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Agents of change: the Sámi Pathfinders, transforming majority-education within the cultural interface

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Cover Page:

Get OFF deFence (2016) by artists Anders Sunna & Linda Aslaksen.

This street art is located across several walls of Alta middle school in Alta municipality.

Image courtesy of Anders Sunna.

Taken from: <https://kunstkultursenteret.no/ressursbase/get-off-defence/>

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Abstract

This thesis fills an academic gap about the Sámi Pathfinders, centring their stories. I examine the role of the Sámi Ofelaččat/Samiske veivisere or Sámi Pathfinders and their contribution to Indigenous education. Indigenous education is framed as part of the paradigm of Indigenous self-determination. The Sámi Pathfinders is an educational initiative whereby Norwegian pupils learn about historical and contemporary Sámi life from young Sámi. It is these young Sámi adults who assume this representative role. The motivation behind the establishment of the Sámi Pathfinders in 2004 was the recognition of the general lack of knowledge in Norwegian society about the Sámi and their rights as Indigenous People. By contributing to closing this ‘knowledge-gap’, the objective of the Sámi Pathfinder initiative is to make the Sámi culture more visible, with the long-term objective of countering discrimination and stereotypes.

Providing a peer-to-peer communicative encounter, the Pathfinders primarily focus on Norwegian youth by visiting high schools covering the length and breadth of Norway. This thesis asks: How do the Sámi Pathfinders understand their role as addressing discrimination and existing stereotypical associations about the Sámi? To answer this question, I present a case study which explores the types of experiences (comments and behaviours) the Sámi Pathfinders encountered when visiting Norwegian high schools. Through semi-structured on-line interviews with five Pathfinders, this case study provided a unique opportunity to document the Pathfinders’ reflections about their experiences and accumulated knowledge. The Pathfinders’ testimonies reveal that this ‘knowledge-gap’ still exists in Norwegian schools, explaining that most schools did not prepare their pupils for their visit. Additionally, their reflections reveal that stereotypes about and discrimination towards the Sámi are ongoing concerns. With that said, I argue that the responsibility of educating the majority should not solely be placed on the Sámi community and its youth.

Čoahkkáigeassu

Dát masterdutkan gokčá dan akademalaš váilevašvuoda mii lea sámi ofelaččaid birra, ja bidjá guovddáži sin muitalusaid. Mun guorahalan Sámi ofelaččaid rolla ja sin váikkuhusaid eamiálbmotoahpahussii. Eamiálbmotoahpahus lea rámmejuvvon sisa oassin Eamiálbmogiid iešmearrideami paradigmii. Sámi ofelaččat lea pedagogalaš doaibma gos dáža oahppit ohppet nuorra sápmelaččain sihke dološ- ja dálááiggi sámiid eallima birra. Lea dát nuorra sámi ollesolbmot geat váldet badjelasat dán ovddastanrolla. Sámi ofelaččat-doaibma ásaheavvui 2004:s, ja duogášágga ásaheavvui lei dovddastus ahte lei oppalaččat váilevaš máhttu Norgga servvodagas sámiid birra ja sin vuoigatvuodaid birra eamiálbmogin. Sámi ofelaččaid álgaheami ulbmil váikkuhit dán «máhttováilevašvuoda», lea oážžut sámi kultuvrra eambo oidnosii, dainna guhkesáiggi ulbmiliin ahte vuosttildit vealaheami ja stereotipiijaid.

Ofelaččat fáallet njuolgga deaivvademiid ja gulahallamiid erenoamážit dáža nuoraiguin go gallestallet joatkaskuvllaid miehtá Norgga. Dát dutkkus jearrá: Mo áddejit sámi ofelaččat iežaset rolla go sii čujuhit vealaheavvui ja dálá stereotiippalaš assosiašuvnnaide sámiid birra? Vástádussan dán gažaldahkii, de mun ovdanbuvttán ovttá dáhpáhusdutkanmuša mii suokkarda makkár lágan vásáhusaid (kommentárat ja láhttenuogit) Sámi ofelaččat deive go gallededje Norgga joatkaskuvllaid. Dán dáhpáhusdutkanmušas lean čađahan beallestruktuvrralaš gearahallamiid viđain ofelaččain neahta bokte, ja dat lea addán erenoamáš vejolašvuoda duodaštit ofelaččaid reflekšuvnnaid sin iežaset vásáhusaid ja čohkkejuvvon máhtu birra. Ofelaččaid duodaštusat almmostahttet ahte dát «máhttováilevašvuoda» ain gávdno Norgga skuvllain, ja čilge ahte eanaš skuvllat eai ráhkkanahhtán ohppiid ofelaččaid galledeavvui. Dasa lassin, de ofelaččaid reflekšuvnnaid almmostahttet ahte stereotipiijat ja vealaheavvui sámiid vuostá leat bissovaš vuorjašumit. Dainna oaivvildan ahte ovddasvástádus oahpahit váldoálbmoga ii galgga dušše leat sámi servodaga ja sin nuoraid ovddasvástádus.

Abbreviations

SP Initiative – Sámi Pathfinder initiative

SUAS – Sámi University of Applied Sciences

All translations from Norwegian done by author

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1 The Sámi Pathfinders

This thesis investigates self-determination through Indigenous education. Specifically, I examine the role of the Sámi Ofelaččat/Samiske veivisere or Sámi Pathfinders in countering discrimination and stereotypes in Norway. This was undertaken by interviewing five Pathfinders and document analysis. The Pathfinders are presented within a conceptual framework of decolonisation through which Indigenous self-determination, education and agency are actualised. The Sámi Pathfinder (SP) initiative is a supplementary educational offering. It provides majority-schools with knowledge about Sámi culture and society, thereby “filling” the identified knowledge-gap pupils and teachers have. The SP initiative under the auspices of the Sámi University of Applied Sciences (SUAS) is an instance of self-determination. Within this over-arching framework, the Pathfinders can be seen as agents of social change. By increasing knowledge about the Sámi for the everyday Norwegian, it is possible to position the Pathfinders as actors within the Sámi indigenisation of mainstream education.

As a government initiative which provides information or knowledge about Norway’s Indigenous People, the Sámi, the SP initiative contracts young Sámi adults (18-25 years) (hereafter referred to as the Pathfinders) for a year-long tenure to give presentations about Sámi history, culture, language, society and identity. The Pathfinders themselves are chosen from different areas in Norway; this includes both from inside and outside Sápmi/Sábme/Saepmie or Samiland, that is the traditional geographical areas associated with the Sámi. The Pathfinders present diverse perspectives about Sámi life including, to varying degrees, their personal perspectives or stories. Whilst the Pathfinders primarily visit high schools and engage with and meet Norwegian youth, they also visit organisations and institutions in Norway upon request. Typically, it is the high schools who request them to visit. These peer-to-peer interactions between high school pupils and the Pathfinders are envisioned as contributing to countering the misconceptions and prejudices held by youth in the majority society about the Sámi.

The SP initiative was established by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD). Erna Solberg and Anders J.H. Eira, the respective Communal and Regional Minister and Deputy Minister at the time, were instrumental to its development (A. Eira, personal communication, April 5, 2022). The initiative's aim is to help alter or prevent

prejudices based on negative stereotypes from developing due to mis- or a lack of information about the Sámi. The motivation behind the establishment of the Sámi Pathfinders was the recognition of the general lack of knowledge in Norwegian society about the Sámi and their rights as Indigenous People. This was clearly stated at the press release of the initiative by Erna Solberg. Solberg (2004) explained:

...we know that there still are too many who know too little about the Sámi, Sámi culture and way of life, who the Sámi are and where the Sámi live. There can be many different understandings/beliefs (oppfatninger) about what rights the Sámi as an indigenous people have in Norway. Lack of knowledge can contribute to creating prejudices and incorrect assumptions/stereotypes (vrangforestillinger), and these can lead to discrimination and unnecessary antagonisms (motsetninger).

The Government will therefore increase knowledge about Sámi culture in Norway, making the Sámi culture visible.

The SP initiative contributes to closing this 'knowledge-gap'. It aims to make the Sámi culture more visible, with the long-term objective of countering discrimination and stereotypes. Making the Sámi culture more visible is important given that the Sámi, and Indigenous People globally, have been rendered invisible historically, politically, socially and through research and educational systems (Smith, 2021; Berg-Nordlie, 2021). The Pathfinders' objective is not only to build a more tolerant and inclusive society for everyone (Dikkanen, 2020) but to redefine in their own terms the public Sámi image. Seen in this way, the SP initiative and the Pathfinders is an expression of agency and Indigenous self-determination.

Established in 2004, the Sámi Pathfinders became a permanent initiative in 2008. Given that the initiative is continuing, it is reasonable to assume that the knowledge-gap recognised in the early years of this century is equally relevant today; indicating that discrimination and stereotypes are ongoing concerns. The SP initiative is not the only example of government efforts to educate Norwegian pupils about the Sámi and counter stereotypes and prejudices. Other initiatives are: Dembra (established 2012) (Democratic preparation against racism and antisemitism) which "offers development programs for schools and teacher training for institutions" as well as lesson plans; Reaidu (established 2013), an inter-disciplinary resource website for students, teachers and institutions developed by the Centre for Sámi Studies at UiT The Arctic University of Norway; and the Norwegian National Human Rights Institution (NIM, established 2015) which has absorbed the Competence Centre for Indigenous Rights (originally established in 2004).

However, the Pathfinders are unique because they not only offer knowledge about the Sámi but direct contact *with* the Sámi. It is this form of interpersonal contact that is considered particularly effective in the transmission of knowledge increasing the potential for changes in pupils' attitudes and assumptions about the Sámi (SK Report, 2007; NIM, 2022). Hence, the Pathfinders provide Indigenous education that is potentially transformative.

1.1 Research Status

Apart from the Statskonsult evaluation Report (2007) and a publication by SUAS celebrating a decade of the SP initiative (Länsman, 2014), there appears to be no other literature on the SP initiative or the Pathfinders themselves. With this in mind and the fact that the Pathfinders' role is to help fill the "knowledge-gap" about the Sámi, this section explores extant research which investigates levels of knowledge about the Sámi in Norwegian schools.

If education can help affect changes in attitudes and prejudices towards the Sámi, then schools become a main actor towards this end. The Norwegian Educational Act (1998, Section 1-1) stipulates that "all forms of discrimination must be combatted". This is reiterated in the Core Curriculum of the current national curriculum LK20 (MER, 2017) under the section "The purpose of the education". It states: "School shall promote democratic values and attitudes that can counteract prejudice and discrimination" (Section 1.6). So, democratic values are directly linked to the school's role in helping counteract discrimination.

Furthermore, the inclusion of Sámi perspectives in school subjects has had a broader mandate since 2006 (LK06) which also includes a cross-curricula approach (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020). This raises questions concerning the degree-, kind- and effect of content about the Sámi presented in universities and Norwegian schools by teachers and educational resources.

Hadi Khosravi Lile's (2011) thesis specifically connects the education of the Sámi to human rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, asking whether Norway is meeting its legal obligations. Lile's research was conducted across 15 schools located both in the North and South of Norway. Of interest are the responses by teachers and ninth grade pupils about what they say they have learnt about the Sámi. The results show that 92.4% of 189 teachers are not satisfied with the teaching they have received from teacher-education institutions about the Sámi (p.340-342). This means that teachers did not consider that they had sufficient competency to teach about Sámi related content. Consequently, the responses by 817 pupils showed conflicting levels of knowledge and teaching about the Sámi. Lile's research was thus the first step towards mapping levels of knowledge about the Sámi in both Northern and Southern majority schools.

From 2010-2015, the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) put in place a research group to investigate the way in which institutions were meeting the stipulations in the 2010 teacher-education reform. The reports included feedback from leaders, teachers/lecturers and students enrolled in teacher education for primary and middle schools (GLU-Grunnskole læreutdanning). Institute leaders in 39 universities were asked how important teaching about the Sámi was in their institutions. The results indicate that teaching about the Sámi was considered less important for institutions in South-West and Western Norway than institutions in Middle, Northern or Eastern Norway (Følgegruppa, 2013, p.77). The responses suggest that a perceived need for Sámi content related to the presence of a Sámi population and culture in the local area (Følgegruppa, 2013). The report also showed that the inclusion of Sámi content in higher education is random and dependent upon individual lecturers' interest and initiative (Følgegruppen, 2013, p.86).

A later report (Følgegruppa, 2015) noted that teacher-education institutions claim that they have strengthened their teaching about Sámi perspectives since 2011. However, responses from GLU-students show that about 61% of respondents expressed that they had not developed a greater understanding of what an Indigenous People is; and 66.6% of respondents stated that their course had not highlighted the relevance of Sámi culture and history in contrast to 18% that said that it had (p.109). It appears that much preparatory work by institutions has been at the planning level only. However, when it comes to including a Sámi perspective in higher education, the report highlights that there is a great deal of variation amongst institutions (p.125). Overall, however, teachers and students believe there has been too little change (p.127).

NIM's report (2022) shows that of those participants who had 10 years of Norwegian schooling (grunnskole), 49% said they had been taught little or nothing about the Sámi (p.48) and 23% in total said they had learnt a lot or quite a lot. What was taught about the Sámi in schools was in relation to culture, language, religion and traditions. For those respondents who believed they had knowledge about the Sámi, this knowledge comprised of connections between the Sámi and reindeer, language and culture. Some respondents also mentioned the Sámi's status as an Indigenous People, Sámi settlement areas, history and Norwegianisation (p.50). Furthermore, those respondents who resided in geographical areas traditionally associated with the Sámi, that is, Northern Norway in the counties of Nordland and Troms and Finnmark, believed they were informed about the Sámi.

Despite a history in Norwegian schools which has highlighted the importance of context and culture in education, this has not extended to Sámi perspectives or that of other minorities. Andreassen & Olsen (2020) state that education in schools and teacher-education at the institutional level in Norway is far behind that of other countries, lacking emphasis on the importance of including an Indigenous perspective. NIM's report (2022) does reveal an improvement in the self-reported level of knowledge about the Sámi. They compared answers by young respondents (under 30 years) and older respondents (60 years and over). The younger group (36%) said they had learnt a great deal about the Sámi as opposed to 26% in the older group. Of interest, is that respondents with higher education consistently said that they had more knowledge about the Sámi than respondents with lower levels of education. However, to what extent teacher-education and textbooks include Sámi content and perspectives is variable (NIM, 2022). NIM (2022) suggest that teaching about the Sámi and other minorities in teacher-education needs to be strengthened and should be a topic of research.

Research on textbooks is pertinent given their authoritative status and Norwegian teachers' reliance on them (Eriksen, 2018a). Whilst textbooks are potentially important pedagogical tools, they also represent national hegemonic discourses and create values in the classroom (Eriksen, 2018a; Normand, 2021). Compared with national minorities and immigrants, the Sámi are referred to more frequently in history, religion and social studies' textbooks used in middle and high schools (Følgegruppen, 2014). However, they observe that a portion of history books suggest that the injustices the Sámi have suffered are a thing of the past, in which current problems and challenges within Sámi society are connected "to Norwegianisation and nation-building ...[and] to a lesser degree to the situation today" (p.58). Social studies textbooks frame the Sámi within a multicultural society. The authors problematise the use of the term "ethnic minority" as a catch-all-phrase textbooks use for the Sámi, national minorities and immigrants, which weakens the distinctions between the three groups (p.125). However, they did find that some Social Studies textbooks address the complexity of identity articulation in Norwegian society today, allowing for different identifications in addition to being Norwegian (p.125).

Gjerpe (2021) states that previous studies on textbooks and the type of content about the Sámi, reveal three representative tendencies: "1) a stereotypical representation of the Sámi as exotic and different; 2) the exclusion or the minimising of the importance of historical events that show conflict (such as Norwegianisation or The Alta conflict), and (3) a

perpetuation of a nationalistic ideology, particularly in Norwegian and Social Studies subject areas” (p.297-298). Eriksen’s (2018a) investigation of primary school texts shows similar tendencies. In fact, both Eriksen (2018a) and Gjerpe (2021) confirm that the representation of the Sámi in textbooks reflects a dichotomous rhetoric in which the majority society is seen as the communal “we” and the Sámi are “othered”.

Overall, it appears that education about the Sámi has increased every decade (NIM, 2022); the background chapter (3) presents some of the reasons for this development. Encouragingly, Evju and Oslen (2022) maintain that Norway is currently in a period of change in which academics, teachers and the general population are more interested in acquiring knowledge about the Sámi. Yet despite an increase in knowledge and interest, the literature examined over the last decade highlights a consistent lack of competency about the Sámi in Norwegian schools and teacher-education. In addition, representation of the Sámi in Norwegian textbooks as discussed above establishes an us-and-them discourse which essentialises the Sámi and perpetuates stereotypes. The Focus group (Følgegruppen) reports revealed that lack of human, economical and pedagogical resources, significantly impacts whether schools and teacher-education prioritise content about the Sámi (Olsen, 2020). This then brings us to the question of, when Sámi content is included in the classroom, how is it presented.

1.2 Combatting Stereotypes and Discrimination through Indigenising Education

Teachers are not responsible for the discriminatory speech or actions of their pupils, but they do have a responsibility both ethically and legally and play an important part “in countering negative attitudes towards prejudice in classrooms, the schoolyard, the school and the wider community” (Whitaker, 2013). The challenge for schools and teacher-educational institutions is “how to develop a pedagogical practice that challenges stereotypes rather than reproduce them” (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020, p. 163). NIM also states that substantial knowledge and competency about the Sámi is required so teachers can implement the aims specified in LK20 (discussed in Chapter 3). The claim is that knowledge promotion will help reduce stereotypical representations about the Sámi.

So, what does this knowledge promotion look like? This is an important question since the integration of ‘knowledge’ is framed as a cure-all for discrimination and racism (Eriksen, 2018a). Andreassen and Olsen (2020) state that knowledge acquisition *about* the Sámi in

isolation does not ensure that changes to attitudes and empathy will be developed. Similarly, Osler and Lybaek (2014) say that the integration of knowledge alone will not promote respect. However, “knowledge about historical events provides the possibility for insight into changes in society which have consequences for how human dignity/worth is understood” (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020, p. 156). It has “the potential for transformation” (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p.223). This is also important from a decolonial perspective. The importance of knowing the history of the Sámi, is exemplified by what Ojibwe-American writer David Treuer (American Writers Museum, 2020) says about Native Americans: “to know America is to know Indian history... to ignore the history of Indians in America is to *miss how power works*” (my emphasis).

There are, of course, teachers with considerable knowledge and understanding of Sámi history and culture. As shown above, this is frequently the result of individual teacher’s engagement about Sámi matters (Følgegruppen, 2013; Evju & Olsen, 2022) rather than from structural efforts by schools. Evju and Oslen (2022) propose that it is the teacher’s methodological approach, reflexive praxis and positionality that is significant. Of import is how teachers position themselves in relation to Sámi themes and issues. Interviews with eight social studies teachers from schools in Eastern and Northern Norway about how they approached Sámi issues in their classroom, reveal the importance of a relational approach in the classroom (Evju & Oslen, 2022). A relational approach intentionally includes and promotes Sámi perspectives and knowledges in the classroom placing them within a shared history.

The inclusion of Sámi perspectives in mainstream Norwegian education is a form of Indigenous education known as mainstreaming. Mainstreaming broadens the notion of Indigenous education to include the majority society. This means that pupils in majority classrooms not only learn from and about Indigenous People but also need this knowledge (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017). Mainstreaming is part of efforts to indigenise education at all levels of the system. Indigenisation is a “field of research, policy and practice” (Olsen & Sollid, 2022a) and can be conceived in different ways (see Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). It has also been implemented in other international Indigenous contexts with varying degrees of success (for a discussion of its implementation in Australia see Lowe & Yunkaporta (2013) and Bishop, Vass & Thompson (2021), in New Zealand/Aotearoa see Walker (2016) and G.H. Smith (2003).

In Norway, indigenisation in Norwegian schools means contextualising Sámi themes and issues (content) from a Sámi perspective rather than a majority position. For instance, teachers relate the past treatment of the Sámi (such as Norwegianisation) to the present (discrimination) in order to present an issue (such as windmill parks) from a Sámi perspective (Evju & Oslen, 2022). The objective is to present Sámi content in a manner that is not essentialising and stereotypical. Equally important is the presentation of content in a manner that does not reinforce dichotomies, that is, Norwegian contra Sámi (Sollid & Olsen, 2019). Instead an intercultural perspective (Olsen, Sollid & Johansen, 2017) should be promoted that does not privilege the majority-society's viewpoints over those of the 'other'. It is this positionality that helps counter an us-and-them discourse. It requires teaching *about, for* and *through* Sámi perspectives and knowledge. Norwegian scholars propose that the integration of Indigenous education in Norwegian schools can complement and challenge citizenship education (Olsen et al, 2017; Sollid & Olsen, 2019), human rights education (Eriksen, 2018b) and help understand and address other shared global challenges, such as global warming and climate change, increasing racism and threats towards biocultural diversity (Olsen et al., 2017).

1.3 Relevance

The Sámi people continue to experience higher levels of discrimination and hate speech compared to the majority-population (NIM, 2022). K.L. Hansen (2018) documented that ethnic discrimination is the most common form of discrimination reported by Sámis. Based on data collected in 2012 from 11,600 participants across five counties in Northern Norway, one in five Sámis have experienced discrimination, although very few report it to authorities. K.L. Hansen's report is one of the most recent contributions to the body of research investigating the existence of prejudices in Northern Norway towards the Sámi. Consequently, the Sámi Parliament and the Norwegian Government developed an Action Plan (2020) towards building greater equality and anti-discrimination. This plan acknowledges that "racism and discrimination have negative consequences for individuals, groups and society". This can result in "exclusion, lower social mobility and psychological problems" (p.11). The plan specifies that more knowledge is needed about discrimination directed towards the Sámi.

In a recent report on the mental health of Sámi youth, young Sámi explain that many experience discrimination because of their Sámi identity (Hansen & Skaar, 2021). This kind of discrimination strongly affects them, and can potentially create social differences,

exclusion and marginalisation, and poor health status compared to other Norwegian youth. Furthermore, the report connects hate speech in particular to young Sámi's mental health, advocating for increased preventative measures. The authors emphasise that mental health is a requirement for developing a strong Sámi identity and, moreover, for Sámi youth to have a place in society.

In 2021, the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NIM) carried out research to identify and measure the majority population's attitudes towards the Sámi and national minorities in Norway. Their efforts were based on previous research which showed that 1) "stereotypes can influence peoples decisions and behaviours, often contributing to discrimination and hate speech" (NIM, 2022, p.59) and 2) that "low levels of contact between groups, lack of knowledge and stereotypical representations in the media can increase prejudices towards minorities whereas measures that can promote knowledge, levels of contact and media representations can prevent or reduce prejudices" (p.46).

However, the report also clarifies that this is not a simple one to one correlation. They explain that the approach used to promote knowledge, increase contact and promote positive media representation is an important influential factor on how prejudices can change. They emphasise that for a positive change in prejudices, contact needs to be "sufficiently close, positive and frequent" (p.46). Similarly, contact which is negative, even if it is a one-off occurrence, can promote prejudice if it is not offset by other positive experiences (p.46).

NIM (2022) conducted surveys with 2654 participants, 18 years and over. Their principal findings showed that many participants stated that they did not have a great deal of knowledge about the Sámi or national minorities. Hence, their report stresses the need for more knowledge about the Sámi and other national minorities in schools. However, they underscore that knowledge about Sámi history and culture can help reduce prejudices *if* it is taught in a manner that "actively challenges stereotypes" and incorporates historical and current injustices towards the group, including the group's own perspectives about these themes (p.46).

1.4 Choice of Topic and Research Question

The general lack of knowledge about the Sámi within Norwegian society contributes to existing racist and discriminatory attitudes/comments towards them and other minorities (Action Plan, 2020). My thesis specifically looks at the educational system. This is based on my understanding that firstly, schools have played a primary role historically and currently in the "implementation and execution of the State's political initiatives in relation to the Sámi"

(Olsen et al., 2017, p. 3). Secondly, schools are considered an appropriate forum to help combat discrimination and stereotypes by providing knowledge (NIM, 2022). This is reaffirmed by the relatively new Norwegian Core Curriculum (LK20) which obligates teachers to include knowledge about the Sámi and Sámi perspectives in every subject. As well as it positions schools as primary actors in countering prejudice and discrimination through the promotion of democratic values and attitudes (see Section 1.1).

Recognising that the intersection between the discrimination of the Sámi and educational practices in Norwegian schools should have greater focus, this thesis asks: *How do the Sámi Pathfinders understand their role as addressing discrimination and existing stereotypical associations about the Sámi?* In order to answer this, I present a case study which explores the experiences of five Pathfinders when visiting Norwegian high schools. To compliment and provide a context for this study I have mapped and described how the SP initiative is formally arranged, including its history and how the Pathfinders are prepared for their role. In addition, I have supplemented this research by attending a Pathfinder visit at a local high school.

