



Coastal identities in the modern age:  
On diversity of ethnic articulation in Storjord, North Norway



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## **Abstract**

This thesis discusses Coastal identities in the modern age - the case of Storfjord in Northern Norway as studied in 2009. Populations in the coastal areas of Northern Norway are more or less a mixture of Coastal Sami, Kven and Norwegian. Historically, it might be analyzed as some results of the encounters of three ethnic groups; the Coastal Sami, Kven and Norwegian historically. Therefore, there is a natural tendency to choose a “both-and” ethnicity. However, the Coastal Sami and Kven experienced the worst form of the Norwegianization policy until the last century. The Coastal Sami and Kven ethnicity were often stereotyped as a stigmatized ethnic identity or just inferior. The mixed ethnic population in Northern Norway was therefore integrated into the Norwegian mainstream. My thesis brings out the contemporary changes among them. I observed the different ethnic identifications among the mixed population in Storfjord. I analyzed them in three categories: Category 1 termed “the North Calotte Cocktail” and “Northerner (Nordlending in Norwegian)” group. Category 2 is the group who chose the single ethnic identity as Sami instead of their former Northern Norwegian identity. Category 3 comprises of those who claim double/multiple ethnic identification instead of just having the Northern Norwegian identity. Furthermore, this thesis includes how these different ethnic identifications are influencing Sami ethnic revitalization and their mechanisms for strengthening their new identity.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 A story from my fieldwork

I will begin with a story. When I was doing fieldwork in Storfjord, I interviewed a friend of mine who was engaged in Sami issues. The reason I chose him for my first interview was because he was my co-worker for several years. Many times, he shared his dream of revitalizing the Sami culture and language in Storfjord. He was around 40 and had 3 kids. He was born and grew up in the southern part of Norway where his mother came from. He spoke a southern dialect. His mother, whom I met while she was visiting her son, moved to the Finnmark as a nurse in the early 1950s, and his father was born and raised in the Finnmark.

I asked about his parents and why he had to learn the Sami language after he had grown up. He said *“my father was a good man and it was not a secret or anything shameful that he was a Sami when I grew up. However, he did not want us, that is my brothers I, to learn the Sami language or anything related to Sami culture. He never spoke Sami to us.”*

When I heard his story, I was sitting in his living room, which was decorated with Sami handicrafts made of horn, wood and leather. I knew that he made these things, so I asked him how and where he learned this. *“After my father passed away, I moved to the Finnmark to find out about my heritage and roots coming from my father’s side of the family. You know, I was made fun of in school because I was a Sami. But I did not know the difference between them and me. Of course, I have a Sami father and I am a little shorter than others. But what else? .... they did not accept me as an ordinary Norwegian. However, I was fully accepted as a southern Norwegian in the Finnmark. It was ironic. It was hard to feel like and be accepted by others as a Sami in the Finnmark. I was neither Norwegian nor Sami. Who or what was I? ... I learned the Sami language and Duodji<sup>1</sup> in the Finnmark from the people there and in school. That experience and knowledge led me to understand who I am and gave me*

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<sup>1</sup> Sami traditional handicraft and art

*confidence in my Sami identity. I am proud to say that I am a Sami and also a Norwegian. .... I will move to the Finnmark again. It is hard to teach my kids the Sami language in Storffjord. I tried to speak Sami with my son but there are limitations because there are not many who can speak Sami in Storffjord. My wife and kids have attended a course called "Language Café", to learn the Sami language. It helped a little bit. I want to send my kids to a Sami kindergarten so that they can learn the Sami language "*

## **1.2 Introduction to key concepts**

Ethnicity is one of the main concepts in my thesis. I will discuss the concept of ethnicity and ethnic identification in the context of language and cultural revitalization. Ethnicity is complicated, ambiguous and complex. Hence, the concept of ethnicity is discussed in different manners. From the anthropological view, ethnic identity theories have been debated mostly from a big category between the primordial approach and the instrumental approach in general. The primordial view argues that ethnicity is an innate aspect of human identity. Meanwhile, the instrumental view insists on a constructed identity which means that ethnicity is an artifact created by individuals or groups to bring together a group of people for some common purposes. To present a theory of instrumental views, many have referred back to Barth's essay, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1994). Barth's investigation took place on the boundaries between ethnic groups and identified the significance of considering boundaries as well as the content. He criticizes the anthropological work of typology grouping through the ethnic diacritical markers such as dress, food and languages. He argues that ethnicity represents the social organization on the basis of the contrast between "us" and "them". His concepts are aware of an ethnic group's dichotomization by social relationships.

I argue that ethnic groups are not groups formed on the basis of shared culture, but rather the formation of groups on the basis of differences of culture. To think of ethnicity in relation to one group and its culture is like trying to clap with one hand. The contrast between "us" and "others" is what is embedded in the organization of ethnicity (Barth 1995).

Furthermore, his idea is that ethnicity is also produced by social interaction. People can construct and mobilize ethnic identity (Barth 1969) .

My point of departure is closest to the instrumental view. However, does Barth's theory explain how the population of "mixed" ethnic background in Northern Norway constructs a dual ethnicity? Dual ethnicity might not be a found in Barth's concepts of ethnicity.

Nevertheless, I prefer to use Barth's theories to analyze inter-ethnic boundaries and social ethnic categorization of "mixed" descent in the Coastal Sami region. In addition, I develop my argument of dual ethnicity based on Barth's concepts because they help me to investigate the manifestation of different ethnic identities.

My main concept is based on social organization of mixed descent. Therefore I will investigate inter-ethnic dynamic contact between populations of "mixed" background and other existing ethnic categories. How does the "mixed" category draw the line between one of their ethnic origins? In the Coastal Sami regions, many have mixed ethnic backgrounds which are a result of increasing inter-ethnic marriage. They also have their own distinguishing factors which could be lived out as Sami and Norwegian. One person I interviewed was born in a Coastal Sami region and has both Norwegian and Sami ethnic origins. She can speak both Sami and Norwegian and has cultural skills on both sides. She said she prefers to speak Sami and put on the Sami costume when she visits relatives in the Finnmark. However, she said that she wears the Norwegian national costume on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, which is the Norwegian National holiday, in Storfjord and speaks Norwegian there in daily life with her neighbors. In previous research, mixed descents in Northern Norway describe themselves as or like a "Northern Norwegian cocktail". "I am neither only Norwegian nor only Kven, but I am a Northern Norwegian cocktail with Norwegian, Sami, and Kven elements in my background"(Anttonen 1998:45). Kven are known as immigrants from northern Finland or northern Sweden to Norway in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with Finnish-speaking cultural background. There are contemporary debates over Kven matters of identity management which I will deal with later in section 1.3. Then, in chapter 2, I will focus on the theoretical study of ethnicity, especially dual ethnicity with particular attention to the Coastal Sami people's situation. Then, I will compare approaches with other populations of "mixed" descent from previous studies.

Through the story of my first informant, I have noted that learning the Sami language and culture played a pivotal role in achieving his ethnic identity and sense of belonging in both ethnic groups. Is this just a story of one man? It is not unusual to meet people who are dealing with their mixed ethnic identity in Northern Norway. Historically, if we compare the population censuses from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20 century,

we see the dramatic changes in the ethnic categories in northern Norway. Studying inter-ethnic marriage, Norwegianization and acculturation (Bjørklund 1985; Thuen 1987) may explain these demographic changes.

In my thesis, I intend to demonstrate how “mixed” ethnic populations regard their distinctiveness and how they operate in their ethnicity. Language and cultural revitalization is also a significant focus in my thesis. Why is the maintenance of indigenous languages important? To a large extent, colonialism and nationalism have affected indigenous peoples and resulted in global abandonment of their languages and cultures in general. Linguistics are concerned that the indigenous languages are not being transmitted from mothers to children because of political, economic and social factors (Edwards 1985; Fishman 1991; Fishman 2001). Why is it an important issue? Laura A. Janda noted that “language is the vehicle of a group’s culture, if a group’s distinctive language is lost, access to both type of cultural expression (lofty and everyday) is cut off. When this happens, group identity is always severely compromised and most often vanishes” (Janda 2008:2). Further more, David Harrison argues that when indigenous languages die, indigenous peoples lose useful human knowledge about animals, the seasons, plants, and other aspects of the natural world (Harrison 2007). Therefore, language death is both a matter of importance to the specific ethnic groups and is also a global issue from the aspect of losing human knowledge. In recent years, ethnic revitalization movements have focused on the restoration of ethnic identity through culture and languages. Ethno-political mobilization groups have been asking for special rights for protection of their traditional cultures and languages. In my thesis, I will focus on language and cultural maintenance in the context of the ethnic revitalization movement among the coastal Sami people.

### **1.3 Definition of the terms: the Coastal Sami, the Kven, Kven language**

The Sami are an indigenous people and ethnic minority in Scandinavia. Paine distinguished Sami society in three groups by ecology and economy: the Mountain Sami, the Settled River and Inland Sami and the Coastal Sami<sup>2</sup> (Paine 1957:6-7). Historical documentation tells us

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<sup>2</sup> 1. The Mountain Lapp who practice a reindeer-breeding with extensive nomadism. They form but a small numerical minority. The most important of the «winter villages» for these so-called Mountain Lapps are Kautokeino, Karasjok and Polmak.

2. The Settled River and Inland Lapps who live along the river courses and especially, in the neighborhood of the Mountain Lapp winter village in the interior of Finnmark. These people practice a mixed economy:

that the Sami people's culture and economy were observed homogenous until the 17<sup>th</sup> century. However, Paine observed that there was deep division between the Mountain Sami and the Coastal Sami in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In his field work, he found out that the Mountain Sami from Karasjok no longer treated the Coastal Sami in Revsbotn as proper Sami but as the "dáčâ". The Sami word "dáčâ" means the one who is not Sami or the one who is not Sami in behavior, outlook and performance. The word "dáčâ" can be used for local people who can not speak any Sami dialect. Nevertheless, Coastal Sami do not refer to themselves as "dáčâ" in Sami conversation but refer themselves as "we Norwegian" in Norwegian conversation (Paine 1957:18-20). Eidheim (1971) has shown the Coastal Sami identity was stigmatized, and therefore people performed as Norwegians in the public sphere. Sami identity was acted out on the backstage. The Coastal Sami people underwent the harsh Norwegianization process and mingled with Norwegian and other people in social and economic circles. Nowadays, The term coastal Sami denotes people of Sami origin who live on the coast of northern Norway (Nilsen 2003).

The Kvens are people of Finnish descent who immigrated to Northern Norway in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. In 1987, the Norwegian Kvens Association was founded, which claimed the status of a national minority for them. When Norway ratified the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities in 1999, the Kvens achieved status as a national minority<sup>3</sup>. The Kven language also received the status of a minority language in 2005 by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). However, their ethno political movement became an "indigenous movement" related to fighting against issues concerning the injustice and oppression. Many of them did not count themselves as an immigrant but an indigenous people. By that statement they demanded equal rights to land and resources (Anttonen 1998). These issues, especially the use of term of "Kven", are still ongoing debates and dilemmas today. Who are the Kvens? Kari Storaas argues that although the State uses the term Kvens for people in South Vanlange, the people

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lake and river fishing, hunting, forestry work, milk and meat production, and so forth. Virtually all have modern, permanent homestead today...

3. The Coastal Sami: the past and present economy of those living in West Finnmark. Paine R. 1957. Coast Lapp society. Tromsø: Tromsø museum. 2 b., pl. p.

<sup>3</sup> White Paper No. 15 (2000-2001) defined national minorities as "Groups with a long-standing attachment to the country". In Norway these minorities are: Kvens (people of Finnish descent in Northern Norway), Jews, Forest Finns, Roma and Romani people/Tater.

there do not perceive themselves as Kven but as Finnish or Finnish origin (the Norwegian terms 'finsk' or 'finskætted'). Researcher Kari Storaas stated this in her PhD thesis in Sør-Varanger(Storaas 2007). There is increasing awareness about Kven identity and Kven culture centered on language, education and cultural expression in Storfjord. At the same time, some people I interviewed did not want to call themselves Kven, but either Finnish, or Norwegian with Finnish origins. Therefore I will use the term Kven/Finnish together on my thesis.

#### **1.4 The Storfjord municipality and I**

Storfjord is the southernmost of the municipalities in North Troms and is a relatively young municipality. Until 1930, Storfjord, Kåfjord and Lyngen were one large municipality. This municipality was then divided into 3 smaller municipalities'.<sup>4</sup> Storfjord municipality borders both on Finland and Sweden. Storfjord municipality covers an area of approximately 1570 sq km, and has a population less than 2000. The most densely populated areas in the municipality are Elvevoll, Oteren, Hatteng and Skibotn. The three different ethnic groups of interest that encounter each other in Storfjord are represented by the Sami, Kven and Norwegian people and cultures. The Skibotn market was traditionally a meeting place for trade among the Sami, Kven and Norwegian people since the mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. This still takes place today(Fossbakk 2004). The Kvens came from northern Finland and from Tornedalen of northern Sweden. They moved gradually and reached the borders of present Norway in the eighteenth century. From there, they moved into northern Troms and western Finnmark into the areas of Skibotn, Alta, Børselv and Tana<sup>5</sup>. In Nord-Troms, Skibotn, Nordreisa and Kvenangen, there are Kven settlements(Hyltenstam and Milani 2003). In the Signaldalen, Norwegians from the southern part of Norway moved in and settled in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Even today they still speak their southern dialect(Figenschau 1999).

I have lived in Storfjord since 2004. I worked as a youth worker in a Christian organization for 5 years and I am now working as a nurse there. So, Storfjord is my home in Norway and I experience beautiful nature and good people. The reason I want to write about people in Storfjord is because I have seen the people's struggles and the changes in ethnic identification

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<sup>4</sup> Storfjord Kommune politisk historie from <http://www.storfjord.kommune.no/>

<sup>5</sup> Universitetsbiblioteket i Tromsø - juni 1999 <http://www.ub.uit.no/arkiv/maanedens/1999/199906e.htm> in April 2009 Kenneth Hyltenstam & Tommaso Maria Milani: *Kvenskans status: Rapport för Kommunal- og regionaldepartement och Kultur- og kirke departement* 2003



in the past few years. When I came there in 2004, I did not meet many people who said they are the Coastal Sami or Kven. The Coastal Sami or Kven culture was not visible at that time to me. Maybe I could not recognize the cultural expressions or differences even if they were there because I was a foreigner who could not speak Norwegian. My observations on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May can show the changes. I remember my first 17<sup>th</sup> of May parade which I participated in. In Storfjord in 2004, I wore the Korean national costume and carried a Norwegian flag. There were foreigners from Thailand, Philippines, South Korea, Germany, Finland, Canada etc, and the others were Norwegian or Sami. I remember that there were three men who wore Sami costumes. They were my co-workers and friends. They were not originally from Storfjord but had moved there some years ago. There was no one who was originally from Storfjord wearing a Sami costume. As time went on, the change came to this village. Some people, identifying themselves as Coastal Sami, started to wear the Coastal Sami dress. I remember one woman wearing the Coastal Sami dress on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May. Unfortunately, many village people took a critical attitude toward her Sami identity. Some nicknamed her “plastic Sami”, and she became the laughingstock of the village. I asked people what the problem was and why? They said that she should not identify herself as a Sami because there were no differences between them. “She is like us, nothing special. She can not speak the Sami language. What makes her say she is Coastal Sami? Who are the Coastal Sami?”

Surprisingly, people were very open to talk about ethnicity and cultural diversity during my field work in 2008. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May in 2008, there were quite many children and adults who wore the Sami costume. One lady I interviewed said that she would make her own Kven dress. People wanted to identify their different ethnicity through costumes in the public sphere, and talked about the cultural diversity in Storfjord often in a positive way.

This kind of change did not happen just among individuals, but also the Storfjord municipality now carries a project which called “Diversity gives strength.” In 2007, the local council made a resolution stating that all its activities will be based on three cultures and languages: Sami, Norwegian and Finnish. The municipality has a slogan: “Diversity gives strength.”

