home.

Eman

Tromsø, 2017

## **Abstract**

This thesis deals with music and expression of indigenous identity. The focus of the study is the musical performances and stories of primarily Sámi, the indigenous people inhabiting the areas of Northern Fennoscandia comprising of Norway, Finland, Sweden and the Russian Kola Peninsula. It also includes the Tuvan, the inhabitant of the Republic of Tuva in Central Asia which is a member of Russian Federation.

The study situates the primary fieldwork setting Riddu Riđđu Festival, which is an important coastal Sámi and international indigenous festival, as a symbolic site where musical performances take place and indigenous identities are embodied, managed and celebrated. By presenting the historical background of the festival, I have contextualized Riddu Riđđu and used it as a point of departure from where I head towards the stories and musical performances of my respondents who are from Sápmi and the Republic of Tuva.

Taking two vocal traditions: Joik (Sápmi) and *Xöömei* (the Republic of Tuva) and their use in contemporary Sápmi and Tuvan soundscape, this study explores the contemplative process of understanding oneself in the process of asserting and expressing one's indigenous identity, and the significance of music in this process.

Through music, these musicians tell the tales of their lives: their experiences, encounters, attachments, belongings, emotions, and sentiments. Through music, they portray the interconnectedness to their cosmology and spirituality. Their music makes one think, rethink and question the understanding regarding indigenous identity. This thesis discusses how musical practices and performances become a process for these individuals through with they experience themselves, and also express their indigenous identity. Therefore, my study documents this phenomenon where music becomes a journey that leads these individuals to the manifestation of their indigenous identities.

*Key words: Music, Indigenous Identity, Expression, Sámi, Tuva, Soundscapes, Joik, Xöömei*

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis deals with music and expression of indigenous identity. The focus of the study is the musical performances and stories of primarily Sámi, the indigenous people inhabiting the areas of Northern Fennoscandia comprising of Norway, Finland, Sweden and the Russian Kola Peninsula. It also includes the Tuvan, the inhabitant of the Republic of Tuva in Central Asia which is a member of Russian Federation. The study situates the main fieldwork setting Riddu Riđđu Festival, an important coastal Sámi and international indigenous festival, as a symbolic site where musical performances take place and indigenous identities are embodied, managed and celebrated. By presenting the historical background of the festival, I have contextualized Riddu Riđđu and used it as a point of departure from where I head towards the stories and musical performances of my respondents who are from Sápmi and the Republic of Tuva.

Taking two vocal traditions: Joik (Sápmi) and *Xöömei* (the Republic of Tuva) (descriptions included later in this chapter) and their use in contemporary Sápmi and Tuvan soundscape, this study explores the contemplative process of understanding oneself in the process of asserting and expressing one's indigenous identity and the significance of music in this process.

Through music, these musicians tell the tales of their lives: their experiences, encounters, attachments, belongings, emotions, and sentiments. Through music, they portray the interconnectedness to their cosmology and spirituality. Their music makes one think, rethink and question the understanding regarding indigenous identity. This thesis discusses how musical practices and performances become a process for these individuals through which indigenous identity is expressed. Therefore, music becomes a journey that leads them to the manifestation of their indigenous identities.

I have based my thesis on the stories of four musicians. Three of them are individuals from Sápmi and one of them is a musical ensemble from the Republic of Tuva. I have based my study through the fieldwork primarily done in Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015. Interviews, participant observation, analysis of song text, and musical performances were my main research methods. I base my analysis on the theoretical perspectives mainly from "Music and identity" by Simon Frith, which explores the formation of identity in relation to music (Frith, 1996). I also use the Thomas Solomon's concept of 'place of sound' (Solomon, 2006) (See Chapter 3).

My interest and relation to the topic stems from my own indigenous identity. I am a Newar from Nepal. Newars are one of the major ethnic caste group of Nepal. We are the

community whose ancestral home is Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. We are renowned for our elaborate culture and way of life. We have our own language, writing scripts, social organization, and culture<sup>1</sup>. The other reason for my engagement to this topic is my keen interest in music and my upbringing in a musical family. My grandfather was a trained Indian classical musician. My father, mother and uncle (on my mother's side of the family) were musicians, who were a part of cultural revival through a folk fusion music group called *Deurali Pariwar*<sup>2</sup> in Western Nepal. However, I have never been a musician as such. I do have a deep love and appreciation for music and a curiosity to learn about different aspects and perspectives related to music.

Similarly, one key incident that happened few years ago really brought forward the questions regarding indigenous identity in my life. I was a part of Underground Metal subculture in Nepal. I had a social circle with friends who were musicians playing for the metal bands. However, one day a close friend of mine who was a drummer decided that he wants to quit the band to start formal education in playing '*Dheeme*'<sup>3</sup>, a traditional Newari music instrument. Typically used during a traditional dance, it is a drum played with two bamboo sticks. It is cylindrical in shape with wooden frame and leather binding on each sides that vibrate and produce the sound. When I inquired him about his intention, he replied that he wanted to learn about his indigenous identity and heritage through music. He added that he didn't hate Western music but he realized that as a youth belonging to the Newar community, not only did he have an opportunity to learn to play traditional musical instruments but also a responsibility of learning and sharing the traditional knowledge.

That friend, later, went on to join Bachelor in Ethnomusicology at one of the universities in Kathmandu. Within a year, he did learn to play *Dheeme*. I saw him accompanying his father and brothers in festivals playing *dheeme* with joy and pride. However, his answer that day made me all think about my own identity as a Newar. Of course, I have always had the knowledge that I belong to community called Newar and my family members are proud of their Newar identity. But when I delved more into a deeper level of understanding regarding my Newar identity, it troubled me. I didn't speak the language, I didn't go around wearing traditional Newari dress. So, how was I a Newar? What does it really mean to be a Newar? What am I doing to assert my cultural identity? Should I walk around all the time with some cultural

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<sup>1</sup> Chapter II, *The Newars..* Retrieved from <http://web.comhem.se/~u18515267/CHAPTERII.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> ReverbNation. *Deurali Pariwar*. Retrieved from <https://www.reverbnation.com/deuralipariwar>

<sup>3</sup> *Dhime solo (Kutumba ft. Dattatriya dhime group)*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AB-MkAHLxE>

markers that identify me as an authentic Newar woman? Does wearing western outfit and listening to Western metal music make me less Newar? How do I assert and live my identity of being an indigenous woman every single day?

Even though my thesis is not about Newar identity and it does not answer the above mentioned questions directly, it, however, provides an understanding on the issue of indigenous identity and music. Being in Tromsø and studying Masters in Indigenous Studies definitely sparked my interest in indigenous issues particularly related to the Sámi.

Therefore, my research interest is deeply rooted in these questions and built on the curiosity regarding indigenous identity and music. Therefore, I chose this topic to understand how music can be an expression of indigenous identity.

## 1.1 Understanding Indigenous Identity

A lot of questions may arise on our mind when the topic of indigenous identity is brought forward. What does it really mean? Who can have it? What criteria should be fulfilled? Is it asserted on its own or is it assigned? Is it being born as indigenous or is it the process of becoming one? It is a very complex topic and a lot has been said about it. ‘The topic of indigenous identity opens up a Pandora’s Box of possibilities, and to try to address them all would mean doing justice to none’ (Weaver, 2001, p. 240).

The complexity of defining the term ‘identity’ itself makes it problematic to construct an ultimate meaning of the term ‘indigenous identity’. Ever since the term was introduced by psychologist Erik Erikson in 1950s, much has been written and discussed about the notion ‘identity’ (Rice, 2017). Identity is based on identification, which is based on recognition of a common origin or shared characteristics with another person, group, or ideal leading to solidarity and allegiance’ (Weaver, 2001, p. 243). Identity can also not be referred in ‘the monolithic sense’ which means, there is no singular meaning to it, it can mean everything and at the same time, it can mean nothing (Hokowhitu, 2010, p. 13). Hall (1996) states that identity are always fragmented, multiply constructed and intersected in a constantly changing, sometimes conflicting array (Hall, 1996, pp. 1-17). He describes the concept of identity in a more strategic and positional way as a construction within, ‘not outside discourse’. (Hokowhitu, 2010, p. 4). Therefore, identity is referred as ‘points of identification and attachment, only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render ‘outside’ abjected’ (Hokowhitu, 2010, p. 5).

Joona (2012) argues that the definition of an indigenous people is not challenging when it's a group but it is more difficult at individual level. The core of the problem, the author refers to, is the indigenous peoples' objectives to have their historical rights to land and waters returned (Joona, 2012).

Lindgen describes how 'identity strategy' is developed by indigenous people as a way to survive one's living environment (as cited in Sarivaara et al., 2013, p. 27). Sarivaara et al. (2013) use this concept to show how the Sámi speaking non-status Sámi in the Sámi community use the identity strategy to deal with their problem regarding their identity (Sarivaara et al., 2013, p.27).

The history of indigenous people is marked by colonization. The stories of subjugation, suppression, land dispossession and genocide come up when we go deeper into the history of indigeneity (Smith, 1999). Individual national indigenous movements, therefore, were the mobilization of indigenous communities against the forces of imperialism (Hilder, 2010). The global indigenous movement, however, was inspired by North American Red Power Movement launched after the World War II. The rising discourses of human rights after the Holocaust arose the concern regarding the rights of indigenous communities (Hilder, 2010).

The term 'indigenous' was included in the International Labour Organization's Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention and Recommendation of 1957, to refer to the people who are descendants of the inhabitants of the lands of settler colonies before colonization. International Labour Organization (ILO) also implemented Convention No. 107, in 1957, which aimed to protect the rights of indigenous communities. In 1968, anthropologists working in Latin America raised a concern regarding the indigenous matters which led to establishment of International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in Copenhagen. In 1971, UN commissioned a study on indigenous peoples carried out by José Martinez Cobo. (Minde, 2008). Through the establishment of these various political organization related to indigenous peoples like IWGIA, World Council of Indigenous Peoples WCIP, and UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous People, indigenous activists have formed a global solidarity and have rightfully provided critique to the processes of imperialism (Hilder, 2010).

Interpretation of identity in terms of indigeneity produces the challenges to be researched, probed and reconstructed (Hokowhitu, 2010). Nevertheless, the need for a space where 'relativity, multiplicity of truth and ambiguity' are accepted; a location which is much different than the one with singular fact and conclusion, has been recognized (Hokowhitu, 2010, p. 13). He further writes that it is this space which situates the fluidity in what it means to be

indigenous. Many agree that indigenous interpretation of identity is their own definition of themselves, their representation through different markers of indigeneity, their situatedness in relation to their community and others and recognition based on external perceptions (Hokuwhitu, 2010; Weaver, 2001).

Having identified the complexity in defining ‘indigenous identity’, my thesis will attempt to examine how music is being used as an expression of indigenous identity . Therefore, through this research, I will explore the music created and performed by indigenous musicians and ensembles. I will analyse the song texts and performances to explore the process through which the experience and embodiment of indigenous identity are expressed through music. In the next section, I will discuss the two communities and their music that I am discussing in my thesis: The Sami and joik and Tuvans and *xöömei*.

## 1.2 The Sámi and Joik

The Sámi are the indigenous people residing in Northern Fennoscandia. They are traditionally engaged in reindeer herders, fishermen and small scale farmers. The indigenous area of Sámi livelihood is called Sápmi, the land of the Sámi, comprising of northern areas of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. Over the years, substantial efforts have been made to assimilate Sámi people into majority populations. The infamous ‘Norwegianization’ policy was the official policy where constant efforts were made to represent Sámi ‘as the weak and dying race’ that needed to be Norwegianized in order to elevate to higher level (Niemi, 1997). Throughout the first half of half of 21<sup>st</sup> century, Sámi people went through political and socio-cultural marginalization. Oppression and endangerment of Sámi language was ensured through the introduction of criteria such as, proficiency of Norwegian language in order to buy or lease land until 1940s and extensive use of Norwegian language and strict regulations regarding use of Sámi language at schools (Minde, 2003).

In public sphere and in presence of Norwegians, many Sámi people started to deliberately hide their Sámi identity (Eidheim, 1969). They experienced discrimination, stigmatization and ‘everyday racism’, which resulted in association of Sámi identity with shame (Minde, 2003).

After the World War II, resistance against the assimilation policy started. The 1950s saw a growing revitalization of Sámi identity. This articulation of Sámi identity movement was fueled by the ‘self-concept of the Sami as being a distinct people who had lived in the area before the present states came into existence’ (Gaski, 2008, p220). The ethnic revitalization

process was carried out through re-codifying the Sámi minority culture that included reviving the name Sápmi, creating the Sámi flag, and labelling the stigmatized Sámi language as the mother tongue (Eidheim, 1992). Aboriginalization of Sámi ethno-politics and self-understanding in 1970s and 1980s, introduction and enactment of Sámi act, and the establishment of Sámi parliament in 1989 subsequently helped in rectifying the stigmatized status of Sámi people (Eidheim 1992, 1997; Thuen, 1995). Eidheim (1992) describes this stage as ‘the awakening’ where ‘Sami reappraise their self-image, invents a new context for unifying cultural fraternity, and, gradually, also becomes a new political power element on the Nordic stage” (p.3-4). Various cultural symbols like reindeer herding, spirituality, traditional music, clothing, and handicrafts, and language were used in this awakening stage (Blix, 2013).

The Sámi revitalization process definitely helped in constructing the Sámi culture as being equal to Norwegian culture but it also created the ‘preconditions for cultural insecurity, personal frustration and the generation of new categories of social winners and losers’ (Eidheim, 1997, p. 54). The coastal Sámi people for instance, were the ones strongly affected by the stigmatization, discrimination and assimilation which resulted in very dissolution of ethnic boundaries between Sámi and Norwegian.

Bjerkli (2010) takes the case of coastal Sámi in Manndalen, Kåfjord, in Troms County, to show how the fragmentation of language and culture resulted in some people could openly identifying themselves as Sámi while the others could not (Bjerkli, 2010). The scenario where fewer people speak Sámi language and may not possess or identify with the dominant symbolic expression of Sámi heritage, another judgemental view: “second-rate Sámi” might be experienced by individuals (Eidheim (1997, p.45).

In this manner, the revitalization process has also gave birth to a Sámi-Sámi dichotomy. Research has shown that those who were strongly affected by the assimilation policies might have been because of this narrow symbolic representations of ‘Sáminess’ (Blix, Hamran &Normann, 2013, p. 6).

However, music especially joik has a special place in Sámi soundscape (Gaski, 2008; Hilder, 2000). Joik, is the original music of the Sámi people and belongs to the genre of oral literature (Gaski, 2008). The term ‘joik’ (Norwegian) is noun that is Scandinavian simplification based on Northern Sámi term *juoigat* (to joik). It is called ‘*luohti*’ in Northern Sámi, ‘*vuolle*’ in Lule Sámi or ‘*vuelie*’ in South Sámi languages (Gaski, 2008). However, the noun joik has been adopted by Sámi themselves in the last century (Hilder, 2010). Joik is a way of naming and remembering people and draws spontaneous inspiration from people, places and

animals. The most significant features of joik is that it is circular and has no beginning and end and one joiks something instead of joiking about something (Hilder 2010). Joik normally consists of a single unaccompanied voice (and in some cases, accompanied by drums). The voice sings words or syllables and sometimes a combination of both (Edström, 2003). Tirén states that joiks deal with people, animals, places and through ‘tone painting’ a joik helps to describe the object being described (as cited in Hilder 2010).

Joik holds a vital part in pre-Christian Sámi religion and cosmology (Hilder, 2010, p139) and has been associated with shamanism. This was, however, used as a basis for systematic suppression of the Sámi cultural expression by the Christian missionaries. This led to burning of Sámi drums and association of joik with witchcraft<sup>4</sup> Lehtola writes:

The intent of Christian priests seems to have been the complete destruction of the old world-view, not just the shamanistic practices. Besides the traditions firmly linked to shamanism, the church judged many other unfamiliar customs to be heathen, such as the secular yoik tradition

(as cited in Burke, n.a)

Despite being subjected to stigma and suppression, joik has been vital a part of the Sami cultural revitalization (Hämäläinen et al., 2017). As Biret Ristin Sara describes, joik is the key form of protest by the Sámi (as cited in Hilder, 2010).