Using a qualitative research approach, I conducted semi-structured on-line interviews with former Pathfinders from 2017-2022. These intentional “conversations” provided a unique opportunity to document the Pathfinders’ reflections about their experiences and accumulated knowledge.

In order to collect and document the lived experiences of the Pathfinders, I chose Testimonio as my qualitative research methodology. This approach allowed me to learn directly from the Pathfinders, rather than via secondary sources. Unlike other forms of narrative research, a ‘testimonio’ or a lived experience approach emphasises that the participants or narrators are experts of their own lived experience or story. The Pathfinders, then, become knowledge-bearers or holders of their own lived experience which helps to rectify the power/knowledge imbalance between the researcher and the interviewee (Eastmond, 2007). In so doing, ‘testimonio’ elevates the positionality of the interviewee. Like Indigenous methodologies, through testimonio the interviewee or Pathfinder is positioned as having special knowledge or information that I and other members of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous majority society subsequently lack. Through their *testimonies*, the Pathfinders are no longer viewed as the ‘other’.

I employed reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; 2019) to explore the Pathfinders’ testimonies. This method provided the necessary approach and structure for

answering the following supplementary questions to support the main research question.

These are:

- a. How do the Pathfinders perceive their role and experience their role?
- b. What kind of knowledge (emotional/cognitive) do they represent/present?
- c. How do they understand the way in which they address discrimination and existing stereotypical associations of the Sámi?

Reflexive thematic analysis also allowed me the flexibility to work from the bottom up and explore the data provided. This meant that the data drove my theoretical direction, in particular my focus on agency and the cultural interface.

This thesis contributes to existing literature that considers how stereotypes and discrimination can be counteracted by Indigenous education. It shows that stereotypes and discrimination are present not only in Northern majority classrooms, but Southern too. It also reveals that the majority of teachers did not prepare their pupils for the Pathfinders' visit. This thesis centres the Pathfinders' stories, thereby starting an academic conversation hitherto overlooked. With that said, the responsibility of educating the majority should not solely be placed on the Sámi community and its youth.

1.5 Positioning Myself - Challenges and Limitation of the Study

Research does not occur in a political or social vacuum (Hale, 2001; Johnson, 2014; Olsen, 2016). Significant influences on my choice of topic and its focus have been my previous master's thesis on an Australian Aboriginal author, my experience as a teacher, my involvement in Our Migration History project (see www.ourmigrationhistory.com) which aims to incorporate greater minority perspectives in the classroom, and my involvement with Dembra³ through the DEMCI (Democracy and Citizenship) program area at the University of Stavanger. I am therefore a researcher and advocate.

As an advocate, I am required to constantly consider my role from both an insider and an outsider perspective (Olsen, 2016, p.33). Born and raised in Australia, some parts of my identity correlate to the outsider position. I have for example knowledge-gaps about specific Sámi matters due to my geographical distance from Sápmi, my incomprehension of the Sámi language, the relatively newness of learning about the Sámi, and the simple fact that I am not Sámi. I recognise that these gaps affect my research. For instance, although I am fluent in Norwegian having lived here for 23 years, it is still not my mother-tongue. Therefore, there was always the possibility that during the interviews, which were in Norwegian, I would not understand something—either language based or due to social context. What is more I live on

the West-coast of Norway with its own dialect. The Pathfinders I interviewed had dialects from all over Norway. Despite recording the interviews, the rate at which some of the Pathfinders spoke combined with their dialect meant that some words or phrases were ‘missed’. Subsequently, I had to evaluate how relevant these missed words or phrases were to the overall content.

At the same time, I have gained some knowledge about Indigenous Peoples and the Sámi from my studies. Thus, several references to historical and current Sámi people or events— Márkomeannu, Kautokeino rebellion, Elsa Laula Renberg—mentioned in the interviews were not unknown to me. In other contexts, such as living in Rogaland and teaching, I have greater knowledge which corresponds more strongly to the insider position. But again, I do not know what it is like to be a young Sámi adult ‘teaching’ in Norwegian mainstream schools and never will.

As a researcher I am therefore occupying both insider and outsider positions simultaneously along a sliding scale. As a non-Indigenous researcher, my role is to be humble and respectful; to know what I can and to be prepared to keep learning (Kuokkanen, 2007). This will help me understand how my positionality and intersectionality - white, female, married to a Norwegian, mature-aged, Australian, teacher, student, mother and advocate— influences me as a person and my various roles: witness, researcher, interpreter and advocate. Advocacy has an ethical component. This ethical component is framed within the concept of reciprocity: a necessary “relationship between the scholar and the community that is studied” (Olsen, 2016, p.40). Reciprocity also includes the scholar’s obligation to “give something back to the community” (Olsen, 2016, p.40). Whilst my research will not necessarily have any direct effect on the Sámi community, nor on levels of discrimination in Norwegian society today, it will bring the SP initiative and the Pathfinders sharply into focus and is thus a small gesture of giving back.

1.6 Thesis Outline

This thesis is divided into eight chapters. In this Introductory chapter I have presented my research question concerning the Pathfinders and the SP initiative and provided a general overview of the social and educational context in Norway. This context highlights the gaps in both research and knowledge about the Sámi in public schools generally and the Pathfinders in particular. In Chapter 2 I introduce the theoretical foundation for my findings. Here agency and the cultural interface are key concepts that will be discussed. Methodology and ethics are

the focus of Chapter 3 in which I explain how the Pathfinders were selected, methods used and my ethical deliberations. Chapter 4 provides the backdrop for the development of the current national curriculum (LK20) and explores how educational policies and practices included or excluded the Sámi. The next chapter (5) gives an account of the SP initiative from its inception to today and describes what a visit from the Pathfinders entails. Subsequently in Chapter 6, I present the Pathfinders and their individual testimonies in relation to three thematic areas: representation, diversity and identity; the complexity of knowledge sharing; and the impact on the Pathfinders. The following chapter (7) discusses my findings in terms of the theory and research questions presented. Finally, in Chapter 8 I summarise the conclusions drawn from my findings in conjunction with the theory and methods used, as well as implications for future research.

2 Theoretical Framework

I stated in the introductory chapter that I consider the SP initiative a form of self-determination within which the agency of the Pathfinders is enacted. This chapter therefore addresses this claim, by briefly explaining what self-determination means in an Indigenous context and its relevance to Indigenous education generally and specifically to the Sámi in Norway. Self-determination is presented from a political standpoint throughout this thesis rather than from a social Sámi perspective. A political standpoint is relevant to my thesis because despite historical colonial practices minimising Sámi political agency (Sissons, 2005), without political will or collective Sámi/Indigenous agency, changes to the Norwegian education system would not have occurred to the extent they have (see Chapter 4). Furthermore, Indigenous methodologies and Indigenous education are inherently political fields (Sollid & Olsen, 2019).

My overarching focus in this chapter is therefore on agency and how it enables and limits Sámi identity articulation; its diversity and difference. As will be shown, this articulation is both essentialist and constructivist. The space in which the Pathfinders and the pupils meet and in which identities and diversity are articulated is situated within the cultural interface (Nakata, 2002, 2007). Conceptually therefore, agency and decolonisation are relevant to my discussion of how the Pathfinders are agents of social change contributing to Indigenous education within the cultural interface (see Chapter 7).

2.1 Self-determination in Norway – a Relational Approach

Relationality is a fundamental traditional principle of Indigenous epistemologies, axiologies, ontologies and research (Moreton-Robinson, 2017). It is a fundamental principle of how self-determination is politically enacted in Norway (Broderstad, 2014). Not only does this relationality include institutions of power and other social groups (Belier & Hays, 2020), but it extends to Indigenous Peoples' shared experiences of oppression, dispossession of rights and territory, historically and ongoing (Belier & Hays, 2020). Equally, relationality is exhibited in Indigenous peoples' resilience in the face of eradication, integration and assimilation (Kenrick & Lewis, 2004). Stemming from colonial practices, spurred by racial-biology and 'a vision of progress' (Belier & Hays, 2020), justified through colonial legal concepts such as terra nullius, Indigenous peoples have had to and continue to negotiate the extent of their self-determination within international, state and local institutions, laws and policies— and in their daily lives. Consequently, relationality is a central concept and practice within decolonisation.

2.2 Decolonisation

Decolonisation is both a theory, methodology and a practice. It has been a guiding principle in how I approached my research and analysis. Decolonisation challenges existing hegemonic discourses and underlying power structures/relations at play within society, institutions and governments. Silva, Fernández and Nguyent (2021) explain that decolonisation is “a potential epistemological standpoint and framework to understand how systems of power reproduce oppression” (p.388). In terms of this thesis, the oppressive systems of power in question are education and research (Olsen, 2016; L.T. Smith, 2021). Hence, decolonisation is a continual process that aims to make visible “ways of knowing, thinking and being that disrupt coloniality” (Silva et al. 2021, p. 389). These systems of power and ways of knowing and thinking and their institutions are, among other things, concerned with the distribution of knowledge.

2.2.1 Decolonising Knowledge

Globally, Indigenous People have been marginalised or omitted in historical accounts or, when presented, having no influence over the way in which they were presented. Through colonial narrative practices and policies Indigenous peoples have been essentialised as primitive or uncivilized (Elenius & Tjelmeland, 2010; Hansen & Olsen, 2014), noble or

exotic (Sissons, 2005), inferior (Minde, 2003) and presented as dying out (Kortekangas, 2017). Equally the marginalisation of the Sámi in Norwegian society (discussed in Chapter 4) has colonial roots that have continued implications today. These “historical wounds” (Chakrabarty, 2007) have affected the Sámi People’s identity articulation, visibility and social standing within Norwegian society. Looking critically at the knowledge within these narratives is part of decolonisation efforts. This critical viewpoint allows “different views of the present, the colonial past, and the pre-colonial past to emerge or become visible” (Virtanen, Olsen & Keskitalo, 2021, p.12, as cited in Walter Mignolo, 2011). Decolonisation contributes to the possibility for Indigenous People to be able to “rewrite and reread” their history and their position in that history (L.T. Smith, 2021, p.31). Through self-determination, they can retell their own (his)stories and redefine what it means to be ‘indigenous’. In so doing, they take steps towards the decolonisation of their stories/knowledge. In turn, this creates the possibility for justice for historical wounds and healing.

2.2.2 Decolonisation and Education

My discussion of decolonisation relates specifically to knowledge- production, -integration and -transmission provided by the Pathfinders for Norwegian pupils. Since Indigenous studies “engages the politics of knowledge production, the politics of education and the indigenous politics of self-determination” (Nakata, Nakata, Keech & Bolt, 2012, p.123), decolonisation is part of Indigenous Studies (Olsen, 2016). Ergo, as a student of Indigenous Studies, it is part of my thesis. Marginalisation of Indigenous People generally results in a certain kind of knowledge production founded on Eurocentric and Euro-American values, beliefs and thinking (L.T. Smith, 2021). These values influenced colonial narrative practices and policies. Today, the Eurocentric overtone in educational policies and curricula globally remain (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Similarly, the Norwegian curricula in mainstream education and teacher education has been criticised for othering (Haugen, 2021).

Decolonisation of knowledge through education paves the way for ambiguity and multiplicity of knowledge(s), languages, perspectives and ways of being. It can help scholars and pupils/students reflect upon and understand the “conceptual limits of their own thinking” (Nakata et al., 2012, p.121). Some scholars are concerned with the way in which decolonisation has been viewed as placing the Indigenous and non-Indigenous or Western (coloniser/colonised) in a dichotomous relationship (Olsen, 2020; Nakata, 2002; Nakata et al., 2012). Perceiving the intersection of Indigenous and Western knowledges through this oppositional lens, limits critical thinking and fails to recognise the complexity of knowledge.

Additionally, polarisation can essentialise and simplify both positions which may also result in creating biases. Significantly, polarisation and essentialisation run the risk of overlooking the “internal variations and differences” within Indigenous knowledges and societies (Keskitalo, Rasmussen, Rajjo-Ravanti & Äärelä-Vihriälä, 2021).

Despite arguments claiming that Indigenous and Western knowledge systems are incompatible (Nakata, 2007), there are those that argue that the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and knowledges in education allows us to see the ways in which they are complementary (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). They are thus considered to be in a system of co-existence and relationality (Kuokkanen, 2007). This is a process in which Indigenous People learn to understand Western knowledge (but without rejecting their own knowledge) and non-Indigenous people learn to recognise the multiple worldviews and knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). This complementary approach requires a different educational system that respects the epistemological and pedagogical foundations of both (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). This increased emphasis on decolonisation and subsequent acknowledgement of Indigenous knowledges and education, has led to the revitalisation of Indigenous knowledges for Indigenous Peoples (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Moreover, it has advanced the indigenisation of institutions and majority education.

2.3 Agency, Structure and Transformation

Agency is the individual’s capacity to act, to influence their social world (or structure) (Sibeon, 1999). Whether agency takes precedence over structure or vice versa, and the capacity of the individual to influence or construct their social world or conversely be constructed by it, has been the source of scholarly debate for several decades (Howlett, 2010; Sibeon, 1999). While some scholars have considered agency and structure as distinct entities, there are others that consider them “mutually dependent”, existing only in relation to each other (Howlett, 2010, p.104). Their “relationality” can be considered “dialectic”, meaning that “their interaction is not reducible to the sum of structural and agential factors treated separately”. (Howlett, 2010, p.104, as cited in Hay, 2016). This also indicates that neither one is privileged over the other. Considering structure and agency as ‘relational’ rather than oppositional, mutually dependent rather than separate entities, is in keeping with decolonisation, Indigenous methodology and self-determination initiatives. A relational approach to structure and agency allows me to analyse the “interplay” (Howlett, 2010; Page & Petray, 2016;) between the Pathfinders’ agency and educational and governmental

structures in order to answer the research question. Furthermore, it appropriately emphasises a strengths-based approach (Page & Petray, 2016) to my discussion of the Pathfinders, providing a counterpoint to historic and continual deficit narratives which have characterised research about Indigenous Peoples and educational efforts (McCallum, Waller & Dreher, 2019).

For Indigenous Peoples, agency is an epistemological and ontological premise in which all living things have agency and are interconnected (Kuokkanen, 2000; Kwaymullina & Kwaymullina, 2010). However, in social sciences, agency can be described as “the capability of individual or collective actors to do something in the social realm, contributing to a process of “making and remaking [...] larger social and cultural formations” (Page & Petray, 2016, p. 89). Undertaking social action with the ambition to transform society is dependent upon “the capability of the individual to ‘make a difference’ to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events” (Giddens, 1984, p.14). The ability to ‘make a difference’ is contingent upon the actor being able to exercise some form of power that has the capacity for transformation (Giddens, 1984). Sibeon (1999) refers to this as “causal powers”. Effectively, anything that has “causal powers” are actors or agents. Actors can be organisations (such as central government departments, voluntary organisations, private firms, local government department, professional associations, trade unions, ...); communities (Page & Petray, 2016); and individuals (Page & Petray, 2016; Sibeon, 1999). Therefore, actors are aware that by taking action in the social realm, they do so in the context of power relations (Page & Petray, 2016).

“Colonial dispossession” of Indigenous children, land, culture and sovereignty has marginalised the “causal powers” of Indigenous People, restricting their political agency (Sissons, 2005). The resultant “historical distribution of resources and interests laid down structurally over time” has important consequences for the ways in which the influence of agency is enabled or constrained (Howlett, 2010, p.104). The repercussions of this historical dispossession is still felt today causing impediments to Indigenous Peoples’ access to resources and rights worldwide (Belier & Hays, 2020). Despite these restrictions limiting Indigenous Peoples’ room to manoeuvre (Belier & Hays, 2020), that is, their ability to have an impact or affect change, agency is still possible. Hence, Indigenous People (actors) engage in social action “through the very structures [such as schools/education] which constrain them” (Page & Petray, 2016, p.89). Unequal power relationships and access to resources

impacts the transformative capacity of agency (Howlett, 2010). Tensions or conflicts are therefore always present in the interplay between agency and structure.

2.4 Identity

Within theories of identity there are disputes between essentialists and non-essentialists. These distinctions were originally delineated by Stuart Hall in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (1990). Thinking about identity from an essentialist perspective means that there is some intrinsic and fundamental trait/aspect to that identity derived from a common origin or experience or both (Grossberg, 1996). Alternative identity constructions are thus posited as either negative or positive in relation to the essentialist identity. This results in the pursuit of the ‘authentic’ or ‘original’ aspect of that identity. It is also an either/or scenario, where the struggle over representations of identity takes place by replacing one “fully constituted, separate and distinct identity” with another (Grossberg, 1996, p.89).

The opposing theory of identity, known as constructivist, negates the possibility of identity being fully constituted, separate and distinct. Furthermore, the idea that authentic/original identities exist or that they derive from a “universally shared origin of experience” is rejected (Grossberg, 1996, p.89). Instead, identities are “always relational and incomplete, in process” (Grossberg, 1996, p.89). Identities are not fixed, but temporary and unstable and they are reliant upon relational differences that distinguish them from other identities. Hence, identities and their differences are multiple, because they are articulated by connecting these differences or fragments.

Within Sámi society there are conflicting identity articulations due to Norwegianisation and assimilation, but also because the Sámi are living in what is now Norway in the modern world. The identity spectrum starts with those who associate shame with being Sámi, to Norwegian youth who are extremely proud to call themselves Sámi. Bjørklund (2016) proposes that Sámi society today gravitates towards a constructivist approach to identity. This means that Sámi identity is socially constructed. Sámi ethnic identification in Norway is not a stand-alone entity. It operates in concert with the Norwegian cultural identity and the diversity that exists within the Sámi community. Following, an individual’s Sámi identity is not in opposition to the Norwegian, rather it is a way of expanding one’s identity (Bjørklund, 2016). The Sámi today have the flexibility to articulate their Sáminess in particular social situations, such as within political and social institutions, associations and events. Additionally, Sámi language, culture, food tradition and lifeways are

also multiple and different. Hence within the Sámi community, the way the Sámi experience their identity is related to these differences.

Yet, despite the diversity among the Sámi, as an ethnic group there are common traits and values which unit the group, distinguishing it from others (Berg-Nordlie, 2022; Hansen & Skaar, 2021). In a Sámi context there is an expectation that “to belong to the group one needs to have mastered several cultural competencies that are considered to make up the Sami ethnic profile” (Bjørklund, 2016, p.11), also called ethnic markers. The requirement for cultural competency in order to be Sámi supports an essentialist view. Hence, there is a “battle” between these two different theories of identity articulation about Sáminess (Bjørklund, 2016; Nystad, Spein, Balto & Ingstad, 2017).

Berg-Nordlie (2022) identifies four main cultural competencies that impact the reasons individuals identify as Sámi. These are: 1) knowing the language; 2) living with and of nature; 3) carrying the torch for Sámi artistry; and 4) having kinship ties. However, Berg-Nordlie (2022) shows that there is no easy answer to which cultural competency is more important and how much of each competency one needs to be accepted as a Sámi. Acceptance and belonging in a community vary between individuals and from community to community. In the battle for Sámi identity, the question for which there is no consensus remains: “what is the most important part of Sáminess? — one’s individual traits, or living and working in community and solidarity with coethnics?” (Berg-Nordlie, 2022, p.465).

2.5 The Cultural Interface and Sámi Identity and Diversity

The cultural interface is a way to conceptualise the decolonial space that exists in societies in which Indigenous and non-Indigenous people find themselves today. Nakata (2007) explains that the cultural interface is the “intersection of western and Indigenous domains” (p.9). Nakata (2007) elaborates saying that this space includes “histories, politics, economics, multiple and interconnected discourses, social practices and knowledge” (p.9). The interaction of these elements shapes our worldview and how we understand our reality. The knowledge we implicitly infer from this “intersection” is used to make sense and meaning of our lives (Nakata, 2007). Nakata (2002) also asserts that this is also the place where “we are active agents in our own lives” (p.285).

The cultural interface applies to all Indigenous Peoples whether living in cities or remotely/rurally (Nakata, 2002). Not only are the boundaries of this conceptual space blurred, but there are constant tensions within it. These tensions are caused by “the intersections of knowledges and discourses” (Nakata 2002, p.286). The tensions surrounding the

constructivist and essentialist understanding of Sáminess is one such discourse. Whilst these tensions cause constraints, Indigenous People still have agency to respond, to make decisions affecting their lives. They therefore can negotiate within this space, drawing on the same facilities they used to survive colonialism: resistance, adaptation and subversion, to name but a few. Although Indigenous agency is not thwarted by this space, the outcomes arising from the intersections of Western and Indigenous knowledges and discourses are unpredictable (Nakata, 2002).

Not only is the cultural interface a multi-lingual and multicultural space, it is also multi-layered and multi-dimensional (Olsen, 2018; Sollid & Olsen, 2019). Sollid and Olsen (2019) consider the cultural interface an appropriate concept to describe "the situation of many [Sámi] in the aftermath of decolonisation, assimilation and revitalisation" (p.33). For example, in the municipality of Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono where they conducted their research, there are not only Sámis and Norwegians but also Kvens. Hence families potentially have connections to all three groups, speak all three languages and self-identify as Norwegian, Kven and Sámi. At the same time, family-members may identify differently, some as Sámi, others as Norwegian or Kven (Bjørklund, 2016). In addition, they may feel that they are both Sámi, Kven and Norwegian, but then not fully Norwegian, or Sámi or Kven (Sollid & Olsen, 2019) or even somewhere in between. This allows for multiple subject positions and impacts the way a person identifies themselves and others, including which cultural markers they employ. Importantly, this negates the notion that a singular narrative or articulation of Sámi identity can represent the collective. Rather it reminds us that the collective is comprised of many and varied complex narratives (Olsen, 2018).

2.6 Self-determination, Agency and Identity Articulation

Self-determination is also about reclaiming Indigenous Peoples' right to self-definition, that is defining oneself and one's community. One way of enacting Sámi self-determination is through identity articulation. In terms of individual enactment of agency and identity, Dankertsen (2016) refers to the use of symbols, such as traditional Sámi clothing, the Sámi flag and ČSV (the slogan Čajet Sámi Vuoiŋŋa, Show Sámi Spirit) and the Sámi language, as a way of "performing Saminess" (Dankertsen, 2016). However, not all Sámi choose to articulate their identity by learning the Sámi language and wearing Sámi clothes. Instead, many Sámi employ different symbols, such as swearing or using certain Sámi expressions even though they are not a Sámi speaker per se. They also perform their Sáminess by, for example, spending time in nature and with one's family, going on boat trips, or recounting

stories told to them in their youth of the significance of certain places. Dankertsen (2016) explains this kind of articulation as awakening the once hidden fragments of Sámi culture from the past and incorporating it in a way that is meaningful to the individual in their everyday life (Dankertsen, 2016). However, in both Sámi and majority societies these everyday performances of Sáminess and articulations of identity are not always recognised to the same degree.

In Dankertsen's study of Lule and Marka Sámi communities in Northern Nordland, some Sámis are perceived as "political Samis" or "Sami elite" because they choose to articulate their Sáminess visibly using clothes and other symbols. Those Sámi who do not feel comfortable in visibly expressing their Sáminess in this way become invisible within the community (Dankertsen, 2016). The lack of validation of alternative articulations of Sámi identity from the dominant cultural expressions of Sáminess means that positions of privilege and oppression within Sámi communities exist. For Dankertsen (2016) however, these alternative performances of Sáminess reveal the fragmentation that colonisation has wrought on the Sámi due to loss of land, languages, traditional knowledge, and communities (p.23). In this particular community, Dankertsen describes a Sámi-Norwegian intercultural and decolonised space where the Sámi can perform their own sense of cultural belonging and identity in creative and dynamic ways. Significantly, they can reinvigorate the once hidden fragments of Sámi culture in a way that makes sense in their daily lives. In terms of my theoretical perspective, this means that despite the tensions of knowledge, symbols, language, memory, tradition ... at the interface of this Sámi-Norwegian community, Sámi individuals have agency to choose which fragments from the past to include in their present and their future so they can articulate their individual identity. This example illuminates the numerous and complex possibilities of narrative-identity articulation within the cultural interface.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical underpinnings that are relevant to my discussion of the Pathfinders testimonies. As the meeting ground for Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge, the cultural interface aligns with decolonisation efforts that do not see the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges as oppositional or hierarchical. Nor is it a place where one knowledge system can replace or undermine the other (Nakata, 2002). Rather, the cultural interface provides an alternative to dichotomous thinking; colonial-colonised, us-them, Sámi-Norwegian. It can be envisioned as a continuum of knowledge, culture and identity from both Indigenous and Western domains, from the past to

the present. Within this space Indigenous people have agency which can be harnessed to promote Indigenous futures. This includes Indigenous education.