Storfjord municipality is historically multilingual and multicultural. Finnish, Sami and Norwegian culture and languages have existed there side by side. According to an 1865

census, Sami and Kven were registered in a high percentage (Sami 59%, Kven 32%) in Storfjord (Kilde: Nou 2007, 14:466-467,495). However, there have been dramatic changes within the last hundred years. In the 1978 census, 0.9% were registered as Sami and 98% were registered as non-Sami. The rest were either not sure or did not want to answer the question. "Do you consider yourself as Sami?". There was no data of Kven registration according to the 1978 census (Aubert 1978). In chapter 3, I will look at historical data concerning ethnic identification and language use in Storfjord from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century on. Now in a time of disappearing Kven and Sami language and culture, people are willing to revitalize these things, and revive their local heritage. The Coastal Sami and Kven/ Finish people from Storfjord are becoming more visible and accepted more and more in society and people are saying that they have a multicultural and multilingual heritage.

### **1.5 Research questions and research hypothesis**

In a family from the village, there are three siblings. One identifies oneself as a Coastal Sami and the others are Kven, and Norwegian. It is interesting to observe how people choose and identify their ethnicity. In this family situation, they have chosen either Norwegian or non-Norwegian identity according to individual self-ascription. On this basis, one might wonder why they do not choose multi-ethnic identities. Do people believe that it is better to choose one authentic identity? I lived in Storfjord and heard the old language theory which people used to believe in Northern Norway. They said, if you speak to your children in more than one language, they can or will not be fluent in them. This was one of the old theories about language learning that widely affected and still affects Coastal Sami and Kven/ Finnish-descendant, even though nowadays we know that children can learn and speak several languages fluently without difficulties. Comparatively, adults learn with more difficulty. This was negative ascription from outside for the multi-lingual concept.

In that context, it seems that it is problematic to choose a dual/multi ethnic identity for some individuals. Why? Are there old beliefs saying that mixed ethnic groups should choose their sense of belonging and origin just from one of the categories of origin by subordinating the weaker part of origin to stronger part? Maybe if they choose more than one ethnic origin, they will or can not fully achieve the sense of belonging to either ethnicity. Practically

speaking, maybe they can or will not choose dual/multi-ethnic identity because of the loss of their ancestral languages.

In my thesis I intend to investigate how people conceive their ethnic identity, and investigate the association between ethnic identification and language skill. My research questions are:

1. Could the success of Sami or Finnish language learning among northern Norwegians who have mixed ethnic backgrounds help to achieve or strengthen identity as Sami and Kven?
2. To what degree does a language course in the village influence one's identity affiliation?

In Storfjord, the ethnic identity could be categorized as Sami, Kven, or Norwegian, based on their self-ascription. Nevertheless, historically, the ethnic identification they have is a combination of three different ethnic groups. This mixed ethnicity is expressed often as "North Norwegian" (the Norwegian term: "Nordlending") which is a hybrid and is not based on their choice. My hypothesis is that the northern Norwegian who has a mixed ethnic background could have dual and bicultural ethnic identification by the learning of language and culture. They could achieve both Norwegian and Sami (both Norwegian and Kven) ethnic identity. It might also be possible for one to have a multi-ethnic identity if someone has learned the Sami and Kven language. I also investigated how dual and bicultural ethnic identity could influence the issue of ethnic revitalization, which tends to encourage dichotomization between Sami and Norwegian or Kven and Norwegian and rejects double or triple ethnic identity construction.

## **1.6 Fieldwork and research methodology**

I conducted my fieldwork from May to August 2009 in Storfjord and lived in village called Hatteng. Since I had lived there for 5 years, it was not a venture into the unknown. When I moved to Storfjord, I rented a place to live in and started daily routines that I had done before: like going shopping, hiking, swimming, visiting friends, going to church etc. Local people and friends recognized my presence in the village and asked how I was doing with my studies in Tromsø and why I had come back. So naturally I had an opportunity to talk about my thesis with a few people. They were very open to have a conversation about ethnicity and

cultural diversity in their hometown, and they even mentioned people whom they thought could be informants for my subject. So, I started sampling data by the snowball technique. Approximately 1800 people live in Storfjord municipality, which is divided into a few villages. I applied a qualitative research method during the field work period by conducting interviews, collecting documents, and by participating in the festivals of Sami and Kven people and joining other cultural activities in Signaldalen.

I had planned to carry out focus group discussions in the Sami “Language Café”. However, I could not do so because the “Language Café” was closed during the summer holidays. Instead, I interviewed four people who attended the “Language Café”, two in March<sup>6</sup>, two in August 2009, and another two in November 2010. The two whom I interviewed in March had moved to Finnmark. I could not have the focus group discussion because there were too few people in November. In all, I interviewed twenty people, young and old who had different ethnic backgrounds and lived in different villages.

In the beginning of my field work, I did not conduct the interviews with a planned sequence of questions or a tape recorder. To obtain information, it is important to have various questioning technics. It was a challenge to choose and adopt different styles and sequences of questions with different people. For instance, I started to interview an old woman with a sequenced question form and tape recorder. Her answers were very short and she had a defensive attitude. So I had to terminate the interview. She served coffee before I left, and surprisingly started telling me about her life and family history which turned out to be important data for my project. Actually, it seemed that the tape recorder and the many questions had been a hindrance to her. On the other hand, some young informants who had a higher level of education, wanted to have directed sequential questions.

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<sup>6</sup> On HIF-3620: Linguistic, Cultural and Educational Revitalization processes course on spring semester 2009, I wrote an essay on cultural language revitalization in coastal Sami region: Storfjord and Kåfjord. I did field work in Gáivuotna - Kåfjord and Storfjord from 24 March to 31 March 2009. In Kåfjord, I interviewed 6 people who attended a language course in Aja centre and had a focus group discussion with them. In Storfjord, I interviewed 8 people, and 2 of them were participants of the “Language Café”. At that time I had a plan to do a focus group discussion in Storfjord as well. Unfortunately, the meeting in the “Language café” was cancelled at that time.

Age group	< 30	30-50	50-70	Above 70
Number of informants	3	9	6	2
Gender of informants	2 men, 1 woman	1 man, 8 women	2 men, 4 women	1 man, 1 woman

(Age Statistics and Gender Information of Interviewees)

In the interviews, I combined both structured interviews with representatives of Storfjord municipality and residents of Storfjord, and narrative interviewing with old people. I encouraged them to tell their life stories and experiences. Observation was also a very effective tool to understand social context and use for data collection. I often acquired valuable data through random observations, encounters with people at work<sup>7</sup> and in informal social settings such as barbecue parties, Sunday hiking trips, voluntary (community) work etc.

Many people from Skibotn are engaged in the revitalization of the Kven/Finnish language and the Kven culture. Locally, people label Kven and Finnish, “mixed”. Even on the municipality web site, they wrote Kven/Finnish together without a distinct separation between them. However, some argued that it was very important to call themselves Kven and revitalize the Kven language. Others did not seem to be strongly concerned with which name they should be called. But some are more concerned that they will miss or even lose their Finnish roots and cultural heritage. When I asked about their ethnicity, most of them identified themselves as Norwegians who have a Finnish speaking ancestor. The elderly people said that Kven and Sami culture and language prospered when they were kids. The history of encounters among these three ethnic groups in the northern Troms shows that settlement and trade made up and were essential for the multicultural and multilingual society in the past.

During my time in field work, I participated in the Baaski Kven festival in Nordreisa (10-14 June) and the Riddu Riddu festival in Kåfjord (15-19 July). Both of these festivals were held in the neighbouring municipalities of Storfjord. Riddu Riddu is a festival which is meant to revive the Coastal Sami culture and language by a group of Sami youth in Kåfjord. They

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<sup>7</sup> I was partly working during summer as a nurse in Storfjord municipality.

organized the first Riddu Ridđu Festival to provide an opportunity for young Sami people to get together and sing Sami songs, speak their ancestral language, and learn about their traditions. It has been held every year since 1991 and will continue this year. Baaski is a Kven culture festival held in Nordreisa. The first festival was in June 2007 and the responsible organizer is the Nordreisa municipality.

### **1.7 Outline of the thesis**

This thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter is a general introduction to the thesis and research methodology and discusses the methods used to collect and analyses data. It also deals with the validity and reliability of the data. The second chapter is a theoretical framework about dual ethnicity, language revitalization and multiculturalism. Chapter three gives the historical background of the Sami, Kven and Norwegian encounter in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and describes the contemporary ethno-political movement. Research and fieldwork findings are presented in the fourth chapter, and the fifth chapter is the summary of my conclusions of the research and gives suggestions concerning further study on the subject of ethnic revitalization.

# Chapter 2

## Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Ethnic identification among mixed origin descent and dual ethnicity

Over the recent years, the study of ethnicity and how to classify ethnic groups in research has been formed by two schools of thought – primordial and instrumental. Ethnicity was understood as a key variable to describe common cultural and historical traits of a population which has common social meanings and a sense of belonging. Ethnicity is often inaccurately and confusingly used together with the word ‘race’, and is found within the definition of indigenous people. In many countries, indigenous people were differentiated by physical traits, skin color and categorized by 'blood' quantum classifications in government registration. Many times, the official categorization of ethnicity among indigenous peoples was basically understood in terms of race. For example, Government definitions of indigenous identity in Australia was largely race-based until the Commonwealth developed self –determination policies in 1970s (Grievies 2008).

When researching into ethnic identity among indigenous peoples, investigations should be made on the basis of history. They also have common cultural, linguistic and religious traits which set them apart from other ethnic groups. Therefore, I will use the categorization of ethnic group by descent, self-identification and recognition from others, such as community and other ethnic groups. I will focus on the history of ethnic groups which also gives us information the continuity of their ethnic identity.

This chapter deals with the theoretical discourse on dual-ethnicity in relation to the Sami people. I used the term ‘dual ethnicity’ to describe people who claim membership of two ethnic groups(Gibson 1999). My informants identified themselves as having dual ethnicity by ethnic origin and cultural competence such as language and custom. They claim their membership through their parents’, grandparents’ or great-grand parents’ ethnic origin and self-ascription. Dual ethnicity enables me to explore several things: first, how mixed ethnic descendants define their membership in two different ethnic groups; second, what kind of



factors help them to articulate their otherness compared to groups of single ethnic identification; thirdly why people react differently to their mixed ethnic origin.

Trond Thuen(1989) discussed the social categorization of descendants of mixed origin and tried to outline some of variables in ethno-genetic processes. In principle, descendants of ‘mixed’ alliances may be defined as belonging either to one of the categories of origin or to a new one, but they may also find themselves in a peculiar liminal and diffuse sort of social condition (Thuen 1989). He presents Coastal Sami in North Norway, the Aleuts of Alaska and the Métis of Canada to illustrate mixed populations and compare each group to some extent. In the case of the community of coastal Sami in Troms, North Norway, the mixed population of Sami and Norwegians is defined as a blend of both.

Their Sami identity is far from being extinct, but they cannot associate themselves with the model image of Saminess presented by reindeers or by the ethno political leadership. They feel that part of their personality is also in some way Norwegian as a product of a long process of acculturation. It is not that they are neither Sami nor Norwegian (like the Métis are neither White nor Indian) but a blend of both (Thuen 1989:62)

This notion is observed in my interviews as well. On the one hand, a blend of Sami, Finnish and Norwegian identify themselves as Northern Norwegian or ‘Northerner’ (the Norwegian term: “Nordlending”). The few participants in my field work named themselves as Northern Norwegian or a North Calotte<sup>8</sup> Cocktail which is mixture of Finnish, Norwegian and Sami ethnic origin. When they used this expression, they related it to ethnic origins of parents, grandparents or great grandparents and identified themselves as Norwegians of ethnic background. For instance, one lady who I interviewed said:

“I am a Northern Norwegian, my grandparents on my mother’s side were from Finland and my grandparents on my father’s side were both Norwegian and Sami. I was born in Norway and grow up here. Therefore, I am Norwegian. Almost everybody here has a background like me. I am neither Kven nor Sea Sami and I am not interested in these kinds of issues. If you want to talk about cultures or languages, I might be not the right person, because I am Northern Norwegian.”

With this background, I perceived that the Northern Norwegian is a blend of Sami, Kven/Finnish or Norwegian, and that they have a Norwegian identity. Their Sami and Kven/

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<sup>8</sup> Roughly, the North Calotte includes the areas of the polar circle in Norway, Sweden and Finland, in addition to northwest Russia. Thuen T. 2002a. Cultural Policies on the North Calotte Acta Borealia 19(2):147-164.

Finnish descendants do not greatly influence their sense of ethnic identity. They do not want to live as Coastal Sami or Kven/Finnish. Thuen(1989) asserts that ethnic ascription is based not only on criteria of origin but also criteria of performance. Many of the mixed descents in Storfjord have been integrated within the Norwegian ethnic category and identify themselves as Norwegians in daily life.

On the other hand, a blend of Sami, Finnish and Norwegian identify their ethnicity based on dual (in some case multiple) ethnic origin. They reconstruct ethnic boundaries with coastal Sami and Kven.

“I have a Norwegian and Coastal Sami background. But I grew up with only a few experiences of the Sami language and culture. My grandmother said it was important that I speak good Norwegian. Sami language was a secret language at home. They spoke Sami when they wanted to say something I should not understand or when we had visitors from the Finnmark. I think I am a Northern Norwegian. But it is not all of me because I have also a Coastal Sami origin. I will not neglect that part because I am both Northern Norwegian and Coastal Sami.”

The interview showed the differences in ethnic identification among Northern Norwegians. In Northern Norway, especially the Coastal Sami region, there are people who can identify their ethnicity as both Norwegian and Sami. Dual ethnicity of individuals in itself is not problematic. However, It could be a problematic categorization with regard to governmental recognition of the Sami as an indigenous people which are dichotomized from Norwegian(Thuen 1989). There is a similar case in Canada. In Canada the term “Métis” is loosely applied to all persons of mixed, White and Indian blood who are not classified as “Indian” by the government of the country, similar to ‘the North Calotte Cocktail’ in the Coastal Sami region. However, the Métis in the north west of Canada stand out as a distinct ethnic category by their own history and culture. In addition, they were recognized by the Constitution of Canada as an indigenous people in Canada in 1882(Sealey and Lussier 1975).

The Northern Norwegian or North Calotte Cocktail does not construct a third status of ethnic identity such like the Métis in Canada. However, individuals who ascribed to both identities often claim their rights as Coastal Sami or Kven. From my material from field work, I could differentiate between three types of ethnic categories among the mixed population and could spot changes of identity articulation in Storfjord. The first category is in largest in my area. This group identifies themselves as a result of ethnic mixing of Norwegian, Sami and Kven,

which are termed the “the North Calotte Cocktail”. They are suspicious of any ethnic identification for any political purpose. I will refer to this group as “the North Calotte Cocktail group” in this thesis. The second category consist of those who insist they are Coastal Sami and not Norwegian, because they have a conception of ethnic identity as ‘either-or’ categorization thereby implying one category and not both. The third category is those who claim dual ethnic identity. They are Norwegians by descent from some Norwegian ancestors. They speak the North Norwegian dialect and are generally received as Norwegians. However, they also have Sami ancestors and wish to strengthen their Sami identity, for example, by learning the Sami language. Therefore, category two has not the Norwegian identity but the Sami identity, category three on the other hand, chooses both Norwegian and Sami, and steps out of the “either-or” category.

My line of argument in this categorization is that the Coastal Sami identity could further develop like the ‘Métis’ category. The history of Coastal Sami is the result of encounters of Norwegian and Kven/Finnish by intermarriage and economic interaction among these groups. The Coastal Sami is neither Norwegian nor Sami, but a mixture of both. The changes among the mixed ethnic groups in Northern Norway, especially the Coastal Sami region, show possibilities of Coastal Sami ethnogenesis by reinvention of history and tradition. My argument is based on the fact that the Coastal Sami ethnic identity almost disappeared from the social sphere after the Norwegianization policy. People struggled with the management of their mixed ethnic background, resulting in their trying to revitalize their stigmatized Coastal Sami identity(Eidheim 1971). The ‘Métis’ category gradually appears to be the case with regards to the Coastal Sami people.