### 1.3 Tuvan Landscape and Xöömei<sup>5</sup>

Tuva Republic is a member of Russian federation and part of Siberian Republic District. It lies on the southern edge of Siberia with Mongolia to its south. Situated in Central Asia, surrounded by mountains, far from trade routes and absence of railway, make Tuva remote and landlocked<sup>6</sup>.

Historically, Tuva has been a part of Chinese and Mongolian empires. Famous Mongolian Emperor Gengis Khan conquered Tuva in 1207 and it came under Yuan dynasty. In 1944, it became a part of USSR and received an autonomous status as Tuvan Autonomous Socialist Soviet Republic in 1961. After the collapse of the Soviet Union In 1991, the sovereign

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<sup>4</sup> The Sámi Joik. Retrieved from <http://www.laits.utexas.edu/sami/diehtu/giella/music/yoiksunna.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Tuvan name for Throat singing. Details in the following page.

<sup>6</sup> Tuva Republic, Russia. Retrieved from <http://russiatrek.org/tuva-republic>

Tuva Republic within the Russian Federation was founded. Tuva is now home to seminomadic herders who are involved in keeping sheep, horses and reindeer, and hunting<sup>7</sup>.

Tuva is famous for its ancient remains of the Sayan Mountains, Altai peaks, lush grasslands, taiga forests and most importantly for their unique throat singing technique called *xöömei*. Tuva has been described as ‘the musical Olduvai Gorge<sup>8</sup>, a living record of a protomusical world, where natural and human-made sounds blend’ (Levin C. & Edgerton, 1999, p. 80).

Tuva remained isolated geographically and culturally for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After the collapse of Soviet Union, Tuva gradually became open to the rest of the world. Tuva remained unknown to the Western world until the late physicist Richard Feyman ‘drew attention to it’ in the early 80s<sup>9</sup>. The review on the book ‘Tuva or Bust!’(1991) written by Ralph Leighton describes the book as a records a remarkable last attempt of cancer ridden Feyman to reach the fabled Tuva (Matherne, 2003). In an attempt to get an access to isolated Tuva and driven by his fascination for Kygyl (the ‘interestingly’ spelled Tuvan capital with no vowels), Feyman accompanied author Leighton in a rigorous preparation process ranging from calling a Russian radio station to get more information on Tuva to organizing an exhibit at the Smithsonian and in Los Angeles (Matherne, 2003). It was because of Feyman and Leighton, Tuva got a lot of international attention<sup>10</sup>. Late 1980s also brought American ethnomusicologist Ted Levine to Tuva where he met the group Huun-Huur-Tu and brought them to United States<sup>11</sup>. These exposures brought the Tuvan music and culture that had been isolated for years to the international limelight and also opened up opportunities of collaboration between Tuvan and Western musicians.

In the last three decades, Tuvan performers have been successful in presenting their music outside of Tuva as well<sup>12</sup> Pioneer among them is vocalist Kongar-ol Ondar, popularly

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<sup>7</sup> Tuva’s Meridian of Musicality, Spirituality, and Cross-Cultural Place: A Primer on Tuvan Throat Singing. Retrieved from <http://www.redefinemag.com/2013/tuvan-throat-singing-musicality-sprituality-cross-cultural-place/>

<sup>8</sup> Olduvai Gorge is an important archaeological site in Tanzania where the first human fossils were discovered. The site is famous for the recovery of hundreds of fossilized bones and stone tools dating back to millions of years, led the paleoanthropologists to deduce that the human evolved in Africa. Retrieved from <http://www.livescience.com/40455-olduvai-gorge.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Everything You Wanted to Know About Tuvan Throat Singing and Were Afraid to Ask. Retrieved from <http://www.carnegiehall.org/BlogPost.aspx?id=4294994445>

<sup>11</sup> Alash- About Tuvan Throat Singing. Retrieved from [http://www.alashensemble.com/about\\_tts.htm](http://www.alashensemble.com/about_tts.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Tuva’s Meridian of Musicality, Spirituality, and Cross-Cultural Place: A Primer on Tuvan Throat Singing. Retrieved from <http://www.redefinemag.com/2013/tuvan-throat-singing-musicality-sprituality-cross-cultural-place/>

known as Ondar the Groovin' Tuvan, who received international attention after winning UNESCO sponsored International Throat Singing Competition in 1992<sup>13</sup>. Before getting an international acclaim, Ondar formed Tuvan ensemble in 1985 and began performing in and outside Tuva 'defying official displeasure'<sup>14</sup>. Later on, he was performed with musicians like Frank Zappa, and also appeared in David Letterman's Late Show<sup>15</sup> He is also credited for inviting American blues musician Paul Pena, the subject of the documentary Genghis Blues<sup>16</sup>, to Tuva. The Academy Award nominated film followed Pena's journey to Tuva to learn throat singing and also features Ondar<sup>17</sup> In 1995, Ondar came up with an acclaimed album titled 'Echoes of Tuva'. For his contribution towards Tuvan music, he was named National artist of Russia and he is regarded as the musical ambassador of Tuva<sup>18</sup>.

Following this, ensembles like Huun-Hurr-Tu, Alash Ensemble, Yat-Kha, Tyva Kyzy, Chirgilchin and singer Sainkho Namchylak have brought Tuvan musical expression to the world. Apart from bringing along traditional folk flavor from the remote republic, their experimental collaboration with artists from various musical genres is worth-mentioning. The collaboration of Huun-Hurr-Tu with several Western musician for Frank Zappa's renowned Salad party of 1993<sup>19</sup> was received with accolades.

One of the most significant changes in Tuvan soundscape is inclusion of voices of women. Previously prohibited from singing due to prevailing beliefs and superstition, women are gradually breaking the barrier and finding space for expression in Tuvan musical sphere<sup>20</sup>. The result of this positive change is Tuva's all-female music group called Tyva Kyza, powerful vocalist Sainkho Namchylak and singer Aidysmaa Koshkendey in Chirgilchin. More recently, Tuvan throat singing has influenced pop culture so much so that in one of the episode of the popular sitcom The Big Bang Theory, the main character Dr Sheldon Cooper is seen practicing throat singing<sup>21</sup> These instances show that over the year, once isolated and unheard of Tuvan

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<sup>13</sup> *Biography. Kongar-ol Ondar.* Retrieved from <http://www.ondar.com/biography/>

<sup>14</sup> *Biography. Kongar-ol-Ondar.* Retrived from <http://www.ondar.com/biography/>

<sup>15</sup> *Kongar-ol Ondar on David Letterman-u0027s Late Show.* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ui-Tk5HP4E>.

<sup>16</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.genghisblues.com/>

<sup>17</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.redefinemag.com/2013/tuvan-throat-singing-musicality-spirituality-cross-cultural-place/>

<sup>18</sup> *Biography. Kongar-ol Ondar.* Retrieved from <http://www.ondar.com/biography/>

<sup>19</sup> *Frank Zappa Salad Party 93 with Huun Huir.* Retreived from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVUMSazQL9U&t=3s>

<sup>20</sup> *The women who sing khoomei.* Retreived from <http://www.redefinemag.com/2013/tuvan-throat-singing-musicality-spirituality-cross-cultural-place/>

<sup>21</sup> *Sheldon Cooper Throat Singing.* Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-RsB4a4ogc>. Last accessed 12 April, 2016

music is now becoming more accessible and ensembles like Chirgilchin are finding their space in international music sphere.

*Xöömei* in Tuvan language (also popularly referred as *khöömei*, or *khoomii*, *hoomei*) is a general term used to refer one of the remarkable variants<sup>22</sup> of overtone singing by inhabitants of Mongolia, Tuva and Siberia. Although *xöömei* is used to refer to throat singing in general, it specifically refers to one of the major Tuvan throat-singing styles. It is sung in the middle range ‘with whistle floating above the fundamental pitch, like wind swirling above rocks’<sup>23</sup>.

Ancient throat singing technique (including Tuvan *xöömei*) was developed in Central Asia among the nomadic herdsmen, ‘people who lived in yurts, rode horses, raised yaks, sheep, and camel, and had a close relationship with nature’<sup>24</sup>. Levine and Edgerton (1999) state that while in Tuva:

one of the first impression is of an unalloyed silence as vast as the land itself. Gradually the ear habituates to the absence of human activity. Silence dissolves into a subtle symphony of buzzing, bleating, burbling, cheeping, whistling – our onomatopoeic shorthand for the sounds of insects, beasts, water, bird, wind (Levin C. & Edgerton, 1999, p. 80).

The landscape, nature, life ways and soundscape of Tuva have inspired in bringing out this ambient form of music. According to Tuvan legends, the first Tuvan throat singers were said to be imitating the sounds of the nature and in the process, they produced this complex sound with two or more distinct tones and pitches simultaneously. Thus, producing an effect like that of a bagpipe, where the singer starts with a low, sustained drone slowly and subtly manipulated to break up and amplify second ‘series of flutelike harmonics’ which represents the sound like the whistle of the bird. All these while, the drone continues at the lower volume (Levin C. & Edgerton, 1999, p. 80).

Basing the understanding on the history Sámi and Tuvan, and their soundscapes, this thesis will further proceed to the research questions in next section.

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<sup>22</sup> Other styles of Tuvan throat singing are: *sygyt*, *kargyraa*, *borbangnadyr*, and *ezenggileer*. Retreived from [http://www.alashensemble.com/about\\_tts.htm](http://www.alashensemble.com/about_tts.htm)

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.alashensemble.com/about\\_tts.htm](http://www.alashensemble.com/about_tts.htm)

<sup>24</sup>Retreived from [http://www.alashensemble.com/about\\_tts.htm](http://www.alashensemble.com/about_tts.htm)

## 1.4 Research Question

My primary research question is ‘how is indigenous identity expressed through music?’

To explore and understand the main research question, I will carry out following tasks:

- a) Describe the case of Riddu Riđđu Festival by tracing the historical background to understand the setting and context.
- b) Present analyses of stories, song lyrics and musical performances of indigenous artists to understand what they are trying to express in regards to personal and collective identities.

## 1.5 Outline of the thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory chapter that discusses the background, historical understanding, and contextualizes the setting. It leads to the topic and discusses the issue in question. It also explains my motivation towards this subject and the objectives of this research. The research question and tasks are also elaborately discussed in this chapter.

The second chapter deals with the literature review and theoretical orientation of the thesis. It provides the information on the previous literature and also consists of the discussion on theoretical frameworks related to indigenous identity and music. It is an attempt to situate the research subject in terms of context and theory.

The third chapter explains the research methodologies applied in this particular study. It explains the data collection and analysis methods I have used. It is also a part where I discuss the ethical challenges I faced during the research and also the reflections on my part in the fieldwork.

Chapter four is where my main discussion starts. This chapter focuses on the fieldwork setting i.e. Riddu Riđđu and the draws upon its historical background. This chapter contextualizes Riddu Riđđu festival as a physical and symbolic place for musicians and audiences to come together to express their identities. By discussing the context of the festival, I will establish it as a point of departure and proceed to my fifth chapter which will focus more on the stories of the informants.

The fifth chapter contains different subsection where I dwell into the data I have collected through my fieldwork. This is the section where I will present the stories of my respondents. I will also analyse the song texts and musical performances to add depth to my discussion. The stories are connected together through common themes such as reflection and

contemplation process to understand personal and collective identity, expression of sentiments and nature-human relationship, and music as a space for losing and finding identities.

The final chapter is the sixth chapter and it provides a conclusion to the main issue of the thesis. Here I will describe the findings of this thesis. I will also provide some final reflections.

## 2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Previous Literature

There is an extensive archive of writings on identity in general (Goffman 1959, 1963; Hall, 1996). Various scholars have contributed through their studies in understanding the relationship between music and identities (Frith, 1996; Rice 2017; Stokes, 1994). Several other literatures served as a foundation giving basis and shape to my research topic (Chilisa, 2012; Magowan &Neuenfeld, 2005)

‘Music and Identity’ by Simon Frith (1996), explores the formation of identity in relation to music. The article starts with the identification of a problem in popular music academia which is limited to the assumption that ‘sound must somehow ‘reflect’ or ‘represent’ the people.’ (Frith, 1996, p. 108). There is always a quest of finding a connection of a group of people through music or identification of certain type of music to certain group of people.

Frith proposes a new stance to explore the aesthetics of popular music, where ‘the issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience - a musical experience, an aesthetic experience - that we can only make sense of by *taking on* both a subjective and a collective identity’ He also brings up two premises of his argument: one, identity is not a thing but a mobile process of becoming (not being) and two, ‘our experience of music - of music making and music listening - is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*’ He draws a similarity between music and identity saying that both are in fact performance and story describing individual in social and social in individual. Through this article, Frith argues that our sense of identity is constructed by music through ‘direct experiences it offers to body, time and sociability, experiences which enables us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives’ (Frith, 1996, pp. 108-125)

Similarly, the article ‘Bodies, Myth, Music: How contemporary indigenous musicians are contesting a mythologized Australian Nationalism’ by Stephanie B. Guy (2015) focuses on the two Australian myths: ‘terra nullius’ and ‘noble savage’ to argue how these myths have been instrumental in ‘foundation of colonial nationhood and their repercussions reverberating within post-colonial imaginings of Indigenous Australians today’ (Guy, 2015, p.1). The article takes the experiences of four contemporary indigenous musicians to examine the ‘how public and mainstream representations of Aboriginality are breaking these myths, and are a subtle display of the fracturing of a constructed Australian nationalism’ (Guy, 2015, p. 3).

The use of music and voice in the expression of cultural identity has also been explored taking Taiwanese aboriginal female singer-songwriters' stories. The article 'Creating space for where ancestors once walked' analyzes the cultural musicology in terms of 'lyrical and musical expression and focus on production techniques and aesthetics' (Hughes & Keith, 2012, p. 177)

Since my fieldwork setting was Northern Norway, I gathered knowledge about the setting through various literatures on Sami identity, lives, experiences, issues of stigma and complexities (Blix, 2013; Eidheim, 1969). Ethnic identity as a social stigma has also been captured by exploring Sámi identity as a hidden ethnic identity which has been stigmatized throughout time (Eidhem, 1969).

The article 'Yoik-Sami music in a Global World' explores the impact of globalization on indigenous cultures. Taking Yoik, the traditional Sami musical genre as a focus, he raises provocative questions regarding innovative use of traditional art in new settings. He also brings addresses an important issue regarding the challenges faced by indigenous cultures through commercialized appropriation and politically correct cosmopolitan (indigenous) expressions. (Gaski, 2008, pp. 357-358).

To understand the fieldwork area Manndalen and Riddu Riđđu festival better, I read various related articles and books. The ambiguity and complexity of coastal Saami identity in Manndalen in relation to not just Norwegians but also amongst locals have been studied by Master in Indigenous Studies 2006 (MIS-06) student Anastassia V. Leonenko (2008). Through her Master's thesis she explores the relation of *manndalinger* to the cultural invention and shows their chosen way of the invasion of traditions. It also explores 'how far they accept distortions as authentic to their heritage during the process of cultural invention and which sign-substitutions can be defined in relation to Coastal Saami culture today' (Leonenko, 2008, p. iv).

Similarly, the book 'Sámi Musical Performance and Politics of Indigeneity in Northern Europe' captures the vivid picture of dynamic music scene of the Northern Europe. His extensive study on Sámi musicians, festivals, projects and recording industry discusses a wide array of issues like time, nature, revival, sovereignty, repatriation and cosmopolitanism, and also shows how the Sámi musical performance helps shape notions of national belonging, transnational activism, and processes of democracy in Northern Europe (Hilder, 2015). I have also heavily relied on his Ph.D. Dissertation on the same subject (Hilder, 2010).

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

In this section, I will discuss the theoretical framework that I have applied to analyze the data of this research. To understand the main research question ‘how is indigenous identity expressed through music’, I will be focusing on three main keywords: indigenous identity, music, and expressions.

The main premises for this study has been based on the theories by Stokes (1994), Frith (1996), Solomon(1997) and Hansen<sup>25</sup> (as cited in Hilder, 2010).