3 Methodological Framework, Data and Ethics

My choice of methodologies was governed by the overarching concept of relationality. Rather than framing the chosen methodologies within simplistic, homogenous categories, Indigenous or non-Indigenous for instance, I have framed them as connected and complementary. This relational approach is in keeping with an Indigenous methodological paradigm (Keskitalo, et al., 2021) and is a fundamental principle of Indigenous self-determination and the indigenisation of education. So, in this chapter I present testimonio and decolonisation as two complementary approaches which strive to destabilise the traditional power imbalance between the researcher and participant, in order to elevate the participant's status. This power ratio is destabilised further as, from a decolonising point of reference/agenda, testimonio and decolonisation aim to challenge dominant Western or European epistemologies and ideologies. Therefore, my choice of methodologies and accompanying analytical process complements my ambition to decolonise myself and my research.

3.1 Decolonisation and Research

Given that I have presented decolonisation in the theory chapter I will not belabour the point here, except to emphasise that for Indigenous People the roots of research stem from colonisation (L.T. Smith, 2021) Through processes of othering, historical research practices informed by racial biology have objectified Indigenous Peoples – identified by research being done on or to Indigenous Peoples (L.T. Smith, 2021). Therefore, as a non-Indigenous researcher part of my responsibility has been to clearly show that my interactions with the Pathfinders is premised on collaboration; that is, research carried out *with* the Pathfinders.

Since Indigenous methodology(s) are concerned with decolonisation (Olsen, 2016; L.T. Smith, 2021) as a research practice and process, this means that “indigenous voices, perspectives, and interests” are the focus of this thesis (Olsen, 2018). Recognised as ‘knowledge-holders’ (Porsanger, 2004), the Pathfinders and their testimonies are centred in this thesis. Yet, they are not isolated in the centre, but interact with other knowledges whether they are Indigenous or not (Kuokkanen, 2007). Although the Pathfinders are not representative of Sámi knowledge in its totality, their role as a ‘Pathfinder’ gives them unique access to specific knowledge (Olsen, 2016) which I and other members of the Indigenous and

non-Indigenous Norwegian society subsequently lack. By means of social interaction (that is, the interview) involving active listening and conversation, I have been privy to some of this ‘special knowledge’.

3.2 Testimonio

Testimonio provides an “extended account of lives in context” (Thorjussen & Sisjord, 2020). These ‘accounts’ are first-person narratives or stories that create a “narrative of collective memory” (L.T. Smith, 2021, p.165). Originally testimonio stemmed from the Mestiz@/Indigenous group(s) of Latin America where it was used to “bear witness” to the colonial and political injustices these marginalised groups were encountering (Caxaj, 2015). Testimonio gives community members the opportunity to voice, represent and make sense of their history of oppression. It “claims authority through virtue of marginality and lived experience” (Caxaj, 2015, p.3). It is the Pathfinders “lived experiences” that allows me to explore my research question. Using lived experience as a qualitative research approach highlights the subjective aspects of human experience and social life (Given, 2008). It is an appropriate method since the shared lived experiences of Indigenous peoples globally—marginalisation, oppression and victims of progress—contributes to what makes them unique (Dahl, 2012; Kenrick & Lewis, 2004; Sissons, 2005). More importantly, it creates an opportunity for the Pathfinders to reflect upon and share their individual and collective experiences as a Pathfinder, which may prove cathartic.

Decolonisation and a major part of self-determination is about Indigenous peoples’ being able to tell *their* truth. I consider testimonio a suitable method that acknowledges this tradition of equating ‘truth’ with personal stories or lived experiences. As an approach testimonio aligns itself with decolonisation (Silva et al., 2021) and Indigenous methodology(s) (Olsen, 2016).

3.3 Approaching the Pathfinders

I did not have any criteria per se when it came to approaching the Pathfinders to be interviewed. All 65 Pathfinders from the start of the initiative in 2004 to the Spring of 2022 were suitable on account of their experience. I recognised early on, however, that it would be their willingness to participate in my study that would be the determining factor. This concern was based on conversations with Sámi friends and colleagues and literature explaining that the Sámi, one of the most researched Indigenous peoples in the world (Virtanen, Olsen & Keskitalo, 2021), are wary of research potentially suffering from ‘research-fatigue’ This

wariness also extends to Sámi institutions. Consultation is therefore an important aspect of Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination (Mörkenstam, Josefsen & Nilsson, 2016) and Indigenous methodologies (Chilisa, 2020). Therefore, my project was explained to the administrators of the SP initiative at SUAS to help facilitate the process of contacting current and past Pathfinders.

Subsequently, I decided that it would be beneficial to attend one of the Pathfinders visits to a high school in Rogaland in April 2022. This decision was based on the assumption that it would give me the opportunity to: firstly, introduce myself and my research personally to the Pathfinders – breaking the ice so to speak; secondly, establish some form of personal contact which would encourage their interest and participation in the proposed interviews and even provide me with other possible candidates for interviewing; and thirdly, gain a sense of what their visit entailed – the structure, the topics covered in their talk, visuals and videos used, their interaction with the pupils and teachers. This also meant contacting SUAS again to explain my intentions beforehand and ensure that there was no conflict.

3.4 Witnessing the Pathfinders

By witnessing the Pathfinders “in action” so to speak, I was able to experience their visit first-hand rather than read a report about it. I recognised that I lacked this important ‘piece’ of knowledge. As a result, I not only fulfilled the three assumptions stated above, but also ended up altering the interview process itself—specifically the questions I would ask. This meant that I could focus on questions that were more personal rather than functional. For example, instead of asking the Pathfinders to explain what they did, I could ask how they tweaked their presentations according to their interest areas or skill set? Some Pathfinders were particularly interested in the Sámi Parliament for instance, and therefore included that in their presentation. Others were musically adept, playing perhaps an instrument or joking for their audience. In a way, it helped me take a step towards an insider position. Interestingly, it also helped me clarify my topic: my focus was the *Pathfinders only* and not the pupils or the teachers' preparation of the pupils for their visit.

3.5 Pre-interview Preparation

As anticipated, there were hurdles firstly getting in contact with the Pathfinders and then secondly in getting responses from them. SUAS could not provide me with the Pathfinders personal contact information. However, one of SP initiative's advisors sent an email to all Pathfinders explaining my thesis and encouraging them to participate. I did not receive a blind

copy of this email. Furthermore, this email did not elicit any contact from any of the Pathfinders. In the end, I had to find the contact information of individual Pathfinders using social media and the Norwegian digital telephone catalogue. I used SMS or Facebook messenger to contact most of the Pathfinders. I evaluated that a text message was less intrusive and confronting than a phone call, allowing the recipient time to reflect before answering, as well as promoting a more immediate response than email. Contacts at UiT also provided me with one Pathfinder's email. In the end, I interviewed five Pathfinders (SP1-SP5) rather than the anticipated six. Having obtained my NSD/SIKT (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research) approval in August and written consent (see Appendix A) from the participants, interviews spanned a period of two weeks during September 2022.

“Relational accountability” (Virtanen et al., 2021, p.18 as cited in Shawn Wilson 2008) is an important approach to help reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and the researched. It can also be perceived as humanising myself and by extension the research process, which is in keeping with decolonisation (Silva et al., 2021). Hence, I endeavoured to maintain a professional yet friendly tone during the interviews and subsequent emails sent to the Pathfinders prior to completing my thesis. In addition, when one of the Pathfinders asked me to send them my interview guide, I did not hesitate as I felt that full disclosure was important to show respect for my participants and build trust.

3.6 Interviews and Data Integrity

Interviews are not spontaneous or organic social interactions – although they can include these elements. Rather they are “conversation[s] with a purpose” (Chilisa, 2020, p. 249). The interview process was semi-structured (see Interview Guide, Appendix B). The benefit of having a guide is that it not only provided me with a structure for the interview but the opportunity to collate similar data from all participants (Chilisa, 2020). This proved useful when comparing testimonies and looking for common themes and anomalies.

The interview guide contained 13 open-ended questions which provided the basis for our conversation. This guide explored their motivation for becoming a Pathfinder; a self-described account of their job and their experiences; self-assessment of their impact; exploration of perceived differences when visiting schools in Sámi dominant and non-dominant areas; impressions of the preparedness of the teachers/pupils at the schools; feedback about the SP initiative's role and structure; and lastly the impact of their experience on their identity. Additionally, a semi-structured interview guide provided me with the

flexibility to ask for further clarification to improve my understanding or explore a particular issue.

The interviews were internet-based using Microsoft TEAMS. Digital protection of the data was provided via UiT. Due to the pandemic, in which digital platforms have become normalised to some extent as a means of work and social interaction, online interviews were unproblematic for the Pathfinders. In fact, during a few interviews when difficulties with sound or the transcribing function occurred, the Pathfinders helped me by giving advice to try and solve the issue. The interviews were synchronous, varying in length from 40 mins to 1hr (average interview time 53 minutes) and were conducted in Norwegian.

3.7 Representation

Since 2004 there have been 67 Pathfinders, including the four Pathfinders that started this year. The five Pathfinders interviewed comprise 7.5% of the total number of Pathfinders. The Pathfinders are young adults between 18-25 (Länsman, 2014). My mapping of the Pathfinders, based on information available on the SP website shows that over 70% of the Pathfinders have been female. Over half have been selected from Troms and Finnmark (48), Nordland and Trøndelag have had equal representation (13 and 14 respectively) and Oslo has had two (2). Following, Northern Norway and Trøndelag have had greatest representation. Eastern Norway has had minimal representation and Southern and Western Norway none. These figures do not allow for dual representation: that is Pathfinders who identify with more than one city, county or region.

3.8 Analytical Strategies and Data Analysis

I used reflective thematic analysis as defined by Braun & Clarke (2006, 2019). Thematic analysis generates themes from the data. Themes are “stories about particular patterns of shared meaning across the dataset” (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p.592). Themes don’t simply “emerge” during analysis, they are identified by the researcher actively noticing patterns/themes, creating links between data sets, selecting themes that are interesting and then reporting on them (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Because thematic analysis is frequently employed by researchers but not necessarily identified as a specific method, Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the need for “clarity around process and practice of method” (p.7). As a qualitative method, reflexive thematic analysis “centr[es] researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and the importance of deep reflection on, and engagement with, data” (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p.593). Using this approach inductively with the Pathfinder

data, resulted in the following themes: representation, identity and diversity; knowledge; and the impact on the Pathfinders.

I discovered that this process is fluid and creative. I had to be flexible and consider if the data best suits the themes chosen and vice versa. One of the difficulties I found was that data can apply to several themes at once – this is particularly the case when trying to distinguish between expressions that illustrate diversity, identity and representation. Hence, I attempted to choose citations that best clarify or magnify the point. It is not, I have realised a perfect science. And although this is suggested when employing a reflective thematic analysis method and for that matter any qualitative method (Byrne, 2022), I see the potential for a different scholar to interpret and select thematic elements in completely different ways.

Despite my intention that this thesis honours the Pathfinders testimonies/stories, it is at the same time the medium by which they are presented, contextualised by my research question. Consequently, the Pathfinders stories are not presented in their entirety. I have selected and edited narrative evidence in order “to border [my] arguments” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.7). At the same time, I have tried to represent “... their own ways of thinking, feeling and interacting with the world” (L.T. Smith, 2021, p.31). Therefore, I have tried to foreground the Pathfinders’ stories and present what *they* say in relation to chosen themes. At all times it has weighed on me how to formulate the findings to ensure that I am presenting their words in the context of our conversation and not extrapolating so it will suit a particular thematic point. This has required repeated verification of my transcriptions, including checking Norwegian dictionaries, to help assure myself that I am representing them as accurately and honestly as possible. Consequently, I repeatedly revisited the data and reflected on it to increase reliability.

3.9 Bias, Reliability, Validity and the Research Question

Qualitative methods allow for greater possibility of discovering something in the data that I hadn’t previously anticipated (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It allowed me the flexibility to work from the bottom up or inductively. I believe this helped me to shed some of my own biases with relation to the research question. For instance, initially I was preoccupied with uncovering the racial discrimination experienced by the Pathfinders. However, through the interview process I discovered that their experiences as a Pathfinder were overwhelmingly positive, outweighing any uncomfortable experiences of discrimination that they did have. Consequently, in order to maintain the relationship and integrity of the information granted me in the interviews, I reflected upon how I could best represent their stories and what weight

I should give discrimination in my thesis. This resulted in a shift of thematic focus to representation, identity, diversity and knowledge as the means used by the Pathfinders to combat stereotypes and discrimination. It also led to my concern with embodiment and the impact what the Pathfinders do has on them personally. In turn, this influenced my theoretical choices, notably the focus on agency and identity articulation. My analytical approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019) was informed by my understanding that reflexivity is fundamentally tied to methodology and ethics. As a criterion of qualitative analysis and Indigenous methodologies, reflexivity provided me with a technique to help me consider my own biases and limitations. In combination, these choices have provided tools which help me answer the research question and increase the validity and reliability of my findings.

3.10 Anonymity

Anonymity means that my participants are not able to be identified. So, in my introductory email I explained my research, clearly stating that the interview would be recorded and that all personal information would be made anonymous. This was necessary in order to obtain the participants informed consent and build their confidence in my abilities as a reliable, trustworthy researcher. The Pathfinders are therefore referred to by codes (SP1, SP2, SP3, SP4, SP5). A precis of our conversation was sent to all participants so they could verify the content, reflect on their comments, provide feedback (Porsanger, 2004) or withdraw them entirely should they so desire. Upon completion of my thesis all names have been deleted.

The Pathfinders are public figures. They are, to quote SP2, “superstars”, at least within the Sámi community. Given the nature of the “job” of being a Pathfinder they are frequently interviewed by the media (NRK Sápmi, NRK Troms og Finnmark, Adressa, Journalisten, High North News, Nea Radio, NordSalten, Sandefjord Blad...), they speak at many and varied public forums (Markomeanu festival, 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia in Italy, Holocaust Centre ...) and they are particularly active on social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Tik Tok). And of course, the SP website contains vlogs and information on each year’s Pathfinders (since 2017) and the Pathfinders themselves write blogs for the website (since 2019). Hence it is not difficult to do a google search on the last decade’s Pathfinders to find out more about them. Consequently, the Pathfinders are particularly visible within the Sámi community.

The Pathfinders’ public status and media exposure was and is an important consideration, particularly in relation to anonymity. When asked about whether they wanted to remain anonymous in this thesis three of the five Pathfinders replied yes. Despite two

Pathfinders being willing to have themselves recognised in this thesis, I have decided to provide anonymity by not mentioning the specific year they worked or their gender. In addition, when I discuss my findings in Chapter 6, I have loosely specified which part of Norway the Pathfinders are from. I am aware, however, that by ‘reading in-between the lines’ it may well be possible with certain comments to make connections. As a way of providing additional anonymity, I also use the gender-neutral pronouns ‘they/them/their’ to help prevent recognition and eliminate potential bias in connection to gender representation. This usage is in keeping with an inclusive research practice (L.T. Smith, 2021) and is also commonly used within Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies today (Berendzen, 2017; Wayne, 2005).

3.11 Limitations

Despite originally wanting to interview six Pathfinders, I do not believe that one extra interview would have an impact on my findings. However, I realise that I could have included gender representation as part of my discussion and theoretical perspective. Gender is potentially relevant due to the disproportionate number of male Pathfinders in comparison to female during the last 18 years. I am equally aware of the lack of inclusion of intersectionality in Indigenous Studies (Olsen, 2018). However, as this thesis is, to my knowledge, the first academic research to present the Pathfinders, my area of focus is introductory, concentrating on the general impact of their role.

It is also conceivable that I could have considered the data from alternative theoretical perspectives. But I believe that the choices I have made promote a strength-based approach that does not diminish the contribution the individual Pathfinders make. Instead, any implied criticism is directed towards the overarching structures within which the Pathfinders work.

3.12 Summary

In this section I have shown transparency in my methods and explained my reflexive practice and ethical considerations. I have attempted to decentre myself and critically examine my own power position and intersectionality in relation to the research material and to the Pathfinders. This has demanded a continual cycle of reflexivity. As a human being, it is impossible not to be morally and emotionally affected by the stories I have been told. However, as a researcher I am obliged to present the facts, considering different points of view, trying to consider what it is I do not see, to present a nuanced understanding. In essence I have strived for critical distance to appear ‘trust-worthy’ (Johnson, 2014; Olsen, 2016,

p.42). Additionally, as a student of Indigenous Studies I have endeavoured to show respect and enact a relational approach in my contact with five young Sámi adults. From a decolonial point of view I have tried to disrupt my Western-Eurocentric bias by engaging in a cycle of reflexivity. None of these tasks have been easy or straight forward. Ultimately, my methodological choices and my methods have worked towards “mak[ing] what is presumed to be ‘other,’ visible and valued” (Silva et al., 2021, p. 389). I do this in this thesis by sharing with you the stories entrusted to me by the Pathfinders.

4 Making the Invisible Visible

This section maps the political journey of the Sámi people from an invisible minority to a visible Indigenous People. It presents a brief explanation of how the status of Indigenous Peoples has influenced educational policies and reforms, which in turn have allowed for the Sámi to have greater self-determination. Self-determination is presented within the context of Indigenous education. Indigenous education is part of a larger discourse on decolonisation (Kuokkanen, 2000; Olsen, 2016). In Norway, Indigenous education includes both the teaching of Sámi language, culture and methodology to Sámi pupils in Sámi schools. In addition, it provides for Sámi language learning for Sámi pupils in Norwegian schools (based on the number of Sámi pupils that desire it). More recently it also involves teaching majority-pupils about Sámi history, culture, societal life and rights. As has been shown in the introductory chapter, the need to increase majority pupils’ knowledge about the Sámi is due to the existence of a knowledge-gap which occurs at all levels of the Norwegian educational system. This blindspot leads to stereotypes which contribute to continuing discrimination and hate speech towards the Sámi. Within this context, the Pathfinders function as a stand-alone act of self-determination embodied by Sámi youth. Providing Indigenous education to Norwegian majority pupils, the Pathfinders are then positioned within a pedagogical initiative striving to provide a counterbalance to existing stereotypes and discrimination of the Sámi people.

4.1 Positioning of the Sámi in Norwegian Society

The Sámi are the internationally and nationally recognised Indigenous People of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Their traditional territory, known as Sápmi/ Sábme/Saepmie or Samiland, extends across the northern reaches of Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula in Russia. Today, this territory is divided by these four state borders. Therefore, Sápmi also connotes an “imagined community” that is not confined to geographical borders

(Balto & Østmo, 2012). The Norwegian Sámi are diverse in terms of language, culture and traditions, ways of living and group identification (Sollid & Olsen, 2019). In Norway, there are three official Sámi languages. The diversity of Sámi groups within Sámi society are demarcated by geography, language, traditions and identities, for instance, Sea Sámis who live along the coast, Marka Sámis who are closer to the north-eastern Swedish border located in forest and mountain areas (Hætta, 2010), and Reindeer-herding Sámis located in inner Sápmi (Sollid & Olsen, 2019). In addition, there are also Urban Sámis who reside in cities both inside and outside of Sapmi (Dankertsen, Berg-Nordlie & Winsvold, 2022). There are approximately 55 000 Sámi in Norway who live in 10 municipalities that have chosen to identify as Sámi: Karasjok, Kautokeino, Nesseby, Porsanger, Tana, Kåfjord, Lavangen, Tysfjord, Snåsa and Røyrvik. Whilst the Sámi are the majority in some municipalities, such as Kautokeino and Karasjok, this is not the case for all (Eriksen, 2018a).

The Sámi are the only recognised Indigenous People in Europe (Keskitalo, Virtanen & Olsen, 2021). As an ‘Indigenous People’ the Sámi have the right to self-determination, which means that they can make decisions about cultural, political, social and economic matters that concern them and their territory (UNDRIP, 2008, Article 3). For Indigenous Peoples globally, self-determination is vital for their well-being and survival. This is due to their shared experience of “subjugation, marginalization, dispossession [of land], exclusion or discrimination” (Kenrick & Lewis, 2004, p.5), whether past or present. These shared experiences are a consequence of unequal power relations which have placed their linguistic, social and cultural development in peril.

Since World War II international instruments have been developed to ensure Indigenous Peoples’ survival and cultural continuity. These instruments outline the rights of Indigenous Peoples and consequently the rights upon which Indigenous self-determination should be based. They are the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO C169, 1989) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2008). These instruments build on human rights agreements from 1966, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC) (Anaya, 2009; (Mörkenstam et al., 2016). International instruments are subjected to ratification or implementation by states/countries. However, the way these instruments are implemented or interpreted by the countries in which the Sámi live varies considerably (de Costa, 2015; Berg-Nordlie, 2022). National laws, constitutions, policies and institutions both delimit and

promote the extent and impact of Indigenous Peoples' right to self-determination (Anaya, 2009).

Norway has ratified all the instruments mentioned above in addition to the UN 1989 International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the 1992 Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities (UNMRD) and the European Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM) (in force in 1999). These international conventions and declarations are signed in a spirit of good faith, meaning that the state intends to put measures in place that align with the rights the instruments specify. In 1988 the protection and development of the Sámi language(s)—North, Lule and South Sámi—culture and society were added to the Norwegian constitution. Paragraph 108² of the constitution obliges the state to ensure that the Sámi can protect and develop their language, culture and societal life. In response to this inclusion and strengthened by domestic pressure by the Sámi themselves, the Sámi parliament was established in 1989. The Sámediggi or Sámi parliament is an official institution that protects, promotes and represents the Sámi people and their concerns nationally and internationally (Henriksen, 2008). It provides the Sámi people with political representation, contributes to policymaking through various government bodies and processes and has some decision-making authority within Sápmi (Mörkenstam, et al., 2016). The Sámi Parliament has symbolic, political and legal significance and is an important mechanism for Sámi self-determination.

In 1992 the Sámi Act was introduced, which specifies that the Norwegian and Sámi language are of equal status and worth (§ 1–5) (Sameloven, 2022). In 1997 at the official opening of the Sámi Parliament, King Harold V recognised the Sámi has having equal status with Norwegians. The King stated that the “Norwegian State is established upon the territory of two peoples”. And he apologised to the Sámi for the injustices inflicted upon them by the Sate’s Norwegianisation policy (Det Norske Kongehus, 1997). Given this combination of symbolic gestures and political and legal measures, it would appear that the status and rights of the Sámi in Norway is understood and accepted. Unfortunately, what is understood at one level does not always filter down and become part of the national understanding at all levels of civil society.

Norwegian society today is multicultural. Most Norwegians, however, typically understand the concept ‘multicultural’ to mean the influx of migrants, particularly Muslims (Olsen et al., 2017; Osler & Lybæk, 2014) —not the Sámi nor Norway’s official national

minority groups (Kvens/Norwegian Finns (people of Finnish descent in Northern Norway), Jews, Forest Finns, Roma and Romani people/Taters). Reasons for this positioning within mainstream Norwegian society are complex. One possible contributing factor is the lack of knowledge about the significance of the Sámi's status and their rights as an Indigenous People, nationally and internationally. This knowledge-gap is coupled with general perceptions that the Sámi only live in the North of Norway (Nord Trøndelag and Troms and Finnmark) and a lack of understanding of the diversity that exists within the Sámi community (Olsen et al., 2017). This absence of knowledge has been enhanced by the general invisibility of the Sámi in historical accounts and the Norwegian nationalist movement of the 1800s (Berg-Nordlie, 2022).

Historical national racialisation practices and policies which devalued the Sámi (and Kvens), depicting them as not equal to the national majority have resulted in 'historical wounds' (Chakrabarty, 2007). These wounds are felt as shame, pride, awe and aversion and are expressed in the way in which the Sámi (national minorities) and the Norwegian national majority understand themselves (Eriksen, 2021, p. 110). As Berg–Nordlie (2021) explains, many Sámi do not want to identify as Sámi. In tandem with this is the persistent narrative of 'us' and 'them' in the majority Norwegian psyche. Where 'us' or the Norwegian 'we', also known as the 'ethnic Norwegian', means 'white', and everyone else is the 'other' (Svendsen, 2013; Osler & Lybæk, 2014; Gjerpe, 2021). This understanding is further problematised when one considers that the Sámi are unique, compared with Indigenous Peoples in other parts of the globe—because they are white (Dankertsen, 2019).

4.2 The Development of Sámi Education

Recognition of the pivotal role schools played historically in the Norwegianisation (Norway's assimilation policy) of the Sámi is well documented (e.g. Gjerpe 2021; Minde, 2003). The goal of Norwegianisation was homogeneity: one territory, one language, one culture. In the 1880s, teachers in schools in traditional Sámi districts (Sápmi) were not allowed to use Sámi as the language of instruction. This practice became formalised in 1936 with the Elementary School Act. This Act completely prohibited the use of any Sámi language in schools. It meant that the Sámi were "to discard their language, change their attitude with respect to their fundamental values and get rid of their whole Sami identity" (Minde, 2003, p.76).