## **2.2 Sami language revitalization**

The Sami language belongs to the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic family, and is closely related to the Baltic Sea-Finnish languages, such as Finish, Estonian and Hungarian<sup>9</sup>(Brenna 1997). There are nine Sami languages in Sapmi<sup>10</sup>, and Northern, Lule and Southern Sami are spoken in Norway. Lule Sami people can understand the Northern and Southern language

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.hamline.edu/law/registrar/pages/syllabi/summer2007/norway/12-The\\_Sami\\_of\\_Norwa.pdf](http://www.hamline.edu/law/registrar/pages/syllabi/summer2007/norway/12-The_Sami_of_Norwa.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Sapmi denotes the Samiland which covers vast territories in Northern Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway (Bull, 2002,pp29)

with some effort. However, Northern and Southern Sami speakers can not understand each other (Corson 1996). As a result of Norwegianization, the Sami language lost its social domain and risked disappearing some decades ago. A peculiar trait among indigenous peoples is the fact that their languages almost died out due to the influences of colonization, the policy of assimilation and even globalization. There is the tendency of the global society to neglect the needs of minority and indigenous languages which face extinction. Some people argue that it is a natural process for languages to die out, just like human beings have a time to be born and a time to die. This view implies that nothing should be done about disappearing languages. Others, for example Finnish Linguist Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (2009), point out that languages are not disappearing by chance but are being 'killed' or 'murdered'. She used the strong term 'language genocide' to describe this phenomenon.

Whether languages are dying naturally or are being murdered by others, disappearing languages are a common phenomena which raise problems of preservation of culture and ethnic identity among indigenous peoples. There is therefore the need to look closely into the reasons for the disappearance of indigenous languages. Linguists explain first and foremost that there are few indigenous people left. David Harrison (2007) indicates that 548 languages, which are nearly a tenth of the world's languages, had speakers fewer than 99 and faced extinction in 2005. Secondly, there are few indigenous people who speak their ancestral languages because their languages are not used in dominant social circles. Skutnabb-Kangas (2002; Skutnabb-Kangas 2009) points out that languages can be 'neglected' by the educational system and mass media.

Many indigenous languages were 'neglected' by forced assimilation through education in colonial periods. In addition, forced assimilation through education made indigenous parents believe that their mother tongue was not a language which would lead their children into a successful future. Skutnabb-Kangas indicates that the weak political and minority position of indigenous people today could be one of the main reasons that indigenous languages are still neglected. The Sami language was almost close to death although Sami rights started gaining recognition in Norwegian society after the Alta-case in the 1970s. The protests against the Alta dam brought public attention to the Sami and a breakthrough in Sami politics, resulting in the establishing of the Sami Rights Commission. The increased recognition of Sami rights in Norway affected the Sami language. There have been tremendous changes since the 1980s.

The Sami language started being transmitted to the next generation and is used in daily life and education since language revitalization was implemented in recent decades.

In Norway, Norwegian and Sami are the official languages. Since, the Sami constitutional right was stipulated, the Sami people could maintain and develop the Sami language because the Sami language was considered a right which was legally binding. The Act of 12 June 1987 No. 56 concerning the Sámediggi (the Sami parliament) and other Sami legal matters (the Sami Act) was adopted, and the national assembly, the Storting, ratified the Constitution Article 110a in April 1988. Article 110a of the Norwegian Constitution states “It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life.” Norway also ratified the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on Sep 1972<sup>11</sup>, Article 27<sup>12</sup> being related to the Sami. The ILO (International Labour Organization) Convention no. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries in 1990, shows that Norway acknowledges Sami people’s rights and indigenous statutes. Because of this the Norwegian state has an obligation to uphold these rights.

According to the Sami Act § 1-5 and chapter 3, Sami and Norwegian languages are of equal worth and within the administrative districts for the Sámi languages (the municipalities of Kåfjord, Kautokeino, Karasjok, Nesseby, Porsanger, Tana and Tysfjord), Sámi and Norwegian are languages with equal status<sup>13</sup>. While the Sami language is being used within 7 Sami language districts it is becoming active and more widely used in daily life, education and social domain. Coastal Sami areas outside the Sami district have not been as successful in their attempts to revitalize the language in their districts. There are weaknesses in registration outside the Sami district. I would like to compare Storfjord which is outside the Sami

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<sup>11</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights  
[http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en) cited 10 April 2010

<sup>12</sup> Article 27: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language”

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/fad/Selected-topics/Sami-policy/use-of-the-sami-languages/the-use-of-the-sami-language-in-the-publ.html?id=86942#> cited 11 April 2010

language district and Kåfjord which belongs to the Sami language district. These are two neighboring municipalities in Troms County.

I will give a brief picture of Kåfjord and how this municipality went through the Sami language and cultural revitalisation. Kåfjord achieved an independent municipality status from Lyngen County in 1927. Kåfjord has fisheries as its central industry. Due to the decline of the fishing industry, people have been suffering for a long time with unemployment (Hovland 1996; Leonenko 2008). However, today the municipality has become an important centre for Coastal Sami revitalization. The youth and Coastal Sami activists have become very active in reinventing the culture and tradition of the Coastal Sami. Riddu Riddu is a festival, started by a group of Sami youth in Kåfjord, which began to revive the Coastal Sami culture and language. They organized the first Riddu Riddu Festival to provide an opportunity for young Sami people to get together and sing Sami songs, speak their ancestral language, and learn about their traditions. It has been held every year since 1991 and will continue this year. In addition, the Kåfjord Sami language center was established in 1994 and has contributed to the revitalization process along with the Riddu Riddu festival.<sup>14</sup> Lene Antonson did research on the Sami language situation from 1850 to 2004 in Nord-troms. She used the population census from 1970 to analyze the change of language use in Nord Troms. The table below gives information of Storfjord and Kåfjord (Antonson 2004:168; Aubert 1978)

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ajasamisksenter.no/linker.9393.no.html> in March 2009

Table 1: The number of persons with Sami as first language in a percentage of the settlement

<b>Number of Person who speak Sami as their first language</b>							
<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Sami as First language</b>	<b>Parents speak Sami as first language</b>			<b>Grand parents speak Sami as first language</b>		
		<b>Yes</b>	<b>I do not know</b>	<b>Yes+ I do not know</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>I do not know</b>	<b>Yes + I do not know</b>
<b>Storfjord</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>13.1%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>	<b>27.0%</b>	<b>13.4%</b>	<b>40.4%</b>
<b>Kåfjord</b>	<b>13.9%</b>	<b>40.9%</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>44.7%</b>	<b>57.5%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>64.6%</b>

Lene explained that there was a high percent of the population whose parents and grandparents spoke Sami in Kåfjord and Storfjord in the 1970s compared to other municipalities in Nord Troms. The use of Sami as a first language began to diminish from one generation to the next. Yet, when Kåfjord chose Sami as the official language like other Finnmark areas, they received economic support to establish a Sami language Kindergarten, the Aja Sami Center, and so on. These institutions contributed to reverse the trend of language use in the 1970s (Antonson 2004). I could see a trend of increasing numbers of Sami speaking students by analyzing data from the ten-year compulsory school information in Norway.<sup>15</sup> There are not many who speak Sami as a first language compared with other students who speak Sami as a second and third language. However, in Kåfjord there has been an increase in the number of bilingual students and a rising interest in the Sami language within the space of a few years.

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<sup>15</sup>Grunnskolen informasjonssystem [www.wis.no/gsi](http://www.wis.no/gsi) in March 2009



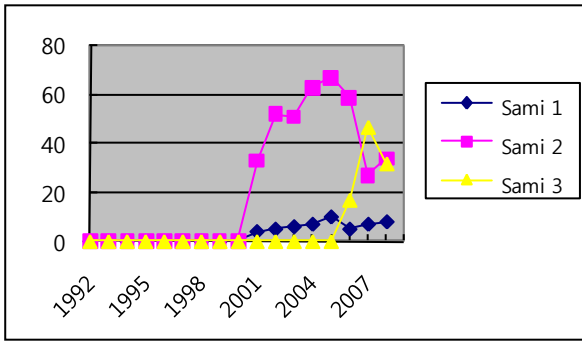


Fig. 1 Student number/ Years number of students related to Sami language in Kåfjord

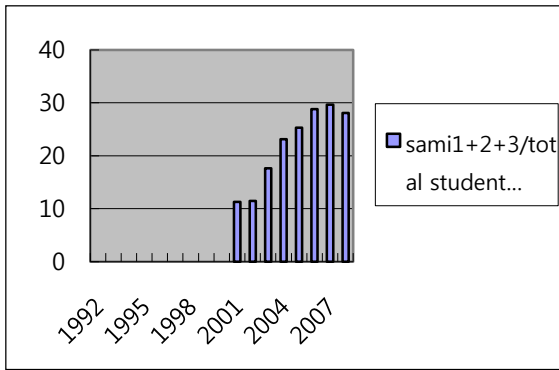


Fig 2. Percentage of student who can speak Sami as first, second and third language in compulsory school in Kåfjord

Whereas, Sami language is successfully being revitalized in schools in Kåfjord, there are only a few students in Storfjord who speak Sami as their first language (3 students /2001, 2 students/2002.2003, 1 student/2007, 2008), and who are learning it in compulsory school. Even in kindergarten, it has been a challenge to find teachers who speak Sami. In passing on the Coastal Sami identity, culture, human knowledge and value to further generations in the Coastal Sami region, the revitalization of language has significant meaning.

### 2.3 Multiculturalism

“Culture” is a common word we hear in every day life in the media, schools, market places, courts and other different social arenas. In the last few decades, the words “multicultural society” or “diversity” are very commonly used. In this section, I will deal with how multiculturalism offers an adequate comprehension of - and solution to - the situation of

indigenous peoples in the world, and Sami people. Firstly, I will deal with the main characters of liberal multiculturalism and see how this policy or philosophy approaches society, which has challenges and problems with the issue of cultural diversity and collective rights. To use the word “liberal” and “multicultural” seems a contradiction. For example, many multiculturalists insist upon the notion of specific permanent measures based on minority rights to preserve their unique culture. Liberalism is fundamentally focused on individual rights and equal treatment regardless of religion, gender or ethnic-group. However, liberal multiculturalists analyzed and developed the liberal theory so liberal states could handle the multi-cultural society. Secondly, I will discuss the situation of indigenous people including the Sami people in the context of the decolonizing movement. How does multiculturalism play a vital role in maintaining indigenous people’s autonomy?

In order to understand current features and debates over liberal multiculturalism, it is necessary to see the main characters of liberalism and multiculturalism. First of all, liberalism could be understood as a political philosophy which is primarily concerned with individual’s freedom and the individual’s relationship to the state or political authorities. It is not easy to characterize what liberalism is because it is extensive and complicated. Thus I will find the main principle which can be found in liberalism. Kukathas figured out a core of common assumptions to be found in liberal arguments, and put them into three categories. First, liberal theory is individualist in asserting or assuming the moral primacy of the person against the claims of any social collectivity; second, it is egalitarian because it confers on all such individuals “the same moral status and denies the relevance to legal or political order of differences in moral worth among human beings”: and third, it is universalist because it affirms the moral unity of the human species and accords “a secondary importance to specific historic associations and cultural forms”(Kukathas 1992 ). The principles that have defined liberalism are usually focused on safeguarding individual rights, freedom and equality. Unfortunately, in any society, there will exist social, political and cultural structures that do not promote the realization of individual rights, dignity and freedom. Therefore, the liberal tradition argues that the political power ensures the individual’s fundamental rights to freedom. In this sense, liberalism is usually associated with the individualists’ analysis of society and stresses the importance of individual and equal treatment.

Typically, multiculturalism highlights the affirmation of the value of cultural diversity. Historically multiculturalism is associated with large scale immigration among western countries such as Canada, Australia, America and England starting in the 1960s. In the 1970s, the government of Canada and Australia use “multiculturalism” to assist in the ethnic pluralism within the national policy. The government of Canada ensures that all citizens can keep their identity, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. It recognizes more the ethnic diversity within a society and against the assimilation policy. It also merged idea and policy to include into society aborigines and Native American people who have been ignored and oppressed in the passed. Therefore multiculturalism is usually associated with group right or collective rights which are needed for maintaining their cultural differences and diversity in society. In this context, the controversial philosophy and policy between liberalism and multiculturalism can be seen.

Liberal multiculturalism is a political theory that philosophizes over how liberal democracy could accept group rights and handle the challenges which the liberal state faces as a result of multiculturalism. Will Kymlicka(1995) is one of the liberal multiculturalists. He discusses in his book, *Multicultural Citizenship*, about ethnic and national minorities. Liberal multiculturalism, simplified, is one of the political and philosophical approaches to the cultural diversity in the modern multicultural society. That is how the liberal society or nation could address the issue of collective rights and cultural diversity. In a global world, it is true that most countries are culturally diverse and face problems and challenges as to the degree to which cultural diversity should be accepted and tolerated, and how cultural diversity can be accommodated in society.

I would analyze the main feature of liberal multiculturalism by liberal multicultural scholars. Firstly, liberal multiculturalism gives more recognition to culture and community and gives special weight to the claims of cultural membership. Kymlicka(1989) argues in his book, *Liberalism, Community and Culture*, that multicultural states should recognize group rights with liberal equality and protect minority cultures by individualist justification. A liberalist, Kukathas(1992) asks in his essays; “are there any cultural rights?” to Kymlicka’s suggestion that liberal states should take active steps in the legal and political arrangement for minority groups’ cultural rights. Classical liberalists, like Kukathas do not agree on abandoning, modifying, and reinterpreting liberalism. Secondly, liberal multiculturalism embraces culture

as an element of considering justice. People can only regard themselves as autonomous beings when they have access to a social culture of choice. Group-differentiated measures that secure and promote this access may therefore have a legitimate role to play in a liberal theory of justice (Kymlicka 1995). Thirdly, liberal multiculturalism based on group rights or special treatment in a certain group is supported by the idea of equal opportunities and contemporary policy. Fourthly, they are not tolerant with illiberal cultural elements.

How does multiculturalism cooperate with the indigenous movement? Does multiculturalism contribute to ensuring indigenous people's rights? I will look at the indigenous movement's claim to group rights and how it goes along with multiculturalism. The Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples was adopted in the General Assembly in New York on September 13, 2007 after a long process starting when the United Nations Economic and Social Council established the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in 1982. Highlights in the Declaration are self-determination, collective rights, and land and territory rights. There have been a lot of discussions among and between indigenous peoples and states. The working Group prepared the draft of the Declaration, agreed on the final text, and submitted it to the Sub-Commission from 1985 to 1994. Over the years during negotiations in the UN bodies, there have been significant debates on terms of definition, "who is indigenous?" why is it "peoples" instead of "people" or "population", and how can we understand and interpret the word "self-determination" with regards to nations, land right and territories?

When the Declaration was adopted on 13 September 2007 by the United Nation General Assembly, Human rights experts said it was "too good to be true". 144 countries supported it, 4 were against and 11 abstained. It was a historical and victorious moment for indigenous peoples and for the world. We can see it as moment of reconciliation between indigenous people and countries which mostly, in the past, have had a colonial history. However, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were against it, unfortunately.

Canada and Australia maintain multicultural state policy within the issue of immigration and minority policy. Historically, multiculturalism developed with the issue of stateless minorities. In Canada, the government seeks to provide and protect the multicultural nature of the society through federalism. Kymlicka argues that federalism respects the desire of groups to remain autonomous, and to retain their cultural distinctiveness, while nonetheless acknowledging the

fact that these groups are not self-contained and isolated. How then does federalism cope with immigration groups which are rarely territorially concentrated? He suggests overcoming this obstacle by adopting a non-territorial form of self-rule. National minorities demand some form of political autonomy or territorial jurisdiction, so as to ensure the full and free development of the interests of their cultures, and to promote the interests of their people (Kymlicka 2005). The practice of multiculturalism in Canada could not offer an adequate comprehension of the situation, especially of indigenous peoples. Indigenous people are in the context of minority groups and have protection and rights as much as national minorities have. Kymlicka questioned the basis on which indigenous peoples have a strong claim to self-determination than other national minorities.

Multiculturalism in Australia also attempts to overturn the dominant mono-cultural history and society.

Indigenous history and tradition did not count. The new settler culture was giving birth to a new national type, through the interaction between 'race' and 'place'. And Indigenous, 'suppressed and exterminated', would not make contribution to the development of that distinctive Australian culture (Stephensen 1936 :12-15) (quoted from Moran 2002:1019)

WEH Stanner sought a new consciousness in 1969 by calling this the 'great Australian silence'. Stanner acknowledged however, that in mid-twentieth century Australia there was no blanket, nation-wide silence 'on all matters aboriginal', and that there was 'a real and growing appreciation of the distinctive quality of aboriginal culture, thought, and problems of life' (Haebich 2005).