### 2.2.1 Music, Self Reflection, and Indigenous Identity

Frith (1996) explores the formation of identity in relation to music. It identified a problem in popular music academia which is limited to the assumption that ‘sound must somehow reflect or represent the people. He states that there is a quest of finding a connection between a group of people and music, and the process of identifying certain type of music to certain groups of people. He uses the examples from the arena of popular music to suggest that formation of social identity must be through mutual enactment rather than just relating it to certain groups of people or values (Frith, 1996, pp. 107-111).

So, he brings up two premises of his argument: one, identity is not a thing but a mobile process of becoming (not being); two, ‘our experience of music - of music making and music listening - is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*’. He draws a similarity between music and identity saying that both are in fact performance and story describing ‘individual in social’ and ‘social in individual’ (Frith, 1996, pp. 109-110) . I want to use borrow his concept of identity as a mobile where the experience of music reveals the experience of an individual because of the instances revealed by my respondents about their music making process and its relation to their process of self-discovery. Through the continuous process of music making and performing, my respondents are going through a rigorous and soul-searching process of discovering who they are, what they are dealing with in their surroundings, and what this discovery means in relation to their indigenous identity.

Thus, the discovery of self is thus understood in terms of their encounters with others. Taylor (1994) describes this as a dialogical character of being human where we define our

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<sup>25</sup> Despite being one of the most important document that archives the history of Riddu Riđđu Festival, the book ‘Storm på Kysten (Storm at the Coast) by Lene Hansen(2008) could not be directly used for this thesis because of the language. The book is published in Norwegian. Since I do not have the proficiency in Norwegian, I had to rely on the secondary source i.e. Hilder (2010) for the cited resource.

identity through the modes of expressions that are introduced and exchanged through interaction with others (Taylor, 1994, pp. 32-34). He writes:

Thus, my discovering my own identity doesn't mean that I work it out in isolation, but I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.

(Taylor, 1994, p. 34)

This dialogue between the musician's self and others become very prominent when it comes to musical performances. This is where Frith uses music to describe the experience of identity both as a social process and aesthetic process. It is a social process where a form of interaction takes place and at the same time it is an aesthetic process where the main objective is to play and hear what sounds right (Frith, 1996, p. 110). He describes the whole process - from performance by musicians to listening by audience- as expression of identity where there is both distinction of self and the others but at the same time the lines distinguishing them blurs out (Frith, 1996, p. 118). He also argues that our sense of identity is constructed by music through 'direct experiences it offers to body, time and sociability, experiences which enables us to place ourselves in imaginative cultural narratives' (Frith, 1996, p. 124).

My respondents are musicians. They are artists who identify themselves as indigenous/ethnic. They use music as the work of art to express experiences, stories, aspirations, sentiments, desires, emotions and feelings. Using Thomas Solomon's concept of 'performance as embodiment', I want to analyze how the sound are lived and to bring forward their 'affecting presences'(Solomon,2006). Robert Plant Armstrong (1971) proposed this term 'affecting presence' to denote art objects. These affecting presences emphasize the processual nature of a) embodiment of the felt experience by artist in their creative works, and b) how those come into encounter with these works can also feel the experiences the artists went through. In musical practices, my respondents stated that they go through a process of embodiment through creation, experience and 'living' the music, which when is presented or performed for an audience, creates an 'affecting presence' which are art objects that emphasize the processual nature by embodiments of the felt experience by artist in their creative works and then, those experiences are also felt by those who come across the works of art (as cited in Solomon 2006). During the musical performances that was observed through the fieldwork and the experiences

shared by my respondents, they stated that they go through the similar process of embodiment through musical creation where the ‘affecting presences’ were created and shared.

## 2.2.2 Performances, Place and Indigeneity

In this study, the ‘place’ played a vital role in bringing together the musicians, performances, audiences and me. Tromsø, being a culturally rich city in northern Norway, gave me an opportunity to be a part of the local music scene and most importantly, the indigenous art and music festival, Riddu Riđđu Festival.

The close relationship between ethnicity, identity, music, and place has drawn much attention in the field of ethnomusicology (Stokes, 1994, Solomon, 2006). In this study, I am using the concepts of ‘ethnicity, identity and music in relation to performance and place’ (Stokes, 1994) and concept of ‘place of sound’ (Solomon, 2006).

Stokes discusses how music transcends the limitation of our own place in the world and ‘boundaries’ to construct trajectories. This describe the vital role of music in relocating ourselves. He then states:

The musical events, from collective dances to the act of putting cassette or CD into a machine, evokes and organizes collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power, and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity. The ‘places’ constructed through music involve notions of difference and social boundary.

(Stokes, 1994, p. 12-13)

Similar is the case of my fieldwork setting. The historical background of the setting becomes significant in order to understand the context of the place. Therefore, I have used Lene Hansen’s arguments as cited in Hilder (2010).

Throughout the years, Riddu Riđđu has become a ‘translocal cultural world’ of its own (Stokes, 1994, p. 97). It is a social meeting place for musicians from all over the world. Here they can play their music, collaborate with other artists, perform in front of audiences, create a musical experience, and bond with others. It is a space where we are reminded of years’ long history of oppression, stigma and subjugation of Sámi people (Refer to Chapter 1). It is also a reminiscence of revitalization process coastal Sámi people went through and the milestones Riddu has achieved throughout the years (Details in Chapter 4). Most importantly, it is a safe niche that has been created for indigenous people around the world to come together and

express their solidarity. He also argues it is also argued that a sense of self and sense of place are interconnected (Stokes, 1994). An individual's sense of place based identity, thus becomes the basis of a sense of community (Solomon, 1997).

### 3 Research Methodology

This chapter mainly discusses the various methods and approaches for data collection and analysis. The data collection method employed, the challenges and ethical issues faced and the reflection on my role as researcher have been thoroughly discussed here. The preliminary phase of the fieldwork was also relevant and important for this study, therefore, this chapter begins with the details on the preparation.

#### 3.1 Preparation for the fieldwork

I decided to do my fieldwork in Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015 as it is a meeting point for musicians and artists from various indigenous/ethnic community all over the world. The Riddu Riđđu kick start programme, held in Árdna in June 2015, gave me an overview of how the festival is going to be. Being a part of this programme made my fieldwork preparation a bit easier as it was an opportunity to meet, talk and build an initial rapport with some artists and organizers. After watching the musicians perform, I approached Ingá-Máret Gaup-Juuso for a quick chat. She is a joiker, singer and composer from Finland. She belongs to a new generation of joik singers and is involved with three musical projects: Luohtemohkit, a four membered traditional joik ensemble; Mingá, an experimental joik band, and Tundra Electro, an electronic joik band. When she heard about my interest in interviewing her for the research, she was very positive. She gave a consent to be one of my respondents instantaneously.

Being a part of the programme also brought forward the probability of language challenge that could affect this research. The whole programme was in Norwegian and occasionally Sami. Since, I am not a Norwegian or Sami speaking person, it was challenging to follow what presenters were saying. Fortunately, one of the fellow audience seated next to me understood my challenge and was kind enough to translate what was being said.

I also decided to volunteer for the festival. The reason for this was mainly reciprocity. As a researcher, I was making Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015 my fieldwork setting. I was going to meet and interview my respondents there, get information related to my topic, observe the musical performances as a participant and experience the ambience of a festival. The festival was going to be the place of importance for my thesis. I believed it would be reciprocal to give something back and volunteering would give me that opportunity.

### 3.2 My Respondents

My thesis is based on the stories, the thoughts and insights shared by my respondents. Kovac (2009) describes story as an active agent in a relational world which helps us in getting insight and knowledge of the phenomenon (Kovac, 2009, p,94). The process of interview heavily relied on the stories. The process was such that it wasn't only them sharing their reflections and experience with me but it was me as well, who had a chance to share my story to them. Stories were there even when we were not formally in the in the interview setting anymore. Therefore, there was a reflexivity in this process as well as we are both receiving and giving something. Kovach (2009) describes this process as a co-creation of knowledge (p.100).

It is also based on the music they have created, practiced, performed and shared through concerts, festivals, and social media. They are: Chirgilchin, Ingor Ántte Áilu Gaup (Áilloš), Ingá-Máret Gaup-Jusso, and Risten Anine Kvernmo Gaup (Sápmi). They are all engaged in one or more joik and music projects. Their description is given below:

- a) **Chirgilchin (Tuva):** The name ‘Chirgilchin’ means ‘the dance of the air in the heat of the day’ or ‘miracle’ depending upon the context.<sup>26</sup> The ensemble comprises of four members: Igor Koshkendey, Aidysmaa Koshkendey, Mongun-ool Ondar, and Aikhan Oorzhak. Since its formation in 1996, the members have several noted achievements. Igor Koshkendey is the three times winner of the Grand Prix of the International Throat Singing Competition in 1998, 2000, and 2002. He is an expert in the Oidupaa style, a type of kargyraa unique to the singer Vladimir Oidupaa. Another member Mongun-ool Ondar won the Grand Prix of International Throat Singing in the 1992. He is recognized as having mastered six different throat-singing styles and is working on inventing his own style. Aidysmaa Koshkendey is the only female musician in the ensemble who has won several throat singing competition in Tuva. Throughout the years, they have toured around Asia, America, and Europe performing their unique music.
- b) **Ingá-Máret Gaup-Juuso (Sápmi)** is a joiker, singer, song writer who is from Gárasavvon, in Northern Finland. She is involved in various musical projects namely, Luohemohkit, MINGÁ and Tundra Electro. She has performed joiks to the royalties of Norway and Monaco some years ago during their visits to Lapland, Finland. Her

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=Chirgilchin>

collaborative performance of the song called ‘Son’<sup>27</sup> with Swedish singer Loreen, who was also the winner of Eurovision Song Contest in 2013, gained popularity. She performed that composition ‘Son’ along with Loreen on the National Day celebration of Sweden in Stockholm in the year 2014<sup>28</sup>.

- c) **Iñgor Ántte Áilu Gaup ‘Áilloš’ (Sápmi)** is a Sámi joiker, songwriter, composer, and actor from *Guovdageaidnnu* (Kautukeino, Finnmark) in Northern Norway. He was initially a part of the rock group "Ivnniguinn". He has been described as the best example of the so-called “modern joik” phenomenon for releasing a rock recording and a traditional joik recording simultaneously in 1978 (Bamman, 2006). His album ‘Yoikur’ gained a critical acclaim and the song ‘Consolation’ from that album was nominated for the prestigious Edvard Prize.
- d) **Risten Anine Gaup (Sápmi)** is a Sámi joiker, singer, songwriter and performer from a reindeer herding community in *Guovdageaidnnu* (Kautukeino, Finnmark) in Northern Norway. Apart from traditional joiking, she is also involved in various creative projects.: Ozas and Manin Jeanine. Along with her siblings, she has been a part of various music festivals and concerts around the world, and climate change march.

The reflexivity regarding the choice of using their real names was well thought and discussed. Since they are all public figures, they did not have any problems regarding using their real names. Before the interviews, I provided them details about the thesis and received verbal consent to use the recorder. I had used a note book where I asked them to write their names, home place and they all did without any hesitation. One of my respondents was concerned about the presentation of the data. So, I sent her the transcript of the interview with her with underlines and highlights of the part that was going to be used in this study. She made a few corrections and gave me consent to use those parts.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjI0tqQN39s>

<sup>28</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42sFckjGa\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42sFckjGa_s)

### 3.3 Data Collection Method

Qualitative research approach has been used for this research. It is an approach that is used to explore and understand the meaning ascribed to a social or human problem by individuals or groups<sup>29</sup>. The research is descriptive based on the data collected from interviews, participant observations, and informal conversations, information from social media, text analysis and field notes and diary keeping.

However, since this thesis deals with expression of indigenous identity through music, some approaches and methods developed within the ethnomusicology<sup>30</sup> framework have also been borrowed and used. These methods comprise: concert/festivals participations, listening and analyzing the contents from musical compositions and performance videos, and conversation with other musicians and audiences (Cooley & Barz, 1997, Nettl, 2005).

Most of the data were collected through fieldwork based on Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015 in Manndalen, Kåfjord, Troms County during the five days of the festival from 8-11 of July 2015. All my respondents were performing at the festival. However, only three interviews were carried out during the festival. Similarly, during the thesis writing period, I also attended musical concerts, art performances, and talk programmes that were relevant to my topic at different venues in Tromsø. I did one last interview with a respondent in August 2016 after a performance in a talk programme in Small Projects<sup>31</sup>, an alternative art space in Tromsø.

In the following section, I will describe the data collection method in detail.

#### 3.3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is defined as "the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the researcher setting" (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999, p. 91). To get familiar with and gain information about the subject, I involved myself to the setting as an observer who is also a participant. At the Riddu Riđđu kick-off programme and the main festival, initially I was a 'complete observer' whose identity was unknown to the others present in the setting. The roles later changed to

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<sup>29</sup>*The Selection of a Research Approach*. Retrieved from [http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/55588\\_Chapter\\_1\\_Sample\\_Creswell\\_Research\\_Design\\_4e.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/55588_Chapter_1_Sample_Creswell_Research_Design_4e.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Ethnomusicology was often referred as 'world music' before 1990s which focused on music as a human activity in a variety of cultural contexts (Post, 2006, p. 2).

<sup>31</sup>*Home*. Retrieved from <http://www.smallprojects.no/>

being ‘participant as observer’ who has a known identity in the setting and s/he is actively involved in the regular activities of the setting being studied (Bryman, 2001, pp. 298-301).

At Riddu Riddu Festival, I had various roles. I was a researcher carrying out research using participant observation as a method of observing the activities as a festival participant. Similarly, I was an audience listening and watching the performance of artists on stage, meeting fellow festival goers, and having a conversation with them on music, performances, indigenous identity and being a part of festival. I was also a volunteer at the UiT –The Arctic University of Norway’s lavvu at the festival, representing the university and interacting with visitors visiting the lavvu.

Participant observation helped me understand the artist’s expression of narrative messages, performance of their ethnic/indigenous identity on stage and off stage and the audience’s reactions and participation to the performances. This method also helped me understand the setting better because I was a part of the process that was going on.

### 3.3.2 Interview

Interview is also the main method employed in this research. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant’s experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, for example, to further investigate their responses (McNamara, 1999).

There were four key respondents that I interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured. Semi-structured interviews are focused interviews that have research guides with questions, which cover the issue to be covered and the sequence might not be the same to every participants (Chilisa, 2012, p. 205) Based on the artist I was going to interview and the changes that occurred in the field, the questions in the guide were also modified. The sequence of interview questions was flexible but revolved around key themes of music, indigeneity, performativity, space, audience perceptions, and roles and responsibility of the indigenous musicians. Having key themes already prepared gave flexibility to the interview guide as the questions could be changed and edited according to the need of the situation. Semi-structured, open ended interviews turned out to be very useful as the informants used their liberty to steer the conversation on the key themes the way they want.

Interviews with three respondents at Riddu Riddu were carried out outdoors around concert area or around the bonfire. Whereas, one interview was carried out in a local café in Tromsø. The rapport building with the respondent was done in the programmes held at Small

Projects, where I had an opportunity to watch the performance, met the artist afterwards, break the ice and make an appointment for an interview. The interview settings with all the respondents were quite casual and informal.

Focus interviews proved to be a very important method for my research. All the interviews were face-to-face which gave me an opportunity to understand the social cues like the voice, body language, gestures, facial expressions and so on<sup>32</sup> (Opdenakker, 2006). These cues were very important instruments in giving additional information other than the direct answers to my questions. For instance, these cues helped me to steer the conversation whenever I touched some sensitive issues that my respondents were not comfortable with or were reluctant to talk about. Similarly, if they had trouble understanding my questions, they would react and I could rephrase the queries instantly.

A sound recorder was used for all the focus interviews with the main respondents. I asked permission with the respondents to use the recorders prior to the interviews. I did not use the recorder during informal conversations and small chats with other participants. Digital camera was also used to take photographs of the events, artists, performances and fieldwork settings. The recorded data was transcribed in a personal computer and for confidentiality stored in a password protected files.

Random encounters and informal conversations also have been useful for this thesis. At Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015, for instance, conversations with audiences, and fellow volunteers gave me a very deep understanding about the audience's perception, impressions and feeling of unity and bonding one acquires while in such settings.