Norwegianisation was part of the nation's drive to develop industry and modernise; to promote cultural unity and a national identity in response to a perceived need to defend the nation's borders. Ideologically speaking, Social Darwinism and scientific racism were

influential factors that not only promoted artificial hierarchies between humans but aimed at elevating and civilising Indigenous Peoples (Hansen & Olsen, 2013; Kortegangas, 2017). Officially Norwegianisation ceased after World War II, but practices continued well into the 1980s (Minde, 2003).

The period after World War II to the present day has been described as a gradual “thaw of Norwegian politics towards the Sámi” (Broderstad, 2022, p.54). However, after World War II the Sámi were effectively invisible, having “little or no place” (Olsen & Sollid, 2022, p.29) in Norwegian society, the curriculum and national schools. The Labour government’s focus at the time was building a welfare state to minimise inequality, concentrating on health, social issues and education. Despite this effort, “Sámi culture became associated with poverty and incompatible with development and good standards of living” (Broderstad, 2022 p.59 as cited in Minde, 2005). The diversity in Sámi society was reduced to “a more or less monocultural reindeer-herding community” (Olsen, 2020, p. 29). And the Sámis were positioned within majority society as “a Sámi-speaking part of the Norwegian population” (Broderstad, 2022, p. 60). These associations about the Sámi still exist within majority Norwegian society. Despite earlier attempts to reform the school system in favour of recognition of Sámi children’s right to education based on the same principles that majority children were entitled to, it wasn’t until 1967 that education in Sámi and as a school subject (that is, to learn about the Sámi language) became possible in two majority- Sámi areas (Broderstad, 2022, p.60). However, this had very little effect due to the government’s centralisation policy which closed smaller schools forcing Sámi pupils to attend Norwegian public schools where the curriculum did not cater for Sámi language learning (Broderstad, 2022 p.60, as cited in Lund 2003, p.34-35). Later the Primary School Act of 1969 allowed parents to claim Sámi language education as a right if it was their mother-tongue. But this Act was altered in 1976 to apply only to children in Sámi districts (Broderstad, 2022, as cited in Lund, 2003, p.36).

The Sámi had to wait eighteen years before the Sámi language could be used as the language of instruction for primary school children in Sámi dominant areas and as a subject (Broderstad, 2022, as cited in NOU 2019: 23, p. 77). The changes that developed were facilitated by the Council of Sámi Education and Sámi mobilisation via an amendment to the Education Act (1985).

Initially, when the government set up the Council of Sámi education in 1975 it had very little authority beyond publishing textbooks in Sámi (Broderstad, 2022). In the 1980s,

conflict between the Sámi and the government over the proposed hydroelectric power station on the Alta River generated national and international attention. Questions concerning the treatment of the Sámi in Norway and their rights were raised, requiring action (Broderstad, 2014). Consequently, the Sámi Parliament was established in 1989. Interestingly, it was The Council of Sámi education which was to have the greatest initial impact on education.

The Council advocated for the recognition of the importance of the connection between Sámi ethnic identity and social and cultural conditions as a prerequisite for learning. Understood as “a population with their own societal life” (Broderstad, 2022, p.60, as cited in Lund, 2003), the Sámi were able to influence education. This was to be seen in the 1987 national curriculum (M87). The Council also played a pivotal role in the amendment of the Sámi Act in 1990 in which the Sámi and Norwegian languages became equal (Broderstad, 2022) and the Sámi Act for Primary School in the same year which established Sámi language administrative areas in six municipalities in Sápmi. Despite these schools promoting and providing education in and about the Sámi language, ensuring its relevance and longevity, the curriculum implemented in these schools and the resources used were still that of mainstream Norwegian education. This was to change in 1997 with the development of a Sámi curriculum.

The development of a Sámi curriculum (L97S) for Sámi pupils was first realised in 1997. L97S provided education for Sámi pupils in Sámi schools in their mother tongue (Broderstad, 2022). Arguably this shift is in part a response to the recognition of the Sámi as one of Norway’s official languages (1992) and the inclusion in the Norwegian Sámi constitution and law that Norway is founded on two peoples (1997). These changes related to growing pressure from the International Indigenous Peoples movement, in which Norway’s Sámi played a pivotal role (Minde, 2008). According to Olsen et al. (2017) Norway’s ratification of ILO C169 (1990) which recognised the Sámi’s status as an Indigenous People, became manifest in L97S and its successor LK06S (2006). This is also the case with LK20S (2020). These curricula enabled Sámi education for Sámi pupils based on Sámi language, perspectives, premises, interests and concepts. The development of the Sámi curriculum is a collaboration between the Sámi Parliament and Norwegian educational authorities (Sollid & Olsen, 2019). It is thus an instance of relational self-determination.

The development of a Sámi curriculum has been described as an “expression of Norway’s move from assimilation, marginalisation and multiculturalist tolerance to an explicit recognition of the needs of Sámi students and a Sámi community” (Olsen & Sollid,

2022a, p. 30). It helps contribute to ongoing processes of Sámi revitalisation and self-determination. This development indicates an evolving recognition of the symbolic and real significance of Norway's Indigenous Peoples by the State and their right to self-determination; culminating in an educational system that is increasingly culturally sensitive to the Sámi (Olsen & Sollid, 2022b). As a result of greater political participation and increasing awareness of Sámi perspectives, rights and interests, the Sámi are negotiating their way "into" Norway's educational system (Falch, Selle & Strømsnes, 2016, p.136).

4.3 Mainstreaming: Indigenising the Norwegian Curriculum and School

Since 1997 a Sámi curriculum has been created in tandem with the national curriculum. However, both the Sámi curriculum and the Norwegian curriculum are governed by the values and principles located in the national "Core curriculum" which reflects the contents of the Education Act. The national Core curriculum reflects the epoch's social and political concerns and imperatives. Evaluation of previous and existing curricula and textbooks reveals that there have been three strategies which govern the way the Norwegian curricula have handled Sámi and Indigenous related themes. As already discussed above, the first of these was invisibility or omission. However, with the increasing recognition of the rights of the Sámi as a minority, the main strategy of M74, M87, L97 and LK06 has been one of inclusion (Olsen & Andreassen, 2017). Recognition of the multicultural makeup of Norwegian society can be seen in L97. In this curriculum, the Sámi were seen as one of many minorities within Norwegian society. In 2006, the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion (LK06) presented an intercultural perspective (Olsen et al., 2017). Focus included intercultural communication and democracy and citizenship. Yet, none of these earlier versions of the Core curriculum mentioned the Sámi as an Indigenous People (Olsen, 2020).

This was rectified with LK20 which was introduced over a period of three years, 2020-2023. LK20 formally acknowledges the Sámi's status as an Indigenous People which provide for Indigenous rights to language and cultural perpetuity. ILO C169 is specifically mentioned in LK20 (section About the core curriculum) and the Sámi's status as an Indigenous People is explicit. This inclusion responds to local and global trends of increased recognition of Indigenous rights to education (Olsen, 2020), decolonisation and indigenisation.

4.4 The New Curriculum (LK20)

In a Norwegian context, the current curriculum (LK20) is an example of mainstreaming. This is the first time an “Indigenous perspective” has been introduced into the Core curriculum. LK20 is being phased in over a period of three years, 2020-2023. It incorporates diversity, inclusion, representation and research as primary focus areas. It aims to integrate Indigenous and minority perspectives and promotes a cross-curricular approach which is seen by some scholars as a means of challenging racism as well as working toward a more just and equal society (Osler & Lybaek, 2014). The Core curriculum directly connects learning about Sámi cultural heritage as equally as important and valuable as Norwegian cultural heritage. This is made clear in Section 1.3. Identity and cultural diversity which states:

Sami cultural heritage is part of Norway's cultural heritage. Our shared cultural heritage has developed throughout history and must be carried forward by present and future generations.

This section also stipulates that “pupils shall gain insight into the Indigenous Sámi people's history, culture, societal life and rights” and the “diversity and variation in Sámi culture and societal life”. The emphasis on diversity within Sámi culture and society is important in order to counterbalance the historically manufactured and dominant simplistic perception that all Sámi are reindeer-herders. So, LK20 promotes intercultural understanding and explicitly encourages the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and themes in Norwegian education (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020; Olsen et al., 2017).

The Core curriculum also frames learning about a country's Indigenous Peoples as an important part of democratic processes. Section 1.6 Democracy and participation, explains that “The indigenous-people perspective is part of the pupils' education in democracy. All the participants in the school environment must develop awareness of minority and majority perspectives and ensure that there is room for collaboration, dialogue and disagreement” (MER, 2017). As a result, teacher education and teachers in the classroom have an obligation and the responsibility of including Sámi content and perspectives in all subjects for all pupils, not simply those institutions or schools where Sámi studies or pupils exist. “Teachers have a particularly large responsibility for the formation of democratic citizens who shall have knowledge for and knowledge about Sámi society” (MER, 2017). According to Olsen, et al. (2017) this means that teachers, schools and educational policies are important contributors to Sámi revitalisation efforts.

In effect, LK20 recognises the interrelatedness of Norway's two peoples and the social, political and historical processes that constitute the relationship between Norwegian and Sámi - colonial and Indigenous. In the spirit of decolonisation, this relationship is not dichotomous but intertwined and complex. It acknowledges the assimilation policies of the past as well as the historical and present-day existence of Sámi resistance and processes of revitalisation.

4.5 Summary

The public-school system is an apparatus that promotes and perpetuates ideological and political norms (Andreassen & Olsen, 2020; Leitch, 2010; L.T. Smith, 2021). These norms are found within educational policies which have historically reflected the needs and culture of the majority (Sollid & Olsen, 2019). In turn, these policies create a domino-effect that influences curriculum (Olsen et al., 2017; Sollid & Olsen, 2019), then teacher education, followed by teachers, textbooks and finally pupils. Policies mirror national and global political and social concerns which change over time. As this chapter has shown, this has directly or indirectly impacted the Sámi people.

Despite schools being the principal vehicle for the transmission and reproduction of language, culture and ideology (L.T. Smith, 2021), the Norwegian Sámi through mainstreaming have inverted these colonial tendencies into attributes to meet their own objectives of self-determination and decolonisation. The pursuit of self-determination for Indigenous Peoples is about attaining legal and political justice for past and present injustices and deprivations (Áhrén, 2016). The development of Indigenous education, described in this chapter, has shown that historical policies and practices of Sámi invisibility within the Norwegian educational system have evolved in step with international Indigenous rights' development, supported by policies of inclusion and multiculturalism, towards decolonisation and indigenisation (Gjerpe 2017; Olsen et al. 2017, Olsen, 2020; Olsen and Andreassen 2018).

5 The Institutionalisation of the Sámi Pathfinders

This chapter presents the institution behind the SP initiative in order to frame it within this thesis's discourse of self-determination and decolonisation. It attempts to present the structure that supports and prepares the Pathfinders, as well as outline the requirements expected of a Pathfinder and their presentation. In this descriptive chapter I used publicly accessible information on the SP initiative. This took the form of two main documents: the 2007 evaluation report by Statskonsult¹ and the 2014 ten-year Jubilee publication by former advisor to the Pathfinders, Risten Rávná Länsman. The SK Report is both descriptive and evaluative. It describes what the Pathfinder visit entails based on observation of three visits. In addition, it evaluated the pilot project “the Sámi Pathfinders”. The aim of the evaluation was firstly to see if the pilot project was a worthwhile means of influencing the knowledge and attitudes of Norwegian youth about the Sámi. Secondly it considered how well run the SP initiative had been as a research project. My own experience of attending a Pathfinder presentation at a school in Rogaland also informs this chapter and supplementary information from the SP and government websites. SUAS has confirmed that there have not been any other government evaluations of the initiative. They also acknowledged that they have carried out some “small” internal assessments since 2007 (M. Kvernmo, personal communication, January 9, 2023).

5.1 Sámi University of Applied Sciences

The Sámi allaskuvla/Samisk høgskole/Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino is the administrative organisation that has the fiscal and managerial responsibility for the Pathfinders. They are also responsible for preparing them academically so they can fulfil their role. SUAS is a Sámi institution established in 1989 by the Norwegian Ministry of Education. Whilst this is not the first higher education institution to offer Sámi language education, it was the first *Sámi* educational institution to provide Sámi students with higher education in a Sámi language (Thingnes, 2019).

As previously addressed in Chapter 3, Indigenous language loss through colonial practices and policies means that for Indigenous Peoples language and education go hand in hand. This is particularly the case for SUAS as it is “one of few institutions of higher education worldwide that mainly operates in an Indigenous language” (Thingnes, 2019,

¹ The responsibility and function of Statskonsult has now been transferred to the Norwegian Government Agency for Financial Management (DFØ),

p.153). SUAS is located in Kautokeino, a majority-Sámi area where most of the population is Sámi, speaks Sámi, and where Sámi is the main language in municipal services, school and the health sector. Kautokeino is also home to other significant Sámi institutions, such as NRK Sámi radio and the Department of Education. Northern Sámi is the dominant language. Hence, SUAS's operative and educational language is also Northern Sámi (SUAS; Thingnes, 2019).

SUAS is an instance of Indigenous self-determination as it provides the possibility for the Sámi to manage and provide educational offerings according to the needs of Sámi society, language and culture. These offerings include, teacher education for Sámi schools, journalism, Sámi Language and Literature, Duodji (Sámi Handicraft and Applied Arts/Fine Art), and reindeer husbandry (Thingnes, 2019). In combination with research these programmes strive to strengthen the development of Sámi society by safeguarding and developing “the Sámi language, culture, land, and traditional ways of living” (SUAS).

Today, SUAS is not the only Sámi institution of higher education in Norway to offer education that strives to protect and promote Sámi culture, language and society (other examples include, UiT The Arctic University of Norway and Nord University). Since SUAS combines “traditional knowledge with scientific” knowledge (Thingnes, 2019, p.156), it can therefore be viewed as one of the higher educational institutions in Norway that actively decolonises knowledge. Significantly it is this institution which is the home of the Pathfinders.

5.2 The Scope of the Pilot Pathfinder Project

The principal objective of the Sámi Pathfinders is to present knowledge about Sámi society and culture (*forhold*) to youth throughout Norway in order to influence their attitudes towards the Sámi (SK Report, 2007). However, initially the initiative focused on schools within Sápmi and neighbouring areas. This was because a change in attitudes towards the Sámi was perceived to be greatest in these areas compared to areas where the Sámi did not traditionally live (SK Report, 2007, p.6). Effectively, discrimination was not considered “such a big problem” in the “South”. During the project's trial period the target group for the project was clarified and extended from a three-year project to four. The initiative's objective was clarified: “to inform non-Sámi youth about Sámi language, culture and society” in areas where the Sámi have traditionally been present and areas where they have not (SK Report, 2007, p.6).

5.3 Structural Arrangement of the Pathfinder Initiative

Described as a “partnership” between SUAS and the Norwegian government (Länsman, 2014), the SP initiative is financed by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD) (previously called the Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, KMD). The budget provided by KDD has grown from 800 000 kroner in 2004 to 4,162 million kroner in 2022. Each Pathfinder receives a stipend; currently 220 000 kroner (SP website). Costs in relation to travel and accommodation are covered by the funding given to SUAS. SUAS has two-three employees that support the Pathfinders, an advisor and a coordinator.

Employed for a tenure of one academic year (September-June), the Pathfinders’ tailor-made course is “intensive” (Länsman, 2014). This course includes two units: Sámi Culture and Society and Presentation Skills (SP website). The course extends over both Autumn and Spring semesters. The Pathfinders therefore have exams or obligatory assignments to complete during both semesters. Initially, only the unit on Sámi Culture and Society totalling 30 study points was offered (Länsman, 2014). Currently the course-load is 60 study points, equating to one full academic year at bachelor level. The Pathfinders are taught by specialists in their respective fields. These fields are diverse and range from Sámi literature, History and Politics to Duodji, Religion, Reindeer herding and cultural understanding (SK Report, p.45). In order to provide this high level of expertise, SUAS invites guest lecturers from other tertiary institutions (E.G. Broderstad, personal communication, February, 9, 2023). The lectures are given in either Sámi, Norwegian or English.

Since its inception, SUAS has always focused on honing the Pathfinders’ presentation skills. However, it was the SK evaluation (2007, p.21) that highlighted the importance of preparing the Pathfinders to tackle “difficult” or “uncomfortable” situations. The report noted that these situations happened especially during visits to schools in the North. Despite the Pathfinders being informed not to promote any political opinions during their visits (SK Report, 2007), controversial topics can come up and may well be political. For instance, questions about rights can be a controversial topic creating conflict between the Sámi and the majority society in the North (SK, 2007, p.46). Currently, SUAS includes training on how to handle these situations. In addition, either the SUAS coordinator or advisor accompanies the Pathfinders when they visit schools in Northern Norway (the counties of Troms and Finnmark and Nordland).

5.4 Criteria and Recruitment

The criteria for the selection of the Pathfinders have remained relatively stable since its inception. SUAS determines the applicants' criteria, who is to be interviewed and the final selection. According to their website, a Pathfinder needs to be “willing to talk to Norwegian youth and teach them about Sámi society”. In addition, personal traits such as engagement, the ability to work with others, storytelling skills and creativity are emphasised. They must also be prepared to talk about their own life and background as a Sámi. Applicants cannot be older than 25 years and are expected to have attained their high school certificate or have at least 5 years study or work experience. Whilst not originally a criterion (SK Report, 2007), today the Pathfinders must be willing to use social media actively. By contrast, they are not required to be Sámi speakers. It is considered advantageous if they have their driver's license.

Recruitment of the Pathfinders takes the form of advertisements on websites. My research indicates that these outlets include the Sámi Pathfinders, SUAS, the Sámi Parliament, County websites and Sámi digital newspapers. Naturally the Pathfinders also promote the initiative via their school-visits. Once selected, the four new Pathfinders sign a contract with SUAS. In July each year, the newly selected Pathfinders are officially revealed at Sámi festivals, either, Riddu Riddu, in Gáivuotna/Kåfjord in Troms and Finnmark (see <https://riddu.no/en>) or at Márkomeannu in Gállogieddi in Nordland, which is considered “part of the Norwegian side of Sápmi” (see <http://www.markomeannu.no/no/hjem/>). This occasion is attended by representatives from the Sámi Parliament, SUAS and the government.

5.5 Benefits of Being a Pathfinder

The website promotes the SP initiative as developing the applicant's personal and professional skill set whilst simultaneously contributing to society. This is framed as “an intense and unforgettable year of study, providing unparalleled knowledge and experience which develops skills attractive to future employers”. Furthermore, assurance is given to the applicants that by participating in the SP initiative they will make “an enormous contribution to increasing knowledge about the Sámi for many young Norwegians— something which contributes to reducing prejudice and bullying”.

5.6 The Travel Schedule

The Pathfinders travel to high schools throughout Norway over a six-month period (November to May). They visit Norwegian schools rather than Sámi schools. Originally three

Pathfinders were contracted annually. The SK Report (2007) recommended this be increased to six to allow for sickness and other eventualities. This would also prevent the Pathfinders from presenting alone. During the pilot project's final year "the government increased this to four" (Länsman, 2014). Having a fourth Pathfinder meant that they could also visit higher education institutions in addition to high schools (Länsman, 2014). This increase also resulted in the Pathfinders travelling in pairs; enabling the Pathfinders to travel every week (Länsman, 2014). In practice this means that each pair of Pathfinders visits schools every other week.

Schools or teachers book a visit via the SP website using an online form. These requests are then processed and coordinated by SUAS. The Pathfinders are consulted about their travel preferences which is incorporated into the schedule. Which schools are prioritised and how the schedule is divided between counties and Pathfinders is ultimately decided by SUAS. A general overview of their schedule is available on the SP website to help schools plan their visit. This general overview does not include which Pathfinders will be presenting nor does it list which schools will be visited. Yet what it does show is that out of a total of 18 active travelling weeks this year, the Pathfinders will spend six in Eastern Norway, six in Western Norway, four in Northern Norway, two in Trøndelag and one in Southern Norway. Some of these visits are organised as single week blocks and others as two consecutive week blocks.

During their tenure the Pathfinders have two additional planned activities. In December they visit the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD) in Oslo, which is responsible for Sámi and minority affairs. This visit is scheduled in December because high schools are busy with exams. This visit is a learning opportunity for the Pathfinders, providing them with a "unique insight into how the ministry works with different Sámi issues" (Länsman, 2014; see <https://www.facebook.com/samiskeveivisere/>). In May, the Pathfinders travel to New York to attend the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples in New York, which includes participating in the Global Indigenous Youth Caucus.

The SP initiative is popular among teachers and pupils. Teachers who were interviewed as part of the SK Report (2007) considered the Pathfinders' representative role as important and their visit a useful supplement to learning in schools. During its trial period (2003 until April 2007) the Pathfinders visited 13 high schools annually (SK Report, 2007). Presently, the Pathfinders visit approximately 60 of the country's 411 high schools (15%) (SP Website).

5.7 The School Visit

The Pathfinders first travel by plane and then generally hire a car to reach the school. Public transportation is used less frequently. Usually, they hold two presentations during the school day. These presentations can be scheduled by the schools at varying times throughout the day, resulting in the Pathfinders having to be present all day. When visiting schools, the Pathfinders do not wear symbolic identity markers such as the Sámi *gákti*, instead they dress in everyday clothes.

Their presentation/lecture lasts 90 minutes with a short break half-way. Typically, two Pathfinders present the lecture using a power point as a focal point. Whilst the content of the lecture remains relatively stable, it is modified according to their interest areas and personal experiences (SK Report, 2007). The Pathfinders plan the presentation/PowerPoint together determining its content and order. Throughout the six months the Pathfinders rotate partners. In principle, they will travel and present with every one of the Pathfinders. This rotation of partners means that the presentation/PowerPoint and its execution must be adapted to reflect the new pairing of Pathfinders.

The Pathfinders present a lot of facts in their presentation because the pupils' knowledge about the Sámi is often minimal (SK Report, 2007, p.46). During their presentation they may ask the pupils specific questions, such as “What do you associate with the word Sámi?”. At other times they might ask more generally if “anyone has any questions?”. During the three visits the SK attended, the Pathfinders showed variation in the topics covered, presentation techniques and examples given (SK Report, 2007, p.43). They also used humour and self-irony. The report notes that topics covered were also influenced by the questions posed by the Pathfinders as well as those by the pupils/teachers. Overall, the SK Report (2007) stated that the Pathfinder visit is an excellent offering for schools, “equally serious as it is engaging” (p.46).

5.8 Peer-to-Peer Communication

The courses and role play activities provided by SUAS prepare the Pathfinders for a communicative encounter. This encounter between the Sámi Pathfinders and Norwegian youth is described, by actors in the project including the Pathfinders, as a “meeting” with Norwegian youth. The idea is to avoid “lectures” and one-sided references to sources (SK Report, 2007, p.19). Instead, the Pathfinders use “stories” and youth language which according to these actors is a better way to share or spread information about the Sámi.

This peer-to-peer encounter framed within a communicative model creates “dialogue” (SK Report 2007, p.55). The SK Report utilises Grunig’s² model consisting of four communication techniques: attention, knowledge, attitude and behaviour. The report recognises that communication is a suitable technique to increase attention and knowledge. However, it also makes clear that there are many other factors that affect attitudes and behaviours (p.47). These factors include a) the degree of the sender’s credibility/believability; b) the type of content and its delivery; c) the communication channel (Television, social media, brochures or personal); and d) the receiver – who they are and how they personally relate to the content.

Regarding factor (a) credibility, the SK Report (2007) explains that there are obvious differences between the Pathfinders and the pupils due to their Sáminess. In spite of this, the Pathfinders’ credibility is established since they and the pupils are both of similar age and appearance (“dressed in typical youth clothing”) (p.47), with presumably similar interests. In relation to factor (b), the content is presented factually and emotively (SK Report, 2007, p.47). Feelings “help hold the pupils’ attention and interest better than dry facts” (SK Report, 2007, p.47). Dry facts are for instance information about Indigenous People, Sámi conditions (*forhold*), language, history, Sámi statistics. Examples given of information with emotional content are joik, myths (*overtroiske fortellinger*), rituals and modern Sámi music (SK Report, 2007, p.48). In terms of the receiver (factor d), if they are “emotionally affected by the content/issue (*problemstillingen*), [they] are more likely to be open to the information/message” (*budskap*) (SK Report, 2007, p.47). The opposite, lack of emotional investment in the content, results in less engagement in the information/message. The report concludes that the Pathfinders employ a “personal two-way communicative channel” (factor c) (SK Report, 2007, p.48).

The report lists several immediate concerns with this form of communicative channel. These are: the need to restrict the scope of information; limited number of school visits (8%) and the number of classes in attendance; concern that the Pathfinder’s visit can be seen as a “happening” because there is no written teaching materials given to schools to support the information/message and help pupils remember the content; and finally concern that schools are not sufficiently aware of the SP initiative. As for the emotional effect on pupils (*berørte*), the report says that it is not a given that the Pathfinder’s visit will effect pupils positively. It is

2 Note: The year or other resource details were not provided in this report.

possible that this affect can “enhance negative attitudes” (SK Report, 2007, p.48). Despite these concerns, the report confirmed that this personal two-way communicative approach employed by the Pathfinders engages and connects the pupils through questions, discussions and drawing parallels for some pupils, namely other Sámis or pupils with an immigrant background.