However, some critics point out that Australian multiculturalism is just accepted on the level of celebrating customs and folkloristic culture. They face the challenge of the problem of diversity resulting in a more problematic separation or threat to social unity. Australian Prime Minister John Howard in 1998 argued that multiculturalism does not respect and tolerate diversity but rather in many ways social division. To some degree, multiculturalism gave strength to indigenous people in Australia, as it contributed to the seizure of the assimilation policy from the state and dominant white Australians. Indigenous Peoples' Right was discriminated against for a long time in the history of Australia, so the adoption of the Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples is really significant for indigenous peoples who have been marginalized and oppressed in their history. During the negotiation of the Declaration, there was positive development in relationship between States and Indigenous

Peoples, that is from a position of conflict to the conversation toward agreement. Indigenous Peoples can fully enjoy their collective right, cultural right, self-determination and right to lands, territories and resources by the Declaration. The states that were against the Declaration should recognize the right of Indigenous peoples. In the USA, multiculturalism is more focused on a wide range of non-ethnic social groups which have been excluded or marginalized from the mainstream of society. Therefore multiculturalism refers to the historical exclusion of groups such as the disables, gays and lesbians, women, the working class, atheists, and Communists(Kymlicka 1995).

What about the Sami in Scandinavia? How does Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia's state policy accept multiculturalism? The Sami had been under the assimilation policy since the middle of the nineteenth century and were well integrated into the society. Even though the Norwegian Government submitted a recommendation of the Sami Committee in 1959 and it was considered by the Parliament in 1963 for the protection of minority rights, the old assimilation policy continued. However, Henry Minde (2003b) emphasized in his article, *The challenge of indigenism : the struggle for Sami land rights and self-government in Norway 1960-1990*, that Sami Internationalism had started by that time and it could be seen that Sami politicians were inspired by the idea of equality and the right of self-determination through 1960s and 1970s. The Sami elite were widely engaged on the international level and were accepted as indigenous peoples among international indigenous organizations.

In both Sweden and Norway the government policy was based on Social Darwinism, Finland had developed its own policy because they had been under Sweden and Russia for a long time, and the Sami in Finland were only a small minority. However, under the assimilation policy in Norway in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Sami in the Finnmark tried to oppose the policy by electing their own politicians to the Norwegian parliament.

The Sami therefore managed to create local bodies that developed into being local Sami organizations (Except Swedish Sami- they had the National Association of Swedish Sami from 1950). Gradually the Sami of the Nordic Countries managed to establish an inter-Nordic co-operative body - the Sami Council, in the years 1952-1956. The Sami Council opened conferences and educated young Sami leaders through politico-cultural programs in the 1970s. In the 1980s, the Sami ethno-political situation experienced a turning point

through the Alta case in which the Government wanted to build a dam on the Alta River in the Finnmark which is traditionally a Sami area.

Trond argues that the Sami had its political system from before, whether it was strong or weak, but has developed into a nation-wide organization. In Norway, through the Alta Case, the Sami ethno-political elite passed judgement on the Government and brought powerful changes for the Sami in the nation. As a result of this, the Sami Assembly was established in 1989, and an institutionalized relationship based on a constitutional acknowledgement of the Sami as a people in their own right was developed(Thuén 2002b). The Sami people are one of the indigenous peoples in the world who have gained the most collective rights and achieved self determination through politics and institution building.

In conclusion, most indigenous people were colonised and oppressed by the assimilation policy. The issue of indigenous peoples' rights was earlier discussed in with the concept of minority rights in relation to the discrimination of minority populations. Indigenous peoples rights, land rights and self-determination was not understood in the period of colonization, and assimilation was a political goal for many countries that had indigenous peoples. Multiculturalism is against the assimilation policy toward minorities and focuses on group's cultural rights and on uprising their dignities. It relates to the problem of cultural diversity and the great immigration waves in our global world. However, after observing the implementation and practice of multiculturalism in different countries, one can not say that indigenous people have found adequate solutions in all situations by adopting the multicultural theory. The turning point of indigenous history came through indigenous people's journey to the UN which promoted the concept of equality and outlawed the discrimination of indigenous peoples. The cooperation of the indigenous peoples with each other was also one of the reasons for the success in negotiating and creating the new international declaration.

#### **2.4 Recollection of local tradition and reinvention of places**

During ethnic revitalization, people often went through processes to recollect the tradition of the past to reinvent their ethnic identity in the present. Local communities in the Coastal Sami region in Northern Norway had lost their cultural and linguistic diversity.



In North Norway... over the last hundred years modernization processes of various kinds, notably technological and transport innovations and a market economy, and a determined governmental policy of cultural assimilation, have transformed some of these communities. The cultural manifestations that used to be associated with Sami culture have almost totally disappeared. The intimate relationship between a specific cultural repertoire and the ascription of a certain ethnic identity has thus broken(Thuen 1990:29-30).

Storfjord municipality did not have the image of ethnic diversity until the revitalization started. In the revitalization process, oral traditions and events which people remember gave connections between the past and the present. In the past, in Storfjord, the diversity of ethnicity often caused conflict among ethnic groups. Traditionally, places had a connotation of collective ethnic identity and still there are, to some extent, place's with symbolic connection to ethnicity. Creating a new image of Storfjord by place reinvention is pivotal in ethnic revitalization.

The term 'reinvention' indicates that something has been left behind and has to be recreated, renewed or redefined(Nyseth 2009). Through symbolic expression, places also communicate their identity (Philo and Kearns 1993), and are given an important and attractive image (Nyseth 2009). Storfjord has the slogan "Diversity gives strength", and focuses on revitalizing three languages and cultures: Norwegian, Sami and Kven/Finnish. They are moving forward to the place of a multi-ethnic diversity of Norwegian, the Coastal Sami and Kven/Finnish from the place of a mono-ethnic Norwegian municipality by reinventing and recreating the image of Storfjord.

# Chapter 3

## The historical background of Coastal Sami and Kven people

### 3.1 Introduction

In the last few decades, the Sami people have developed a strong bond of solidarity among international indigenous movements and have been successful in claiming Sami rights as a nation and people. Sami people's collective rights had not been recognized within countries where the Sami people had lived a long time such as Norway, Finland, Sweden and Russia. Sami culture and language were threatened and the majorities in these societies tried to absorb them into the mainstream until the Second World War. However, the ethno-political movement which was started by a few Sami elite has successfully contributed to the recognition of their rights and helped the Sami people to move forward for land rights and self determination. In 1996, Hovland Arild wrote a book about the modern indigenous youth movement in Kautokeino and Kåfjord. He focuses on the Sami youth movement in relation to the Sami identity affiliation. In his research, Hovland shows that Sami identity affiliation in 1990s was accepted paradoxically by the Sami people even after they gained more political power and autonomy.

“Sami identity affiliation today can be experienced as both a promise and a threat, a personal anchor and a threat to one's identity, a deeply felt requirement and an assault marked decree, a resource and a dragon, a noble brand, and a stigma”(Hovland 1996:204-205, my translation)

Why? One of the main reasons is that the Sami people, historically, suffered under the oppression of colonization which affected in their self image and made stereotypes of the Sami in the past. Therefore, it is important that today's Sami affiliation, especially the coastal Sami affiliation, is analyzed on the basis of their history.

My focus is on the Coastal Sami's maintenance of their ethnic boundaries and the self-affiliation of their identity after encounters between Kvens and Norwegians during the 1850s. I also intend to delve into how the experience of the harsh Norwegianization policy and modernization affected the Coastal Sami identity. Even though, the Sami people achieved their political power and self-determination as a people, the Coastal Sami still struggle to find their own identity and Saminess, which is usually portrayed by the Finnmark Sami relationship to reindeer. Reindeer herding has been used much as a symbol of the Sami, but the Coastal Sami were not included in that Sami image. They were not accepted even by their own people so they needed to find their own symbol. The Coastal Sami culture and language almost disappeared and was deeply oppressed. The Coastal Sami people would like to determine who they are and write their own history of revitalization. This was shown in the young Coastal Sami people's movement during the Riddu Ridđu festival.

In this chapter, firstly, I will start by looking closer into the ethnic categories, using the census of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, I will observe the trend of collective ethnic identity and understanding of place in the context of historical settlement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thirdly, I will see how the Laestadius movement influenced the preservation of the Sami language and culture.

### **3.2 The encounter of three tribes: Sami, Kven and Norwegian, from the 1850s**

This section is devoted to highlight ethnographic data from the census of the 1850s and analyze the changes in ethnic identity and the reasons for the changes. What were the main figures or elements that influenced ethnic boundaries and ethnic identity affiliations?

In recent years, the emerging revitalization of the Coastal Sami identity has been vivid in the Lyngen area, especially in Gáivuotna-Kåfjord. The Lyngen area was composed of Storfjord, Gáivuotna<sup>16</sup>-Kåfjord and Lyngen municipality which was one municipality until 1930. Between 1865 and 1930, the Lyngen area was registered in all censuses with one of the highest Sami populations in North Troms. Therefore, I will analyze the data concerning the Lyngen areas from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I also

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<sup>16</sup> Gáivuotna is Sami name of Kåfjord

found some separate data for Storfjord, Lyngen and Gáivuotna–Kåfjord, though it was not easy to find separate data for Storfjord municipality only. Data taken from the censuses in the old Lyngen municipality provide much information about ethnic changes. Using this approach I would like to compare the ethnic revitalization movement of Gáivuotna–Kåfjord and Storfjord in chapter 4.

In the census of 1865, 1875, 1900 and 1930 in North Troms, the Sami population was noted. In 1865, the Sami population in Lyngen was proportionately the highest in North Troms, with 64 percent in Kåfjord and 59 and 58 percent respectively in Storfjord and Lyngen municipality. Significantly, statistics from the 1865 census show information of ethnicity that is Sami, Kven or Norwegian, has also been provided at the individual level (Evjen 2007).

In the table below, we could see the Sami ethnic group as a majority in which more than half in 1865 moved to non-Sami ethnic groups (Norwegian dominant population) after almost a 100 years.

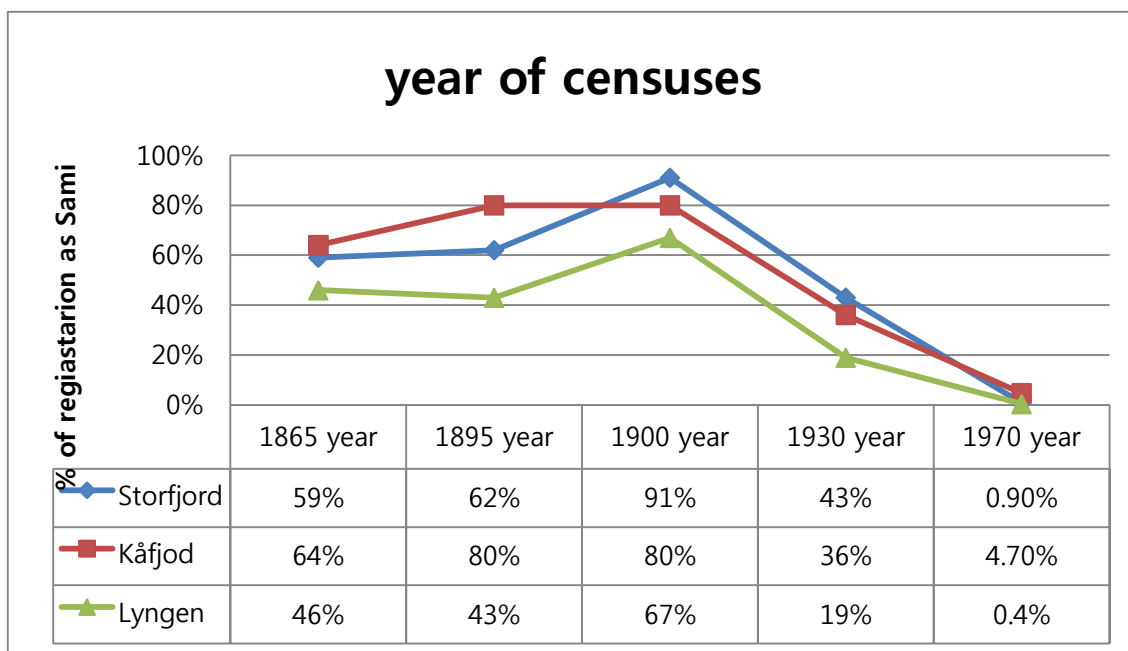


Fig.3 Percentage of registration as Sami in Lyngen area

Percentage of registration as Sami in Lyngen area in which Evjen(2007)<sup>17</sup> presents data separately in the three contemporary municipalities and data drawn from Aubert in the 1970 census (Aubert 1978)

<sup>17</sup> Figure made by me from the data in (Nou 2007, 14 : 466-467,495) and 1970 census (Aubert 1978)

This figure shows that the Sami population in the area of Lyngen had increased in the period from 1860 to 1900. After 1900, there was a decrease of Sami population in the census. Surprisingly, the 1970 census reported an extremely low Sami population in this area, with 4.7 percent in Kåfjord, 0.9 percent in Storfjord and 0.4 percent in Lyngen municipalities (Aubert 1978). This might be caused by the influence of the Norwegianization policy to a great extent such as in other areas in Northern Norway. However, we could find other factors which influenced the decrease of the Sami population in the Lyngen area in figure 3 below. When the Sami population started to decrease in the census of 1900, the mixed ethnic population increased. Until 1930, the decreasing Sami population was connected to the increase of both populations of mixed ethnic groups and Norwegians, and mixed ethnic populations were up to 43 %. Starting in 1920, there were mixed categories added to the census. The mixed ethnic categories were the result of inter-ethnic marriage. A modification of ethnic categories in registration correlates with the decline of the Sami population. While the Sami population decreased, the mixed ethnic groups, Kven and Norwegian population increased.

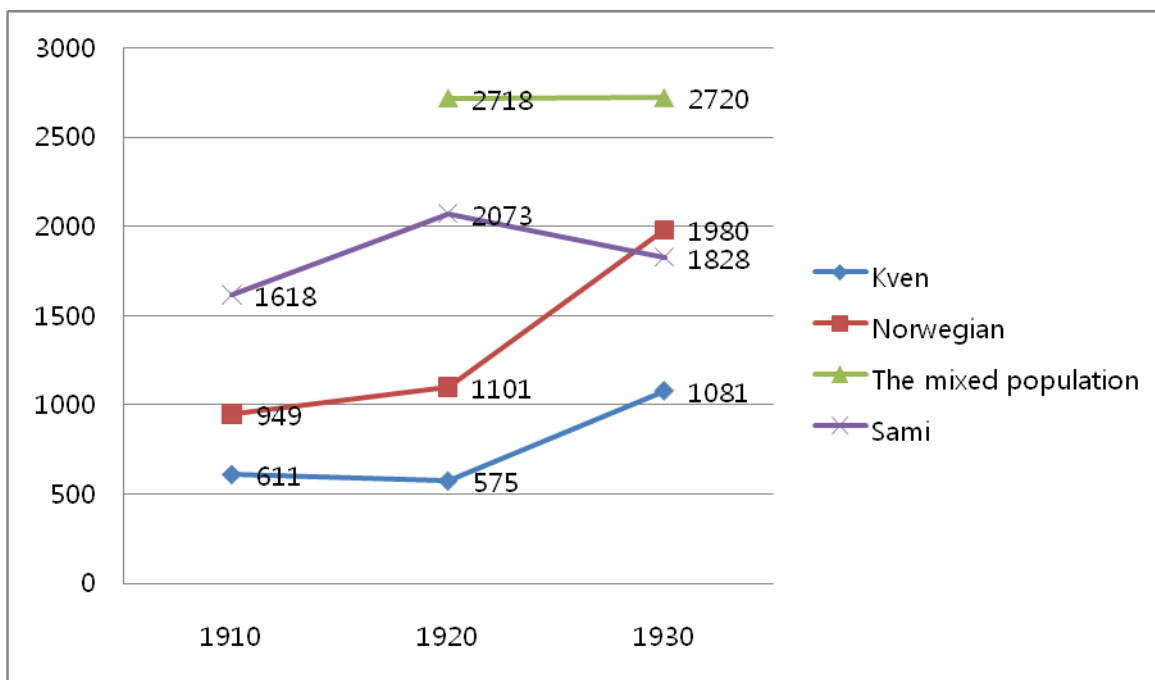


Fig.4 Proportion of ethnic groups according to the population census 1910, 1920 and 1930 in Lyngen area.