### 3.3.3 Field Notes and Diary Keeping

Early on during the preparation of the fieldwork, we were advised by our supervisors that having a field note and/or diary makes the research process much organized and convenient. The main reason was the fact that one cannot really rely on their memory when it comes to performing a serious task like research. While on field, I realized very quickly how important taking notes and keeping a diary actually. When I went to various programmes, concerts and festivals, I was overwhelmed by the multitude of impressions I got. So, having a diary to make

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<sup>32</sup>Opdenakker,R. (2006). *Advantages and Disadvantages of Four Interview Techniques in Qualitative Research*. Retrieved from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/175/392>

my notes and write down my experiences and impressions proved to be useful as it helped me structure my thoughts and ideas. It also helped me keep track of the tiny details one tends to forget. Keeping the notes and journal has also helped me reflect upon my own stance in and away from those particular settings.

### 3.3.4 Use of Social Media

Social media played a vital role in getting in touch with the artists. Based on the online videos and audios, I initially chose four artists/bands performing in Riddu Riđđu Festival as my key informants. I used Facebook to search for these artists. I sent them Facebook messages telling them about my research and inquiring if they were interested to talk to me. Fortunately, all of them gave me positive responses. In chats later, they showed interest to talk to me during the festival and accepted my ‘friend request’ on Facebook.

Social media also helped in later part of research after I was done with the fieldwork. Since I had connected the respondents through social media tools like Facebook, Instagram etc., I could follow their stories through newsfeed and keep myself updated about the music performances and festivals they were engaged with. With two of my respondents, I had further chats and email exchange because of their performances in some concerts/festivals relevant to my topic. In these correspondences, I inquired about the recent development in their musical journey.

### 3.3.5 Secondary Data

Secondary data were also used for the research. Books, articles, and other online resources like websites and ebooks have been a very important source of data. Online forums and Facebook groups on ethnomusicology were also used as a platform to share and discuss ideas with likeminded ethnomusicologists and researchers around the world.

Song lyrics analysis is also employed in this study. I have mainly used an unreleased song written by one of my respondents that goes simultaneously with the stories shared by them during the interview. Textual analysis is described as a way of gathering information by the researcher on how other human beings make sense of the world (McKee, n.a.). According to Dallin (1994) lyrics are written with an intent to form an interaction between the author and the listener. The message might be anything but the purpose is to motivate the listeners to think about what is in the lyrics (Dallin 1994). The reason why I chose to analyse the song lyrics was

to understand the message the writer wanted to convey and since the writer was my respondent, the analysis of song lyrics gave more depth to what was shared through interview.

Apart from that, I also gained understanding from various multimedia sources like sounds, music, art, documentary and so on from the internet. I basically relied on Riddu Riddu festival website<sup>33</sup> for all the supplementary information related to artists, bands and musicians that I was going to interview. I also used the festival's official TV partner NRK TV's website<sup>34</sup> to check out their page dedicated to the festival. Watching various documentaries and videos related to the artists or the music has been a great source of knowledge for this study. For instance, I watched the related documentaries and videos which helped me understand the Tuvan region and the context and history of Tuvan throat singing, as one of my main respondents were from Tuva.

However, one setback that hit me hard while searching for information related to Tuvan artists was the lack of sources from Tuvan scholars themselves. Most of the secondary sources about Tuva was written, filmed or presented by foreign scholars but not much by Tuvan scholars. There were mostly magazine articles and blog posts on the internet that were published by the Tuvan writers. I have, however, also used the artist page of Tuvan artists for information. Similarly, finding secondary data related to music and identity from the Scandinavia proved to be difficult as well because of the language challenge. Not having proficiency in Norwegian deprived me from a lot of information as most of the articles that I came across were written in Norwegian. Of course, translation was possible using online translation tools but a lot of meaning would be lost in the process. The language challenge is discussed in the next section.

### 3.4 Ethics and Reflexivity

Throughout the entire time of research, I have found myself reflecting on my own position as a researcher. As an international student from Nepal researching in a Norwegian setting, I am an outsider for Manndalen and also for the respondents I interviewed. I don't speak the language either which has proved to be quite challenging during the thesis writing process. I have discussed the challenge in a separate section below. Any researcher is regarded as an outsider who is able to situate himself outside of the setting and 'observe without being implicated in the scene' (Smith, 2012 p.137).

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<sup>33</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.riddu.no>

<sup>34</sup> Retrieved from <http://nrk.no>

Similarly, I am not a musician. I don't have a theoretical knowledge of music and I don't share the same experience of being an indigenous musician as my respondents. Deciphering musical terminologies and interpreting them for the purpose of my research has been challenging. As a researcher representing University of Tromsø, my education in a Western and English-speaking university might have also created a research relationship that nurtures a power imbalance and puts me automatically in an outer sphere. Major challenge of being an outsider researcher is difficulty in accessing to the information. There were fair chances that the respondents would not be willing to accept 'the outsider' coming in their community to gather information and interpret it as an 'intrusion' (Bridges 2001, p.373).

My own identity as an indigenous woman from Nepal also helped me bond with some respondents. I had some instances where being indigenous helped me in making a bond with other indigenous person. For instance, during an interview, one of the respondents asked me if I was indigenous. When I affirmed, he stated that me being indigenous makes it easier for him to convey his thoughts because he believed that I could relate to what he was saying. In some way, my own indigenous identity was a way to gain trust from my respondents.

I was playing several roles and was placed in various positions. I was a volunteer from the university, a music lover, an indigenous woman from Nepal and mainly a researcher. As a researcher, when I realized the different positions and spheres I was moving in, and figured out that the best thing I could do was be open, respectful, reflexive and humble towards my respondents and their stories, and try to unveil the 'honest and as far as possible truth-like understanding' (Bridges 2001, p.383).

Throughout my thesis writing process, I have been aware of the importance of reciprocity. As discussed before, in this process of gaining knowledge I have come across different settings and different individual who have played a vital role in the making of this study. So, I believe in adopting the key features of indigenous methodology in this research process as well: 'respect, reciprocity, and responsibility' (Wilson, 2003, p. 77).

### 3.5 The Language Challenge

As discussed above, language proved to be a major challenge while doing the fieldwork and sometimes also during the collection of secondary data as mentioned above. All the interviews were carried out in English. But since the interviews were not in my respondent's first languages, it was quite challenging to get the communication flow. I had to rephrase my questions frequently. Sometimes I also had to give out supporting information before they could

fully understand and come up with an answer. Most of the time, I had to throw in a word or two which they would affirm and use in their answers. One of my informants even started speaking in Sami during the interview but he quickly realized what he was doing and switched to English. Chilisa (2012) describes language as an expression of the patterns and structures of culture that consequently influences human thinking, manners and judgment. “Culture is lived, and language, through all its manifestations, projects that life, giving it form and texture” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 131).

Using English for interviews might have been problematic in a sense that it took longer time for my respondents to register my questions, formulate a plausible answer and respond promptly. In one of my interviews, my respondents used keywords in Norwegian while answering. However, since the words were very similar to English, I was able to translate them. She approved the English words and incorporated them in her answers later.

Gonzalez and Lincoln strongly recommend the researchers ‘not familiar with the languages of the researched’ to have translators and interpreters in the research process (as cited in Chilisa, 2012, p.154). However, I could not use any translators because my respondents came from different indigenous communities and countries, and they all spoke different languages. So, using different translators for each respondent in such a short time was not feasible. So, I addressed the issue by letting them know about the language barrier and asking them if they were comfortable to do the interview in English. They affirmed to it and the interview was carried out in English through their consent.

## 4 Performance, Place, and Indigenous Identity

This chapter will dwell upon the discussion on the relationship between music performance, place, and indigenous identity. I will trace the historical background of Riddu Riđđu Festival. As mentioned in Chapter 2, I will use Lene Hansen's historical background on Riddu Riđđu as cited in Hilder (2010). Using discussion on cultural fusion (Gaski, 2008), I will provide an analysis of a musical performance from the inauguration ceremony of festival in 2015. The purpose of doing so is to contextualize Riddu Riđđu in relation to the topic of my thesis. Hence, in this chapter, I will present Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015, as a symbolic site, a 'place of sound' (Solomon, 1997, p. 322), where these indigenous musicians come together to embody, manage, express, and celebrate their identities.

### 4.1 Riddu Riđđu Festival: The History

Since its inception in early 1990s, Riddu Riđđu festival has become an important gathering for Sámi and international indigenous people. The event takes places every year for one week in the month of July in village of Manndalen, Kåfjord, Troms County. The festival week is filled up with various musical performances, art exhibitions, youth and children camps, movie screenings, and workshops and seminars on various issues related to indigeneity. Indigenous artists, music bands, ensembles, indigenous culture enthusiasts and activists from all over the world meet up in Manndalen to celebrate their indigenous identity and culture. Thus, situating Riddu Riđđu festival in historical context becomes important in order to understand the importance of space in relation to performativity of an artist/musician and his/her indigeneity.

To discuss the historical background of the festival, I will use Hilder's (2010) description of '*Storm på Kysten*' (Storm at the Coast), a 2008 book by one of the founders of the festival Lene Hansen. In the book, Hansen traces out how Riddu Riđđu as a brainchild of coastal Sámi youths of Kåfjord for cultural revival which, later, went on to become one of the most important international indigenous festival (as cited in Hilder, 2010). The community, which was dependent on fishing and farming for livelihood before twentieth century, underwent a harsh assimilation policy. This century long policy largely disrupted the social, cultural and religious aspects within Sámi, and Kven communities. Towards the end of Second World War, more damage was done when German army adopted the scorch and burn policy. Large population of Sámi and Kven people were forced to evacuate their homes. Results of these harsh treatments did not go unnoticed. What followed next was generations' long silence,

shame, and invisibility. Post war older generations only spoke Sámi in their closed walls of their homes (See Chapter 1).

Their experiences were so traumatic that they hesitated from passing over language to their future generation and even went on the extremities of concealing their Sámi identity (as cited in Hilder, 2010, p.122).

1970s marks significant change in socio-political situation of Sámi people of Norway. Storting's<sup>35</sup> 1978 decision to dam Alta-Kautokeino water in order to build a power station was met with protests and demonstration by Sami and environmental activists.<sup>36</sup> This movement for Sámi people's indigenous right garnered much local and international attention. Along the same line as the ČSV (Čájeheskot Sámi Vuoiŋja 'show Sámi spirit'), a local Sámi organization 'Kåfjord Sami Association (*Gáivuona Sámisearvi*) was established in Kåfjord. In her Master's thesis on Davvi Šuvva, Synnove Angell (2009) discusses the significance of movements like ČSV in expression of ethnic identity which later paved a way to cultural manifestation like Davvi Šuvva (Angell, 2009, p. 44). Davvi Šuvva festival is the first Sámi and international indigenous culture and music festival in midsummer of 1979, on a hill in a Sámi and Swedish/Finnish border village in the north of Sweden and in the middle of Sápmi (Angell, 2009). Davvi Šuvva played a significant role in building a foundation to global indigenous network which was later continued by Riddu Riđđu (Hilder, 2010, p. 126). Similarly, Kåfjord Sámi Youth (*Gáivuona Sámenuorat (GSN)*), with Lene Hansen as the leader, was established in 1990. Later, the members of GSN were active participants in larger Sámi political movements. Kulturdagen (The Culture Days) which brought the cultural and political aspects of GSN together also paved a way for the realization of Riddu Riđđu (Hilder, 2010, p.123).

In summer 1991, Riddu Riđđu festival started and carried on for two days Labelled as '*Jagi vai Beaivvi*' (Year and Days), Riddu Riđđu began with a hope to celebrate of coastal Sámi identity (p.123). Hansen (2008) states that the reason for doing so was probably because art was a way of expression of alternative values thoughts and values in a community predominated with a strong religious and narrow value system (as cited in Hilder, 2010). This was welcomed as a clever strategy because unlike direct and strict political methods, this was more subtle and

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<sup>35</sup> Norwegian parliament

<sup>36</sup>Retrieved from

[https://www.samediggi.no/content/download/414/3769/version/2/file/Infobrosjyre+om+Sametinget+paa+engelsk.docx\(1\).pdf](https://www.samediggi.no/content/download/414/3769/version/2/file/Infobrosjyre+om+Sametinget+paa+engelsk.docx(1).pdf)

inclusive. Revolving on the themes of indigenous music, art and crafts, traditional food, storytelling, gathering and celebration, Northern culture and current northern trends, Riddu Riđđu has successfully found a fine balance between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ (Hilder, 2010, Leonenko, 2008).

Gaining the title of ‘Woodstock in Kåfjord’, many big names of Sámi soundscape like Mari Boine, Frode Fjellheim, Ingor Ántte Áilu Gaup, Marit Hætta Øverli, Ánte Mikkel Gaup, Niko Valkeapää etc. have performed at Riddu Riđđu. Similarly, it also got a subtitle ‘an Indigenous People’s Festival’ and has brought various popular world music artists and bands to the village of Manndalen like Yothu Yindi (Aboriginal), Maxida Märäk (Sápmi), Black Fire (Navajo), Chirgilchin (Tuva), Nanook (Greenland), A Tribe called Red (Canada) and many more<sup>37</sup>. However, over the years, Riddu Riđđu has not been away from criticism. Negative comments about the festival were expressed by Sámi from Inner-Finnmark areas who believed that the festival was misrepresenting and misusing Sámi culture. But despite this predicament, today Riddu Riđđu boasts of performances from internationally acclaimed indigenous artists and musicians, and a huge participation from audiences and volunteers from all over the world (as cited in Hilder, 2010).

When I was attending the festival, the festival provides a platform not just for music but also for indigenous art, films, theatre, literature, and language. Every year there are several workshops, seminars relevant contemporary local and global issues related to indigenous people, their resources and identity. Similarly, there are workshops where interested individuals and also Sámi who do not speak Sámi language, can learn basic Sámi vocabulary and expressions. The festival also hosts Youth and children camps where they can engage in activities like dance, music, lasso throwing, and joik. Riddu Riđđu also thrives on large volunteer community. Every year months before the festival, many volunteers sign up for volunteering for different jobs ranging from providing security, welcome and receiving, engaging in making and serving food and drinks at café area to rigging the concert and festival area. The large volunteer community engaged in smooth running of the festival also show the reciprocal relationship between participants and festival organizers because in exchange of taking up various responsibilities at the festival, the volunteers get free access to the festival, a

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.riddu.no/nb/program-2016/artistarkiv>

special area to camp, free food coupons and a chance to meet other volunteers from all around the world.

#### 4.2 Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015: Indigeneity at Home

Building upon the historical background and context, in this section, I will present a portrait of Riddu Riđđu 2015, where I was a researcher and a volunteer, and contextualize the festival in regard to my thesis topic. My attempt here is to provide an account of musical performance particularly the collaborative performance between Arvvas<sup>38</sup> (Sápmi) and Chirgilchin (Tuva) to discuss how a collaborative musical performance creates a ‘sense of place’ (Stokes, 1994) where these artists by the process of embodiment, merge, and express their identities. By doing so, I will further try to situate Riddu Riđđu Festival as a symbol of this ‘sense of place’ which makes these free experimentations and expression possible and this embodiment happen.

**8<sup>th</sup> of July 2015.** It was a chill summer evening. There was excitement and exhilaration in the air. Riddu Riđđu festival 2015 had been officially inaugurated and the crowd was waiting for the special act for the evening. It was the commissioned performance by Joik Jazz Band ‘Arvvas’ with the Tuvan throat ensemble ‘Chirgilchin’. The four members from Chirgilchin dressed in their traditional attire came on stage along with the duo from Arvvas: singer/joiker Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska in her summer *gákti* and the bassist/singer Steinar Raknes in his trademark fedora hat and his bass. Along with traditional Tuvan instruments, there was a bass and a drum set accompanying the performance.

The performance started off with a popular song from Arvvas’ their new album Remembrance (2015) called ‘So Long, My baby’. In the 70 minutes performance, they presented a unique fusion of Tuvan throat singing and folk sound, Sámi joik and western jazz music. Igor Koshkendey from Chirgilchin revealed later in the interview that they had merely two days to practice (Koshkendey, personal communication, 9 July, 2015). They met on Monday and came up with the act within Tuesday night. This collaborative concept emerged at a concert in 2013

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<sup>38</sup> Arvvas. Nordic Notes. Retrieved from <http://nordic-notes.de/en/artists/arvvas/>

in Russia. After seeing the performance of Chirgilchin, Sara proposed fusing the sound of Tuvan vocal and music tradition with the Joik Jazz sound of Arvvas<sup>39</sup>.