5.9 Summary

Based on their own evaluation, including feedback from pupils, teachers and the Pathfinders themselves, the Statskonsult concluded that the SP initiative was a successful way to increase the knowledge of and influence the attitudes of Norwegian youth about the Sámi. Central to the initiative’s continuation and development is the Sámi allaskuvla/Samisk høgskole/Sámi University of Applied Science. In recent years SUAS has developed a website providing information about the Pathfinders and educational resources for teachers and pupils (one of several recommendations for improvements suggested by Statskonsult). And as another measure of success, “the Sámi Pathfinders” has been implemented in Sweden and Finland (in 2014, https://www.nrk.no/sapmi/_ofela__at_-i-finland-og-sverige-1.11961187) and has been adapted by Jewish (Jewish Pathfinders, <https://www.xn--jdedommen-l8a.no/?s=veiviser>) and Muslim communities (Muslim Pathfinders, <https://www.muslimskeveivisere.no/>).

6 The Pathfinders’ Testimonies

My discussions with the Pathfinders show that all three—representation, identity and diversity—are interconnected aspects of their role and influence each other. As their statements will show, this trifecta of factors is an important source of motivation for becoming a Pathfinder and continuing in spite of challenges faced throughout the year. What is particularly noteworthy is that these three factors are enhanced in unexpected ways because of their Pathfinder role/duties. These developments will be discussed here. Additionally, the Pathfinders are all individuals with their own personality, life experiences, education and family-language background. This means that how they interpret and handle their experiences as a Pathfinder is unique. Whilst this seems obvious to say, at the same time what is not so obvious is that despite these differences, the Pathfinders share similar reactions or responses to the year as a Pathfinder and the impact it has had on them. What is most important in terms of the research question(s) is the discussion of how this representation unfolds, in what way it

counters discrimination and stereotypes, and significantly, how it affects the Pathfinders themselves.

6.1 The Significance of the Pathfinder's Role

The Pathfinders consider their role really important. Increasing the visibility of the Sámi is pivotal to SP4 who wants the Sámi to be normalised in the majority society. For them their social mandate is to “build up knowledge about what and who are the Sámi, build up knowledge about Sámi society and build up Sámi visibility” (SP4). SP3 also refers to their role in terms of a social mandate. The word mandate has an authoritative and official aspect to it, emphasising that this is a job, duty or commission³. This is implied by SP3's comment that “It's something you get a stipend for. It's what you do”. This “payment” implies that the Pathfinders feel a certain obligation is attached to the role. This obligation, however, can be viewed in two ways: 1) they are paid to do a job; and 2) they have a duty to represent. I will return to this sense of obligation in section 6.5.2.

The SK Report (2007) states that they understood the SP initiative at the time as not having the ambition of creating “change at the societal level” (p.49). Based on my conversations with the Pathfinders this no longer seems to be the case. The Pathfinders view their role as contributing to Norwegian society thereby benefiting the Sámi community. The Pathfinders' contribution to society is explained in terms of the distribution of knowledge. SP4 states that informing others is the whole point of the initiative. According to SP2, there is a “hole” of knowledge about the Sámi and their history that requires “filling”. Teachers' lack of competency about the Sámi people means that they are reticent to raise this topic with their pupils (Eriksen, 2018b). Therefore, teachers are not sufficiently prepared to “fill” this hole themselves.

SP4 problematises this lack of knowledge by placing it in a colonial context. They explain that lack of knowledge “leads to the exotification of the Sámi. Exotification makes people feel different about themselves so for instance they may not want to wear their *gákhti* or choose to learn Sámi at school”. The exotification of the Sámi contributes to making the Sámi not want to identify as Sámi. SP4's reference to exotification alludes to the intergenerational ramifications of Norwegianisation in which many Sámi refuse to talk about what happened to them with their families and reject the use of visible Sámi symbols, including language (Dankertsen, 2016). This relates to the consequences of continuing

3 See definition: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mandate>

colonial stereotypes and ethnic discrimination over generations in Norwegian society that leads to continued shame associated with being Sámi. This results in what Midtbøen and Lidén (2016) describe as “cumulative discrimination”. Hence, SP4 describes the consequences of the lack of knowledge about the Sámi as “a domino effect that causes harm to the Sámi people”.

Other Pathfinders relate a lack of knowledge directly to stereotypes and discrimination. SP5 elaborates by highlighting the connection knowledge has to the existence of stereotypes. They explain: the “initiative plays a rather important role in breaking down stereotypes and racism... because we bring with us a lot of knowledge”. This is corroborated by SP1 who says the aim is to “increase knowledge among Norwegian youth in order to prevent prejudices and stereotypes and incorrect teaching about the Sámi and Sámi history”. Here SP1 proposes another correlation between knowledge and discrimination, not as a result of its absence, but as a consequence of its inaccuracy or bias.

Filling the lack of knowledge in classrooms about the Sámi is therefore understood in terms of contributing to the Sámi community specifically. As SP5 says, “of course I wanted to address the lack of knowledge so that other Sámi wouldn’t experience hate speech and stereotypes”. Other Pathfinders echo these sentiments by explaining that the role would make them “feel like they are contributing to the Sámi cause” and “make a difference when it comes to “central Sámi issues” (SP2). Although not expressed in identical ways, the Pathfinders emphasise that the Pathfinder role has a social mandate. This mandate carries with it an expectation of representation.

6.2 Representation

At least if people had a little knowledge about the Sámi, it would make our everyday lives simpler. (SP4)

The desire to “act” to do something to make a difference to the everyday lives of themselves and other Sámi is unquestionably a motivating factor for becoming a Pathfinder. As a consequence, by becoming a Pathfinder they immediately step into a representative role. This is made clear when reading the duties outlined on their website and considering they are officially and publicly presented every year at one of the Sámi festivals (see Chapter 5). Within Indigenous societies, representation, diversity and identity are important concepts, due to the tendencies of majority societies to homogenise Indigenous Peoples. These tendencies have their roots in historical colonial practices that tried to simplify and quantify the ‘native’

(Sissons, 2005). Today, Indigenous Peoples strive to correct these oversimplifications to reveal the reality of diversity present in Indigenous societies.

Representation can assume many guises and have many functions. As discussed in the theory chapter, representation within an Indigenous context is related to self-determination. The Pathfinders are very aware of their plural representative roles, which are Pathfinder, young Sámis and Indigenous People. They are also aware of the way in which they personally show diversity and difference within the Sámi community. As this section will show, these roles inform each other and are not, if at all, easily separated. Representation functions on several levels: cultural, social, political and personal. Similarly, these levels are not independent categories, they are also intertwined. This section shows that the personal informs their various roles whilst at the same time their plural representative roles supersede their personhood. In order to “represent”, the Pathfinders employ an assortment of symbols. Through representation of the diversity within the Sámi community they address stereotypical associations about the Sámi and discrimination.

6.2.1 Personal Representation and Diversity

And it is also yes, to show that we are different us too, that there exists not just one person who is Sámi or who are more Sámi than another or how a Sámi should look or yes yes it is diversity. (SP1)

The above quote shows that representation of the diversity within the Sámi community is important to the Pathfinders. They understand that by including their personal stories in the lecture/presentation they can show Sámi diversity generally and their individual differences specifically. As SP1 says, “we are very different even though we are all Sámi”. SP5 also notes: “They [the Pathfinders] were a very different gang”. SP5 clarifies how these differences became visible when it came to planning the presentation: “some wanted to place greater emphasis on the Sea Sámis, others the Marka Sámis”. Consequently, this type of personal content in their presentations helps promote awareness of the diversity within the Sámi community.

Although the Pathfinders wore everyday clothes during their school visits, they did intentionally display geographical and group diversity in their PowerPoints by the inclusion of pictures of themselves (and other regional representations) in their *gákti/gaep tie/gáppte*. A *gákti* is the Sámi traditional (national) costume that through different colours, designs and woven elements, reflects a Sámi's personality, heritage and geographical area. Former

Pathfinder, Inga Elisa Páve Idivuoma, describes the *gákti* as “a communication method that also displays belonging to an ethnic group and identity” (SP Website, 2020). Dankertsen (2016) describes the use of Sámi clothing as a symbol of Sámi identification and pride. Knowing that all the Pathfinders have a *gákti* and include pictures of it in their presentation, it is reasonable to assume that they are proud of their Sámi heritage and identity.

Not all the Pathfinders have lived their lives in what Selle, Semb & Stromsnes (2020) refer to as the Sámi political centre, that is Karasjok and Kautokeino, although their parents may have relatives in this area. For example, both SP3’s parents were raised in the Sámi political centre or Sámi-majority communities, but migrated to a city outside of these areas, where SP3 grew up. The migration of SP3’s parents to the city reflects a migratory pattern from Sámi in the “North” of Norway to cities in the “South” that has rapidly increased over the last few decades (Dankertsen et al., 2022; Selle et al., 2020). In fact, this internal migration is common in other Indigenous contexts, such as Australia (Langton, 2019) and Canada (Tomiak & Patrick, 2010). Typically, Indigenous People relocate to less isolated areas for socio-economic reasons due to the limited number of opportunities within their home communities.

In Norway, Tromsø and Oslo are two cities outside of the Sámi “political centre” with large populations of Sámi (Selle et al., 2020). Tromsø, located in southern Sápmi, is the largest city in northern Norway (Dankertsen, et al., 2022) and has historical and geographical links to the Sámi. Oslo, in Eastern Norway, is Norway’s capital but it has the largest Sámi population outside of Sápmi (Dankertsen et al., 2022). Both cities are able to provide increased possibilities for higher education and employment (Dankertsen, et al., 2022). Despite their respective distance from this “political centre” both cities are important locations for the Sámi community (Selle et al., 2020). Selle et al. (2020) investigated the electoral habits of Sámi outside of the “political centre” and its implication for Sámi parliament elections. Their research shows that more and more Sámi living in cities, Oslo in particular, are registering with the Sámi electoral as a form of self-identification (Selle et al., 2020). Sámi living in cities are referred to as “urban Sámis”.

SP3 refers to themselves as an urban Sámi (bysame). For them, applying for the position as a Pathfinder was extremely important in terms of representation. They explain: “it was a lack of representation from the city, where I myself have grown up and wanted to be an example of”. Here, SP3 highlights what they consider to be a lack of representation of urban

Sámis within the SP initiative. This is confirmed later when discussing ways of improving the initiative. SP3 states: “we need more southern Sámis too”.

Additionally, the lack of representation of urban Sámis appears also to be an issue in Norwegian classrooms. SP3 remembers that pupils asked questions about their accent/dialect: “I got so many questions: ‘Why do you speak *søring*?’⁴. I tended to say, ‘everyone doesn’t live north of Trondheim’”. These questions reveal that various stereotypes exist in Norwegian classrooms. Firstly, stereotypes about what constitutes Sáminess, in this instance language, and secondly about where the Sámi are geographically located. This is not completely surprising since the dominant discourse in educational and pedagogical reference works and curricula (prior to LK20) shows that “the Sámi community is a community of Inner Finnmark, the “heartland” of the North Sámi language” (Olsen, 2020, p.32). This is supported by Gjerpe’s (2021) examination of Norwegian and Sámi textbooks. She states with reference to two specific textbooks that they create “the impression that the Sámi and Sápmi are only relevant in Finnmark” (p.311). According to Gjerpe (2021), how the Sámi are contextualised and represented in these works results in a “textbook-Sápmi” (p.316). Logically this also results in a ‘textbook-Sámi’. A textbook-Sámi is therefore a simplified and essentialised representation of what it means to be Sámi.

Diversity and representation were also mentioned by other Pathfinders in relation to language. The Pathfinders who lived outside of Sámi-majority communities were not raised with the Sámi language as their mother-tongue. Instead, these Pathfinders began their Sámi language journey either at high school or at university. This was the case with SP2 who started learning Sámi at SUAS. SP2 describes themselves as “not a typical Pathfinder who is from Kautokeino and has Sámi as their mother tongue and has reindeer. I have a somewhat different background”. SP2s overt understanding that they are “different” suggests that there is a norm or standard Pathfinder. SP2 and SP3 recognised that by becoming a Pathfinder they could present their own unique story and, in this way, present a different side to the understanding of who and what defines being a Pathfinder. By extrapolation, it also suggests a desire to break down normative and stereotypical understandings of Sáminess that exist not only within the majority society but also Sámi society.

⁴ *Søring* or “Southerners” is a generic term for people who live South of Nordland. People who live North of Trøndelag are called Northerners (*nordlendinger*) by Southerners (<https://www.betydning-definisjoner.com/Søring>)

6.2.2 The Complexity of Representation

A striking feature of the interview data was the Pathfinders' awareness that they represent not just a Pathfinder or a young Sámi or Sámi society, but an Indigenous People. SP5 explains that this was included in their presentation: "That was the first thing we say — 'we are an Indigenous People'". Including this statement in their presentation can be seen to function politically. It provides information which ensures that the status of the Sámi within Norwegian society is made clear. SP5 implies that all the Pathfinders began their presentation this way. This was also the case in the Pathfinder visit I witnessed. What it suggests is that the political and social aspect of their representative role relates not only to inside and outside the Sámi community, but also globally, thereby, increasing their representative scope. This is supported by the fact that the Pathfinders represent the Sámi in New York at the UN Global Indigenous Youth Caucus (see Chapter 5). Further weight is given to this interpretation by SP5's use of the word "ambassador" in the following:

one was an ambassador ...a representative for an entire Indigenous People.
Because you stand there in the classroom, and maybe you are the first Sámi
they have met who is also a Pathfinder [...] one is more than just oneself. (SP5)

This quote illustrates the range of representation encapsulated in a seemingly simple act — standing and talking in a Norwegian classroom. This statement shows that representation is performed nationally and globally (Indigenous people), nationally and locally (Sámi), and locally and personally (oneself).

Moreover, there is the suggestion that these three roles are intertwined, perhaps even indistinguishable. Yet of greater significance is that when they stand there in the classroom they are doing more, representing more than simply themselves and all the roles put together, they are something else ... a Pathfinder. As SP1 says, "one stands there as a Sámi Pathfinder". This perhaps can be seen as a professional identity since they do this as a job. It can also be seen to describe a merging of individual, professional and collective identities. What is more it foreshadows an indefinable aspect of their experience that will be discussed later in this chapter.

This notion that the Pathfinders are more than just themselves is expressed in different ways. "When you become a Sámi Pathfinder, you become in a way a little superstar in Sápmi. Yes, overnight suddenly everyone knows who you are" (SP2). Here, SP2 shows the visibility of the Pathfinders within Sápmi and hence the extent of their social representation. Certainly, my research and discussions with the Pathfinders show that news articles about the

Pathfinders primarily appear in Northern Norway media outlets (like NRK Sápmi), or on the Sámi Parliament and Northern county websites and national Government websites. Equally, advertisements for ‘new’ Pathfinders have also used these same outlets. In a similar vein, SP4 alludes to the enormity of their role when they refer to themselves as “19-20-year olds” who are “front people for youth and for everything Sámi” (det samiske). This, SP4 reflects is their “biggest task”.

All these comments converge to show that the Pathfinders are aware that they represent more than simply their personhood both inside and outside of the classroom. Yet perhaps it is SP2s explanation that provides a context for our understanding of what this representation means: “We represent Sámi identity, very strongly as a Pathfinder...by going out into Norwegian society and making the Sámi visible as a kind of symbol”. Here SP2 clearly shows the connection between what they do—going out into Norwegian classrooms providing knowledge— and its representative effects or consequences: visibility and symbolism.

6.2.3 Visibility and Vulnerability

Despite the changes to the social and political visibility of the Sámi outlined in Chapter 3, the Sámi can still choose to be invisible. Dankertsen et al. (2022) explains that Sámi youth living outside of the Sámi political centre can choose not to speak Sámi or to wear their *gákti* when in public in majority settings, such as in cities. This can be seen as blending in with the majority—being seen as an “ethnic Norwegian”. This equally applies to the Pathfinders. Prior to becoming a Pathfinder SP5 explains that they were not so comfortable with their Sámi identity since they “dropped” using the *gákti*. Dankertsen (2016) refers to the *gákti* as a symbol of Sáminess and its power as a political form of representation. Even SP4, who had a very strong Sámi identity, is selective about when they use their *gákti*. They provide the following example: “when I travel by plane in my national costume (kofte) oooh Brace myself OK, I am going to get looks. I am going to maybe even get comments. I don’t know. I maybe get questions, and I don’t know...one has to in a way prepare for such things”. In this statement, SP4 latently affirms that the *gákti* is a visible marker of Sáminess. But they also alert us to how Sámi visibility can invite unwanted and uncomfortable situations. The use of Sámi symbols, like the *gákti*, are a visible identifier of ethnic pride. Ethnic pride can be considered an important protective factor which affirms a person’s sense of identity and well-being. But it can also lead to vulnerability (Nystad et al., 2017).

By choosing invisibility over identification, the Sámi can minimise their vulnerability with the intention of avoiding uncomfortable situations and discrimination. SP5 explains that “often they didn’t tell people they were Sámi to avoid dangerous comments, questions”. Although SP5 doesn’t elaborate about what they mean by “dangerous comments”, Nystad et al. (2017) connect vulnerability to discrimination. Discriminatory remarks towards the Sámi can occur “at school, work and in the local community [...] in public, on the internet and at stores or restaurants” (K.L. Hansen, 2018). Perhaps the answer to what SP5 may have meant by dangerous comments lies with SP3:

I had a very ah little fear [...] to tell about my Sámi identity. It was often questions ahh knowledge-questions, for example, about language and other things people wondered about which I couldn’t manage to answer.

Both SP3 and SP5 grew up in cities where the Sámi were in the minority. They also grew up without learning the Sámi language. Hence, one of the attractions of the SP initiative is the increase of knowledge and language competency (in North Sámi) the Pathfinders receive over the year. Other Pathfinders express this ability to ‘blend in’ by simply avoiding telling people they are Sámi. SP3 says “the last thing I told people was who I was in terms of ethnicity or background”. SP3’s reluctance to disclose their Sámi ethnicity is specifically related to identity which will be discussed in the section 6.3. Of note here is that by becoming a Pathfinder the Pathfinders are choosing “visibility”. This visibility also places them in a vulnerable position, exposing them to discrimination. The Pathfinders visibility and concomitant vulnerability is not restricted to the classroom. Due to public exposure, it extends equally to the wider community. Vulnerability therefore becomes a factor that is both explicit and implicit in their representative role as Pathfinder, over which they do not have a great deal of control.

6.2.4 Personalising Their Role

To be a Pathfinder has nothing to do with whether you can speak Sámi or not...
you have a story to tell no matter what. (SP2)

The Pathfinders bring something personal or individual *to* the role. Typically, this personal aspect is associated with the content of their class lecture/presentation. For instance, SP1 was interested in addressing specific issues or areas of interest. They wanted to talk about green colonisation with pupils and gave the example of windmill parks being built in Sámi reindeer herding areas. What was important for SP1 in raising such issues was being able to provide a

balanced view by “showing both sides” of a situation. Some Pathfinders made the presentation more personal by joiking and/or playing musical instruments. SP5 explains that the way they talked about history or the order they presented content also personalised their presentation. However, SP5 reflects further: “Perhaps telling our own personal stories is the most obvious way we influence the presentation”. Recounting their personal story means different things to different Pathfinders. It's not only explaining what kind of Sámi they are in terms of geographical location, language and cultural expression; it also means sharing personal stories which may include family histories.

There can be no doubt that the personal is intertwined in the role of a Pathfinder. It is after all stipulated in the criteria for the role on the SP website. Yet for many of the Pathfinders this was something they were keen to do. SP4's enthusiasm in being part of the initiative and pride in their ethnic heritage and the personal nature of what they foresaw in being a Pathfinder is tangible in this statement: “Yes! I am going to talk about my people”. In their case they wanted “to show that being Sámi was cool”. SP2 and SP3 wanted to share their personal stories and show diversity within Sámi youth and the initiative (as discussed above). But just how much of their personal story do they include?

What can and cannot be included in their presentation is not clear. SP2 says that they had a great deal of freedom in what they chose to talk about. They state: “There were no set themes/topics [we] had to present”. But they also admit that “those [Pathfinders] that were before us had a bit of a different approach I believe”. This statement suggests that there has been changes in how much control the Pathfinders have over the content of their presentations. Yet, the SK Report (2007) stipulates that the Pathfinders are not meant to present a political stance. Introducing issues such as Norwegianisation (history), stereotypes, discrimination and hate speech in the presentation, however, has clear political connotations. And knowing that they are to include their personal narrative in the presentation, where is the line between representation that is personal or political?

Moreover, although there appears to be no expectation to include one's gender identity in their presentation, there was no inclusion of the Sámi-queer community in their presentations, despite one Pathfinder considering this a particularly relevant issue for Sámi youth. SP1 explained that although the lectures covered during their intensive course at SUAS covered a range of topics, they did not consider everything relevant for their presentations. SP1 says that instead of Sámi literature, for instance, they could have had a lecture on the Queer Sámi community, “because it is something which is very relevant for society today and

which we perhaps could have talked about in our presentations”. The first organisation for Sámi gays and lesbians started in 2002. Currently, the Sámi Parliament has two members who are openly gay and Sápmi Pride has been an annual event since 2015 (Hagesæther, 2023). Whilst it has been difficult to be gay in Sámi communities, this increase in public awareness and public profiles is “an important step for the Queer Sámi community to be accepted and represented in traditional Sámi environments” (Hansen & Skaar, 2021, p.10).

SP1 implies therefore that talking about the Queer Sámi community would also have been relevant, perhaps even more engaging for their high school audience. There is of course the possibility that including one’s gender status in a Norwegian high school presentation may well increase a Pathfinder’s vulnerability. Although this was not discussed in detail, SP1 felt that without the academic knowledge provided by the SUAS course behind them, the inclusion of this topic was impossible.

However, according to the Pathfinders they did provide varied levels of personal detail in their presentations. For example, SP3 explains that “some Pathfinders shared nothing personal” in their presentations. whereas SP3 thinks they shared a great deal (see section 6.5.2). This comment indicates that the Pathfinders have some control over the extent of their personal representation. At the same time, SP5 felt that “there was an expectation that we all will tell (share) our own story”. It is this and other expectations and the consequences for the Pathfinders that will be discussed in section 6.5. Most importantly, SP3 aptly asks: “how much is one willing to share of oneself” in the presentation? This question is almost impossible to answer precisely because it is impossible for the Pathfinders to predict what kind of responses they are likely to encounter from pupils/teachers.

6.3 Identity

Representation and diversity are inextricably tied to identity. David Block’s (2022) approach to identity as multiple and arising from an individual’s participation “in activities and communication with others” (p.182) applies to the Pathfinders. The Pathfinders interviewed see themselves as having multiple representative roles which inform the manner in which they articulate their identities. Reflecting upon SP2’s comments earlier which connected identity to symbolism (Section 6.2.2), it is feasible that the Pathfinders employ their multiple identities symbolically to show diversity within Sámi society. In addition, the Pathfinders see themselves as a collective identity—Pathfinder—which arises from the “situated practice” of travelling to high schools in Norway and holding presentations together in Norwegian classrooms. The Pathfinders’ numerous possible identity articulations is emblematic of a

constructivist understanding of identity and supports my claim that they have agency. However, this agency can be affected by whether one feels a sense of belonging to and participation in the community (Sollid & Olsen, 2019).

The Pathfinders are “young Sámi” who have grown up in an era where Sámi language and culture is associated with pride. According to Hansen and Skaar (2021), “the majority of young Sámi are very proud of their Sámi culture and identity”. One could assume that without some level of pride in their Sámi culture and identity, the Pathfinders would never have applied for the position. Whilst this is true, it is not as straightforward as it would appear. Yes, the Pathfinders interviewed do represent linguistically and geographically different aspects of what it means to be Sámi and particularly a young Sámi today. But they also mirror larger issues within the Sámi community concerning language loss and its impact on Sámi identity and belonging.

6.3.1 Linguistic Identification and Belonging

Within the Sámi and Norwegian communities, the perception that a “real Sámi” speaks Sámi and resides in rural settings prevails (Berg-Nordlie, 2022). Even though no formal state definition of a Sámi in Norway exists, criteria does exist to be eligible to register to vote in Sámi Parliament elections. This is stipulated in the Sámi act as: “Everyone who declares that they perceive themselves as Sami, and who either a) have Sami as their home language, or b) have or have had a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent with Sami as home language” (Berg-Nordlie, 2022, p. 452). For Sámi over 18, the criteria for the Sámi Electoral Registry (SER) is therefore based on personal identification, that is a declaration of one’s Sámi identity, and a “linguistic-genealogical” criterion, that is one of their parents/grandparents/great-grandparents spoke Sámi (Berg-Nordlie 2022, p.452). Whilst in other Indigenous contexts this non-definition can be considered flexible (see de Costa, 2015), the criteria highlight on the one hand the Sámi Parliament’s constructivist approach to identity articulation and, on the other hand, an essentialist emphasis due to the importance placed on the Sámi language (Bjørklund, 2016). Hence, inside and outside the Sámi community there is a common perception that being Sámi requires language competency.