Source from Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD)<sup>18</sup> s municipality data base<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/nsdnytt/08-1/7.html>

The Lyngen area was dominated by the encounter of three groups, Sami, Kven and Norwegian who lived side by side. People lived in a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society and the mixed ethnic groups were significantly high. The number of Kvens and Norwegians doubled from 1910 to 1930 that is, within the short period of 20 years. The number of Samis increased from 1910 to 1920 and decreased a little bit in 1930. This can be explained by the high percentage of the population in the mixed categories in 1920 and 1930. The mixed categories were 43 % in 1920 and 32% in 1930. It was higher than any other ethnic groups.

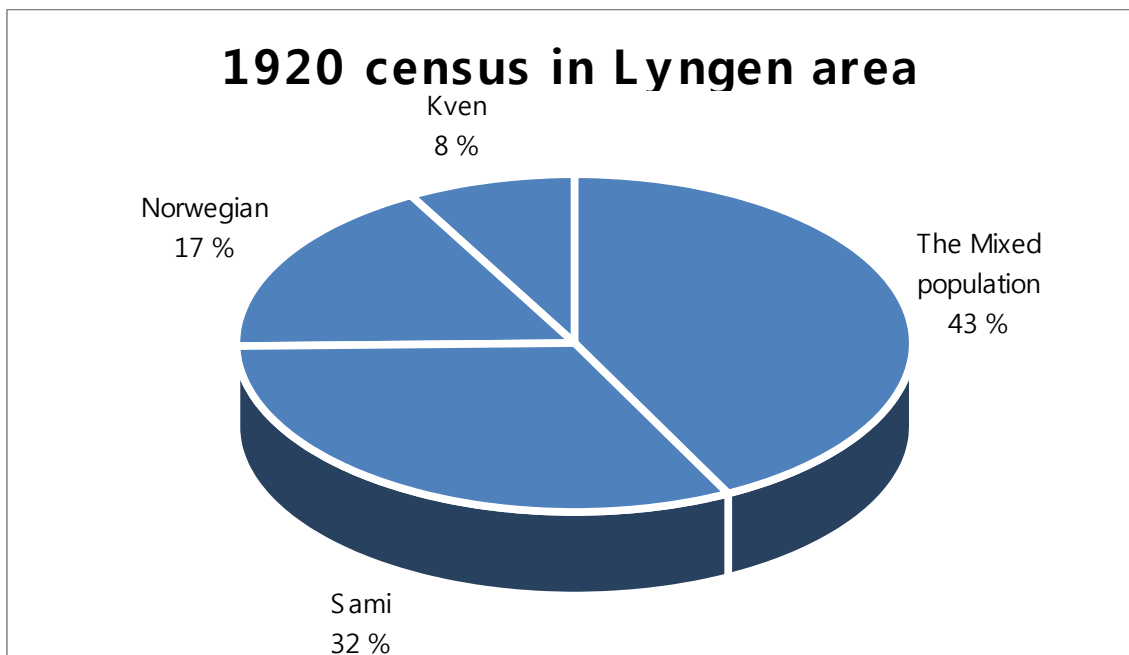


Figure 5. Percentage of registration of different ethnic groups in 1920 in Lyngen area

Source from Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD)<sup>20</sup> s municipality data base

<sup>19</sup> Figure 3,4,5 made by Jung Im,Kim from the date in Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste (NSD)<sup>19</sup> s municipality data base

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.nsd.uib.no/nsd/nsdnytt/08-1/7.html>

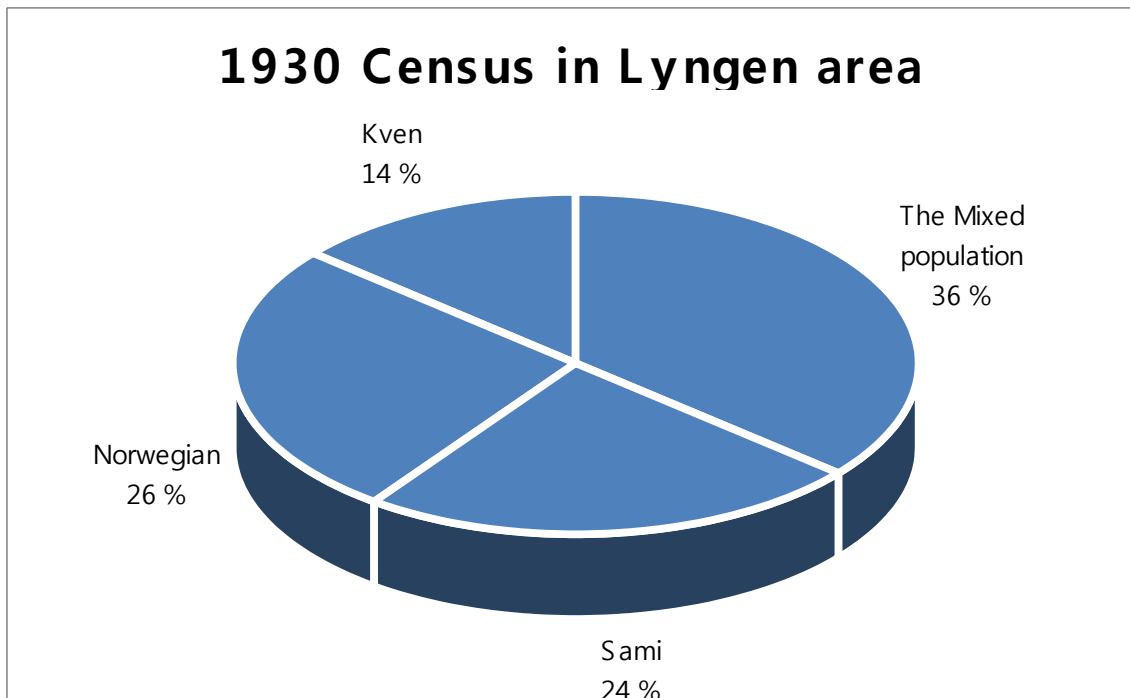


Figure 6 . Percent of registration og different ethnic groups in 1930 in Lyngen area

By analyzing census data, first of all, we can see the increase in the Lyngen area, in the percentage of mixed ethnic groups between 1900 and 1930, which might have been the result of inter-ethnic marriages. In 1920, it was 43 % ,which is quite a high percentage. Secondly, the 1970 census in the Lyngen area shows that the Sami population significantly dropped. It was 0.4 % in Lyngen municipality and 0.9% in Storfjord which implies that the Sami ethnic group almost disappeared. In Kåfjord (4.7%), it was little bit higher than the others. But this area's population was not emigrating at a high rate. People had lived there for several generations so that they knew each other very well and even each other's ancestral backgrounds. In this regard, my line of argument is that most of the people who registered as Norwegians in the 1970 census actually had a mixed ethnic origin. It might be very interesting if there would be demographic data of Sami, Kven/Finnish and Norwegian in the 21st century. Unfortunately, there are no estimations of the number of the Sami, Kven or mixed ethnic groups in Lyngen today because there is no demographic data on the Sami population after the 1970 census. At least there are indirect estimations of the fluctuation of Sami population in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century available from the Sami registration in Sami Parliament which I will present in chapter 4.

Thirdly, the population in Lyngen areas were affected by the Norwegianization policy and Sami or Kven ethnic identity might have been stigmatized as in some other Coastal Sami areas in Northern Norway.

How can people in the Lyngen area revitalize their Coastal Sami ethnicity? Without a doubt, the aggressive norwegianization policy toward the Samis made them carry “shame” in themselves and leave their identity and langugae for a better future and hope. Therefore, to revitalize the culture of the Coastal Sami, people have to face their “sitigmatized identity”(Eidheim 1971) first and overcome it. In addition, they need to recognize their mixed ethnic origin. Many people have mixed ethnic origin so that they can claim dual ethnicity. I will deal with different ethnic identification among populations of mixed origin and how dual ethnicity influences ethnic revitalization of the Coastal Sami in Storfjord. I will give the data concerning Storfjord municipality later in this chapter. In the Lyngen area unfortunately, I could not find information on how many Kven registered in any other censuses.

Storfjord municipality is historically multilingual and multicultural and place were Finnish, Sami and Norwegian culture/ language has existed side by side. According to an 1865 census, Kven in Storfjord were 32% which is quite a high percentage. In Lyngen area, Kven registration in 1920, 1930 was 8% and 14% (Kilde: Nou 2007, 14:466-467,495)

When I interviewed some old people from Storfjord, I got the impression that Storfjord was allegedly a multi-lingual and multi-cultural community. A senior man from Storfjord said “I was born into a multicultural society, lived and grew up there with my siblings, had a mother and father who spoke three different languages daily, and a grandfather who spoke Sami most of the time.”

However, there had been a rapid decline until recent years in people who could speak either Sami or Kven/Finnish language and who had Sami or Kven/Finish identity. The majority of the people identify with the Norwegian culture and speak the Norwegian language. They also affiliate themselves with Norwegian identity even though many of them might have more than one ethnic background. There are various factors as to why people do not choose their Sami and Kven identity. Many people indicate that the main reason was the impact and the success of the Norwegianization policy.



### **3.3 Norwegianization in the 1850s: the brief history of assimilation among the Coastal Sami and the Kven.**

As many indigenous peoples fought to be decolonized and assume autonomy, so the Sami people also followed this movement. Historically, Sámi and Kven had been victims of a Norwegianization policy until around the 1950s. The official ambition was to assimilate the Sami into the Norwegian national identity. It was “extensive, long lasting and determined”(Minde 2003a:133). This process resulted in a radical decline in the population who identified themselves as Sami, and their languages dying out. When the Sami people had been under the Norwegianization policy<sup>21</sup>, they were known to be well integrated in society. When the Norwegianization policy was implemented with great force between 1880 and 1950, all Sami children were forced to speak, read and write in Norwegian instead of their mother tongue. Teachers had to demonstrate good results in the change of language. Documentation of this change increased teachers’ wages(Minde 2005). In the 1950s, Sami identification in the Northern Troms region was almost lost(Bjørklund 1985). The Sami movement was involved in international and global efforts to achieve the rights of indigenous Peoples. Sami elites were widely engaged on an international level and were accepted as an indigenous people among indigenous international organizations. The Alta case, a conflict between the government, who wanted to build a dam on the Alta River in the Finnmark, and the Sami people who used that area traditionally, created a turning point in the Sami ethno-political movement in Norway.

In early 1990, there was a cultural ethno political movement among those who have Finnish-speaking ancestry in Northern Norway, called the Kven. They were regarded as a national minority within single nation states. Like other national minorities, the Kven went through linguistic and cultural oppression and injustice. In a Norwegianization period, the Kven were not allowed to use their language at school. Teachers would encourage and advise parents not to speak Kven to their children at home. Boarding schools were built for both Kven and Sami children to learn the Norwegian language and culture in the northern area of Norway (Huss 1999; Minde 2005). The use of Kven and Sami in the school was forbidden until 1959 and in

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<sup>21</sup> Norwegianization Policy was the assimilation policy which the official Norwegian government conducted in the Northern Norway, both to the Sami and Kven, with the aim of deliberate integration of minority to a large community premises. (Niemi 1994, Minde 2005, Olstad 2002)

the northern area of Norway, one had to speak Norwegian to buy land until 1964. Fishman emphasized the importance of a language's intergenerational transmission for its survival (Fishman 1991). Nevertheless, the socio-political powerlessness among Sami and Kven was so influential that parents chose not to speak their mother tongue to their children. In general, the Norwegianization process brought about feelings of inferiority and devaluation concerning language and culture. This was a burden parents did not want to pass on to their children. This process resulted in a radical decline in the population who identified themselves as Sami, and their language dying out.

Today, the revitalization amongst the Kven people is ongoing and their interest in the Kven language, culture and identity is growing. Having Finnish decent is no longer stigmatized and they are no longer politically powerless since Norway signed the European Charter for the Protection of regional or Minority Languages in 1992. Kven has been granted protection by this charter, and in April 2005, Kven was recognized as having a legal status as a minority language in Norway.<sup>22</sup>

### **3.4 The place of collective ethnic identity and historical settlement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

While in the field, I observed that local people expressed their ethnic identity through place. Quite many used the place as a connotation of ethnic background. Therefore I will discuss the sense of place and local ethnic identity in relation to the historical settlement in Storfjord.

This connection could be seen on the ethnographic maps by J. A. Friis which cover Norwegian, Sami and Kven's settlement. Porkona presents the geographic order and ethnicity through the census data in relation to Friis' ethnographic map of Tromsø for the survey period 1859-1865 and the period 1892-1900 .

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.kvenskinstitutt.no>

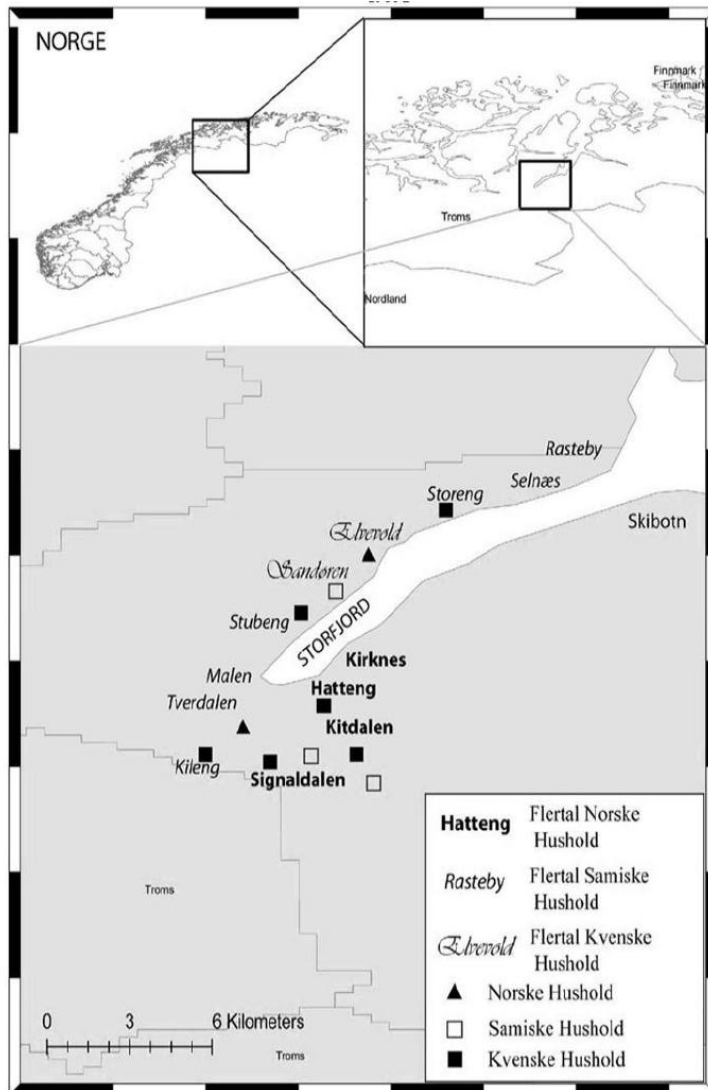


Figure 7: Map of Norwegian, Sami and Kven settlements from 1865-1900 (based on censuses in 1865, 1900 and Friis Maps adopted from Pokorna .M, Master's thesis 2009: 34)

Statistics from the middle of 19<sup>th</sup> century's censuses show information about ethnicity Sami, Kven or Norwegian ethnicity that has been provided at the individual level. It was not through language or origin. However, linguist and theologian Jens Andreas Friis used the language criterion for mapping the ethnic composition of Northern Norway in the last half of the 1800s. Language did play a crucial role for Friis, even with all the weaknesses one might expect in relation to record ethnicity. He published ethno-political maps in 1861 and 1888/1890(Evjen 2007:455-467)

In the period between 1859-1865, the majority of the population in Storjford was Sami, and emany places in Storjford had obvious continuities of ethnicity. Hatteng, Birkemo, Kitdalen,

Signaldalen, Mortendalen, Kilen, Sandøren possessed all three ethnic groups. Mælen, Otterodden, Tverdalen, Nygård, Rasteby and Selnæs are places where Sami population was concentrated. Elvevold and Skrevold are areas where the Kven populations are mostly represented, with only one Sami family (Pokorna 2009:35-37).