Halfway through the show, they performed a song called ‘Paranoid’<sup>40</sup> by British heavy metal band Black Sabbath<sup>41</sup>. Their rendition of Paranoid was a synthesis of Steinar’s rusty vocal blending harmoniously with the vocal chants of Chirgilchin and a melodious joik by Sara. The rhythm line was created by a funky bass pattern playing simultaneously in tune with the sharp yet serene sound of the Tuvan traditional string instrument. A fellow audience remarked that the distinctive sound that they created managed to synchronize well with the mystical grandeur of Manndalen valley. The audience received the performance with loud cheers and claps. Their last song for the evening was a mesmerizing rendition of Michael Jackson’s famous ‘Billie Jean’<sup>42</sup>. The audience went into a unified chant of ‘eamboo’ (meaning ‘More’ in Sámi). However, the performance was over and there were no more songs after this.

Similar feature was seen through the collaborative performance of Arvvas and Chirgilchin. The musicians were trying to express their personal and ethnic sentiments through the fusion of traditional throat singing, joik, instrumentation, the use of Tuvan, Sámi and English lyrics, and jazz music. It also brought forward the similarities, connectivity, and distinctiveness between various music traditions from different parts of the world. Hill (2016) discusses similar instance with indigenous music from Ecuadorian Andes where *indigenas* use traditional music and commercial music to mediate their interactions with mestizo and with Western culture. She describes how musicians are creating ‘personal creative music’ which is a fusion of traditional and Western music. And by making these kinds of fusion, these musicians are trying to personally express and cope with the impact on their lives of interethnic stratification, cultural contacts of daily lives, international travels and intercultural relations (Hill, 2006, pp. 11-13).

When I inquired some of the fellow audiences, they responded with vigor that this confluence of different kinds of music into a fusion brings different types of cultural elements together while maintaining their uniqueness manage to fuse together to create a new form of expression. In his article ‘Yoik- Sámi music in a Global World’, Sámi scholar Harald Gaski

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<sup>39</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.nrk.no/sapmi/arvvas-og-chirgilchin-spiller-pa-riddu-med-joik-og-strupesang-1.12446180>

<sup>40</sup>Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkXHsK4AQPs>

<sup>41</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.blacksabbath.com/>

<sup>42</sup> Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi\\_XLOBDo\\_Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi_XLOBDo_Y)

(2008) raised some relevant question about the confluence of different kinds of music in a globalized society. He asked, ‘what is implied when musical elements from different indigenous peoples are fused together into world music?’ (Gaski, 2008, p. 357). This collaboration showed how music, as a common medium of expression, manages to bring these musicians, who are following different musical traditions and belonging to different communities, together in a place. Thereby, making the performance a process where the various identities become distinct and yet manage to dissolve into something completely new (Frith, 1996, p. 118). This process shows how music can beautifully integrate yet create distinction between different cultures and identities. The joy of sharing the connectivity through music also creates a bonding between the individuals. Hilder (2010) describes similar ‘common expression through music’ by his description of musical performances from Riddu Riđđu 2007, especially the collaborative performance between Sara-Marielle Gaup (who was then involved with the Sámi musical duo Adjágas) and Maori band WAI. He states that these performances managed to achieve a ‘brief moments of synchronicity, less regarding time, but rather in terms of musical expression and political articulations’ and ‘a performance of global musical indigeneity’ (Hilder, 2010, p. 110-111). Gaski also discusses the importance of renewal and development of culture instead of preserving and mummifying it into a museum culture because it enables one to show respect to the tradition yet come up with new forms of expression to ‘experiment freely with their way forward’ without having the shackle of tradition stopping them (Gaski, 2008, p. 357). This performance was a perfect example of musicians working together to create a new form of expression yet show respect to their culture.

Ingá-Máret Gaup-Jusso, my respondent, who was one of the performer in Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015, and she performed with two ensembles: Luohtemohkit and Mingá. She described the festival as a very good place because it gives so much connections to different people. She shared that it was easy to joik there, not just because of the people, but because of the place itself. She exclaimed: ‘This is like metaphor for joik, this place’ (I.Jusso, personal communication, 10 July 2015). Being in Riddu Riđđu seemed to evoke strong emotion in her as she can relate to the stories and instances of other Sámi and indigenous people. Her remarks resonates what Solomon describes as ‘place of sound’, where ‘...landscapes are not thus just visual- they are also tactile, and full of smells, tastes, and sounds’ (Solomon, 1997, p. 322-323). “Riddu Riđđu is home” was one of the most common expression I heard when I was participating the festival. So, for her like many other musicians and artists, Riddu Riđđu becomes what Robert Plant Armstrong calls ‘an affecting presence’ where these individuals

embody the felt experience through creative works such as music, art, and eventually those who experience these works also can feel these presences that artists experiences through encounters (as cited in Solomon, 1997). The festival is a space where indigenous musicians, artists and audience from around the globe can come together and celebrate their indigenous identity in solidarity through music and other forms of art. Therefore, Riddu Riđđu with its intense history of ethnic revitalization and cultural revival, definitely is a ‘contact zone’ where cultural actions happen (Hills, 2000) and a symbolic place where musical expression of Sámi and global indigenous identity come to life.



Figure 1. Collaborative Performance of Arvvas & Chirgilchin. Riddu Riđđu. July 2015



## 5 Know Thyself: Music, Personal and Collective Identity

On a cool evening of 14 June 2017, I attended an interesting talk programme at Small Projects, an alternative art space in Tromsø, by Canadian curator Candice Hopkins. The talk entitled 'Sounding the Margins: A Choir of Minor Voices' was Hopkins' reflection on curatorial works related to protest, indigenous artists and sound based practices. She discussed the concept of 'decolonial listening', where the audiences/listeners listen without intent and outside of oneself. She further emphasized the importance of decolonial listening as 'non-hungry listening' which encourages listeners to experience deep listening not just with your ears but from deep within<sup>43</sup>.

After her thought provoking talk, the stage was taken over by Sámi joiker and singer sisters from Kautkeino, Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska and Risten Anine Kvernmo Gaup. What the audience experienced then, was Sara and Risten's intense presentation of joiks, songs, accompanied by soothing acoustic sound of guitar played by Risten. They also shared stories of growing up in a reindeer herding Sámi family in Kautkeino, with the sound joik (being joiked especially by their father).

During the performance, the Gaup sisters addressed the need to understand your own individual identity in order to understand the surrounding you live in. Particularly emphasizing on the relationship of indigenous people with the nature, and environment, they urged to the audiences to reflect on their actions and be the vehicle of change. Towards the end of the performance, Sara urged the audience to hold the fist in the air and join in on their 'joik army.' The audience did it gladly as all the fists went up in the air and voices of audiences imitating the Gaup sisters' and singing blended together in unison.

After this experience when I came home, one main process that these musicians seem to go through struck me strongly and that was: the process of understanding, managing and expressing the personal and collective identity. The main question that arose was: How does musical performances articulate (Johnson, 2008) personal identity? How does a musician use musical practices to create, understands, and performs his/her personal identity in relation to others? How does this reflection help in understanding, performing and managing their ethnic/indigenous identities?

Therefore, this chapter will be an attempt to capture the explicit and implicit manifestation of personal and collective identity through musical performances. The following sections will focus on the stories from my informants who identify themselves as musicians

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<sup>43</sup> Retrieved from <https://vimeo.com/178828368>

and assert their belongingness to Sámi and Tuvan community. There are two stories from Sámi musicians from Northern Norway, one story from Tuva, and one from Sámi from Finland. These artists and public figure who represent their indigenous community nationally and internationally. Most importantly, they visibly assert their indigenous identity. They openly present themselves as Sámi on stage and off stage, they speak their language, wear *gákti* and *Tuvan Ton*<sup>44</sup>(the outer silk robe) and joik and throat singing are a major part of their musical practice. Drawing inspiration from the concept of ‘self in process’ (Frith, 1996, p.109), I will analyse lyrics from the song ‘Tell our story’ performed by Risten and Sara in ‘Sounding the Margins: A Choir of Minor Voices’ at Small Projects to argue that musical piece, a song or a performance is a strategy that helps these musicians to ‘experience themselves’ (Frith 1996, p.109) and ‘survive in one’s living environment’ (as cited in Sarivaara et al., 2013, p. 27). Along with the lyrics analysis, I will simultaneously present the stories of my informants where they describe their take on being indigenous musicians and the steps they go through during the process of asserting their identities through music.

## 5.1 Contemplation on Personal and Collective Identity through Music

In their 2013 study about the position and identification of the Non-Status Sámi in Finland, Sarivaara, et al., (2013) discuss a central question ‘Who am I?’(Sarivaara, et al. 2013 p.26). According to the authors, this question was instrumental in discussing the ‘new perspective of the multidimensional Sámi identity’. In their study, they focused on what the ‘research partners’, the Sámi speaking non-status Sámi perceive their position and status in the Sámi community. They borrow Lindgren’s concepts of ‘Identity strategy’ (as cited in Sarivaara et al., 2013). Discussing how a non-status position was problem without a solution, the authors outline the strategies that their research partners have developed to cope with their situation. (Sarivaara et al., 2013, p. 26-27). Similar *identity strategies* are developed and applied by my respondents in this soul searching process of experiencing themselves, coping with their surroundings, and articulating, managing and negotiating their collective identity. In the cases I discuss below, my attempt will also be to show how music becomes a key component in this process.

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<sup>44</sup> Retrieved from <https://tyulyush.com/category/the-mystery-of-tuvan-khoomei/>

### 5.1.1 The Dilemma

I will start this section with the first verse of the song ‘Tell our story’ by the band Ozas<sup>45</sup>. This is an unreleased song written by Risten Anine Kvernmo Gaup, one of my informants. She had shared the lyrics of the song on her social media page.

*Sometimes everything seem so meaningless, so out of context*

*Why spend my time studying, when I should be out there raising my voice  
and fighting for our people's rights*

*I feel like I'm wasting precious time, like it's now or never  
It's hard to stay focused on school,*

*when there are so many matters that I should intervene in  
I feel like I'm doing no good, that I'm not contributing in any way*

*I wish I could just pause everything for a minute,  
and do what my heart tells me to do:*

*(OZAS, 2016)*

The Gaup sisters performed this song during the talk programme described in the beginning of the chapter. The song text describes a dilemma. A role dilemma that Risten talked about during the talk programme. She described feeling trapped in between two cultures when she was sitting in the classroom thinking about her life, her story, her people and her Sámi identity. She felt this restlessness of being torn in between two cultures and predicaments. During the performance, she shared the struggle she had to face trying to find a balance in having to be normal and ‘fit in’. On one hand, she feels like she has an obligation towards her normal life as a youth in modern globalized world having to study, get a degree and carry on with her life while on the other hand, she thought that the normality that she was trying ‘to fit in’ wasn’t what she wanted. There were far more pressing matters that required her attention, time and energy such as fighting for the rights of her people.

Echoing this internal conflict reflected in these first few verses of the song, Risten added in a personal interview later:

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<sup>45</sup> Ozas, which literally means ‘the inside pocket of your gákti’ is a collaborative effort with her sister Sara Marielle Gaup where along with music, they work with different mediums of expressions like poetry, lyrics, photographs, performances. The name symbolizes that the issues they are addressing through their work are very crucial and close to their hearts. (R. Gaup, personal communication, August 2016)

I feel trapped in between two cultures: the Sámi and the Norwegian culture. As a Sámi today, it is hard to grow up like being different from the others. I experienced that when I was living in a Norwegian community. I was not in Sámi community those three years, I was 14. I wanted to be accepted, be a part of or be like other kids in that place. I felt like I had to give up the Sámi part of me to fit in.

(R. Gaup, personal communication, 4 August, 2016)

Why did she feel like she was trapped in between two cultures? Why did she feel like giving up her Sámi part in order to ‘fit in’? The answer to this question is deeply rooted to the stigmatized and discriminated history of Sámi people in Norway that is discussed in the introductory chapter of this thesis. (See Chapter 1)

My respondent, Sámi musician Ingor Ántte Áilu Gaup his reminisced about the sad and painful history of stigmatization and discrimination of Sámi people quite bluntly:

In my country Sámiland too, it was forbidden to talk Sámi in school. My generation, my parent’s generation has gone through that. They were being hit by the teacher if they speak Sámi at school. They could not Joik. No! It was considered a big sin, it belongs to the devil, this music, said the missionaries. You know this history, someone are proud of. I am not!

(I. Gaup, personal communication, 8 July, 2015)

The everyday racism, discrimination, bullying and stigmatization they experienced resulted in association of Sámi identity with shame (Minde, 2003). Hiding their Sámi identity in public spaces became quite common place (Eidheim, 1969). Despite the strong revitalization process, this feeling of being ashamed of one’s own history is clearly reflected in the Gaup’s quote above. When one’s language, music, clothing, and way of life are stigmatized and associated with negative connotation, feeling ashamed of one’s identity is all but natural. On his seminal work ‘Stigma’, Erving Goffman (1963) writes about similar predicament, that when an individual who has been always been stigmatized is told that s/he is a human being as everyone else and then at the same time s/he feels the obligation towards his/her group and is

told s/he is actually not, then these contradictory statements make it difficult for him to claim how much of each he must be (Goffman, 1963). “This contradiction, this joke is his fate and his destiny. It constantly challenges those who represent the stigmatized …” (Goffman, 1963, p. 150).

That wasn’t the only instance where the feeling of doubt of being a Sámi was expressed. On my way to carry out the fieldwork at Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015, I observed this dilemma of asserting to Sámi identity from a musician from Manndalen. Apart from being a researcher I was also a volunteer at the university lavvu at the festival. On the bus ride from Tromsø to Løkvoll, I and a fellow volunteer shared the last seat of the bus with a musician from Manndalen who was residing in Tromsø. The musician broke the ice by giving us a detailed information about the fjords, mountains, hiking routes around the area. We also had a very interesting conversation about music, him being musician and identity. But then, my friend asked the musician directly if he was a Sámi. All of a sudden the air got heavy and he got very uncomfortable. He didn’t answer directly, he paused and looked out of the window. After a long silence, he looked at us and said: “Umm! People here really don’t talk about it openly. But I have my family, my roots in Manndalen. So, I guess I am!” This instance left quite an impression because after that there was an awkward air between him and us. It felt like by asking that question we have breached some kind of ethical code (See Chapter 1).

Being a student of Masters in Indigenous Studies at UiT, I had heard stories and received caution about how it was almost a taboo to talk about someone’s identity here in Northern Norway. But this was a case that really brought that imagined scenario to life and made me understand how despite the changed Sámi-Norwegian dichotomy and Sámi revitalization, it might be difficult for some individuals to identify themselves as Sámi and take pride in their history and lineage Risten puts the everyday struggle of being a Sámi in words:

It’s hard to be a Sámi always, it’s always a struggle to be seen, to get help in Sámi. For e.g. when you go to a doctor, you can get help in your own language. You go to your therapist, you get help in your own language, all these things, and they are difficult because there are no Sámi speaking doctors. There are but only at some places. Also at school, people are struggling to learn Sámi or have the Sámi language in school. Learn Sámi in school, that’s also a struggle. I can say that it’s easier to be a Norwegian than it is to be a Sámi because of the everyday struggle.

(R. Gaup, personal communication, 4 August 2016)

In the process of making sense of self, my respondents had gone through a process of reflection on their situation as an indigenous individual, in the cases discussed above, their Sámi identity. During this process, they had a realization that there is a dilemma, a dilemma regarding their position and role in the society they live in. This dilemma is very personal at the same time very deeply rooted in being Sámi. This dilemma made them question not only who they are as an individual but who they are as a Sámi. This internal conflict led them to question their ethnicity and led them to a choice of either giving up their Sámi identity and forget who they are, where they come from and the unjust and traumatic experiences their ancestors went through, and ‘fit it’ or confront the dilemma, make a choice, own up their heritage and history and move forward with determination and courage. So, making sense of self here is not limited to soul searching, understanding, reflecting, and contemplating about your identity as a person. Here it is also to clarify and assert their identity to themselves and to their community.