To contextualise this, let us consider the 2017 New Year speech by the then president of the Sámi Parliament. In this speech Vibeke Larsen spoke Norwegian rather than Sámi. She explained that “The language is identity, culture, and community. At the same time, our family is a typical image of the Sámi society. We are of the same flesh and blood, but also different. Some are able to speak Sámi, others are not. Nevertheless, we are one Sámi family

who belongs together” (Berg-Nordlie, 2022, p.461 as cited in Måsø & Boine Verstad, 2017). In this speech Larsen alludes to the fact that Sámi ethnic identity occurs in tandem with Norwegian cultural identity (Nystad. et al, 2017). She also recognises the extent of language loss that has occurred in non-majority Sámi communities, such as Gáivoutna–Kåfjord–Kaivuono (a Sea Sámi community), due to effects of Norwegianisation and assimilation (Dankertsen, 2016; Sollid & Olsen, 2019). And she affirms those who choose not to revitalise their Sámi language, rather choosing to express their Sáminess in alternative ways (Dankertsen, 2016). However, this speech sent a tidal wave through Sámi society provoking controversial debates about the necessity of speaking Sámi in order to be Sámi (Berg-Nordlie, 2022, p.462).

The debates were primarily divided into two camps, those who considered the Sámi language as a necessary requirement for Sámi identity and those who did not. Berg-Nordlie (2022) states that in the comments from those who considered that speaking Sámi was an unnecessary requirement for Saminess, there was still an implicit perception that “the language-less Sámi’ are ultimately not ‘good enough’” (p.462). Hence, this shows tendencies within Sámi communities to treat differences hierarchically, privileging one form of Sámi identity articulation over another. Thus, the recognition of the different ways of being Sámi is compromised by essentialised and homogenising understandings of Sámi identity within Sámi society which fails to acknowledge the ramifications of Norwegianisation and assimilation for Sámi identity articulation. Importantly, it affects the individual’s sense of belonging.

Of the five Pathfinders interviewed, two (SP1/SP4) came from Sámi- majority communities and three (SP2/SP3/SP5) from communities in which the Sámi are a minority. Consequently, SP1 and SP4 have Sámi as their mother tongue and SP2, SP3 and SP5 have Norwegian. The significance of language, particularly in terms of identity, was apparent in all the interviews except for SP1. During their interview, SP1 did not mention their identity until I specifically asked what impact the year as a Pathfinder had on their identity. In contrast, SP3 explained that prior to applying to the SP initiative they had an “identity crisis”: “I couldn’t speak Sámi and consequently felt like I had not as much right to say that I am Sámi ... I didn’t feel I was qualified enough. Err a bit because of language but particularly geographically”. Here SP3 expresses feelings of inadequacy which caused them to hesitate to apply for the job as a Pathfinder. It also indicates SP3’s concern about the authenticity of their Sámi identity because they cannot speak Sámi and they live in the city. Their comments

exemplify the difficulty many Sámi living in non-majority settings, far away from the political and rural centre in Sápmi, have in reconciling their urban and Indigenous identities.

Urban Sámis are not a homogenous group. Some have migrated from “rural” areas like Ella Mari (Hætta) Isaksen who moved to Oslo but grew up in Finnmark, while others were born and raised in cities, like SP3. Berg-Nordlie (2022) expresses the challenges of urban life through colonial concepts, saying “it is to face assimilation pressure daily, and to deal with lingering ideas that urbanity and Indigeneity are at some level mutually exclusive” (p. 110). The difficulty of reconciling urban and Sámi identities is due to the connection between Sámi culture and rurality which impacts urban Sámis’ sense of belonging and how they define themselves (Dankertsen et al., 2022). For SP3, language is a crucial part of their self-identification as a Sámi. Even though they had relatives in Kautokeino, they felt it was “painful” not to have been taught Sámi (*det gjør vondt*) and implied that their sense of belonging was impeded by “geography”. The correlation between cultural markers such as language and rurality, to identity and notions of belonging are influenced by perceptions of authenticity.

The notion of authenticity stems from colonial practices. Sissons (2005) explains that authenticity flames the ideological and stereotypical distinctions made between authentic and inauthentic natives by settler nations. In a Sámi context, this means that essentialised understandings of Sámi identity are connected to living on the land and traditional Sámi livelihoods (like reindeer herding, coastal-and river fishing and gathering and hunting). The notion of authenticity attempts to simplify the Indigenous experience and ignores the fact that most Indigenous Peoples around the world live in urban not rural settings (Sissons, 2005). Finally, authenticity is exclusionary. It neither allows for internal variation in Sámi identity articulation, nor does it recognise the importance of Indigenous urbanisation “for the survival of Indigenous identity, culture and community” (Dankertsen et al. 2022, p.463).

However, these ideological and stereotypical distinctions are also prevalent within Indigenous communities. This results in social exclusion and sustains differences of power within Sámi communities. Nystad et al. (2017) interviewed 22 young Sámi living in a Sámi-majority community in inner Finnmark. Their research was interested in how Sámi youth in these areas perform their ethnic identity and what they believe signifies them as Sámi. Participants showed that “Sami language is not only considered highly valuable for communication (73%) but is also an ethnic identity marker (32%) and an important part of traditions and reindeer husbandry (23%)” (Nystad et al. 2017, p.4). Their findings, supported

by earlier research, suggests “that language binds people together, but can also forcefully divide people in indigenous communities” (p.10).

In addition, their article discusses the notion of resilience in the face of ethnic exclusion from the group and strategies young Sámi in Sámi-majority areas use to navigate this. Whilst some may resign themselves to not being accepted by the community, resulting in them moving away, others resort to ambivalence. Still there are those who pursue recognition, to find their place in the community. One strategy they mention is to argue that it is not imperative to have Sámi language and cultural competence to be Sámi. That is, that a strong Sámi identity and feeling of ethnic pride can also be felt by having Sámi ancestors (“kinship ties”), wearing traditional Sámi costumes and using other symbols (Nystad et al, 2017, p.10). However, the authors make clear that language is a “vital ethnic marker” within Sámi-majority communities particularly and that without it, non-Sámi speakers may experience inter-ethnic-discrimination. The combination of a lack of recognition from the Sámi group with inter-ethnic discrimination is described as a “double burden that may result in marginalisation” (Nystad et al, 2017, p.10). Marginalisation from within Sámi communities impacts belonging and self-identification.

This section has shown that feelings of alienation and exclusion can occur due to lack of language competency in Sámi-majority communities (which is where SUAS and the Pathfinders are located), as well as urban and other Sámi minority settings. By the end of their term as a Pathfinder, all of the Pathfinders said that their Sámi identities had been strengthened due to an increase in knowledge about Sámi issues and society. Despite SP2 and SP3 arguing that language was not a prerequisite for applying to the SP initiative, they also attributed the development of their Sámi identity to increased language competency. Whilst learning Sámi is of course a personal choice, obtaining Sámi language competency has the benefits of providing a sense of belonging. SP2 expresses their sense of belonging as “finding their roots”. SP3 explains that now when they visit relatives in Kautokeino, it is “really wonderful to kinda feel that I was in a way, home”. It is reasonable to correlate their increased sense of belonging to language acquisition in conjunction with a feeling of recognition and acceptance by the local community (Block, 2022).

6.3.2 Becoming a Pathfinder – a Collective Identity

We are the initiative (SP4)

The Pathfinders travel in pairs. These pairs alternate throughout the year so that they end up working with each one of the Pathfinders in turn. Typically, each pair works together for a period of 5-6 weeks. These interactions include, but are not limited to, travelling together, planning and presenting their lectures. When they are not touring, the Pathfinders attend their studies at SUAS. They are therefore both students *and* Pathfinders. It is, as they describe, “intense”. These shared tasks and the intensity of their experiences create a sense of group belonging and fellowship. This forms what Block (2022) describes as a “community of practice”, resulting in a collective identity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001).

During our conversations it became apparent that the Pathfinders share their experiences. Some expressed this directly. For example, SP4 shared their frustrations with other Pathfinders. These frustrations concerned “awful pupils”, “lack of resources”, “not home very much” and “tiredness”. Other Pathfinders implied that they too shared these same frustrations. This came to light when discussing different kinds of experiences in the classroom. On many occasions, one Pathfinder would recount something that another Pathfinder had told them had happened in the classroom. This was particularly the case when the event was perceived as negative.

Sharing experiences, particularly negative experiences, indicates that the Pathfinders rely on each other for support. SP1 handled emotional responses to events in the classroom by talking to their “co-Pathfinder, or friends or my mother about what I had experienced and how I felt about it”. Similarly, SP3 talked to the other Pathfinders about their experiences and impressions of different schools in the North and South of Norway. Throughout their tenured year, they also have interactions with previous Pathfinders at social occasions and other official forums. SP4 describes the need (*tvang*) they have to discuss their experiences: “But I know when I meet former Pathfinders at a party or something, so it's like, ‘how was it for you?’ ‘Err God, it was just so ---’ and so they had exactly the same experience, and so they have kinda the same need to talk about it”. This description suggests that the Pathfinders are a network or community of shared experiences beyond their shared youth and Sáminess. Importantly, it is these experiences that connect them.

By contrast, this collective identity is not necessarily assured. Challenges can arise because they work so intensely together over extended periods. SP1 states that: “we are after all four-youth, that is one thing, four-youth who also shall work together as a team and that is

also another challenge”. SP5 clarifies saying they would “occasionally disagree with the other Pathfinder and can’t find a solution, because we are so very tired”. For SP1 the difficulty was due to “having got into a rhythm with one pathfinder [after travelling together for 5 weeks] and then poof you are on tour with another one”. Obviously for some of the Pathfinders, these transitions were not always easy.

Despite challenges created by the intensity of their work, positive feelings for the group and among individuals are without a doubt created because of their role as a Pathfinder. At the same time, the support they provide for each other highlights that their experience as a Pathfinder creates a personal response that they *need* to unburden. Hence this collective identity arguably can be seen as providing the Pathfinders with a coping mechanism.

6.4 The Impact of Pupils’ and Teachers’ Knowledge on the Pathfinders

The ways in which their role as a Pathfinder impacts the individual Pathfinders relates directly to what they describe as the presence or absence of knowledge in the classroom. Whereas every encounter the Pathfinders have with a group of pupils is unique, “because the questions asked by pupils are always different” (SP5), the Pathfinders describe patterns of behaviours/questions/comments which relate to the pupils’ level of knowledge about the Sámi. In short, the presence of knowledge brings about positive experiences, whereas the absence does not.

By positive experiences the Pathfinders mean that people wanted to know more or were even perhaps surprised over the information they were told. By contrast, a lack of knowledge resulted in negative experiences, where the Pathfinders either felt they did not quite reach their audience, or they experienced what they interpreted as discrimination. However, their experiences also show that it is not as cut and dry as these patterns might indicate. The Pathfinders also refer to occasions where lack of knowledge by pupils and teachers also related to positive experiences. Of note, they recounted instances where pupils and teachers had knowledge, but this type of knowledge resulted in negative/discriminatory experiences. These different types of experiences will be explored in this section.

6.4.1 Impediments and Enhancements to Knowledge Sharing

The Pathfinders feel that they provide a substantial amount of knowledge/information in their presentations. They are prepared by their 6-week intensive course at SUAS, which covers a range of topics within Sámi culture and society. The Pathfinders consider that the level of knowledge/information they present directly correlates to the presence or absence of

knowledge in the classroom. As a result, these classroom encounters can be interpreted as either an experience of gratification, frustration, disappointment or discrimination.

The Pathfinders encounter a diverse range of perspectives and reactions from pupils and teachers. This is understandable since they meet “so many different people [...] so many differing reactions” (SP4), “many different classes and questions” (SP1). According to SP4 they could encounter: “understanding, racism, misunderstanding”. SP4 reflects that the amount of negativity they encounter was “unexpected”. According to SP4, negativity does “not necessarily [mean] racism as such, but negativity towards the Sámi people”. SP5 says that they were both positively and negatively surprised by pupil responses. SP3 tells us that the “best surprise” they had was when the class was listening to a joik as part of their presentation and the class “actually knew” which animal the joik represented because the class had previously been on a study trip to Kautokeino. As this example shows, the Pathfinders frequently defined pupils’ and teachers’ responses in terms of presence and/or absence of knowledge. According to the Pathfinders, pupils who have prior knowledge are more interested and ask “good” questions.

The Pathfinders noticed and appreciated when teachers had prepared their pupils in advance of their visit. They could detect when the class was prepared by the types of questions they were asked. SP2 explains that “pupils who were prepared in advance of the visit challenged us not in a negative way but made us think. Think about how to respond”. Consequently, SP2 goes on to explain “the whole presentation was elevated. This impacted our general impression of how the presentation went. It was more rewarding”. SP1 explains it simply as “more knowledge, more in-depth questions”. SP1 provides the following example: “we had just talked about extreme stereotypes and hate speech and so a pupil asked ‘what can we do to help prevent this? What can we do to make it better for Sámi who experience hate speech?’”. SP1 interprets these types of questions as showing that the pupils had reflected and wanted to do something positive/active to help make things better. SP1 describes this as a “lovely experience” and significantly states that it meant “that you could talk more about what it means to be Sámi today”. Hence, the Pathfinders felt gratification when pupils were prepared.

Pupil preparation is important both for the Pathfinders and for the pupils. As described above, it meant that pupils were potentially more active; more willing to ask questions. Yet the benefit for both the Pathfinders and pupils was greater engagement. SP1 explains that when teachers came to them and said “yes, we have gone through the website and prepared

questions and pupils are really happy that you are here and happy for the visit', so often it was a very good lecture and a good experience". SP2 provides greater detail about what this "good experience" might entail: "if we had really, really good connection with them, it then was easier for them to talk to us and we kind of became more engaged and gave more". When pupils had greater knowledge, "they had in a way a feeling of accomplishment, [it was] easier to follow [their presentation], they become more motivated" (SP3). Prepared pupils allowed the Pathfinders to showcase more of what being Sámi meant for them and opened up for dialogue or two-way communication.

Personal two-way communication between the Pathfinders and Norwegian youth is something that is highlighted in the SK Report (2007). This invites the pupils to engage in dialogue, ask questions and encourages discussion (see Chapter 5). SP2 expresses surprise when they started because they did manage to engage pupils. SP2 compared what they did in the classroom compared to "high school teachers who struggle to get people to talk". SP1 states that this form of communication "perhaps makes it more believable/credible the knowledge we provide, but also we can make it a bit more fun/entertaining when a young person presents to other young people". SP3 explains that they present and share knowledge/experience from a young perspective. They clarify that this form of communication is "really priceless" (*virkelig gull verdt*). SP3 opined "that a young voice can explain what it means to be a young Sámi today". They suggest that it has more weight or perhaps is more interesting "than a 60 plus, 70 plus [person] who told me how it was".

Certainly, youth-to-youth contact or communication is considered a very important aspect of what the Pathfinders do. However, SP5 recalls "that twice teachers prepared pupils" for their visit. SP4 confirms this saying: "It was strikingly common, that the teacher had put on a Sámi film just before we arrived... and that's it" (The films shown were *Sámi Blood*, *The Pathfinder* and/or *Kautokeino Rebellion*). This "shortcut" as SP2 described it, was not considered an adequate form of preparation by other Pathfinders. As SP5 makes plain: "that's great but there are other things you can also do". Hence, the Pathfinders' testimonies verify that prepared classes were the exception rather than the rule.

Despite teachers being informed in advance that the visit is a "supplement to ordinary teaching, not a replacement" (SP2), many teachers do not prepare their pupils. SP2 explains that "lack of preparation meant that the communication was one way". They explain this using the following example:

At the end of the presentation the Pathfinders ask if there are any questions and pupils who are unprepared remain silent. But when they did ask questions so was it often those that you get time and again or a repetition of what was already presented, which we can answer both backwards and forwards. A lot of questions are repeated. For example, ‘Do you have a national costume?’ ‘Yes, I have a national costume. I showed it just now’. (SP2)

Obviously, this is an example of a question that shows that the pupil has not been following the presentation. SP3 also shared a similar example. But it also illuminates the frustration felt by the Pathfinders due to the basic level of knowledge that the Pathfinders feel forced to present because teachers have not prepared their pupils.

A lack of prior knowledge limits what can be included in the Pathfinders’ presentation. SP1 explains that they present “basic knowledge”. SP4 refers to it as “Kindergarten level of knowledge”. According to them this means including “maps of Sápmi, explaining what an Indigenous People is” (SP1), what a *lavvo* (SP3) or *joik* is (SP5), that we have 10 languages and “starting from scratch all the time” (SP4). More importantly for the Pathfinders, it means that they are unable to “go deeper into how it is to be Sámi today ... to show for example that we have many Sámi activists who are active on social media and ... we have many Youtubers, we have Sámi podcasts. We have an enormous amount of quite simply cool things we could show” (SP1). SP4 agrees saying: “I didn’t get a chance to kinda tell about what is fun (*gøyy*) with our history, or what is fun in our culture ... because they need that foundation [of knowledge/information] in a way, before we can of course build on it”. Despite the Pathfinders recognising the need for this level of content in their presentations, they all either explicitly or implicitly expressed this as a source of frustration.

This “basic” level of knowledge results in the Pathfinders being frustrated due to the repetition of information and the banality of some questions. Some pupils/teachers ask questions that are considered impolite. One such question is “How many reindeer do you have?” which is the equivalent of asking “How much money do you have?” (SP1). Others ask questions or make comments that reveal a lack of understanding of how the Sámi have suffered in the past. For instance, “when discussing the Fossen case and the windmill park which has been built in a reindeer grazing area, a teacher said ‘yes, but it is very important for example ... that we have green energy and you Sámi must also give something for the whole world don’t you think?’”. For SP1 this way of thinking is problematic and made them feel

“very sad”. They explain that it shows that the teacher doesn’t know the history of the Sámi let alone “how much we have already lost”. SP1 reflects further: “if the teacher has so little information and knowledge about history ...[what] other misunderstandings can that teacher have which they are passing on to pupils?”. Hence, questions or statements by teachers reflect not only a poverty of knowledge but also understanding. This understanding relates to the notion that history matters and contrary to conventional belief, the past is not simply in the past. Importantly, as SP1 clearly states, misinformation affects attitudes towards the Sámi and influences what is taught about the Sámi and how or the approach teachers take. It is therefore not surprising that stereotypes and discrimination still exist, given that some pupils’ education is based on these misconceptions.

6.4.2 The North-South Divide

Overall, the Pathfinders consider there to be a great deal of “ignorance” (uvitenhet) (SP5) in Norwegian schools. They distinguish between questions or comments that they believe stem from an absence of knowledge and those that result from some knowledge that fosters stereotypes and discrimination. These distinctions are mostly but not always described geographically. Since the Pathfinders can choose (to some extent) which areas they travel to, not all of them have had the same experiences. But they have all shared their experiences with each other and have therefore the following common understanding: generally, questions in the south of Norway were asked out of ignorance, whereas questions or comments in the North were founded on stereotypes and discrimination.

SP5 says that all the Pathfinders in their year “noticed that [in] places which were very strongly Norwegianised (fornorsket), there we got perhaps questions which ... stemmed perhaps from racism”. Such places mentioned by SP5 were Nordland, Troms and Finnmark. Examples of the types of questions asked were: “You can of course drive over the border without paying toll? Do you drink a lot? Why are you all so short?” These kinds of questions occurred more often in the North and according to SP5 are based on stereotypes. SP2 refers to these kinds of encounters euphemistically as “difficulties”. Surprisingly, SP2 states that it was mainly teachers that were difficult, not pupils. They explain “it was mainly teachers who did not agree with our view of history. And this was mainly in Northern Norway”. It seems apparent that the Pathfinders are conscious of the tensions between the Norwegian and Sámi communities in the North, irrespective of whether they live there or not.

Of considerable interest concerning the degree of discrimination experienced in the North is that several of the Pathfinders mentioned that the coordinator or advisor from SUAS

accompanied them when they attended schools in Finnmark. SP2 explains that “the SUAS advisor was with us the entire week and was with us in in the classroom in case something should happen”. The SK Report (2007) makes no mention of the advisors accompanying the Pathfinders during school visits. How long this has been the case was not addressed in my discussions with the Pathfinders. However, SP3 provides a context as to why this has been implemented. They explain that “there have been so many unfortunate, awful experiences in Finnmark”. No doubt the presence of an employee from SUAS provides the Pathfinders with extra academic and moral support.

However, having a Sámi adult in the classroom doesn’t necessarily prevent “difficulties” from happening. SP3 recounts holding a presentation alone in Finnmark because their partner was sick. The SUAS advisor was present. It was time for lunch and a teacher approached SP3 asking if he could ask them a question. He suggested that he wanted the advisor to leave so that he could ask SP3 the question in private because as he explained “the question... is a little bit discriminating”. SP3 was frightened. They spoke Sámi to the advisor asking them not to leave. The advisor did not leave and told the teacher that if he had something to ask, he could do so in public. SP3 explains “actually it wasn’t a question, it was a theory. He had based it on the fact that there is so much Sámi hate ...that the Sámi are knocked around in Troms because their national costume, in particular the men’s costume, is incredibly ugly and looks like a dress.” SP3 adds that the teacher was “completely sincere”, that he “really believed this”. At the same time, SP3 describes that they felt “put out” (*satt ut*), “completely shocked” and “speechless”. Despite their initial reactions SP3 explained “why the *gákhti* hangs down. That it is there to provide insulation...”. Not surprisingly, SP3 felt that “it was a really difficult day”.

These kinds of encounters are interpreted differently by each of the Pathfinders. SP3 interprets it as aggression: “there were so many aggressive teachers”. SP2 considers them “challenging”. SP2 distinguishes between questions that are founded in ignorance and those that emanate from prejudices/stereotypes and discrimination. Questions which challenge one’s Sámi “identity and history” also took place in the North. Examples given were: “Can you really call yourself Sámi? Do you speak Norwegian? You live in Norway, don’t you?” It is these kinds of questions which SP2 interprets as a “personal attack”.

In the introductory chapter, I explained that there has already been a considerable amount of research concerning the existence of prejudices in Northern Norway towards the Sámi. What appears to have been not so readily investigated until recently are prejudices

towards the Sámi in the South. The Pathfinders also recall discriminatory experiences in the South. These do not always take place in the classroom, but via social media. SP2 remembers very well a particularly “tough” (drøy) question they received on Snap Chat from a pupil at a high school in Stavanger. The pupil asked: “I have a buddy who feels sexually attracted to reindeer? Does he have Sámi origins?”. SP2 explains that they did not reply and immediately blocked the user. After which, they informed the school and gave the pupil’s username. One of the teachers who knew SP2, “took it very badly, and she said that ‘...this should not happen here’”. Exactly what the consequences were for the pupil(s) involved, SP2 will never know.

What we do know, however, is that racialised slurs and hate speech are amplified due to social media’s reach (United Nations, 2021). Furthermore, increased media coverage shows that experiences of hate speech towards the Sámi extend from Facebook posts to bullying and offensive comments in schools, towards football teams and to individuals who have been either verbally or physically assaulted for wearing the Sámi national costume, speaking Sámi, waving the Sámi flag or for sharing Sámi content on social media (NIM, 2022). By the same token, Snapchat is also a less formal and intimidating forum for pupils to connect with the Pathfinders. SP2 also describes Sámi pupils living in the South, who contacted them prior to their visit. SP2 says that they always encouraged Sámi pupils to come and meet them: “we said hi and talked to them. Often we talked Sámi...they really wanted to talk Sámi with us”. According to SP5, the use of social media is a requirement of the SUAS contract. SP4 recalls that one of their university assignments was to create a portfolio about their use of social media. Typically, the Pathfinders would share their social media details at the end of their presentations.

6.5 The Knowable and the Unknowable

As I have established earlier, to be a Pathfinder means that they choose visibility and vulnerability. Their testimonies reveal prior awareness of the current lack of knowledge about the Sámi in the classroom and the possibility of encountering “uncomfortable” or discriminatory comments or situations. Therefore, they realise that being a Pathfinder has the potential to put themselves in a vulnerable position. By contrast, their testimonies also unveil a lack of awareness of the degree of these kinds of situations and more significantly how these events will impact them personally. Whilst it may well be that representation goes hand in hand with the job of a Pathfinder, perhaps what is not so predictable is how the Pathfinders will respond and navigate these experiences and the impact they have, particularly on their level of vulnerability.