However there were no observable continuities between economic activities and ethnicity.

When it comes to businesses in the area, there are no sources of evidence of specialization of economic activity that had been typical of one or another ethnic group. Agriculture and Fisheries, or a combination of both was the main occupation for most of the area, regardless of ethnicity. Exception is forestry and professions related to it (Pokorna 2009:35, my translation).

In the period of 1892-1900, the Norwegian population was concentrated as before in Hatteng and Signaldalen but there were also Norwegian households in Storeng, Kitdalen, and Kileng. Kven and Norwegian–Kven households lived mostly in Skrevold and Elvevold and several Kven-Norwegian and Kven-Sami families settled in Kitdalen and Kileng. Kven-Sami household could also be found in Rasteby and Selnæs where previously only Sami lived. Otterodden and Kileng were still Sami affected areas although the Sami population scattered throughout Storfjord, Rasteby, Storeng, Selnæs, Tverdalen, Mælen, <sup>23</sup>(Pokorna 2009).

To sum this up, there is a trend showing that the populations of Storfjord were settled down in different places in ethnic clusters in 1800s. Therefore, there is the possibility that place symbolizes local ethnic identity to some degree even until today. In my field work, people symbolized their ethnic identity through the name of place. For instance, Hatteng and Signaldalen are connotative of Norwegian ethnicity. Skibotn symbolizes Kven ethnic identity, and Oteren and Elvevoll hold collective ethnicity for the Coastal Sami. This is about collective levels of ethnic identity. I will deal more in chapter 4 as to which degree places are presented by individuals to show different ethnic background or origins.

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<sup>23</sup> This is analyzed data of the census 1900 and Friis' ethnographic map from 1890 by Pokorna

### 3.5 Sami & Kven/Finnish ethnic preservation through Laestadianism.

Laestadianism was a revival of Christianity which started at the end of the 1840s by Lars Levi Laestadius who was a theologian and the parish priest of Karesuando<sup>24</sup>. The Sami people previously traditionally practiced shamanism, in Sápmi (Samiland). Lars Levi Laestadius' message of Christianity was wide spread in Northern Scandinavia. Many Sami people as well as Kven became Christians, which meant a lot of change for the Sami community. (Hage 1996; Kristiansen 2005; Minde 1998).

Laestadius sent spiritual guides to Norway and in 1848 preacher Antin Pieti and his companion visited both Lyngen and the market at Skibotn. Lyngen was, with Ibestad, Ofoten and Kautokeino, one of the places where the Laestadian revival in Norway gained the early foothold(Hage 1996:16).

Laestadianism can definitely be highlighted, from one perspective, as a contributory factor to the preservation of Sami culture and language. How could this not happen in the state church? What was difference between the State Church and Laestadian congregation? Why was it significant for Sami and Kven people?

Laestadius insisted that the meeting should be conducted in the Sami or Finnish language, which are the mother tongues of the people. In Laestadius' movement, Sami and Kven were often called "languages of the heart". It was quite opposite to the Lutheran State Church. Laestadius' chapel in Skibotn was built in 1890s and used to have large congregations (Hage 1996; Kristiansen 2005). Many elderly people in Skibotn said that they experienced a strong revival movement. Laestadianism was an important part of tradition and culture in Skibotn. When I interviewed one lady in Skibotn, she asked me "Are you God's child?" and I said "yes". This was a normal question which many Laestadians ask and which asks basically if one is a Laestadian. She was born in Skibotn and has many relatives in Finland. She speaks Finnish as her mother tongue and is a member of the Skibotn chapel.

She said that people used Sami or Finnish languages in Laestadian meetings even during the period of Norwegianization. This movement is not as strong now as it was before. The younger generation nowadays has a more negative image of Laestadianism. However, people in Storfjord, especially Skibotn, follow the rules of Laestadianism even though they do not

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<sup>24</sup> Karesuando is the most northerly parish in Sweden and borders both Norway (North Troms) and Finland (Enontekiö). At that time three-quarters of the population were Sami who usually spoke Finnish as a second language (Minde 1998:2).

have the Laestadianism faith. For instance, people do not want to do any work on Sunday including cleaning the house, doing the laundry or knitting. I had such an encounter one summer when I hung my laundry out to dry, and one of the neighbors enquired as to I could do my laundry on a Sunday and even take them off the clothes line. The irony of this incident is that he was not Laestadian, he simply followed the rules. This goes to show how strong the influence of Laestadianism is, and that people who do not even have the faith unconsciously follow the rules and teach the children same.

To sum it up, the Laestadius movement has a great influence in Storfjord, especially in Skibotn. It also contributed to preserve the Sami and Kven languages during the Norwegianization period, and to some extent their ethnic identity as well.

### **3.6 Summary**

The Coastal Sami lived in Storfjord municipality for a long time. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the economy and way of life of the Coastal Samis underwent changes. They undertook reindeer husbandry, settled in the coastal areas and gradually left nomadic life. They obtained reindeer meat by hunting wild reindeer and keeping small reindeer herds. The traditional way of Coastal Sami life can be characterized by fisheries and hunting in contrast to the nomadic Sami after the 17th century (Paine 1957:32-37). The Storfjord region was dominated by the Coastal Sami population until the Kvens/Finnish and Norwegians moved to Storfjord during the 18th century. The demographic data in the Lyngen region shows that the Sami population decreased in the beginning of the 20th century, and the mixed ethnic populations increased noticeably. The mixed ethnic population in Lyngen in 1920 was 43 percent and in the 1930 census it was 36 percent. Therefore, the Lyngen area, including Storfjord municipality, moved from a population of Coastal Samis to a population mixed with Coastal Samis, Kvens/Finnish and Norwegians from the 18th century.

In the census of 1970, the Sami population in Storfjord was 0.7 percent and most people identified themselves as Norwegian. The trend of the population of mixed ethnic groups strongly identified as Norwegians from the middle of the 20th century is the result of the Norwegianization policy. In addition, the Coastal Sami and Kven languages and culture have disappeared.

However, there are some areas which symbolize and communicate the different ethnicities nowadays. Firstly, there was a trend in the historical settlement. Different ethnic groups settled in different places in the 18th century, but were influenced by intermarriage and relocation. However, some places are connotative of the various ethnicities until today to some extent. Secondly, Laestadianism gave the social space to use the Sami and Kven languages and express minority cultures during the Norwegianization period. This was a contributory factor in maintaining the Sami and Kven language and culture. For example, the Lesatadius' chapel in Skibotn was a symbol of Coastal Sami and Kven ethnicity, and the State church in Hatteng was more connotative with Norwegian ethnicity.

# Chapter 4

## Research Findings and Discussion

### 4.1 Introduction

My research sheds light on how Coastal Sami ethnic identity is formed and expressed in the Coastal areas of Northern Norway and affects the ethnic revitalization movement. I chose Storffjord municipality which is based on a population with mixed ethnic background. This mixed ethnic background has in many cases allowed individuals to choose whether they will identify themselves as Coastal Sami, Kven, or Norwegian. Through the field studies on the encounter of three ethnic groups: Sami, Kven and Norwegian, I explored how mixed ethnic populations articulate their identity in courses of action and events with reference to collective identity symbols and metaphors of identity.

In this chapter, I intend to demonstrate how mixed ethnic populations present their ethnic categories from time to time. The development and changes among these people are based on the growing sense of the notion of ‘descent –related’ membership and the ability to express their identity. A more specific intent is to show the process of ethnic differentiation among the Coastal mixed ethnic populations.

My line of argument will be as follows; first, the Northern Norwegian identity in Storffjord is a result of Norwegianization. The mixed populations in Storffjord were integrated within the Norwegian ethnic category. However, people express their mixed origins through identifying themselves as “Northern Norwegian”. There is a dichotomized concept among “the Northern Norwegian” to show their otherness toward the nation state. “We are Norwegians who have mixed origins, and therefore we are different from Norwegians in the South.” People recognize their different origins but most people do not have the ability to perform their Coastal Sami and Kven/Finnish ethnicity through languages and cultures. During the assimilation period, the Coastal Sami/ Kven culture and language were forbidden and almost disappeared in daily life. Therefore, when individuals choose their Coastal Sami/ Kven identity, they would like to revitalize Coastal Sami/Kven culture and language. They want to show their otherness as Northern Norwegians through the practice of Coastal Sami/Kven



customs and the speaking of Sami or Finnish. Secondly, most populations in Storfjord have a mixed ethnic origin due to inter-ethnic marriages. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of mixed ethnic category in the Lyngen area was up to 43 percent. Therefore, when the Sami ethno-political movement considers ethnic revitalization, diversity of ethnic articulation in Storfjord should be considered. I investigated different lines of inter-mixed ethnic groups in Storfjord, and divided them into three categories. Thirdly, when “the North Calotte Cocktail” chose the Coastal Sami or Kven identity in the context of single or dual ethnicity, it needed to have a process of acceptance by others. So they tried to manage their new era of identity by dichotomizing themselves from “the North Calotte Cocktail”. By this, they invigorated the Coastal Sami/Kven Culture and language. Finally, I will sum up the local discussions of revitalization of Coastal Sami in Storfjord.

#### **4.2 Who is “the North Calotte Cocktail”?**

During fieldwork, I so often heard the expression “I am a North Calotte Cocktail” and “Northerner” (“Norlending” in Norwegian) when I asked about their ethnic identity. Where is the North Calotte and why are people using the geographical region to identify themselves? Roughly, the North Calotte includes the areas north of the polar circle in Norway, Sweden and Finland, in addition to northwest Russia(Thuen 2002a). Thuen argues that “North Calotte” is not an expression of a mutual set of similarities between population in the north but more a community of otherness in relation to the remaining population of the nation - states(Thuen 2002a). In addition, the North Calotte region represents ethnic plurality such as Sami, Kven and Norwegian ethnic groups. Generally speaking, the North Calotte Cocktail refers to people who live in the North Calotte region, and who have had multi-ethnic and multi-lingual diversity (Sami-Norwegian-Kven) for a long time. These people wish to use the term “the North Calotte Cocktail” to differentiate themselves from the majority population of southern Norway.

By taking a closer look at the North Calotte Cocktail in Storfjord, I explored Thuen’s argument of otherness: firstly, the North Calotte Cocktail or Northerner expresses the “otherness” with Southern Norwegians. They set boundaries as ‘us’ which is North Calotte Cocktail /Nordlending and ‘them’ which is the population of the nation state in the South. Even inside the community, the “us and them” attitude is observed between the North Calotte

Cocktail and Norwegians who have their original root in the southern part of Norway. These Norwegians are called ‘southerners’ or ‘pure Norwegians’ among people in the village. For example, some Norwegians moved and settled in the Signaldalen valley in Storfjord from the southern part of Norway in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and their descendants still speak the southern dialect. Thus, these Norwegians from Signaldalen are not a North Calotte Cocktail, but are ‘pure Norwegian’, as my informants claimed. One of my informants said “I am a Calotte Cocktail. ...I speak north Norwegian dialect and have a northern national costume... I am Norwegian but am different from Southern Norwegians”. This group has the Norwegian ethnic identity. This is fundamental for many of them. Even though, they differentiate themselves from Southern Norwegians by dialect and costume, their daily lives are still typically Norwegian. For instance, they celebrate the 17<sup>th</sup> of May with their Norwegian national costumes like in any other part of Norway. This group said they have mixed ethnic background. Meanwhile, their other ethnic background, such as their Sami or Kven identity, was not activated or performed in the context of social events or daily life. For example, the North Calotte Cocktail group very seldom celebrates the Sami national day on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February. This is not only based on my observation in field work in 2009, but also from my experiences and observations since I moved to Storfjord from 2004. However, in the last few years, there has been a shifting or changing of ethnic identification among the North Calotte Cocktail in Storfjord. Historically, the Coastal Sami and Kven lived side by side as distinctive ethnic groups. Without a doubt, Sami/Kven languages and cultures blossomed until the mid 1800s. Unfortunately, this diversity in ethnicity seems to have disappeared nowadays. One informant said that people in Storfjord worked very hard to hide their Sami background and that the whole Sami world went into hiding when society took from them their language and external cultural identity.

One day, I was with some women from the village around a coffee table and we talked about the wonderful summer weather in the North and various other things. It was not a setting of an interview but we naturally moved into a conversation about the Riddu Riddu festival and the Coastal Sami culture and language issues. The ladies shared their stories of childhood. One lady talked about her father and grandparents who did not teach her the Sami language. She said that nowadays she is realizing more and more that she knows and remembers quite a lot of it from her childhood through her parents and grandparents anyway. For example, she learned from her parents whom she should contact when she was sick and things she should

do or not do because of their Sami belief and religion. She ended by asking others, “even though, we don’t know how to speak the language and we do not have reindeer like the Finnmark Sami, we cannot ignore our Sami background, can we?” The others responded by nodding and agreed that they have a Sami background after all. The conversation ended very nicely, but a lady who was a little bit over 70 wanted to talk to me when the other ladies left. She stared at me and said “our generation and our parents’ generation were brainwashed, we are not Sami at all...you can not find among us or in this place anything related to the Coastal Sami... who are the Coastal Sami?”. She did not want to talk any more about this subject. I got the impression that she was frustrated and angry as we talked about the Sami background in Storfjord. The conversation of the Coastal Sami seemed revolting to her.

### 4.3 Three Categories of mixed ethnic groups in Storfjord

Historical Coastal Sami regions had experiences of encounters with other ethnic groups. Thereby, the mixed ethnic populations are in the majority, and inter-ethnic boundaries nowadays are ambiguous. Mixed ethnic populations experience the encounter between the Coastal Sami, Kven/Finnish and Norwegian to different degrees and choose their ethnic identity differently. This different ethnic identification in Storfjord can be analyzed in three categories: Category 1 is named “the North Calotte Cocktail” and “Northerner (Nordlending in Norwegian)”. Category 2 is a group who chooses single ethnic identity such as Sami instead of Northern Norwegian. Category 3 consists of those who claim double/multiple ethnicity instead of just being Northern Norwegian.

Table 2 Ethnic articulation among mixed ethnic populations in Storfjord

		Mixed ethnic group’s ethnic identity		
		Category 1: “North Calotte Cocktail”	Category 2: single ethnic identity as the Coastal Sami	Category3: double/ multiple ethnicity
Individual basis of ethnic identity	Self-recognition of their mixed origin	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Self-acceptance of their mixed origin	Yes	No: they choose just the Coastal Sami origin but reject the Norwegian and/or Kven ethnicity	Yes

Cognitive basis of ethnic identity	Self-ascription of ethnic identity	Northern Norwegian: integrated within Norwegian category	The Coastal Sami ; insist “either –or” ethnic category: change ethnic identity from Northern Norwegian to the Coastal Sami	Switch between Norwegian and the Coastal Sami/Kven
	Ascription of ethnic identity from others	Northern Norwegian	It is problematic for others to accept category 2’s single ethnic self-ascription because they have mixed origin and they cannot speak the Sami or Kven language. Others argue that there are no significant cultural traits in daily life distinguishing between category1 and 2	Mostly Northern Norwegian but few get acceptance as both ethnicities. There are challenges to be accepted as the Coastal Sami /Kven because of the lack of language and cultural competence
Attitude toward the revitalization of the Coastal Sami and Kven	Language competence	Speak Northern Norwegian dialect	Speak Northern Norwegian dialect and learn Sami or Finnish	Speak Northern Norwegian dialect and Sami or Finnish/ some people can communicate in Sami/ people are interested in bilingual education.
	Involvement in ethnic revitalization	No interest	Actively involved in ethnic revitalization. They focus on learning the language not just for themselves but for the next generation.	There is increasing interest in ethnic revitalization .
	What kind of Costumes do people use on special days?	Norwegian national costumes	Sami costumes	Both Norwegian costumes and Sami costumes

From my observations, I could see changes in ethnic identification among the North Calotte Cocktail in Storfjord. When some individuals in the villages changed their ethnic identity from Northern Norwegian to the Coastal Sami, it was a big event and shocked the community. It caused social debates among people in the village, especially those who identify with being Northern Norwegian. The new Coastal Sami put on the Coastal Sami costumes in public places and identified themselves as the Coastal Sami. These people who changed their ethnic identity went through a time of struggle in finding out who they really were. They realize today that society had forced them to believe that they were Norwegian, although they were not Norwegians but Coastal Sami. Therefore some people made the decision to change their ethnic identity from the North Calotte Cocktail/Northerner (Nordlending) to Coastal Sami. They insisted that they were Coastal Sami though others did not accept this. In ethnic identification, individuals need to examine their identity themselves, but on the other hand, they also need to be acknowledged as Coastal Sami by others. Thus, they face the challenge of proving their Coastal Saminess so that others in Storfjord can confirm and accept them as being such. This challenge is quite tough because they have to prove their Saminess both to people in Storfjord and to the Finnmark Sami(cf.Hovland 1996).