In cases like these, facing the role dilemma, finding oneself in ‘an arena of detailed argument and discussion concerning what he ought to think of himself’ and constantly ‘being pushed in several directions’ and having to deal with an expectations on ‘what he should do and feel about what he is and isn’t’ (Goffman, 1963, p.150) could really be a deal breaker. But not in the case of my respondents. What does this process of reflection lead to? How do the musicians deal with the dilemma? What is the significance of music enabling my informants to make the choice and embody their identity? The next section will be a discussion on how making an active choice becomes a crucial part of identity formation and how they use this opportunity to empower themselves and convey the expression through music.

### 5.1.2 The Joik Power

It’s enough if only somebody get something from my voice. I want to share that. It gives power to any artist when people like it and get something good of it. It’s the meaning of artists and listeners

(I. Jusso, Artist Statement. February 2017, p.1).

Ingá Máret shared her experience of performing joik on a stage in front of the audience. She stated that when she goes to the stage, she gets ‘the power’ and she joiks very loud and strong. She emphasizes that she feels like she has something good to share with others. ‘I can

share my feelings. I have received this present and I can share it with other people'. The two aspects of the power that comes out from her above statements are the power she feels through joik and the power she gets when she sees that the audience likes it. This understanding and awareness of power adds meaning to her identity as an artist in relation to her audience.



Figure 2: Ingá Máret Gaup Jusso, Riddu Riđđu, July 2015

Charles Royal's statement that reflects similar attitude has been quoted by Paul Whitinui (2013) where he argues that indigenous peoples journey of discovering that the 'gift of indigeneity' through a journey where an individual reflects on his/her own cultural intellectual wisdom and supports the journey as he describes it, is deeply necessary as it enables the individual to reflect on their own cultural intellectual wisdom and this in turn helps them to recalibrate their own inner as well as collective cultural potential (as cited in Whitinui, 2013, p, 460).

Another important aspect when it comes to joik is its significance in expressing feelings and managing emotions. Risten talked about how she uses joik to regulate of her emotions and feelings:

I use joik to express my feelings. Sometimes, I get really frustrated and then joik comes in. I use it as a therapy. I make my own joiks to comfort myself or to express feelings. I have some joiks that are angry joiks, for example, as a Sámi youth today, you have to overcome all of those everyday struggles. And

it's difficult. I think that to be able to handle all this, you have to get help or you have to talk to somebody. And sometimes it's not easy to talk. Sometimes it's easier to use music as a therapy.

(R. Gaup. personal communication. 4, August 2016)

In the article ‘Yoik experiences and possible positive health outcomes: an explorative pilot study’, Hämäläinen et al.(2017) explored the potential of joik in positively influencing people’s health and well-being. Taking 13 participants from four Norwegian counties: Finnmark, Troms, Nordland, and Trøndelag, this study tried to figure out the different experiences of participants with joik and the effect of those experiences on health outcomes. The result of the study suggested that joik can in fact have a positive effect comparable to Music Therapy (MT) and may contribute in emotion management in the participants. The article discussed joik’s potential ‘as an intervention in culture sensitive healthcare and health promotion work and also stated that joik is considered an important markers for many Sámi people to assert their social and cultural belongingess (Hämäläinen, et al., 2017, p. 1-7).

Similar remark was made by Ingá-Máret that joik for her is something that she cannot explain in words. It is like a voice of nature that gives her positivity because if she is feeling bad or is sad then, the opportunity to joik is like the opportunity to be positive again. (I.Jusso, personal communication, 10 July 2015)

The use of music in healing and wellbeing has been explored by Klisala Harrison (2013). This study about the relationships between aboriginal Canadian music-making, personal meaningfulness, identity and well-being in urban Canada shows that music as a route to twinned gifts of: Identity and well-being. Harrison states that expression of indigenous identity through music can also be a means of musical and cultural revival within the self and may lead to musical renewal in the community (Harrison, 2013, p. 36).

Similarly, Ingor Ánte Ailu Gaup talked about the musical identity that is created through joik. He argued that joik itself is the musical language of Sámi people and added that when one gets his own joik, it is like you get a musical identity. It is like a musical name (I.Gaup, personal communication, 8 July, 2015). To describe how that works, he asked me to tell him my full name. When I did, he created a joik spontaneously with my name. That was one of the most special moment for me as a researcher because in that moment I was being joiked by this artist and there was no poetic description of me but it seemed like he was making imaginary portrait of me by using his voice. By receiving that joik I felt like I was embodied in the joik itself.

When I inquired him about his take on identity, he answered that he feels like his identity is always with him because he speaks the language of joik everywhere.

When I do joik, it doesn't matter if I am in the moon or Jupiter or place doesn't matter... You can be on top of a mountain, you have your identity with you.

This statement brings up a very interesting take on the understanding of identity that for indigenous musicians, the musical practices like joik itself is a medium of communication and a strong identity marker. It also shows the how having the power of music enables you to formulate and express identities. The following quote by Hargreaves, et al. (2002) supports the above quote by Ingor Ánte Ailu Gaup:

...music can be used increasingly as a means by which we formulate and express our individual identities. We use it not only to regulate our own everyday moods and behaviours, but also to present ourselves to others in the way we prefer. Our musical tastes and preferences can form an important statements of our values and attitudes and composers and performers use their music to express their own distinctive views of the world.

(Hargreaves et al., 2002, p.1)

Along the same line, on her instagram page, Risten shared a picture from the band Ozas' performance at Márkomeannu Festival 2016 with an English and Sámi caption urging everyone to join the 'yoiking army'. Below the caption, following verses were presented:

*Build an army,  
A force that can hold  
Make them all sing  
With fist in the air  
Ready to fight  
For our indigenous rights*

*Luohti is our crossbow  
Juoigan is our arrow*

*To heal our Native marrow*

*We need to act today!*

In the interview I had with her, she shared the concept behind the ‘yoiking army’ was to encourage people to start yoiking. The aim behind this, as she revealed, was to make joik as a form of communication where people use joik to communicate with each other because she thinks that joik is not something just to be performed on stage by stage performers but it is something you do on stage or off stage by yourself as well. She stated, “The most important joikers that we have are the everyday joikers, not just the ones that are on the stage performing” (R. Gaup. personal communication. 4 August 2016). The reader/viewer of her page might feel the expression of power in the text because of the phrases like ‘a force that can hold’, ‘make them all sing’, and ‘ready to fight’. However, they might not find the sense of violence in it because of the use of phrases like ‘luohti is our crossbow’, and ‘juoigan is our arrow’. So, there is indeed a fight but one is equipped for the fight with weapons that are actually different forms of art like *luohti* (joik in North Norwegian) and *juoigan* (to joik). This is a creative strategy of using song text, lyrics or poem to appeal people to come forward and take part in this non-violent movement where the fight will be fought by singing and by waving the fist.

Gaski (2008) discusses Sámi joiks as exclusive and excluding form of communication. He quotes Nils-Aslak Valkeapää who described that joik can be a story for someone who knows it but can be an obscure content for others. He argues that the reason for this double communication of joik might be because of the long history of ‘colonization of Sámland’ where it was developed as an oppositional medium that was clearer to Sámi people more than non-Sámi people (Gaski, 2008, p. 350-351).

Similarly, in the song ‘Tell our story’ quoted above, Risten sings the lyrics part of the song and Sara Marielle joins in with a powerful harmony of a joik. The inclusion of joik and the repetitive chorus: ‘Tell the world our story, make them see our struggles, our lifelong battle’ makes it very clear that their intention is not to fight fire with fire but to convey the message of her people through stories, oral traditions and especially joik.

Similarly, on the writing about role of songs in non-violent social movements of American Indians, Australian Aboriginals and First Nations peoples, Polly O. Walker (2006) writes:

Indigenous activists have been known to disrupt their opponents by singing in ways that challenge the power of the dominant political systems, often giving voice to songs that have been banned by their oppressors. Through their songs, these indigenous peoples also educate others about the goals of nonviolence and the effectiveness of adhering to nonviolent principles. In some campaigns, their songs have carried coded messages to others within the movements, sharing information needed to save the people from further violence and even death (Walker, 2006).

My respondents' stories and songs portray that they are using similar strategy where they use joik that is to heal themselves and others, oppose the dominant system and raise their voices against discrimination and oppression, and bring people together.

The performance of the song at Small Projects created similar ambience. When they were performing the song, they seemed to be relaying the message of resistance through nonviolent creative action to the audience. The most striking gesture was when the audiences were asked to join in with their fists in the air and the ambience of solidarity was created when the audience complied without hesitation.



**Figure 3:** Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska and Risten Anine Kvernmo Gaup, June 2016,  
Photo: Small Projects

The picture above displays the solidarity created between the Sámi musicians and the audience who might have or might have not been Sámi. Risten put this quite clearly in the interview that she experienced similar solidarity amongst the people in Márkomeannu Festival 2016 and Climate March in London and Paris. She stated, ‘You don’t have to be a Sámi to joik, to be a part of it. You can!’ (R. Gaup, personal communication, 4 August 2015). This solidarity showed the power of music, in this particular instance: joik, in bringing the audience to ‘a liminal space’ in which they can lose themselves and become something new through the experience (Walker, p.2). In this liminal space, the audience joined in on understanding the emotions expressed by the musicians through their music and responded to it through visible reactions and gestures such as clapping and raising their fists. It also showed that these performances are create a space where both the musicians and the audience are able to ‘find themselves’ and at the same time ‘lose themselves’. So, in that space, they are constantly constructing and reconstructing their identities, and therefore, experiencing the distinction and dissolution of identity.

### 5.1.3 The Choice

After the initial phase of dilemma and internal conflict, an individual makes a choice, like my informant Ingá-Máret reveals:

I think you always have to make choices because we don’t have the power to make everything at the same time...I like more to show my feelings with yoiks and music

(I.Jusso, artist’s statement, February, 2017)

In the case of my informants, they chose music among many other mediums to express themselves. For them, the process of self-reflection and making music goes hand in hand. Music comes as key component to convey their emotion and sentiments. Music is used by them not only to express their personal but also their collective emotions and sentiments.

When I was attending Riddu Riđđu Festival 2015, I had a chance to meet a lot of music lovers like myself. One afternoon, I was walking towards the festival area with my friends when two guys waved at us and invited us join their campfire. They evidently had a strong affinity towards music and later after getting know each other, they revealed that the only reason why

they were at Riddu was to see Mari Boine<sup>46</sup> perform. One of them made an interesting remark about music being a powerful medium of expression that still resonates in my head. He stated that music manages to express the emotions that cannot be expressed through words. It manages to convey the unsaid. At most amazingly, it manages to convey the wordless and the silence as well. His statement explains that music is a strong medium of expression of a person's inner feelings that are sometimes difficult to be expressed in words.

The above quote by Ingá Máret has similar tone to it that her choice of doing joik or music was because she felt that among all the other forms of arts, these are the mediums she feels the closest too. She makes a distinction between joik and music because even though joik itself is a form of music, it is special in a way that it can be a song or a form of storytelling. It can be performed alone or in a group.

The informants I am discussing in this section were all born in a traditional reindeer herder family with one or family members who practiced music and joiked. Ingá-Máret started joiking when she was four years old and she learnt the art from her father and her uncle. She shared similar nostalgic experience from when she was a kid:

...when I was a child, I yoiked with my father. When we were in the tundra driving with the four wheels, looking for the reindeers. It's a lot of good memories in the tundra when I was a child. Everytime I travelled with my brothers in the tundra, they asked me to yoik because it's so nice

(I. Jusso, Artist Statement. February 2017, p.1).

Similarly, Risten remembers fondly:

My parents they would sing for me. My mom would sing lullabies in Norwegian and other songs. My dad, he has always been joiking. So, I think I maybe started yoiking even before I started to talk. So, it's been a part of me since I was a baby.

(Interview, August 2016)

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<sup>46</sup> Mari Boine is regarded as the most popular and influential Sámi musician. With hit songs like *Gula Gula*, her political comments, and her musical performances at the opening of Sámi parliament in 1989 and UN's Forum for Indigenous Peoples in New York, and inauguration ceremony at Lillehammer Winter Olympics 1994, she maintains her strong presence in the Sámi musical and socio-political scene (Hilder, 2010).

Pioneer musicologist Alan Lomax (1959) writes about the musical style of a child that begins to shape through his culture as he acquires the language and emotional pattern of his people:

This style is thus an important link between an individual and his culture, and later in his life brings to the adult unconscious the emotional texture of the world which formed his personality... Thus, from the point of view of its social function, the primary effect of music is to give the listener a feeling of security, for it symbolizes the place where he was born, his earliest childhood satisfactions, his religious experience, his pleasure in community doings, his courtship and his work – any or all of these personality-shaping experiences (as cited in Baily, 1994)

In case of my respondents, belonging to a Sámi community, having early exposure to music and socialization in a family through joik must have helped them to understand their self-identity and acquire a style that not only shaped their personality but also helped them create a belongingness to their Sámi identity. This acquired style later became to be a key component in helping them go through the self-reflection, understanding the dilemma and the power of joik in addressing that dilemma, the choice, and finally, get the ability to make a decision. The choice to be a visible Sámi, take the role of a performer/an artist/ a musician on the stage, joiking and conveying the message of their ancestors and their community.

The following verses from the song shows the choice beautifully. The choice the author made to fight for her people to make a change and tell the world their story. These are the second verses and chorus of the song ‘Tell our Story’:

*Fight for my people,  
with the same determination and courage and passion as our ancestors  
Believe in that we can make a change when we unite and fight together  
Remove prejudices, remove racism and hate for our people by insight and knowledge*

*By showing them, by making them see:*

***Chorus:***

*Tell the world our story, make them see our struggles, our lifelong battle x4*

*We'll keep you*

*Safe from predators, safe from mining, safe from destruction.*

*we'll keep you  
Safe from predators, safe from mining, safe from destruction.  
(OZAS, 2016)*

Apart from the choice that was taken, these verses also reflects the contemplative process an individual has gone through that enabled her to make a decision to empower herself. Contrasting from the confused and conflicted state of mind in the first verse, these verses have a determined and definitive tone of an individual who finally knows what she wants in her life. The change in the mannerism of the song which starts off with very individual and personal tone ‘I’/‘my’ to plural and collective ‘we’/ ‘our’ also shows the gradual shift and change from personal to collective identity. It also reflects the emotion of a wounded and wronged indigenous person who understands the ordeal her forefathers went through. Nevertheless, there is not a hint of revenge in the tone how the song is presented. Even though she uses the word ‘**fight**’ here which might have violent connotations, her inclusion of the phrase ‘remove prejudices, remove racism and hate for our people **by insight and knowledge**’ shows that the fight she is talking about is not of force but of intellect and understanding. It also shows that these musicians are making active choices on what to perform, how to perform and why to perform. The lyrics, the composition, the instrumentations, the set list, dresses they wear, the gestures they make during the performance on stage, the information they give out before and after every song, the ambience they create in participation with the audiences all reflects the choices that are being made constantly.

## 5.2 Expression of the Sentiments and Relationality

The liminal space, which was discussed in the earlier section, is where past, present and future converges and brings the musicians and the audience together. There is a key factor that enabled the creation of such a unity and that is expression of sentiments. Sentiment is a thought, opinion or idea based on a feeling about a situation, or a way of thinking about something<sup>47</sup>. It is also defined as a refined or tender emotion; manifestation of the higher or more refined feelings.<sup>48</sup> Paal Fagerheim (2014) states that performing sentiments can be seen as process of developing ethnic attachments. These attachments can be towards their community, people, animals, environment, and landscapes (Fagerheim, 2014). When the artists take part in performances,

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<sup>47</sup> Sentiments. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/sentiment>

<sup>48</sup> Sentiment. Retrieved from <http://dictionary.com/browse/sentiment>

these sentiments are amplified because of the shared interaction between the performer and the audience, as experienced in the performance discussed above.

Sentiments are instrumental when it comes to the discussion on music and indigenous identity. Music can be a key note that triggers certain emotion/s and/or can be a medium through which various emotions and sentiments are expressed. Music can also be instrumental in giving emotional power to the expression of identity. So, what are the sentiments that my informants express through their music? Why are the expression of those sentiments important for their Sámi and Tuvan identity?