The preparation of the Pathfinders prior to visiting schools is outlined in Chapter 5. The Pathfinders confirm that they were “well prepared”. SP1 elaborates that not only did they learn “how to present, how to make presentations, how to stand and remember to breathe etc., but they also used role play to prepare them for all kinds of questions”. SP2 states that they were “prepared for every eventuality by SUAS, that we can meet difficult pupils and difficult teachers”. Of import is that this preparation creates expectations so that the Pathfinders believe they understand what and how things will happen and how “difficult” it will be. SP4 on the other hand, does not recall having any role play activities and reveals that: “we were told that people were not always nice”. However, as SP4 clarifies they had no preparation regarding “how it would affect me personally”. This comment speaks to what is knowable and unknowable. No matter how well prepared they were academically or how many times they were told it might be “difficult”—it is impossible to predict how an entire year will be. And it is equally impossible to predict how each Pathfinder is going to react.

6.5.1 Reconciling Their Own Expectations

Based on their classroom encounters, the Pathfinders alternate between feeling that they do make a difference and feeling that they don't. For instance, by answering questions based on stereotypes, SP5 describes being able to “crush” them. By the same token SP5 and the other Pathfinders felt frustrated due to expectations not being met and factors being beyond their control. Although the Pathfinders were informed that there was a knowledge-gap about the Sámi in Norwegian classrooms, they were, as SP5 says, expecting “that pupils would know a little bit more”. In the following example, SP5 expresses his frustration regarding what pupils know: “Most people know who Rosa Parks is, but no-one knows who Elsa Laula Renberg is. And both are very important civil rights activists/fighters. The only difference is that one is from the USA and the other is from Norway. So why do we know more about the struggle for American civil rights than the civil rights' battles that have occurred in Norway?”. SP1, on the other hand, had an expectation that they would “have time to talk and encourage pupils to be more open and respect other people, regardless of where they come from, which language they speak or their appearance”. Instead, they felt a sense of incompleteness. As a result, they would have liked what they called “Sámi Pathfinder Volume 2”. A second year of holding presentations where they could build on the knowledge given in the first.

Other Pathfinders had feelings of frustration and despondency, perhaps even inadequacy, about not being able to make a real difference. This was related to the fact that they only had 1.5 hours with each class which “restricted which topics could be covered”

(SP1). Consequently, several Pathfinders expressed frustration that they did not reach all the pupils. SP1 says “One doesn’t emotionally impact the pupils. Don’t make any big change”.

SP4 says it feels like “what I do almost doesn’t make a difference” (SP4). They explain:

we only have 90 minutes in a year. It isn’t enough...I have visited 120 schools and held over 150 hours of lectures, so for me that is an enormous amount. But for those [pupils] who have been listening, it is 90 minutes in their whole life. And that is almost nothing (ekstremt lite). (SP4)

SP4 ironically brings to our attention, that at the end of the year, it is the Pathfinders who are most affected by lecturing in classrooms, not Norwegian pupils.

Consequently, SP4 felt that what they did was insufficient for the Sámi to be normalised. They claim: “we will never be normalised if we only have the Pathfinders who travel around to different schools. It will never be enough. It must be part of it. An important part, yes, but just a part. There must be more”. This feeling that they were not having an impact meant that the Pathfinders could feel demotivated: “one can often feel that it is a little wasted what we do and it takes so much of one that one loses courage/motivation now and again” (SP1). The Pathfinders were also deflated after negative experiences. SP2 states they wanted to “go home” after negative experiences. Hence, throughout the year the Pathfinders had to manage their expectations and reactions, by reminding themselves why they were doing this.

Similarly, the Pathfinders expected the year to be “very exciting year”, with “heaps of experiences” and lots of “travelling” (SP3). However, the demands of travelling exceeded the Pathfinders expectations. SP2 refers to the challenges of travelling and how time-consuming it was. They said: “All of Sunday went in travelling to the city, finding the hotel and where the school was – then get some food and go to bed. Hire cars to drive to the schools on Monday. Lectures at the schools could be set-up for 8am and 2pm. During hectic weeks, it took almost the whole afternoon to travel to a new place”. Implicitly one can assume that part of SP2’s frustration is also due to the impact travelling had on their private time or downtime. All the Pathfinders knew how the travel plan was typically organised: they would travel one week and have one week off where they would focus on their studies (SP3). However, SP5 experienced travelling for two consecutive weeks and only having one week free. They describe this as “almost the opposite of offshore shifts” which resulted in them not being home very much. SP5 also mentioned other Pathfinders they knew who travelled for five weeks in a row. Although SP5 was aware that these problems occurred due to “lack of

resources at SUAS”, this led to frustration and excessive tiredness. SP3 describes feeling “really bad” after their 3-hour presentation but not being able to relax “because there was always a plane to catch”. Several of the Pathfinders also mentioned visiting schools alone because their co-Pathfinder was sick and there were no replacements. This was despite the SK Report (2007) having suggested an increase to six Pathfinders.

In addition, since the SP initiative is a full-time course, the Pathfinders have assignments throughout the entire year. This includes when they are travelling and giving presentations. This combination of a preliminary intensive six-week course with lectures from 9-4pm, with continual study commitments, travelling, presenting twice a day “was much more difficult than the Pathfinders had imagined” (SP5). It resulted in the Pathfinders feeling “very tired” (SP1). SP3 remembers standing at Márkomeannu Festival with the new group of Pathfinders thinking “now I have nothing to do anymore”. Consequently, the Pathfinders had to manage their expectations, motivations and feelings throughout the year, and find avenues for venting them.

6.5.2 An Embodied Experience

Of course it went ok ...I did it, but, it came at a price. (SP3)

The Pathfinders experience what I interpret as several dilemmas regarding their role or position in the classroom. Firstly, they are there to represent the Sámi and provide information. Secondly, they are not qualified teachers and have limited pedagogical and accrued “factual” information. Thirdly, they are *young* Sámis. In this section I will specifically discuss two dilemmas that became apparent from the interviews: 1) a duty to represent; and 2) an expectation of professionalism. In addition, I will present what I consider to be the most important finding. That being a Pathfinder affects them mentally, physically and emotionally, for which they are not prepared.

As I referred to in section 6.1, the Pathfinders feel a sense of duty in their representative role. This is in relation to academic knowledge but also sharing personal knowledge. All the Pathfinders said that the year was difficult (*tungt*). SP1 implies that the job is demanding and draining. They told me that they were mentally tried from the job because they “give everything” they have during the presentations, they “answer all the questions...there are so many thoughts that one becomes weary in the head”. SP4 explains that “the next day you meet 150 other pupils, and you don’t know what kind of reactions you are going to get”. SP5 discloses that this difficulty is both physical and mental and relates to

the potential consequences that their representation may have. They explain that it is “difficult both physically and mentally because one feels that one has a social mandate. Mentally draining when one is concerned about saying something wrong or conveying incorrect information. Concern and worry that one could hurt one’s own people” (SP5). SP5 was not alone in this concern. SP3 describes their representative role as “a very big responsibility”. They explain how sharing knowledge with pupils and teachers is complicated: “You feel that you should know something about the Sámi situation, that is after all what you are presenting, but no-one is an expert. You are not an expert after studying one year at SUAS, with a six-week intensive course” (SP3). SP3 says this because they felt a sense of expectation from others. They explain: “Some people do believe that [the Pathfinders] know it all”. Hence, the Pathfinders’ sense of responsibility is amplified by the fact that they feel they are representing the entire Sámi nation and their awareness that their academic knowledge is limited. These factors, plus the unpredictability of reactions from pupils and teachers, is mentally and physically “difficult”.

The Pathfinders acute awareness of their mandate and the responsibilities associated with it, meant that they developed a heightened sense of obligation and professionalism. SP3 explains that this meant that they “pushed themselves”. SP1 clarifies this saying they felt an “expectation to be professional in the face of questions that shouldn’t be asked”. SP3 narrated an incident that happened when they were talking about Norwegianisation with a class in a school in the South. SP3 said that pupils “threw chewing gum at us ... and laughed when I told them about Áhkku, my grandmother, who was sent to a boarding school”. Despite these kinds of negative experiences taking place less often than positive experiences, they are what the Pathfinders remember very well (SP2). Instances like this, where the Pathfinders feel confronted by “gruesome” behaviours or comments, whether stemming from indifference, ignorance, stereotypes or discrimination, are “painful”. Even though SP3 informed SUAS, who then sent a complaint to the school, it has since left SP3 with regrets. They say: “I regret that I didn’t end the presentation there and then... that I held out, even though it hurt. I should have packed my things... I won’t hold presentations and tell [things] to you if you shall sit with hoodies on and air pods, sleep or throw things. I can’t be bothered...” (SP3).

SP3 is not alone in having regrets. SP4 wishes they had been stricter and not tolerated unjust experiences or negativity. SP2 remembers that “there were a few times, it was so close (like før)... that we interrupted [the presentation] and said ‘that we are here for your sake, if you don’t appreciate it, then we’ll go’”. SP2 did recall some Pathfinders in a previous year

ending their presentation prematurely. However, SP2 and their co-Pathfinder never did. Just exactly how much the Pathfinders should tolerate in the classroom is raised by SP3. They state: “I didn’t in a way have enough guts to just say that this here is a free offering to schools...It’s not something [you] can expect that we will keep going (holde ut) in the face of bad/awful behaviour. It’s not in a way a duty/obligation (“pliktig”) for us to do this, if, if it hurts us”. And yet it seems that in spite of how they felt or reacted, the Pathfinders pushed on.

On the whole, the Pathfinders consider their year visiting Norwegian high schools as worthwhile. They explain that the majority of their experiences were positive and that it was an incredibly exciting year. However, despite being prepared, they did not fully know what they would encounter, what it would entail and how it would affect them (SP2). SP2 recalls that positive experiences directly affected their whole self. They explain that after having a “super-class” they “had a really good feeling in the body afterwards...we could live a really long time on that feeling”. However, the opposite is also true. When visiting South-Western Norway, SP4 notes that “people joked after us, and called us Sámi cunts and Sámi fuckers and such”. Consequently, SP4 was shaken by this and wanted to quit because “I didn’t want to expose myself to this”. SP4 describes that this particular experience impacted them personally and viscerally. They explain that they “felt [it] in their body in a way that they hadn’t before”. SP4 expresses a desire to have had someone professional to talk to, apart from their co-Pathfinders, friends and relatives. Furthermore, SP4 recalls the teacher excusing the pupils’ behaviour explaining “Yes, but they are just children”. SP4 states that “18-19-year-old pupils are not children”. They continue: “they are one year younger than us”. This last comment is to my mind a pertinent reminder that the Pathfinders are young. It also troubles the positive perceptions that the SK Report (2007) and the Pathfinders have about peer-to-peer communication. Additionally, despite the preparation provided, the Pathfinders’ knowledge and emotional robustness correlates to their age, individual personalities and life experiences. What is certain is that the Pathfinders “learn-by-doing”, which leads to experiences that both delight and challenge them. Despite the sense of obligation they feel towards the role, they believe in what they are doing. However, their enhanced sense of duty to represent and be professional increases their vulnerability, affecting them mentally, physically and emotionally. As cited above “it came at a price” (SP3).

6.6 The Undefinable

Without question all five Pathfinders believe that their year as a Pathfinder has been extremely rewarding. They have increased their network/contacts; had a lot of positive

experiences and feedback; travelled enormously, inside and outside of Norway; increased their knowledge and ability to tackle difficult questions; and it has strengthened their Sámi identity. For many of the Pathfinders, their experiences as a Pathfinder have been the catalyst to continue participating in public events, even at times contributing to their choice of study or employment. Hence it seems that once a Pathfinder, always a Pathfinder – where representation of the diversity of “Sáminess”, contributing to society through the promotion of “Sámi issues”, and “filling” the knowledge gap about the Sámi to help counter stereotypes and discrimination among Norwegian youth, is a perpetual project.

However, according to the Pathfinders, this project and their role within it is not confined to this understanding. Having had the opportunity to reflect about their experiences, the Pathfinders feel that their visits in the classroom “gives something extra” (SP1) and that they are more than just themselves, a young Sámi, and an Indigenous person. SP3 claims that the role of a Pathfinder is “so much more than just travelling... I experience that it was much more. Much, much more than what I can say. A journey is physical in a way ...”. SP4 elaborates saying that “it was after I began as a Pathfinder that it became so much more...it seems easy in practice to travel from school to school, but there is so much more emotion behind it all”. These statements infer that being a Pathfinder is more than what the Pathfinders do and bring to Norwegian classrooms. It is bigger than the job description and bigger than concepts such as representation, diversity, identity and a social mandate. It is consequently, not something for which one can truly be prepared. Certainly, it is not something which I can perfectly quantify by writing this thesis. I believe it is more than peer-to-peer communication between youth as suggested by the SK Report (2007). Rather, it can be described as a *meeting with* a young Sámi adult that occurs within a cultural interface that is more complex than a binary, essentialised understanding of a meeting of cultures: that is, young Sámi meets young Norwegian. Notwithstanding, what the Pathfinders *know* in both body and mind, is that what they do “is bigger than even the Government or SUAS know” (SP4).

6.7 Summary

In an ideal world the Sámi Pathfinder initiative should not have been necessary as the teachers really should be doing it. In my opinion the initiative cannot exist forever, otherwise one has never managed to solve the actual problem. (SP5)

In this chapter I explored how representation and identity are employed symbolically to show diversity and difference within Sámi society. This has shown the complexity of Sámi

articulation, connecting it to broader societal issues of marginalisation, recognition, belonging and self-identification within the Sámi community and the wider Norwegian community. The Pathfinders are simultaneously expressions of this diversity and influenced by dominant essentialist notions of identity. Hence, this plurality of ways of being Sámi and being a Pathfinder, in which one is both-and and neither-nor, is indicative of the cultural interface.

I also presented a variety of experiences that the Pathfinders encountered which resulted in joy, gratification, frustration and despondency. By nature of their job, the Pathfinders are visible and vulnerable. As I discussed, the degree of vulnerability is influenced by factors both within and beyond the Pathfinders' control. Encounters in which pupils and teachers were perceived as having knowledge typically resulted in positive experiences for the Pathfinders. Likewise, visits to schools where pupils were unprepared generally meant that Pathfinders and pupils were less engaged. Therefore, it is possible to describe the Pathfinders' role as a continuum of benefits and burdens which hampers or enables their agency. The impact on the Pathfinders' agency affects how they respond to their role and encounters in the classroom. This in turn impacts their mental and physical well-being. The ethical implications of this impact on the Pathfinders will be explored in the following chapter.

The Pathfinders are intelligent and sensitive individuals who have reflected and problematised (at least among themselves) their experiences. The Pathfinders do believe that "the SP initiative is beneficial for society" (SP3). However, they are also conscious of problems associated with it which impact how they *counter discriminatory and stereotypical sentiments and statements in majority-classrooms in Norway*. Some of these have already been presented in this chapter and will be developed in the following chapter countering stereotypes through education/knowledge. Others which are more relevant to Norwegian society will conclude this next chapter. These are: that the SP initiative is not enough (SP4); and as quoted above, the importance of the teacher's role in providing information about the Sámi and the lack of measures to address the continued discrimination of the Sámi in society.

7 Countering Stereotypes through Education/Knowledge Promotion and its Implications for the Sámi Pathfinders

Following on from the previous chapter, in this chapter I synthesise the main findings from the interviews and how they relate to my research question and theoretical framework. As young Sámi, the Pathfinders inform pupils and teachers in majority-classrooms about Sámi society and culture. Through their presentations they hope to influence Norwegian youths' stereotypical and potentially discriminatory perceptions of the Sámi. Through my discussions with the Pathfinders, I have discovered that there appears to be a "standard Pathfinder", who speaks Sámi, has reindeer and comes from Katuokeino. Furthermore, despite the advantages that becoming a Pathfinder provides in terms of enhanced identity, increased network (belonging) and self-assurance in tackling discrimination, it is also a burden. This burden is related to the Pathfinders' perception that they have a social mandate and a sense of duty attached to their professional and representative role. This burden informs how much of their own personal narrative they include in their presentations and the fact that they represent an entire Indigenous people. This continuum of benefits and burden results in an embodied experience that affects their well-being. These findings problematise my answer to the research question.

The trifecta of representation, diversity and identity shows the multi-layered and multi-dimensional articulation of the Pathfinders' identities. By positioning these articulations within the cultural interface (section 2.5), it strengthens their validity and supports the earlier statement that no singular articulation of Sámi identity can ever represent the collective. The plural identity articulations the Pathfinders have are possible because they have agency. Agency provides a framework to consider the ethical implications of the mental and physical effect of the Pathfinders' role and their responses to classroom encounters. Lastly, the Pathfinders testimonies provide a springboard from which to foster discussion of educational and societal issues in Norway today.

7.1 The Pathfinders Social Mandate and Agency

As established in the previous chapter, the Pathfinders perceive their role as having a social mandate in which they disseminate "knowledge". Their efforts are buoyed by the understanding that an increase of accurate knowledge about the Sámi within a peer-to-peer communicative framework will influence Norwegian pupils' and teachers' misconceptions about the Sámi and possible discriminatory tendencies. The Pathfinders can thus be viewed as

actors responding to societal and educational structures in an effort to transform or impact the education of Norwegian pupils and ergo society. The Pathfinders' agency is enacted in relation to three institutions: SUAS, Norwegian high schools and the Norwegian government. Each of these enable and limit the Pathfinders in different ways. The first two institutions will be addressed in this section. I will return to the Norwegian government in section 7.4.

SUAS provides the framework for the Pathfinders' presentation through the factual knowledge they impart. They also supply role-play activities to help prepare them for the variety of questions they may be asked. It is this academic and practical preparation and support throughout the year, that enables the Pathfinders to enter Norwegian classrooms despite only having a six-week intensive course behind them. SUAS also manages the administrative side of the SP initiative, having most of the contact with schools thereby creating their travel route. So, SUAS through these efforts is enabling the Pathfinders to fulfil their role.

By the same token, the knowledge provided by SUAS determines what the Pathfinders can comfortably include in their presentations. Whilst some Pathfinders felt that they had freedom to select the content of their presentation, SP3 expressed a sense of security in presenting topics that were already addressed through SUAS' formal education. This meant that they felt they could not discuss the Queer Sámi community in schools despite it being, in their opinion, particularly relevant to Sámi and Norwegian youth. Hence, SUAS, as an academic and educational Sámi institution, is the authority on what Sámi content is relevant. The authority and ethos of SUAS aligns with understandings within the educational sphere that power dynamics are at play in all classrooms at all levels of the educational system (Boler, 1999; Janks, 2013). This results in a restriction on the type of knowledge the Pathfinders represent. From a decolonial perspective, it is valid to ask if SUAS is turning an "epistemic blind-eye" to its own knowledge-making practices through the choice of topics they include in their education of the Pathfinders? (Nakata, et al., 2012).

The Pathfinders' "causal powers" are also restricted by the lack of knowledge in Norwegian schools, as well as the unseen dynamics between the Pathfinders and pupils and the Pathfinders and teachers. Due to the lack of knowledge most teachers have and subsequent lack of pupil preparation, the Pathfinders feel they must provide "basic" knowledge. This is for them a major limitation. Providing "basic" knowledge may mean that the class presentation provides superficial understandings of Sáminess, which perpetuates stereotypical, simplified narratives of Sáminess, rather than the complexities that exist in

everyday life. Of course, the reality of their presentation is far more complex and depends not only on the preparation of the pupils, but also their interest and engagement in the topic. In addition, pupil engagement is also contingent upon the Pathfinders. This relates to the preparation provided by SUAS, but also less easily definable aspects such as the Pathfinder's personality, life experiences and the degree to which they are personally affected by their classroom encounters. Arguably, the Pathfinders do have agency to represent more than a simplified narrative. This is especially achieved by the inclusion of their own personal narratives which allows them to “crush” stereotypes and present diversity and difference within the Sámi community. This was particularly evident with SP2 and SP3's identity positions as “non-standard” Pathfinders.

The Pathfinders agency is situational. It is created and given in a particular context; that is, in Norwegian high schools, Sámi festivals and national and international events. It is also limited to a year. Theoretically, as invited guest-lecturers, the Pathfinders are “experts” in being “young Sámi”. Through their representative roles and speaking on behalf of the Sámi people, they gain authority and ergo agency. However, the Pathfinders recount experiences of having chewing gum thrown at them, having their knowledge challenged by teachers, particularly concerning historical facts, as well as being confronted by discriminatory and at times vulgar comments. As young people without a pedagogical background, they enter a pedagogical environment for which they are not fully prepared. Consequently, this imposes limitations on what they can control and how much impact they have. Hence, the classroom is an arena in which the interplay of power relations can compromise the Pathfinders' agency.

The Pathfinder's visit provides pupils with a unique experience —contact with a Sámi person. The SK Report (2007) and the Pathfinders consider peer-to-peer communication to be a boon. It provides credibility and relationality. It encourages dialogue allowing for reflection and perspective-taking. However, the lack of pupil and teacher knowledge directly impacts the effectiveness of this form of communication. Despite teachers being informed that they should prepare pupils, this is outside of the Pathfinders' and SUAS' control. Since, the Pathfinders are not much older than the high school pupils, this can potentially undermine their authoritarian position. This is implied by the fact that the many Pathfinders stated that it was more often teachers who exhibited discriminatory behaviour or comments than pupils.

To assess the impact of the Pathfinders on Norwegian youths' knowledge and perceptions, I defer to the only publicly available evaluation of the Pathfinders. In the SK Report (2007), pupils questioned “believe they have got more knowledge, but that attitudes

haven't changed very much" (p.49). The SK Report (2007) clarifies that it was not possible to gauge how much the pupils believed that the visit contributed to eventual changes to pupils' opinions/beliefs (oppfatning) about the Sámi, when they did not know what their opinions were before their visit. This lack of mapping about pupils' knowledge and opinions/beliefs about the Sámi is equally relevant today as explored in the introductory chapter.

What the Statskonsult proposed as more knowable was that the initiative will probably contribute to creating attention about the Sámi and their situation for all the pupils who participated in the visit (SK Report, 2007, p.48). The question is whether over time, it has contributed to positive or negative attitudes for those pupils who are affected by Sámi problems and conditions (problemstillinger og forhold) (p.48). As there is no follow-up report, it is impossible to say. What the report could say for certain is that "[t]eachers in Northern-Norway have consistently more knowledge about the Sámi, whereas in Southern-Norway often there is a substantial lack of knowledge" (p.46). Consequently, there are greater demands or expectations regarding the Pathfinders' competency and knowledge levels in the North than in the South (SK Report, 2007, p.46). This was certainly corroborated by the Pathfinders I spoke to. However, their experiences show that the knowledge about the Sámi in the North helped sustain stereotypes, misinformation and discrimination, resulting in more challenging classroom encounters which affected them personally.

What the SK Report (2007) conclusively revealed was that the Pathfinders are themselves confident that the SP initiative is successful and worthwhile. This is equally true of the Pathfinders I interviewed. Despite the Pathfinders having problematised the impact of their role throughout their testimonies and despite frustrations due to factors inhibiting their agency, they continue to believe in their social mandate. Hence, it can be stated that the Pathfinders believe that they as individuals and as a collective can make a difference. This ability to act and change their social reality in the presence of structures that resist and assist their endeavours, is agency. So, to reformulate my research question from a theoretical perspective: if the intent of agency is some form of transformation, who or what is being transformed by the Pathfinders' visits?

7.2 Sámi Diversity and Difference Within the Cultural Interface

The Pathfinders are active agents striving to transform Norwegian society through education in majority-classrooms. The previous chapter showed that the year as a Pathfinder fortified their Sámi identities regardless of whether they grew up in majority-Sámi communities or not. In addition, they developed networks and increased their knowledge about Sámi issues and

society. By their own assessment, they have improved their ability to answer difficult questions. In turn, this has increased their confidence, so they are more inclined to make their Sáminess visible. The fact that they perceive their role as enhancing their Indigenous identity is contingent upon them having agency. This results in representation that is both personal and political.

The Pathfinders use their personal, geographical and linguistic diversity to address discrimination and existing stereotypical associations of the Sámi. As the previous chapter showed, they do use these characteristics and their personal narratives to illuminate the different ways of being Sámi. Their self-identification as a group (collective identity) enables them to be able to articulate their identity through political representation, despite the recommendation in the SK Report (2007) that they don't. Furthermore, the inclusion of Sámi history in their presentation can be viewed as a political act (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Hence their collective identities are being a Sámi and being a Pathfinder.

Yet, the Pathfinders also represent different types of individual Sáminess because they live their lives at the interface of two cultures. As I described in the previous chapter, the representative boundaries between where one identity —personal, Sámi, young Sámi and Pathfinder—begin and end are not clear. Nor can they be extracted from the reality of living in Norway and the fact that they are Sámi and Norwegian simultaneously. This is the interface in which all Sámi find themselves and must negotiate daily. For the three Pathfinders who live in non-majority settings this may seem more apparent. But it is equally relevant for all Sámi whether they live in majority-Sámi or non-majority communities.