Some areas in Storfjord have been used as summer pasture for reindeer herders from the Finnmark and Sweden. I visited reindeer herders on the days of ear-marking reindeer in Signaldalen. I interviewed 3 Sami reindeer herders. They have their summer house in Storfjord. My intention was to investigate how the Finnmark Sami accepts the Coastal Sami in Storfjord. The Finnmark Sami differentiated themselves from the Coastal Sami in Storfjord. They said the Coastal Sami in Storfjord did not have cultural and language traits as the Sami do. They argued that it is important that the Coastal Sami could reflect and present who the Coastal Sami are through their culture, tradition and language. They really questioned who the Coastal Sami were and what the difference was between the Coastal Sami and Northern Norwegian. What the Coastal Sami in Storfjord has in common with the Finnmark Sami is the fact that they are both indigenous people. One of my informants said “to be a Sami is not just to put on the Sami costume!” It seems that it is problematic for the reindeer herders to accept the Coastal Sami ethnic identification in Storfjord because they are too close to the Norwegian in cultural traits. In the next section 4.4, I will bring the local discourses about and reaction to this ethnic change among community members.

Recently, there have been some other changes among the North Calotte Cocktail. Some individuals who have mixed ethnic backgrounds want to reconstruct their dual-ethnicity by adding more meaning to their Sami or Kven identity. One important fact with this group is that they did not reject their Norwegian identity because they either have Norwegian origin or have Norwegian cultural and language traits. This is the category 3 people in my figure. One informant said,

“Have you heard of the encounters between three ethnic groups in this area? ... I think the encounters between three ethnic groups happened not only outside but also inside of me. I cannot reject my Sami and little bit of Kven part because it is inside of me. For example, the trunk of the body is Norwegian, the arm is Sami and the foot is Kven, could you say the foot is a small part and so it is not important? ... All three parts are important in defining who I am”.

During fieldwork, there were differences between the North Calotte Cocktail and the person who said the encounter of three ethnic groups exists “inside of me” but I could not explain the difference in category 1 and 3. To make a division was a matter of considerable complexity. Even after fieldwork, I visited some informants several times to confirm that my observation was right as to what they really meant when they said “I have a mixed origin” or “the encounters between three ethnicities exist inside of me”.

To analyze the difference, I would like to look into the melting pot versus salad bowl theory. Generally, the melting pot theory is used as a metaphor from the American multi-ethnic society. Many different ethnic groups immigrated to America and they mixed together. At the end, different ethnic groups all became Americans. The result of this process, supported by the assimilation policy, was that after a certain time people hardly retained their original ethnic traits. Contemporary research, however, sees the result of melting pot theories of assimilation in America differently (Bisin and Verdier 2000). Salad bowl theories are against promoting the disappearance of different ethnic identities, cultural and religious traits. Some diversity is maintained by retaining its own character. The Salad bowl model is often used by multiculturalists to illustrate how we could keep diversity in a heterogeneous society.

My line of argument here is that ‘the North Calotte Cocktail’ (my first category) which could be likened to the melting pot model, whereas the dual/multiple ethnic group (my third category) could be compared to the salad bowl model. The second category does not fall into the melting pot or the salad bowl model even though they have mixed origins, because they

do not accept these. First of all, although “the North Calotte Cocktail” group usually retained their mixed background, they could not retain their distinctive features because of the assimilation policy. They basically identify with the Norwegian ethnic identity which they perform in every day life, and have lost their cultural and language traits.

One might ask, then, how did the “dual/multiple ethnic group” manage to keep their distinctive feature through the time of the assimilation policy? Did the Coastal Sami dialect survive through the harsh and oppressing Norwegianization policy? The answer from historical data such as census will say “no”. They could not keep their cultural and language diversity after the assimilation policy. They denied and gave up their Coastal Sami ethnic origin and found a safe haven in declaring “we are Norwegian”. The memories of Coastal Sami or Kven faded from peoples’ minds after two or three generations. It was almost forgotten. Is it not the same then? I insist that it is not the same. It seems that it was the same before because the “dual/multiple ethnic group” was in “the North Calotte Cocktail” group. They are however not in the same place any more because they chose to have dual ethnicity. My observation and finding is that they realized their Coastal Sami and Kven origins are as important as their Norwegian origin in their ethnic identification. They started to invigorate their weak Sami or Kven identity, and have pursued the process of separating something from the mixture. They have tried to find the things that were hidden in their old memories and stories from mothers or grandmothers. They did not know there was a culture and tradition which could be characterized as Coastal Sami or Kven. They were on treasure hunt. Today some are able to show the treasure which they found in their life and this helps them in their Sami or Kven identity.

They also want to be involved in the cultural revitalization and they are concerned about how they can pass the Coastal Sami or Finnish/Kven language and culture to the next generation. Even though they focus on invigorating the Sami or Kven identity, it is also important to live as Norwegians and maintain their Norwegian identity. For example, many people from Storfjord were involved in the Riddu Riddu festival in 2009 and part of the festival was held in Storfjord. My informants who have dual ethnicity were participating in the Riddu Riddu festival and they expressed their identity as the Coastal Sami. They said that they were enjoying being a part of the festival as Coastal Sami while they were Norwegians in daily life. They also celebrate the 17<sup>th</sup> of May as Norwegians with Norwegian costumes.

## 4.4 The local discourses and reactions to the ethnic changes from the North Calotte Cocktail to the Coastal Sami identity

### 4.4.1 The change of ethnic identification from Category 1 to Category 2

How was the reconstruction of identity process among some individuals from mixed origin to the single Coastal Sami identity? What was the reaction from the community when they identified themselves as Coastal Sami? When the Northern Norwegian changed their ethnic identity to Sami, they expressed their Sami identity through the Sami costumes. When they appeared with the Sami costumes, people often made ugly comments about their identity and appearance.

I 1: “When I think back to the time when I decided to wear the Sami costume in my hometown, it was not always easy... ..People made ugly comments... it was tough... but I went through that time with pride in my own identity”

I 2: “When the Sami parliament was established, I registered as Sami and later I decided to have the Lyngen area Sami costume. People did not like it at all and referred to me as a “plastic Sami”. I had to stand firm in my decision. It was like a fight inside me and at the same time on the outside world”.

In this case, the Coastal Sami who changed their ethnic identity started wearing the Sami costume to symbolize their new identity. They were engaged in finding the Coastal Sami belief and tradition. They joined the Sami political movement and wanted to influence others who did not recognize their Sami origin. However, they were not accepted as Sami by the Finnmark Sami in the beginning. Why? There were two points which were debated among the Samis and non- Samis at that time. First of all, the Coastal Sami were not together with the Finnmark Sami in the Sami movement when the Alta case happened. They were late comers in the Sami movement. Secondly, they do not have the same Sami language skill and cultural competences as the Finnmark Sami have. Skogholt expressed the Coastal Sami’s feeling of not being included in the Sami society as given below. When the Coastal Sami tried to be together with the Finnmark Sami, they felt fear and hopelessness because they could not speak Sami well. Skogholt called this situation a “second stigma”.

“Those of us who tried out our new vocabulary when we met the real Sami-those who could speak the language-more often than not received ironic smiles at our hopeless attempt at speaking a language we couldn’t master. When the criteria for the Sami census came, we learned the truth that we had feared for some time. We “new Sami” were not welcome into the Sami family” (Skogholt 2000).



Different names were used to refer to Sami for example “super Sami”, “real Sami”, “new Sami” and “plastic Sami”, among others. Although, the Coastal Sami in Storfjord perceived themselves as Sami, they were categorized as either new Sami or plastic Sami but not real Sami.

What are the criteria of having Sami identity? How do the Coastal Sami fulfill the criteria?

“All persons who make a declaration to the effect that they consider themselves to be Sami, and who either a. have Sami as their domestic language, or b. have or have had a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent with Sami as his or her domestic language, or c. are the child of a person who is or has been registered in the Sami electoral register” (the Sami Act § 2-6. the Sami electoral register).

The individuals who claim they are Sami in Storfjord fulfilled these criteria: Self-affiliation as a subjective criteria and the Sami language as an objective criteria. Most of them have or have had a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent with Sami as his or her domestic language. However, the reaction from local and inner Finnmark Sami was harsh and they still could not find the sense of belonging on both sides.

Generally people had an image of Sami people depicted by a man wearing the colorful Sami costume, standing with reindeer and using the Sami language everyday. Therefore, it was difficult for the Coastal Sami to find their sense of belonging there even though they tried hard. Actually, the Coastal Sami made a breakthrough when they stopped trying to be like the inner Finnmark Sami. They tried to reconstruct their Coastal Sami culture and heritage. They tried to revitalize the Sami language through education. They created the image of the Coastal Sami separately from the Finnmark Sami and reconstructed a specific Sami identity focused on their forefathers’ traditional way of life. One of my informants who is a Coastal Sami argued that the Coastal Sami tradition and culture was different from that of the inner Finnmark Sami. The Coastal Sami people were occupied with fishing and small farming. They are now revitalizing and reconstructing their tradition and culture which was almost lost and forgotten. They argue that the Coastal Sami identity is based on Coastal Sami traditions and symbols. Therefore, inner Finnmark Sami should not judge the Coastal Sami identity by inner Finnmark Sami standards and point of reference. They want their Coastal Sami culture to be treated as equal to the inner Finnmark Sami. Reinvention of the Coastal Sami tradition and culture was enacted in Kåfjord through the Coastal Sami ethno-political movement. This

movement in Kåfjord has influenced the Coastal Sami in Storfjord but there is still a lack of acknowledgment as Coastal Sami by the local people in Storfjord.

To sum this up, many people in Storfjord had the mixed ethnic background and identified themselves as the North Calotte Cocktail. In the last few decades, some individuals changed their ethnic identity from the North Calotte Cocktail to a single Coastal Sami ethnic identity or a dual Sami/Norwegian. They went through the process of reconstructing and revitalizing the Coastal Sami traditions and heritage to compartmentalize the Coastal Sami identity and inner Finnmark Sami identity. This process led them to be competent in their own culture and tradition. However, there are still challenges as in being accepted as Coastal Sami by others, even though the recognition of the Coastal Sami is growing and is more accepted than it used to be in Storfjord.

#### **4.4.2 Ethnic identification from category 1 to category 3**

From field work observation, I can summarize the character of the category 1 – “The North Calotte Cocktail”. First of all, they recognized their mixed origin and accept it. However, their self-ascription of ethnic identity is Norwegian. Their Coastal Sami and/or Kven ethnicity is integrated in the Norwegian ethnicity. Secondly, they use the Northern Norwegian dialect which is the mother tongue of most of category 1. But there are very few elderly people who can speak the Sami or Kven. It was common to find that category 1 did not have interests in learning Sami or Kven/Finnish language. They live as Norwegians and their cultural expressions are based on the Northern Norwegian culture. Thirdly, those in category 1 do not usually involve themselves in the Coastal Sami and/or Kven/Finnish language and cultural revitalization.

Nowadays, there are some individuals who ascribe to both Norwegian and the Coastal Sami/Kven ethnic identity which I categorized as category 3. Category 3 does not change their ethnic identity such as category 2 does. They maintain the Norwegian ethnic identity and at the same time have the Coastal Sami or Kven ethnic identity. In daily life, they live as Norwegians. However, in some places or situations, they switch their identity from Norwegian to the Coastal Sami or Kven. For example, they switch their identity to Coastal Sami during the Riddu Riddu festival and when they visit a relative in the Finnmark, put on Sami costumes and identify themselves as Sami. This group is also interested in the ethnic

revitalization in Storfjord. Some of them are good in the Sami language and therefore communicate in Sami with the Finnmark Sami but they speak Norwegian at home. This group wants their children to learn the Sami or Finnish language throughout kindergarten and school. Few informants argued that children can learn Norwegian at home because Norwegian is their mother tongue. Although they can speak Sami, it is not their mother tongue and they do not use that in every day life so they are not fluent in it. Therefore, it is important that children can learn Sami or Finnish in kindergarten or school from native speakers.

To sum this up, individuals who have dual ethnicity switch their ethnic identity in different situations. This group did not experience social resistance in their dual ethnicity as much as category 2 did. The reason might be analyzed in two ways. First, Category 3 claims Norwegian identity in which they have good language and cultural competence. There is no problem with the community accepting them as Norwegians. Secondly, they also claim the Coastal Sami and/or Kven ethnic identity through their ancestors. Some of them can communicate in the Sami language and many of them also invigorate Sami or Kven/Finnish identity by learning the language. In that respect, they gain more acceptance of their Sami or Kven/ Finnish identity from the community. However, it was hard to understand people in the community when Category 2 rejects the Norwegian ethnicity which they perform in every day life. Category 2 and 3 are interested in bilingual education because they wish that their children could learn the Sami or Finnish languages in school.

#### **4.5 Could the Coastal Sami identity be expressed in certain locations or at certain social events in Storfjord?**

After World War II, people tried to hide the Sami identity especially in public spheres where the place of inter-ethnic relations takes place. Harald Eidheim's (1971) article showed this phenomena in the Coastal Sami area in Finnmark in 1950s. He observed that the Coastal Sami people did not act out their ethnic identity during inter-ethnic relations because the Coastal Sami ethnic identity was illegitimated. Among the mixed Norwegian-Sami population, language was one of the main symbols which dichotomized ethnic clusters and ascribed ethnic labels.

In this fjord community, Lappish was the domestic language in about 40 of the 50-odd households... Outside the households, Lappish was a medium of communication within the

wider district, but language behaviour is such that Lappish must be regarded as a secret language or code, regularly used only in situations where trusted Lappish identities are involved (Eidheim 1971).

Eidheim's investigation stated that Sami ethnic identity was maintained only in the backstage contexts, and that the Coastal Sami articulated Norwegian identity on the front stage in the 1960s. Thus, someone on a short visit could hardly notice the ethnic diversity in that Coastal Sami area.

How about today's Coastal Sami ethnic management in Storfjordrd? I have lived in Storfjord a few years but I was not able to observe the ethnic diversity in the beginning. My impression of daily life in the Storfjordrd area in 2004 was that it was the same as any other ordinary Norwegian village. However, I think the situation has changed today. The reason I can now recognize differences is probably because individuals have started to present the Coastal Sami ethnic identity and because the community is giving more positive responses to ethnic diversity than before. The middle aged and young generation in Storfjord are getting proud of their ethnic identity, and the social response to the Coastal Sami or Kven ethnic identity is more accepting and positive than before. Some individuals who are actively involved in the Coastal Sami movement have influenced the community. For example, the leader of the Riddu Ridðu festival of 2009 was a girl from Storfjord. When we talked about the Riddu Ridðu festival, many informants acknowledged her with pride.

I observed the Coastal Sami identity performed in certain locations or social events. First of all, the Riddu Ridðu festival is a popular social event in which the Coastal Sami identity can be expressed for both the middle aged and the young generation. Quite many Coastal Sami from Storfjord attended the festival. I met one informant who was a teenage boy twice for interviews. The first time, I met him in his village before Riddu Ridðu. He was the same as other boys in Storfjord. He said "I am from Elvevoll. I am both Northern Norwegian and Coastal Sami." I asked how he expresses his Norwegian and Sami identity, especially the Coastal Sami identity. His reply was

"Maybe I am not much different from my friends in school. I am a Norwegian just as my friends. But when I visit my grand mother, I feel more like a Sami.... I have attended the Riddu Ridðu festival for several years and I will work as a volunteer this year. There, I think, my Coastal Sami identity is mostly expressed. I became interested in Sami culture and history, and have become so proud of my Coastal Sami background after attending the Riddu Ridðu festival. I made a decision to have my own Coastal Sami costume and wore the costume during my confirmation".