The musicians I interviewed emphasized on the concept of interconnectedness between sound, nature and sentiments. Interconnectedness, and relationality are very important concepts when it comes to indigenous research methodology (Faagerheim, 2014; Feld, 1982; Wilson, 2008). In his celebrated book ‘Research is ceremony’, Shawn Wilson points out the importance of relationality in indigenous ontology and epistemology through the discussion on indigenous people’s relations with people, with the environment/land, with the cosmos and with the ideas. He states that the integral part for the foundation of identity for indigenous people was relationships they had with their land, their ancestors who had come back to the land and the future generations who will come into being on the land (Wilson, 2008 ).

The discussion, in the following sections, will be formulated on the themes mainly the sound of the nature that they focus on their music which are instrumental in conveying their feelings, attitude, beliefs and desires. The music that they create, practice and perform are based on several themes. Their music can be about rivers, mountains and landscape. It can be about the beauty of a woman. It can be a nostalgia or an aching longings for what they have lost. It can also be the memory of an ancestor, a friend or even their pets. Sometimes they are created through spontaneous inspiration and sometimes they go through an intense thought process where these compositions are well planned and sometimes they just perform the song that have been passed down by their forefathers. However, the connection of people with nature appears to be the central theme which they all agree upon. In the following section I will argue that choosing to use the relationship to nature as an overarching theme in their music is one of the crucial identity strategies because it triggers emotions/sentiments connected with their community identity.

### 5.2.1 Sound of Nature

Nature holds an integral position in the discourse of indigenous identity. Scholar Stephen Feld (2012) describes the use of sounds from the nature and surrounding by indigenous people living in the rain forests of Papua New Guinea to express emotions and sentiments. In his study about Kaluli in Papua New Guinea, he explores the close relationship between their cosmology and environment. He argues that for Kaluli, the musical practices are the triggers of emotions/sentiments which enables their imagined journeys to ancient places important for their lives. So, according to Feld, to understand the ethos and life quality of Kaluli people, one must first understand modes and codes of sound communication (Feld, 2012).

One of the primary focus when it comes to construction and management of indigenous identity is spirituality. In his article ‘The Exclusive Nature: Sámi Christianity in the Age of Eco-Indigenism’, Torjer Olsen (2014) states that spirituality is often the concept that links together nature and indigenous people. He refers to *State of the World’s Indigenous Peoples* to describe this indigenous spirituality as having the central position where it is intimately linked to environment where the indigenous people live (Olsen, 2014, p. 185).

My respondents have conveyed similar sentiments through their music and stories, where they talk about this connection to their land, environment, ancestors and nature. When we talk about presentation of the overarching theme in the work, we must understand that this connection to nature is not just presented through song lyrics but also through imitation of sounds from nature.

Sound mimesis is one of the methods that these musicians have adopted to articulate their sentiments. What is sound mimesis? Sound mimesis is the practice of imitating the sound of the nature. If we take Tuvan throat singers in particular, their vocal tradition of throat singing is defined as the attempt to “duplicate natural sounds whose timbres, or tonal colours, are rich in harmonics, such as gurgling water and swishing winds” (Levin and Edgerton, 1999, p. 80).

The traditional Tuvan soundscape is largely influenced and connected to their ancient tradition of animism. The animism mentioned here is the belief in spirits (Harvey, 2005) and that ‘natural objects and phenomena also have souls or are inhabited by spirits’ (Levin and Edgerton, 1999, p.80). When asked what he feels about the music he is practicing and performing, the lead vocalist of Chirgilchin, Koshkendey answered that he feels that his music is a process of remembering his algysh<sup>49</sup>. Algysh (alkysh) is a Tuvan term for shamanic hymn (Levin and Süzükei, 2006, p. 227).

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<sup>49</sup> In the above quote, however, Koshkendey uses the term to refer his shamanic ancestor.

In his own words,

This music they came from or our *algysh*. These are very old songs, many years old. They are very good because we can feel it. Sometimes there are these melodies, words, mmm very good words, very nice melodies in these songs.”, (I, Koshkendey, personal communicaton, 9 July, 2015).



Figure 4: Audiences bidding the day goodbye. Riddu Riđđu Festival. July 2015

In the above quote, Koshkendey makes it clear that the songs that he and his ensemble perform are not always their original composition. A lot of them are very old songs that have been passed down to him from the earlier generation. This shows that in Tuvan sound tradition, traditional folk songs are free to be used, practiced and performed. There is no sense of entitlement and ownership when it comes to these folk songs. Different artists and sometimes same artists may use the same song and use different arrangements and style and perform a rendition of it. Similarly, he also gave another interesting statement,

Sometimes we feel our *algysh* and his heart is inside this world. These songs are what he wants to say or what he wants us to see.

(Koshkendey, personal communication, 9 July, 2015)

Here he exemplifies how his feelings of being close to his algysh is triggered when he is singing. Specifically, *algyš* or *algysh* in Tuvan is the song of the Shaman. This song is very personal to the shaman and tells the narratives of her/his birthplace, ancestry, initiation, special gifts and special connections to particular spirits. Often sung in the beginning of the ritual accompanied by drumming of the dungur drum, algysh is a reminder of the identity and power of the shaman because it is the proclamation of her/his abilities (Humphrey, 1996).

Singing the song is a way of reminiscing the shamanic ancestors. These songs are ways of paying respect to the shaman, the ancestors. They are also a way to channel the spirit of the ancestor to the living world in the present. This shows the deeply rooted relationality between human and nature in Tuvan cosmology. This relationship is explicitly expressed through their songs and stories.

Similarly, in their latest album Bisting Tyva they have several songs dedicated to the nature, animals, musical instruments, musical styles etc. The first song in that album is called “Ancestor, I will not abandon my khoomei”<sup>50</sup>. The title of the song suggests that it is a pledge to the ancestor. An assurance that they will never stop doing khoomei. Khoomei is another name of xöömei, the throat singing. The lyrical and overtone singing in the song blends together to create an ambience where the singer seems to be having a dialogue with the ancestor. Even though the ancestor is not present in this physical world, in this space which is created through music, the presence can be felt. So, the tone of lamentation and the promise that they will not leave khoomei, which is one of the prominent feature in Tuvan life ways and soundscape.

Realizing and understanding this relationality is the key to knowledge in communities like Tuva. Chilisa writes it clearly that knowledge can come from prayers or ceremony where people build relationship with those around them: the living, the non-living and the ancestral spirits (Chilisa, 2012, p. 114). Hence, by making this pledge through music, they are also bringing forward the attachment they have with their ancestors. This dialogical relationship they create between two key elements in their lives: ancestors and khoomei, is an expression of their animistic sentiments and their understanding of their spirituality through their vocal tradition.

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<sup>50</sup> Retrieved from <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/bisting-tyva/id1221005434>



Figure 5. Chirgilchin performing at Riddu Riđđu, July 2015.

Reminiscence of the ancestors and long lost way of life (due to displacement from their semi-nomadic culture) are very evident in Tuvan soundscape. For instance, the song ‘Kongurei’, one of the most popular Tuvan song that has been performed by various Tuvan ensembles like Alash ensemble, Huun-Huur-Tu (Khaikin, 2015, p. 4). There is a rendition of this song that has been sung by the female on youtube that credits Chirgilchin.<sup>51</sup> In their well-known 2010 album Ancestors Call, Huun Huur Tu have included this song with English subtitle ‘Sixty horses in my herd’. The first verse of the song goes like this:

*Where are the sixty horses in my herd?  
Where is the hitching post for my horse, Kongurei?  
Where are the six regions for my homeland?  
Where is the village of my tribe, Kongurei?*

“Kongurei”, Huun-Huur-Tu, Ancestors Call, 2010<sup>52</sup>. (Khaikin, 2015)

These texts reflect the lamentation of the individual who is longing for the things s/he has lost. Horses hold a very special position in Tuva. When I asked Chirgilchin what themes do they focus in their music, Koshkendey answered that there were various themes they focused in their songs like neighbours, people, nature, mother, and Tuva. Then, he added while laughing:

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<sup>51</sup> Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5noazsB3ss>

<sup>52</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.redefinemag.com/2013/tuvan-throat-singing-musicality-spirituality-cross-cultural-place/>

“There are more songs about wives and about horses” (I. Koshkendey, personal interview, 9 July 2015). He added that in Tuva, a man can do without car but he can’t do without horses. Horses hold a very special position.

The deep ties that people living in a pastoral semi nomadic society share with their animals is shown in these statements. Coming back to the songs, the other verses of the songs talk about the search for the lost areas of their homeland i.e. Tuva. These verses show a very important element in Tuvan folklore, the personification of nature. Similar personification was seen in the particular type of singing style called *Kargyraa*. During the opening ceremony of Riddu Riđđu 2015, when Joik Jazz band Arvas and Chirgilchin had a commissioned collaborative performance, the audiences participating there remarked how some songs that Chirgilchin were performing blended perfectly with the magical landscape and mountains of Manndalen. When I inquired the ensemble later, Koshkendey replied that they were performing a particular singing style called *Kargyraa*, which ‘look like mountains’ (I. Koshkendey, personal communication, 9 July 2015). This portrays how throat singing is a mimesis because the styles and sounds can be associated with a particular type of landscape; here in this case: *Mount Kargyraa* (Khaikin, 2015). He added that these songs were very special and if we listen carefully to this style then one will be able to visualize the steppes of the low mountains. He exclaimed, ‘In Tuvan throat singing, we can actually see our nature’. (I. Koshkendey, personal interview, 9 July 2015).

These remarks clearly reflects that nature holds a special place in Tuvan cosmology, just as Sámi cosmology. Studies about Sámi identity have presented Sámi people’s relationship to nation as an integral one (Gaski, 2008; Hilder, 2010; Olsen, 2014). Nature is presented as a master myth in Sámi self-representation. Using Sherry Ortner’s concept of ‘key symbol’ (1979), Olsen argues nature as having a strong, dominant and defining position in Sámi setting (Olsen, 2014, p. 195). Likewise, Gaski draws a relationship between joik and nature. He describes the interesting aspect of Sámi soundscape where joik is ‘an extolling of the relationship and dimension of closeness between people and the land’. He describes joik as an art-form tied to nature and at the same time it is a description of humankind’s nature. Taking Nils-Aslak Velkeapää’s ‘Sámiid eatnan duoddariid’ which he called ‘Sámiland’s alternative national song’, he argues that the mountains plateaus of Sámiland that is joiked are both subject and object because the joik is them and they are joik (Gaski, 2008). Gaski’s statements portrays the physical, psychological and spiritual dimension of joik where joik is the subject that is being

joiked, it is also the object that constitutes and embodies the joik, and it is also the relationality that is shared between the subject and object.

Hilder (2010) quotes Mari Boine explaining the similarities between Tuvan throat-singing and joik (p. 120). Both in throat singing and joik, the main method that the artists apply is the using the voice. Boine shared that Joik (particularly Inga Jusso's voice) and throat singing came from the same source which relied on the primeval and its connection to nature (as cited in Hilder, 2010, p. 120). Boine's statements clearly constitutes the same sentiments that have been expressed in above instances and stories about relationality and indigenous spirituality that have been expressed above.

Therefore, music is one of the powerful mediums through which this connection to nature can be expressed. By listening to the music performed by these artists, a listener might also be able to be a part of this connection and, feel and relate to the attachments, belongingness, lamentations, longings, dedications, nostalgia, and other sentiments that these musicians are trying to express. By imitating the sounds from the nature and paying homage to their ancestors and nature in their songs, these musicians are beautifully presenting the powerful expression of their indigenous spirituality. This expression of sentiments is one of the strategy they are using to assert, manage and perform their Sámi and Tuvan identity.

### 5.2.2 We Speak Earth

In connection to the previous section, the discussion on the role of indigenous musicians in creating and spreading awareness about global environmental crisis seems quite relevant.

Most of my respondents have showed concerns about ecological degradation. Ingá-Máret talked about the life rules she learnt from her parents and grandparents on respecting reindeers, nature, family, and relatives. She stated how in older days the way Sámi people lived closer to nature and had life ways that was better for nature. She feels that now that way of life is lost and hence the things that is being done to nature is bad. She urged, ‘...we should try to give peace to nature’ (I. Jusso, artist statement, p. 7).

What does indigenous musician's engagement and concern with environmental crisis tell us? What are the messages they are trying to relay through their performances in regard to their interconnectedness to nature and environmental degradation? These are the questions that formulates the discussion in this section.

Hilder (2010) makes an insightful discussion on the contribution of Sámi musical performances to the debates of environmental crisis. Drawing upon the spirituality, historical

background and socio-political significance of Sámi musical performance, Hilder discusses the role of Sámi musician in articulating a closeness to the environment in relation to the growing global environment crisis. Taking the sacred, place and environment as main themes, he argues that Sámi musical performance can be used as a way of proposing a nature-based cosmology in which humans are equals with their environment.

Making this statement as a point of departure, I want to discuss the different performances and stories that my respondents have shared that sheds a light on the role of musicians in raising awareness and advocating on environmental issues.

In mid-October 2016, social media was abuzz with the talks about an appeal titled '*Gulahallat Eatnamiin* (We Speak Earth)' that was published on Youtube featuring Sámi joiker, singer and composer Sara Marielle Gaup Beaska.<sup>53</sup> It was a video where Sara Marielle talked about the climate change and the effect on indigenous people especially the Sámi people living in the Northern Europe. This appeal came in the wake of COP21, the UN climate conference in Paris, where world leaders were making a new global climate agreements. Research shows that even though 65% of the earth's land surface today is occupied by indigenous people, but they are largely missing in the national climate plans. Because of this predicament, ensuring that indigenous people are not excluded from the important decisions that affect their future and their rights regarding land and natural resources was very important<sup>54</sup>.

Along the same line, my respondent Ingá-Máret explained how she is afraid that the world is getting warmer. Taking example of the situation of Inuit people in Greenland who are experiencing the crisis directly because of the disappearing of ice in Greenland, she shared that climate change will change the lives, not just her life but also the lives of the future generation. So, the Sámi people should do something against it because change in nature and environment meant change in reindeer herding and way of life for her (I. Jusso, artist statement, February 2017).

Therefore, through this video Sara Marielle urged everyone to joik '*Gulahallat Eatnamiin* (We Speak Earth)', film it and share it on social media like Youtube. She stated that joik can be very powerful and when this power is multiplied (by the solidarity of people joiking from all over the world), it will reach into the hearts of the world leaders. The video also comprised of the joik and a footage of an individual dressed in traditional Sámi attire walking

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<sup>53</sup> *Gulahallat Eatnamiin* We Speak Earth. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2LhBAi-Q8I>

<sup>54</sup>Retrieved from <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2015/11/11/indigenous-people-take-steps-to-have-a-voice-in-cop21.html>

in the wilderness towards the waterscape. The video gained a lot of attention and soon people from around the world started sharing videos of them joiking ‘*Gulahallat Eatnamiin* (We Speak Earth)’<sup>55</sup>. Other contemporary Sámi artists like Sofia Jannok also expressed solidarity to this appeal and posted the video<sup>56</sup> of her performing the joik. The title of the joik itself itself speaks volume because it doesn’t say ‘We speak for Earth’ or ‘We speak about Earth’. It directly says ‘We Speak Earth’. This title expresses the sentiments of indigenous people regarding their interconnectedness to their land, nature and environment. ‘We’, the indigenous people speak “Earth”, as in ‘Earth’ itself is a form of expression, a medium of communication, a language, a voice and ‘we’ speak it.