The numerous possible articulations of the Pathfinders' identity suggest that they have agency. However, this agency can be affected by whether one feels a sense of belonging or not and it can be challenged by positive and negative encounters (Sollid & Olsen, 2019). Certainly, SP2 and SP3 increased their sense of belonging through increased language competency. Notably, SP3 perceived their lack of language and geographical distance from a Sámi-majority setting as important factors affecting their self-identification as Sámi. Their concern mirrors tensions that exist within Sámi society between essentialist and constructivist articulations of identity, particularly with the importance of language as an identity marker. By contrast, every Pathfinder acknowledged that their increased knowledge about Sámi history, society and issues strengthened their Sámi identity. Furthermore, a sense of belonging was established by their shared experience as a Pathfinder, cultivating a unique collective identity that promoted their agency.

By *choosing* to become a Pathfinder, choosing visibility and vulnerability, these young Sámi choose to engage in the tensions associated with the cultural interface. This is an empowered and embodied position that reflects the historical and continual dynamics between the coloniser and the colonised. Despite the challenges and dilemmas that the Pathfinders experienced in this space, their sense of agency was not diminished. Even when, as outlined in section 6.4, the outcomes of their classroom encounters were uncertain.

7.3 Standardisation and the Cultural Interface

The concept of the cultural interface is an important critical response to counter essentialised and stereotypical portrayals of the Sámi (Gjerpe, 2021). This is because the cultural interface allows for numerous individual articulations of Sámi diversity and difference, which means that logically there cannot be one singular way of being Sámi. Hence, within the cultural interface people can belong to a collective without being reduced to a single definition. This is equally relevant whether the collective is an Indigenous People (Sámi) or being a Pathfinder. Therefore, through representation of the diversity and difference within the Sámi community, the Pathfinders redress stereotypical representations of the Sámi and the Pathfinders.

It is therefore a concern that the Pathfinders' testimonies show that there is a perception of a "standard Pathfinder" within the Sámi community. There is no doubt many factors influencing who applies and from where – one of which is that the number of applicants appear to be decreasing (SP3). Another factor is the reach of the initiative. This seems to be limited to advertisements and articles about the Pathfinders in media or governmental outlets in the North. This has resulted in two urban Sámis out of 67 over the past 18 years, as well as most Pathfinders over this period coming from Troms and Finnmark. Therefore, it is not surprising that a perception among Sámi youth of a standard Pathfinder has developed.

Concepts of standardisation can have uncomfortable associations with notions of authenticity and essentialism. We can see this in the way in which the Pathfinders show themselves in their *gáktis* in their presentations. This could be seen as adhering to hegemonic symbolic representations of articulating Sámi identity. Alternatively, it also shows the difficulties of living at the cultural interface and exemplifies "the interwoven, competing and conflicting discourses" (Nakata, 2002, p.285) that exist in this shared space. It pays witness to the tensions which influence the Pathfinder's agency to select alternative symbols to articulate their identity.

7.4 Ethics, Dilemmas and the Burden of Representation

In Chapter 6 I referred to the Pathfinders feeling a sense of obligation attached to the role. This obligation relates to the fact that they get paid to be a Pathfinder, but more importantly it results from a sense of obligation or duty to represent. This obligation combined with the feeling that they represent an entire Indigenous People is unquestionably a burden. Many of them expressed concern that their representation through knowledge sharing may or may not “harm” the Sámi people. This is problematic on several fronts. As my discussion above has shown, within the cultural interface it is not possible for one person or even a group like the Pathfinders to be truly representative of the whole. This is applicable in all contexts, Indigenous or not. More importantly, the idea of representing their people, places not only stress on the Pathfinders but also places them in an ethical dilemma for which they appear to neither receive preparation prior to beginning their school visits, nor do they receive support during- or post- being a Pathfinder. This is, I propose, because the preparation is focused on gaining academic knowledge about Sámi culture and society and not providing for the emotional well-being of the Pathfinders.

I highlighted in Chapter 5 how the SK Report (2007) considered feelings an important strategy to sustain pupils’ attention and interest better than dry facts. This is achieved by the inclusion of the Pathfinders’ “stories”. While the emotional impact of the Pathfinders’ visit on pupils is discussed in the SK Report (2007), they never specifically mention the emotional well-being of the Pathfinders. The report does alert SUAS to the need to prepare the Pathfinders for difficult questions, which is now in place, but it never suggested that they also provide routinised or formal outlets for the Pathfinders to reflect on their experiences and/or receive emotional support and assistance. Effectively, 19–25-year-old Sámi youths are encouraged to use their feelings actively as a pedagogical tool. The Pathfinders’ testimonies reveal that they also consider the expectation that they include their personal narratives problematic. This is expressed directly by SP3’s poignant question: “how much is one willing to share of oneself?”.

Similarly, other ethical questions stem from the Pathfinders’ sense of obligation. The duty to represent creates a paradox that places the Pathfinders in a vulnerable position. There is no doubt that the Pathfinders are invested in their role of representing Sámi identity and diversity. But they also want to do a good “job”. This duty to represent is amplified by an additional obligation to be professional. The Pathfinders clearly stated that they remained in classrooms exposed to unfavourable behaviours and comments, in a quandary as to whether

they should or even can leave. This dilemma highlights the power dynamics in the classroom mentioned earlier. However, this dilemma can also be considered as thwarting their agency, which they later regretted.

These ethical dilemmas came to light because of the Pathfinders' testimonies. By sharing their stories, they have created a narrative of collective memory. Through our conversations with a purpose, the Pathfinders reflected upon their experiences. Through this thesis, some of their experiences are documented, rendering them visible. Thus, through their first-person narratives, the Pathfinders have moved from the margins to the centre.

7.5 Transformation: the Societal and Personal Implications of Indigenising Education

Self-determination has many levels: individual, collective and institutional. In Norway, the Sámi Parliament and SUAS are examples of institutional self-determination. Whilst the Sámi parliament and the State's political system are two structures, they interact relationally about issues which are of equal concern to both, such as education, land rights, resource management, cultural protection and so forth (Broderstad, 2014). This relational approach has enabled Sámi agency to challenge and change Norwegian education policies and curricula. It has also resulted in the development and continuation of the SP initiative.

Indigenous institutional actors, such as SUAS, maintain their relationship with the state so that they can promote Sámi issues and attempt to create social change. As documented in Chapter 5, the budget for the SP initiative has substantially increased since 2004. The funding provided by the Government constrains and enables SUAS' agency. It enabled, for instance, the SP initiative to expand from three Pathfinders to four (Länsman, 2014). It also contributed to the development of the Pathfinder website, which is an important resource for pupils and teachers, despite seemingly not being actively used by teachers before the Pathfinders' visit. However, it is still SUAS who decides the specifics of how these funds are distributed and what or who is prioritised. The distribution and prioritising of funds establishes the parameters that not only influence the educational encounter between the Pathfinders and the pupils/teachers; but also, the Pathfinders personally.

The fact that the SP initiative has not increased to six Pathfinders is surprising. This increase was suggested in the SK Report (2007). An increase to six Pathfinders was explained as having positive benefits in terms of the social mandate by increasing the number of visits to Norwegian high schools. It was also seen as a benefit for the Pathfinders, allowing for

sickness or other eventualities. This would help to ensure that the Pathfinders did not visit schools alone and that their travel schedule remained regular. However, some of our Pathfinders mentioned that they and others had travelled for up to five-six consecutive weeks. In addition, the decision to increase the academic weight of their course from 30 study points to 60, the equivalent of one year full-time at university, places constant demands on the Pathfinders' time and energy. The intensity of the combination of travel, work and study and the burden of representation meant the Pathfinders were mentally and physically tired.

The Pathfinders' testimonies reveal that their role is an embodied experience affecting them physically, mentally and emotionally. The NIM Report (2022) declared that for contact to positively change prejudices, it needs to be "sufficiently close, positive and frequent" (p.46). Whilst the SK Report (2007) showed that the majority of pupils were positive to the Pathfinders visit and believed they learned a lot, the same could not be said concerning their attitudes towards the Sámi. Pupils' responses to the questionnaire revealed that either their opinions about the Sámi hadn't changed or that they were not certain if they had. Since 2007, there hasn't been any publicly available empirical research investigating pupils' prejudices before or after the Pathfinder visits. Currently, we have no way of confirming or comparing these preliminary findings. Certainly, the Pathfinders testimonies stated that preparation of pupils resulted in positive classroom experiences. Yet, most of the time pupils were not prepared. Additionally, the Pathfinders' visit is potentially one and a half hours contact-time in a schoolyear and perhaps even the only contact with a Sámi during their lifetime. So, while the Pathfinder visit may well be sufficiently "close" and a "positive" experience for pupils, it is certainly not frequent. By contrast, the frequency of contact for the Pathfinders is significantly greater—and as the previous chapter shows, so too is the impact.

It is also important to consider the contact pupils have with the Sámi outside of the classroom. Research shows that pupils located in the North have more contact with Sámi than those in the South (NIM, 2022). However, contact is also possible via social media, which is a popular communication forum among Norwegian youth and is not restricted by geographical boundaries. However, social media is recognised as a platform that promotes hate-speech (Action Plan, 2020; United Nations). So, social media can conceivably increase pupils' exposure to negative contact or experiences, offsetting the positive impact of the Pathfinders' visit. Hence, to meet the requirements of proximity, positivity and frequency seems an impossibility for simply four Pathfinders. Therefore, SP4's concern that the SP initiative is not enough is highly relevant.

Given that racism is a structural constraint which affects Sámi agency and identity articulation daily, SP5's concern about the teacher's role in providing information about the Sámi and potentially inefficient measures to address discrimination of the Sámi is worth further deliberation. The State is legally obliged to address discrimination through ILO C169, and other human rights instruments (such as CERD, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination) by actively developing measures to help counteract it. Apart from the SP initiative, there have been three new initiatives: Reaidu (UiT), DEMBRA and NIM. This seems somewhat of a minimalist approach to a national problem that has been publicly identified since 2004, if not earlier. Overall, the Government's major focus and emphasis has been the educational system through curriculum development (LK20) and guidelines for teacher education. Despite educational reforms taking time to gain traction in classroom practices (Sollid & Olsen, 2019), my investigations show that the government has not provided sufficient resources— human, economical and pedagogical —to increase national competency for everyone and for teachers in schools and teacher- education institutions in particular, about the Sámi. Additionally, if universities do not see the relevance of including Sámi perspectives and knowledge in their course curricula, due to for instance the perception that there is no Sámi community in their local area, then teaching about the Sámi becomes random and dependent upon individual teachers' interest and engagement. Whilst this assumption by some higher institutions indicates the effectiveness of a century or more of Norwegianisation and assimilation, the importance of the teacher's role in filling this knowledge-gap cannot be overstated. However, according to the Pathfinders testimonies this was rarely the case. It is also important to reiterate here that knowledge about Sámi history and culture on its own is not sufficient to combat prejudices. The teacher's intention and approach is also of paramount importance. This requires teaching in a manner that “actively challenges stereotypes” (NIM, 2022) and it requires teaching *about, for and through* Sámi perspectives and knowledge.

7.6 Summary

By virtue of their Pathfinder role, the Pathfinders have agency as individuals and as a collective. The Pathfinders feel like they can exercise agency. They believe that they make a difference despite structural constraints (SUAS and Norwegian classrooms/teachers), power dynamics, resources (only four Pathfinders) and positionality (minority in a majority context). At the same time, being Sámi, and being part of SUAS and the SP initiative means the Pathfinders have access to more power and resources (knowledge). Then again, their

collective agency as a Pathfinder is limited to one year. However, as their testimonies have shown, their causal powers strengthened both their individual and collective identities.

This chapter has shown that there are many constraints that limit the Pathfinders' transformative ability to alter Norwegian pupils (and teachers) attitudes towards the Sámi. There is currently no empirical research mapping pupil knowledge and attitudes towards the Sámi, prior and after their visits. Though controversial, the inclusion of the Pathfinders' personal narratives in their presentations can be seen as an effective means of connecting with and educating Norwegian youth. Through the distribution of knowledge, as opposed to confrontational encounters, the Pathfinders are foreseeably able to build positive encounters with pupils. However, as to whether these encounters are close and frequent enough to have an impact on pupils' attitudes and prejudices, remains to be seen.

8 Conclusion

Through interviews and document analysis I have explored the role of the Pathfinders to find answers to how they address discrimination and existing stereotypical associations about the Sámi in Norwegian classrooms. The backdrop for these investigations is the national curriculum (LK20), which focuses on the integration of Sámi perspectives and knowledge in all subjects as a central theme and the racial tensions within Norwegian society which are also reflected in schools.

Testimonio allowed me to explore the Pathfinders' complex narratives and show how they mirror the entangled nature of identity articulation within Sámi society today. Their identity articulation is concurrently personal and political, individual and collective, Sámi and Norwegian. At times these articulations can be essentialist, as the example of the standard Pathfinder illustrates, but also constructivist. They demonstrate that there is a plurality of ways to articulate being Sámi, being Norwegian and being a Pathfinder. This complexity of identity articulation applies equally to Norwegian pupils. I have applied the concept of the cultural interface as a lens to investigate the complexity of identity articulation and the interplay between the Pathfinders and the pupils and teachers.

Whilst the Pathfinders' testimonies are uniquely different, I have discovered via this thesis that they also have commonalities. Their collective narrative not only confirms that a 'knowledge-gap' about the Sámi still exists in Norwegian schools, but significantly that most teachers did not prepare their pupils for the Pathfinders' visits. When they did, they typically

put on a film. The presence of pupil and teacher knowledge was shown to generally result in positive experiences for the Pathfinders. Yet, the Pathfinders revealed that they experience a gamut of reactions due to the unpredictable nature of educational encounters in the classroom. These embodied experiences could range from gratification to frustration, disappointment and inadequacy, to surprise. Despite the Pathfinders being academically and practically prepared, I argue that their emotional well-being was not formally provided for during or after their tenure. However, their resilience in the face of dilemmas in the classroom was made possible by the support provided by and within the Pathfinder group and their families/friends.

The Pathfinders represent and provide Indigenous “knowledge, resistance and authority” when they visit Norwegian classrooms (Nakata et al., 2012). They subvert the legacy of invisibility that the Sámi people have experienced historically in education and continue to experience. At the same time, during their visits, the Pathfinders’ agency is influenced by factors both within and beyond their control. In particular, the obligation to include their personal narrative potentially increases their vulnerability as it is frequently connected to an emotional type of knowledge, as opposed to cognitive or factual knowledge.

There is no doubt that their representative role as Sámi and as an Indigenous person provides an essential role model for Sámi youth, some of whom struggle with mental health problems, social stigma and discrimination because they are Sámi (Hansen & Skaar, 2021). Equally, their representative role satisfies the Pathfinders’ perception of their role as having a social mandate helping to normalise the Sámi within Norwegian society improving the everyday lives of Sámi generally. Hence, the Pathfinders are caught between the vulnerability which their representative role exposes them to, with the increased Sámi visibility and status their representation engenders. This is the paradox of representation.

Through knowledge/education the Pathfinders address current tensions between the Sámi and Norwegians and are active agents challenging stereotypes and hate speech. This is done by teaching *about* the history and culture of their people (past and present), framed *within* their status and rights as an Indigenous People, *through* their own perspectives on these and other issues. Importantly, the Pathfinders provide peer-to-peer contact *with* a Sámi. As an example of Indigenous education, the Pathfinders’ educational approach should help reduce prejudices (see section 1.2 and 1.3 and NIM Report, 2022. p.46), allowing for transformation. However, considering NIM’s (2022) statement that to affect positive change in prejudices, contact needs to be “sufficiently close, positive and frequent”, further research is required to

specifically explore the Pathfinders' impact, by mapping pupil and teacher knowledge and attitudes, before and after their visits.

Whilst this thesis focuses on the extraordinary efforts of the Sámi Pathfinders, the following questions remain unanswered. Whose responsibility is it to educate the majority society? How appropriate is it to place this burden on the shoulders of Sámi youth? How are we going to fill the identified knowledge-gap about the Sámi when lack of teacher confidence and preparation, racist views and misunderstanding of curriculum are ongoing factors affecting the indigenisation of mainstream education? How are we going to fulfill the requirements of LK20 if higher educational institutions in Norway are not willing to move towards decolonisation (K.F. Hansen, 2022)?

The state is arguably meeting its requirement of creating measures to counter discrimination and stereotypes. However, the stand-alone nature of the SP initiative and other measures, can be considered problematic. Perhaps, if a coordinated, relational approach was applied, the impact on existing stereotypes and discrimination would be greater. Additionally, if education is considered a significant contributor to countering stereotypes and discrimination, then an attitudinal and conceptual shift is required by educational institutions and teachers towards the Sámi and decolonisation. Herein lies the potential for future work and research.

Finally, as Sámi actors, the Pathfinders aim to transform the majority-educational space by altering society's stereotypical and discriminatory attitudes towards the Sámi. Yet they are not limited to this. Significantly, through representation, identity and diversity, and by sharing knowledge in Norwegian classrooms, the Sámi Ofelaččat/Veivisere/Pathfinders show us the way to live within and at the cultural interface.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Information Sheet and Written Consent Form

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet

“Motarbeide stereotyper: urfolks selv-bestemmelse og utdanningstiltak gjennom de Samiske veivisere

Dette er et spørsmål til deg om å delta i et forskningsprosjekt hvor formålet er å undersøke de forskjellige erfaringer (kommentarer og oppførsel) de Samiske veivisere har opplevd i møte med ungdommer på norske videregående skoler.

I dette skrevet vil jeg gi deg informasjon om målene for prosjektet og hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg.

Formål

Hensikten med masteren min i urfolkstudiet er å fokusere på nytt på de Samiske veivisere og deres viktig pedagogisk bidrag i norske skoler. Deres formål, slik jeg forstår det, er dobbelt: 1) å bygge en mer tolerant og inkluderende samfunn for alle; og 2) gjendefinere det samiske offentlig bilde. Fra denne synsvinkelen, er de samiske veivisere en uttrykk for urfolks selv-bestemmelse. Spesielt vil avhandlingen min undersøke på hvilken måte samspill mellom norske ungdommer og de samiske veivisere utfolder seg i deler av landet hvor samene ikke har bodd tradisjonelt, t.d. Rogland, og ta i betraktning betydningen og rollen de Samiske veivisere har for urfolk utdannelse. Jeg håper at denne avhandlingen vil gi kraft til lærere slik at de holder seg til kravene i Overordnet del i norsk læreplan (LK20) – og følgelig oppfordre dem til å forbedre eget kunnskap for å gi elevene et mer nyansert innblikk i samisk historie og kultur.

Mitt forskningsspørsmål er:

Hvordan motarbeider de samiske veivisere som en utdanningstiltak diskriminering- og stereotypisk konnotasjoner av samene utenfor samiske kjerneområder i Norge?

Hvem er ansvarlig for forskningsprosjektet?

Norges arktiske universitet i Tromsø (UiT) er ansvarlig for prosjektet.

Hvorfor for du spørsmål om å delta?

Det er din tidligere erfaring som en Samisk veiviser som betyr at du er en kandidat for avhandlingen min.

Jeg har lyst til å intervju 6 Samisk vevisere

Marie Kvernmo, rådgiver til de Samsiske vevisere ved Samisk høyskole har tidligere sendt ut informasjon via epost om prosjektet.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det at du delta i et intervju på nett. Jeg skal bruke Teams.

Intervjuene skal bli tatt opp (kun lyd) og transkribert. Intervjuene vill foregå på norsk og/eller engelsk. Kode-veksling mellom norsk og engelsk er en mulighet.

Hver intervju vil vare mellom 30-60 minutt.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykke tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli anonymisert. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Du vil bli tilsendt en avskrift eller en oppsummering av samtalen slik at du kan sjekke innholdet. I tillegg får du anledning til å reflektere over egne kommentarer, gi tilbakemelding eller trekke kommentarene dersom du ønsker det.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Jeg vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene jeg har fortalt om i dette skrivet. Jeg vil behandle opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Bortsett fra meg, er det kun veilederen min (Torjer Olsen) som vil ha tilgang

All informasjon - muntlig, skriftlig og visuell - som fremkommer i intervjuet vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det vil lagres på UiT One Drive. Alle personopplysningene, f.eks (navn, epost osv) vil lagres separat fra kommentarene dine. Jeg vil erstatte navner med en kode som lagres på egen navneliste adskilt fra øvrige data.

Du vil ikke være gjenkjennelig i fullført avhandlingen

Hva skjer med personopplysningene dine når forskningsprosjektet avsluttes?

Prosjektet vil etter planen avsluttes (30.06.2023). Etter prosjektslutt vil datamaterialet med dine personopplysninger bli slettet.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke.

På oppdrag fra UiT har Personverntjenester vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Hva vil skje med personopplysninger om deg etter prosjeketets slutt?

Det er planlagt at prosjektet ender i slutten av juni 2023. Etter det skal alle navner bli slettet.

Dine rettigheter

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

- innsyn i hvilke opplysninger vi behandler om deg, og å få utlevert en kopi av opplysningene
- å få slettet personopplysninger om deg
- å få rettet opplysninger om deg som er feil eller misvisende
- å få en kopi av personopplysninger
- å sende klage til Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger

Hvor kan jeg finne ut mer?

Hvis du har spørsmål til projektet, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta

kontakt med:

- Norges arktiske universitet (UiT) ved Torjer Olsen.
- Vårt personvernombud: Joakim Bakkevold by email (personvernombud@uit.no) or by telephone +47 776 46 322 at the Arctic University of Norway (UiT)

Hvis du har spørsmål knyttet til Personverntjenester sin vurdering av prosjektet, kan du ta kontakt med:

- Personverntjenester på epost (personverntjenester@sikt.no) eller på telefon: 53 21 15 00.

Med vennlig hilsen,

Kimble Walsh-Knarvik
Forskningsstudent
Mbl:47 47 26 4644
Epost: kwa060@uit.no

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har mottatt og forstått informasjonen om prosjektet "*Vår migrasjonshistorie*"
Forskningsintervju og fotoutstilling. Jeg har fått anledning til å stille spørsmål.

Jeg samtykker til:

å delta i et *intervju*

Jeg samtykker til at mine opplysninger behandles frem til prosjektet er avsluttet, *30.06*
2023.

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato)

Appendix B

Interview Guide

The questions in this guide will help provide answers to the following questions:

- a. How do the SP perceive their role and experience their role as a Pathfinder?
- b. What kind of knowledge do the SP represent/present?
- c. In what way do they understand their role as educators of the majority Norwegian community?
- d. How do their experiences differ when visiting schools in dominant and non-dominant Sámi areas?

Motivation

1. Hvorfor vill du bli en veiviser? Hva var det som motiverte deg?
(Why did you want to become a Pathfinder? What motivated you?)

Self-described account of their job

1. Hvordan vil du beskrive jobben som en veiviser uføre?
(How would you describe the job a Pathfinder does?)

Their experiences

2. Kan du sier noe om erfaringen fra ditt år som en veiviser?
(Can you tell me something about your experiences from your year as a Pathfinder?)
3. Er det noen opplevelser eller tanker du sitter igjen med etter denne erfaringen?
(Are there certain experiences or thoughts that remain after these experiences?)

Self-assessment of their impact

4. Når du tenker tilbake til starten som en veiviser, hvilke forventinger hadde du?
(When you think back to the beginning as a Pathfinder, what expectations did you have?)
5. Var disse forventinger møtt på slutten av perioden som en veiviser?
(Were these expectations met by the end of your time as a Pathfinder?)
6. Er det noe du vil ha forandret på basert på kunnskapen du sitter med i dag?
(Is there anything you would have done differently based on the knowledge/experience you now have?)
7. Har du noe råd å gi til kommende veivisere?

(Do you have any advice for new Pathfinders?)

Sámi dominant/non-dominant areas

8. Hvordan var erfaringen din annerledes eller ikke da du besøkte skoler utenfor det samiske kjerne området?

(How was your experience different or not when you visited schools outside of Sami majority areas?)

Educational side

9. Hvordan fikk du inntrykk at elevene var forberedt for besøket ditt?

(What gave you the impression that the pupils were prepared for your visit?)

10. Ble du overrasket av responsen fra elever eller lærere noen gang? Hvorfor? Reaksjon?

(Were you ever surprised by pupil or teacher responses? Why? Reaction?)

Feedback about the SP initiative

11. Hvilken rolle mener du ordningen spiller? Dvs hvordan tolker du din rolle som en SV?

(What role does the SP initiative have? ie, how do you interpret the role of the SP initiative?)

12. Mener du at SV ordningen er tilstrekkelig eller er det rom for forbedring?

(In your opinion, is the SP initiative sufficient or is there room for improvement?)

Identity

13. Hva har erfaringen som en SV gjort med identiteten din?

(What has the experience of being a Sámi Pathfinder done to your identity?)