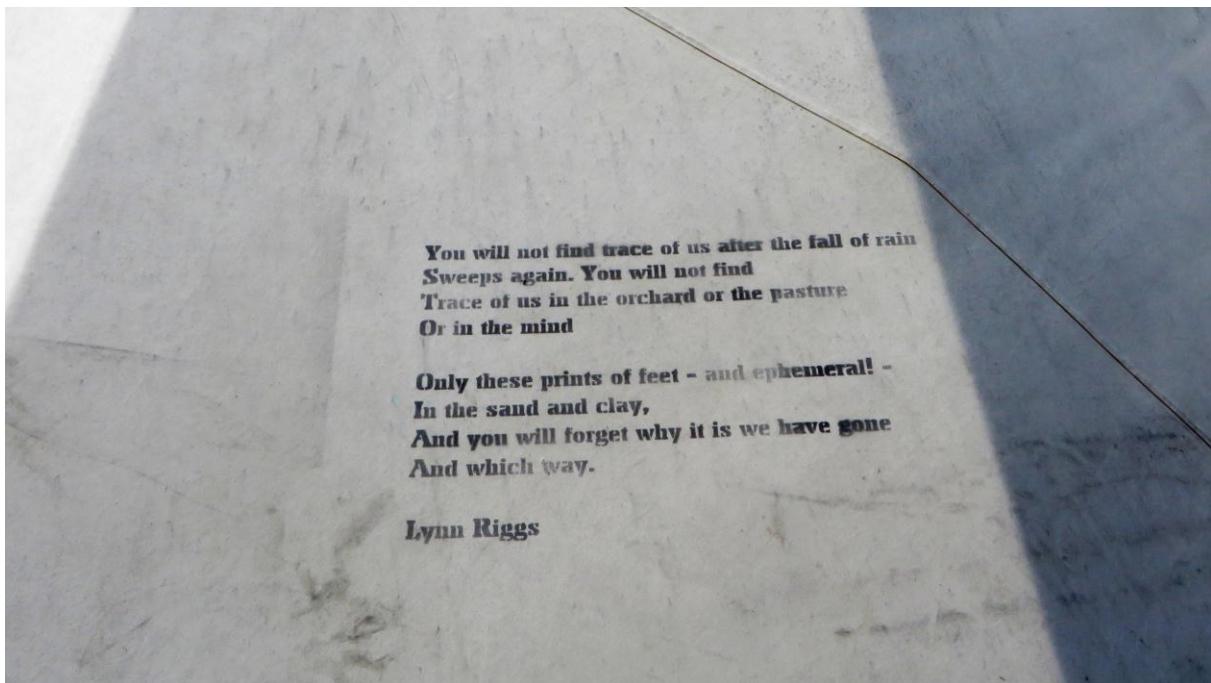


Figure 5. A poem printed on the lavvu at Riddu Riđđu. July 2015.

Similarly, Hilder cites Ola Graff (2007) who explains how joik connects joiker to nature and joiking “puts human in a communicational relationship with nature”, therefore, the music becomes “the meeting point where humans and nature almost become one”. (as cited in Hilder, 2010, p. 162). Historically, joik has played a pivotal role in the 1979 Alta River Dam protests<sup>57</sup> in front of the Norwegian parliament. On 8 October 1979, the protestors (the members of Sámi Action Group (SAG)) set up a traditional Sámi lavvu across the street from the Norwegian

<sup>55</sup>Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2R\\_HtmuFg4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2R_HtmuFg4)

<sup>56</sup> Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P87OeH9aIWA>

<sup>57</sup> Alta Dam Protest (1979) was against the proposed construction of a new hydroelectric project on the Alta River, northern Norway, which was squarely in Sámi territory.

Parliament building in Oslo, they also used vociferous joiks towards the passebys to get a reaction from the government body (Bamman, 2006, p. 359)

The joik ‘We speak Earth’ had the similar function where it brought together people from different walks of the life, from around the world to a meeting point where they were becoming one with Earth and speaking it.

One of my respondents, Risten described the experience of being a part of the climate march with her sister Sara Marielle and thousands of indigenous marchers. She recalled the march where they had ‘banners up in the sky and (our) fists’, their power fists up in the air while joiking. She stated that it was powerful as everybody was joiking the ‘We speak Earth’ joiking (Sámi/ non-Sámi) and one could feel connected both with all the people and with earth. Hilder describes this kind of connection as an intimacy created by joik performance between people and their natural environment by arousing one’s natural surroundings and communing with the spirits of nature (Hilder, 20010, p.163). Regarding the powerful solidarity through joik performance, Risten added, “You were feeling the love” (Interview 4 August 2016).

Chilisa quotes Chela Sandoval (2000) to propose love “as a method made up of a set of practices that can mobilize all people regardless of race and class to work together towards meaningful change”. According to Chilisa, the medium through which this kind of spiritual reality promoting love and harmony can be captured are folktales and stories (Chilisa, 2012, p.112). Here in the case discussed above, joik is one of the medium that triggered and captured that love and harmony.

However, Risten also shared another aspect both environmental issue and being indigenous. When we discussed about the current trend in Sámi revitalization process, she expressed her strong discontent with Sámi culture being exoticized. This exoticizing is both self and external. She disapproves of ‘people looking at Sámi culture as so exotic’ as if they are ‘dolls dressed up in nice colors’ just there ‘to entertain’. Her discontent was not just towards outsiders who want to present the Sámi people as exotic dolls but also towards fellow Sámi people who take part in this act. ‘A part of where they want to express themselves, or be a Sámi exotic doll’. (Interview 4 August 2016).

Hence, self-criticism has been a primary theme for her group Ozas’ performances. The group’s performance titled ‘Silver Brain’ performed in Márkomeannu Festival 2016 gained a lot of attention and critical acclaim.<sup>58</sup> ‘Silver Brain’ was a visual exhibition comprising of

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<sup>58</sup> Retrieved from <http://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9064889>

photographs taken by Sámi photographer Per Heimly with texts/lyrics/poems captioned underneath. The photographs portrayed Risten and her sister Sara Marielle clad in heavily in Sámi gákti jewelleries with very glittery silver and gold makeup all over. Risten shared that the central idea of the exhibition was ‘too much’. They wanted to make people question and contemplate about their own actions of overdoing or overusing things (plastics, minerals for jewelries and so on). But why was this awareness important?

Risten explained in the interview:

We are proud, we say that we are a part of nature. We are connected to earth. But at the same time, we do this overusing as well like this every day overusing. Maybe we should start to think about that. Also that we were saying No to mines, here in Sápmi. We don't want mines to come. We don't want them to build mines here in Sápmi but at the same time, we are wearing all these minerals, silver and gold, that they get from the mines. So, it becomes like this ‘not in my backyard’ kind of issue, where you are okay with the mining as long as it's not in your backyard.

(R. Gaup, personal statement, 4 August 2016)

But she shared that the reactions from the audience was quite baffling because they didn't get the sentiments behind the pictures. They were instead complementing them saying: ‘Oh, Look at them! You are so beautiful. Look at her, she is so perfect!’ While the reactions they were expecting was: ‘Oh my God! This is too much. This is not beautiful!’

This particular story that Risten shared brings forward the issue of self-reflection again but in the light of criticism. This statement corresponds with Berkes' exposure of myths of indigenous people living in harmony with the nature or destroying it, which suggests ‘postcolonial environment ethics’ and ‘an environmental imagination’, which not just Sámi or indigenous people, but humans are a part of nature (cited in Hilder 2008, p. 174). Through their art, the artists wanted to make the audience aware of the double standards and question their everyday actions. Ozas’ expression through their visual performance is to make people contemplate that only urging the government leaders and others to be aware and take an action to ensure the rights of indigenous people will not be that fruitful if one is not aware of their own actions. However, indigenous people’s knowledge, and the process of self contemplation, reflection and criticism as presented through their music and art works here in this study, can be instrumental in addressing the current global environmental crisis. As Berkes, for his

ecological paradigm, proposed possibility of integration of indigenous knowledge with post-positivist science for the better understanding of both local and global ecology, while working towards reviving and strengthening indigenous traditions and communities (cited in Hilder 2008, p. 174).

### 5.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented the stories of my respondents and simultaneously the song text ‘Tell our story’. The main argument in this chapter as the title suggest is ‘knowing yourself’. Especially in Sámi context, although the revitalization process took a full swing throughout the years, the association of Sámi identity with stigma and shame is still seen to be resonating at personal level. Self-contemplation is the process that every individual might go through at some point in their lives. However, the feeling of being stuck in between two cultures and the dilemma for my respondents is not just personal. It started off with a personal tone but it was later connected to them being Sámi. Therefore, the initial phase of the self-realization, reflection and contemplation led them through a process of internal conflict and dilemma. This dilemma was expressed through their stories and their song texts. The dilemma of whether or not to assert to Sámi identity came into surface. This dilemma was fuelled by the years’ long traumatic experience of their ancestors because of Christianity and discriminatory assimilation process described in Chapter 1. But after going through that rigorous process of uncertainty and doubt, they found a new strength through music especially the power of joik to make a choice, to heal and move forward with determination. Using the lyrics analysis method, I also used a song to portray the progression of sense of one’s personal identity to the sense of collective identity. Similarly, human-nature relationship was presented as the main element of their sentiments. These sentiments are explicitly expressed through their music. Especially, the Tuvan soundscape, the imitation of the natural sounds and expression of sentimental attachment to their ancestors, animals, mountains, rivers through their songs and show how their understanding of their cosmology is deeply linked to their Tuvan identity. Through the discussion on how these musicians are also playing a role in addressing the global environmental crisis. Through the discussion on ‘We Speak Earth’, this chapter showed how the expression of Sámi identity through these creative mediums like music are changing. Starting from the point when identity was stigmatized to identity was to show the spirit and now identity is also seeing the glimpse of self-criticism. Throughout this process, the common denominator here is music.



## 6 Conclusion

My thesis is concerned with the significance of music in expression of indigenous identity. Focusing on the central question: ‘how is indigenous identity expressed through music’. Drawing upon the analysis of musical performances, song texts and stories of three different musicians and one musical ensemble, I have explored the Sámi and Tuvan soundscape, and to figure out what process they go through to assert, articulate and maintain their Sámi and Tuvan identities. Through this thesis, I was not trying to answer what a Sámi identity is or what a Tuvan identity is. The purpose for carrying out this research was not to find an ultimate truth or one solid answer. Nevertheless, I have attempted to discuss the relationship between music and identity broadly. More specifically, I have explored the role of an individual (here a musician) in understanding and asserting his/her personal identity, how music becomes instrumental in this process and how doing so leads to expression of a collective identity. Through this understanding I have tried to show the role of musical practices and performances in bringing out the aspect of being indigenous. The aspects I have discussed here might or might not be relevant in other contexts.

I am aware of the complexity regarding the concept of indigenous identity as I have discussed in Chapter 1. Therefore, I have used story telling method to address this complexity (Chapter 3). I should also clarify that the story of four respondents that I have presented here are their personal statements and cannot be generalized and equated as the global voice of all the indigenous people around the world. Yet these are stories and statements about how those individuals have dealt with their Sámi and Tuvan identities using music as a key component. These are their songs, their tales and their performances. These are their description of their ways of using music as a medium to express their encounters, sentiments, beliefs, attitudes, desires, experiences and thought processes. These are their statements that conveys what they think about their Sámi or Tuvan identities and how they use music to articulate their thoughts on being indigenous in relation to others. Therefore, this makes their stories and musical performances unique and relevant in the broader discussion within the discourse of indigenous identity.

Based on the analysis of the context, stories, song texts and musical performances, I have two main findings:

- Riddu Riđđu Festival as a facilitator of indigenous identity expression
- Music as a journey leading to the manifestation of indigenous identity

## 6.1 Riddu Riđđu Festival as a facilitator of indigenous identity expressions

The place plays a vital role in facilitating the performance of music and expression of indigenous identity. Riddu Riđđu Festival has been taken as the case in this thesis. Drawing upon the historical background, I have argued that throughout the years, Riddu Riđđu festival has managed to establish itself as one of the most important sites for the expression of costal Sámi and global indigenous identity. Analysing a collaborative musical performance during the fieldwork, I have discussed how these collaborative efforts help to create a ‘liminal’ space where the musicians express, experience and embody their Sámi and Tuvan identities. Along with the instances and remarks expressed by the respondents and other participants during the fieldwork, I have situated Riddu Riđđu as a ‘place of sound’ where all these participants (musicians, artists, audiences and so on) gather and embody the felt experiences through music, dance and other creative forms of art, and express and celebrate their indigenous identities.

Hence, Riddu Riđđu is not merely a physical setting. It is a reminiscence of the colonial past: of subjugation, domination, discrimination and stigma. It is recollection of past experiences of tension and conflict. It is a symbolic space for global indigenous solidarity (Hilder, 2010, p.127). It is a safe niche for expression of indigenous identity. It is a powerful reminder of cultural resistance, ethnic revitalization, representation, and revival. Most importantly, it is a vehicle of decolonization where artists, musicians, audiences, organizers, participants, volunteers and everyone involved come together to bond, share, learn, and work hand in hand to move this vehicle forward<sup>59</sup>.

## 6.2 Music as a journey leading to the manifestation of indigenous identity

The stories that I have included in the main empirical chapter revolved around the theme of reflection, contemplation on personal and collective identity, display of sentiments, regulation of emotions, and expression of relationality through music. The first section of Chapter 5 was devoted to show how the musicians, especially Sámi, go through this process of examining and critically analysing their personal identity and their collective identity. The effect of colonization, Norwegianization, assimilation and stigmatization, and the role of Sámi history seemed very vital in this process. It also showed us how songs and especially joik are

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<sup>59</sup> Inspired by the MIS 14 class where the guest lecture was Lene Hansen, the former leader of Riddu Riđđu Festival on 26 February 2016.

being used by these individuals to convey their reflection process to self and other. Joik has been seen as a strong identity marker that enables them to embody their identities through sound. Similarly, it seemed to have a positive influence on the well-being of the performers as it helped to regulate and manage their emotions.

The thesis also discussed the significance of musical performance in bringing the musicians and audiences together in a ‘liminal’ space where they could constantly experience, revive, and strengthen their identities. This experience established musical performance as a space where the distinction and dissolution of identities take place.

The second section of the chapter discussed the importance of expression of sentiments in order to understand the community identity. Taking the Tuvan story as the starting point, the section established the theme ‘human-nature’ relationship as integral aspect of expression of Tuvan and Sámi sentiments. The interconnection of human, nature and sound was explained here using the association of Tuvan throat singing and joik with nature. Building upon the discussion that the relationality of human with their ancestors, animals, environment and cosmology inspires the sound they practice and perform, the section further developed to the argument that taking indigenous relationality and knowledge into consideration could be an answer to address the global environmental crisis.

Music is a great form of art that has the power of bringing people together. Through the stories of my respondents and myself, we have dwelled upon music as a soul searching journey of knowing oneself and becomes part of articulating one’s indigenous identity. With this, I hope that my thesis will be relevant in the field of Indigenous Studies. Specifically, it can also be a contribution to the literature on Sámi and Tuvan music. However, this study is an archive of stories of indigenous people that offers insight on their lives, cosmologies, history, music, and politics. It hopefully will open up the possibility for further discussion on new shift in revitalization process of the Sámi. Starting off as the process where identity was associated to stigma, to the cultural revival through ‘showing who you are’ and ‘owning up your indigenous identity’ to the glimpse of self-criticism (discussed through the story of one of my respondent) where criticizing on ‘your own overdoing’ seemed necessary, opens up a discussion on where this vehicle of indigenous identity is heading to.



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# Appendix 1

## Information Guide

This is the information guide used to interview the respondents. This guide was specifically designed for the musicians I was interviewing at Riddu Riđđu 2015. The questions were changed according to the need of the situation. However, the interview revolved around predesigned themes.

### 1. Introductory Questions:

- a. What is your name?
- b. Where are you from?
- c. How are you involved with the music? (Background/History)

### 2. Leading Questions:

- a. How/Why did you choose this genre/style of music? What inspired you?
- b. What is music to you? Do the people in your community have the same views as you?
- c. What is on your mind while making music?
- d. Does your cultural/indigenous values have any effect in your music making process? How?
  - i. Does your music represent your indigenous identity? How?
  - ii. What are your thoughts on the role of music in revitalization process?
- e. Do their works contain traditional symbols and motifs? (+ observation)
- f. How do you think making/performing music affect the indigenous/traditional identity? (belongingness, community)
- g. What contexts do your music relate to? What kind of arena do you play your music in?
- h. Do you feel any difference while performing in an arena like Riddu Riđđu (with more indigenous feel/belongingness) and in a more mixed arena like a bar/concert?
  - i. What challenges do you face?
  - j. What are your visions and goals? (visions and goals of the band)

### 3. Specific Themes:

- a. Language and Identity
- b. Performativity, Space
- c. Revitalization