The second time, we met each other was at the festival. He wore his Sami costume. He said that he enjoyed it a lot and it was good to meet indigenous people from other countries.

Moreover, Laestadian meetings have also been a significant place to express the Coastal Sami and Kven identity. There at the meeting, there was room for the Sami and Kven language in contrast to the State Church. Laestadianism today, it appears, is still ethnically dichotomized into the “us” and “them” although the use of Sami and Kven language disappeared in other congregations. Especially the older generation who have Sami and Kven ethnic origins expressed their ethnic identity through the Laestadian meetings.

Furthermore, the Sami “Language Cafe” is a location for expressing the Coastal Sami ethnic identity. Through the Sami “Language Cafe”, the Coastal Sami people in Storfjord are given the opportunity to reflect on who they are, and to try to live out and build the Coastal Sami identity together. In the “Language Cafe”, people learn the language through the culture . In November 2009, a duodji<sup>25</sup> course in weaving was arranged for the village people during the language cafe. I also participated in that course and made my own belt. One boy came along with his grandparent. He sat together with us and participated. His grandmother was very proud of him. “He made this for me (she was wearing a colorful belt which we had learnt how to make). It is beautiful, isn’t it? He learned how to make it in school”. In the course of that evening, I heard several stories this grandmother told her grandchildren about her childhood and about her mother and grandmother who were Coastal Sami. In the “Language Cafe”, Coastal Sami stories in Storfjord are also transmitted to the next generation.

To summarize, the Coastal Sami identity is expressed in certain social events such as the Riddu Riddu festival, Laestadian meetings and in the “Language Café”. The Coastal Sami identity was dying out in Storfjord as a result of Norwegianization, modernization and social economic changes. However, there are some changes which could be recognized as the start of ethnic revitalization in Storfjord. Firstly, there are individuals who claim the Coastal Sami identity whether in the context of single ethnicity or dual ethnicity. Secondly, there is

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<sup>25</sup> Duodji is a word which describes different types of Sami handicraft.

increasing interests in reinventing the Coastal Sami traditions and in performing their Saminess in public places. Thirdly, there has been a growing interest in the revitalization of language and culture on the community level since 2007. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 2010, the language center was open in Skibotn with an ambition to revitalize the three languages and cultures in Storfjord. This is the first language center in Norway which focuses on three languages: Sami, Finnish and Norwegian. It will be a milestone for ethnic revitalization in Storfjord. The language center arranges language courses in Finnish and Sami and other cultural activities. Although there are changes in ethnic identification in Storfjord, people who claim to be Coastal Sami or Kven still need to create more locations and events in Storfjord for performing their cultural distinctiveness next to the North Calotte Cocktails.

#### **4.6 The relationship between place and ethnicity**

Storfjord municipality borders both Finland and Sweden. This geographical factor influenced the local culture and heritage which is based on diversity and interaction among different ethnic groups. In this section, I will deal with the relation between place and local identity in Storfjord. How can place be relevant to individual identity?

A human being achieves distinctness by being associated with a place, because the place is special or because of the special lifestyles associated with that place. Places can be distinct because of aesthetic conditions (nature and cultural landscape), history and traditions (Viken and Nyseth 2009:226)

During my fieldwork and after several interviews, I recognized that there was some kind of relational significance concerning place, local identity and individual ethnic identification in Storfjord. It was interesting to hear people's association and responses about their ethnicity. There were very few who said "I am a Sami" directly in the beginning, even though they had a Sami identity. First, informants usually said they were Northern Norwegian and mentioned where they lived and gave some information about their family history. For instance, they would say "I am a Northern Norwegian and I am from Oteren", "I am a Norwegian and I am also from Skibotn. My grandparents moved from the Torne valley<sup>26</sup> to Skibotn a long time ago". When the local people mentioned where they lived, it seemed to be connotative of the ethnic background. Generally speaking, when people said that they are from Oteren, it was often connotative of a Sami ethnic background. Skibotn and Kitdalen often represent Kven or Finnish ethnic background and identities. Places like Hatteng and Signaldalen have strong

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<sup>26</sup> The Torne valley is located in the northern part of Scandinavia on the border of Sweden and Finland.

indications of Norwegian ethnicity. I discussed place and local identity relations by historical settlement in 1800s in Storfjord in chapter 3.

I would like to bring a case to show how ethnicity could be related to place today. In 2007, the municipal council meeting decided to move NAV (the employment office) from Oteren to Hatteng. The location of NAV in Storfjord brought huge conflict in the small village, although it was a decision made by the majority in the municipal council meeting. The minority expressed great dissatisfaction, and claimed that this will cost the municipality highly. It was discussed almost every week in newspapers and debated among people in 2008. When I heard about this NAV case from the media and people, I saw the point of argument on the basis of political and economic disagreement in the municipality. However, some people said that the NAV case is deeply involved in ethnic conflict and competition. Coastal Sami people wanted to keep public possession in their places. There was tension between people in Oteren and Hatteng because the NAV office was to be relocated to Hatteng. When this case was debated in private spheres, the ethnic conflict was strong.

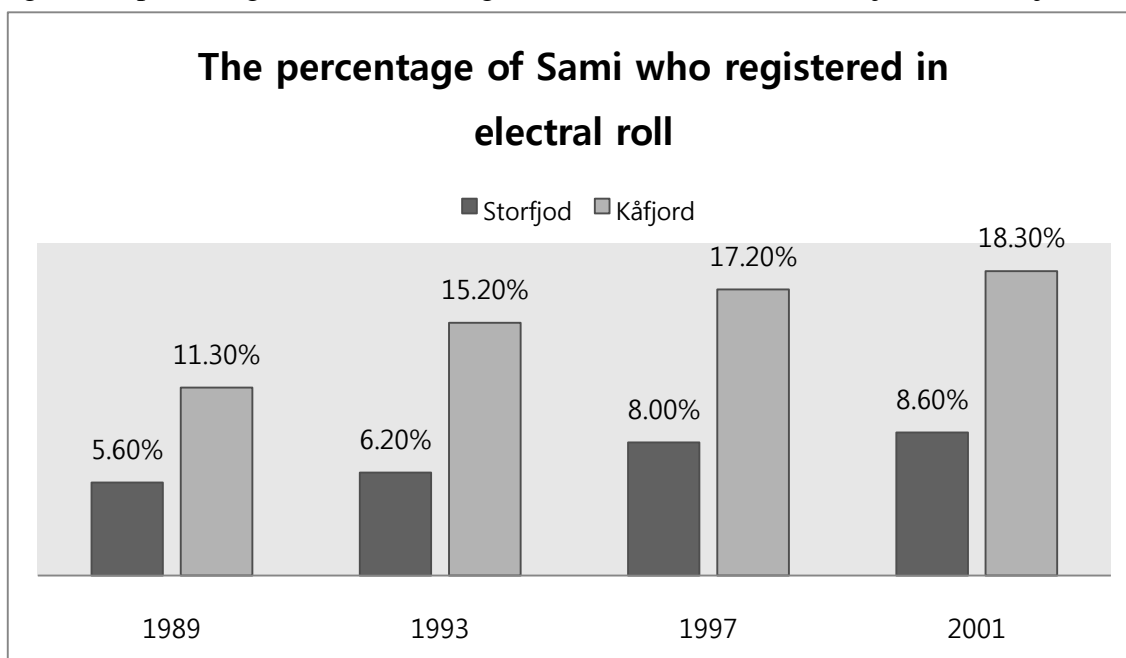
People in Storfjord went through conflict and division because of their difference. When the municipality had the new slogan “Diversity gives strength”, people turned a scornful shoulder on the municipality’s revitalization project which started in 2007. The revitalization in Storfjord focused on municipalities with three different cultural and linguistic cultures. The emphasis of the project was on the Kven, Norwegian and Sami cooperating together and the diversity of the municipality was presented as their strong point in the multi-cultural society. Storfjord has gone through the process of establishing the three languages center and it was officially opened in February 2010 in Skibotn. Opening this language center has been a new and important step into the future of ethnic revitalization in Storfjord.

#### **4.7 The comparison between Coastal Sami revitalization in Kåfjord and Storfjord**

Storfjord and Kåfjord are neighboring municipalities where historically the Coastal Sami have lived for a long time. Generally speaking, both communities experienced the waning of the Coastal Sami ethnicity through the increasing mixed origins and the Norwegianization policy. It ended up becoming like a mono-Norwegian ethnic society by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, some people started to have the ambition to revitalize the Coastal Sami language and culture following the Sami political movement. This was started in Kåfjord in

the 1980s and has had a successful journey(Hovland 1996). Nowadays, Kåfjord is the symbol of a reinvented place for the Coastal Sami tradition and holds the Riddu Riddu festival which has become an indigenous people’s gathering. In Storffjord, there is an increasing interest in ethnic revitalization by both the Coastal Sami and Kven. The table below shows how much self-identification as Sami is expressed in both communities. The Sami registration in Kåfjord is almost a little more than double that of Storffjord. The ethnic revitalization in Kåfjord has been focused on the Coastal Sami culture and language.

Fig. 8 The percentage of Sami who registered in electoral roll in Storffjord and Kåfjord



I have attended the Riddu Riddu festival since 2005. At that time the ethnic revitalization movement in Storffjord was not visible. I was wondering why the revitalization of the Sami movement did not happen in Storffjord. When I inquired about this in Storffjord, I got the response that “people in Kåfjord are more Sami than us. In the olden days, transportation and road systems were not very good. It was therefore a remote area so they could preserve their language and culture better than we could. However, people in Storffjord are more mixed and almost everybody became Norwegian”. This was what the local people believed, and they still claim that it is the same today.



What is the difference between the ethnic revitalization between Storfjord and Kåfjord? Firstly, it started from young elite who identified themselves as the Coastal Sami in Kåfjord. They were deeply rooted in the ethno-political movement in the context of the indigenous movement. The Coastal Sami ethno-political elites have achieved indigenous rights such as the preservation of the Sami language and culture. In Kåfjord, they led the revitalization movement of the Coastal Sami language and culture. Kåfjord is one of the Sami language districts in Norway. This movement in Kåfjord developed on the international level through the Riddu Riddu festival which creates a meeting place for international indigenous youth.

Storfjord is now starting the revitalization of the Coastal Sami. However, the revitalization movement is not in the context of the Coastal Sami only as indigenous people. People focus on Norwegian (Signalalen dialect), Kven/Finnish and the Coastal Sami culture and language revitalization. The revitalization in Storfjord can be highlighted on the affirmation of the value of cultural diversity and deals with the equal status of the three ethnic groups. They recognize more the ethnic diversity within the context of multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is usually associated with group rights or collective rights which are needed for maintaining the cultural differences and diversity in society. The Coastal Sami hardly recognize having a special right as an indigenous people in Storfjord. I will not analyze the reason for this in this thesis but I can only surmise the reasons might be connected to the characteristics of populations. The first characteristic is that they are based on a mixed ethnic population. The second is that the Sami ethno-political movement insists upon the “either- or ethnic category”. Therefore, mixed ethnic populations have to choose either the Coastal Sami ethnicity or Norwegian. I argue that this was problematic for mixed ethnic populations who both integrated well into the Norwegian society and have a Norwegian origin.

#### **4.8 Summary**

My research questions are below:

- Could the success of Sami and Finnish language learning among Northern Norwegians who have a mixed ethnic background give dual and bicultural identity through the strengthening of their ethnic identity as Sami and Kven?
- To what degree do the language courses and cultural activities in Storfjord operate and produce a dynamic network of identity affiliation and ascription?

My fieldwork findings can be summarized into four parts. First, the population in Storfjord is based on the mixed ethnicity: Norwegian, Kven/Finnish and the Coastal Sami. It was a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual community until the Norwegianization policy hit this area. The population was integrated into the Norwegian ethnic identity. Therefore, the majority of the population today identify themselves as Norwegian. Although they are Norwegian, they express themselves as Northern Norwegians to show their mixed origin of the Coastal Sami and/or Kven/Finnish. They dichotomize themselves with the Norwegians who live in Sigdalen because they moved from the southern part of Norway and still speak the southern dialect and they are referred to as ‘pure Norwegians’.

Secondly, the Coastal Sami and Kven/Finnish cultures and languages almost died out through assimilation. Storfjord lost its multi-lingual and multi-cultural heritage in the community. However, there have been changes in ethnic identity in Storfjord in the last 10 years. Some individuals from mixed ethnic populations started to choose the Coastal Sami or Kven identity. These people were actively involved in the ethno-political movement to gain the rights for the Coastal Sami and Kven. The population of mixed ethnic origins was identified in three different ethnic categories in Storfjord. It is significant to observe the character of these groups. The individuals who have mixed origins identified themselves as the Coastal Sami whether in the context of single ethnicity or dual ethnicity. These groups (category 2 and 3) wanted to express their Saminess and invigorate their Sami identity by learning the language. They are not fluent in the Sami language. Most of them speak Northern Norwegian as their mother tongue. They are making efforts to learn the language and transmit Sami to next generation. However, they do not speak Sami to the children at home, but send them to the Sami kindergarten and let them learn Sami from the natives. Therefore, they focus on language revitalization through bilingual education so that the next generation can have the opportunity to learn Sami.

Thirdly, the “Language Café” plays a pivotal role in providing a meeting place for the Coastal Sami in Storfjord. It is not just a language course but a platform for the Coastal Sami to build networks and discuss Coastal Sami issues. In Storfjord, the three-language center opened. The language center will support the individuals to learn the languages. Fourthly, when people identified themselves as Coastal Sami in category 2, it was hard to be accepted by the locals because they know their Norwegian and/or Kven/Finnish ancestors. There has

been resistance in accepting them as Coastal Sami because there was not enough ethnic distinctiveness among categories 1, 2 and 3. In addition, the Coastal Sami do not have the same cultural symbols as the Finnmark Sami. Therefore, language learning and reinvention of the Coastal Sami tradition was important in showing their distinctiveness and at the same time in strengthening their Sami identity.

It was the beginning of the ethnic revitalization in Storfjord. They established the language center to revitalize three languages (Sami, Norwegian which is the Signaldalen dialect and Finnish) in Storfjord. Through the language center, people want to preserve their multi-ethnic heritage. It will be interesting to follow up the ethnic revitalization in Storfjord. How does the language center contribute to ethnic revitalization? The ethnic category 1 is in the majority now, and categories 2 and 3 are minorities but are growing. How will this trend be influenced by ethnic revitalization? It would be interesting to investigate this for further studies.

## Chapter 5

### Summary and conclusion

This thesis has focused on ethnic identities in Northern Norway. Populations in the coastal areas of Northern Norway are nowadays more or less a mixture of the Coastal Sami, Kven and Norwegian. It might be analyzed historically as one of the results of the encounter of three ethnic groups; the Coastal Sami, Kven and Norwegian. Therefore, there is a natural tendency to choose from a “both–and” ethnicity. However, the Coastal Sami and Kven had experienced the worst form of the Norwegianization policy until the last century. As a result, the Coastal Sami and Kven ethnicity was often stereotyped and carried stigmatized ethnic identity.

Although, following the Norwegianization process, the diversity of ethnicity among the majority was almost assimilated into the Norwegian mono-ethnicity, some Northern Norwegians still express and identify their Sami and/or Kven cultural traits. In addition, the Sami ethno-political movement gained, in the wake of the Sami nationhood as people, respect for Sami culture from the Norwegian society. It also helped people express the Sami culture with pride. Nowadays, many individuals from the mixed population are involved in identity management in the context of either single ethnicity or dual ethnicity. I argued earlier that the paradoxical Coastal Sami identity management and acceptance from others was achieved through the Sami ethno-political movement. The Sami ethno-political movement focused on the development of the dichotomization between the Sami and Norwegian. They created the Sami symbols and emblem through the Finnmark Sami who are reindeer herders. The result is that the Coastal Sami are still struggling with their ethnic identity management. Why is the Coastal Sami identity management problematic for themselves and others? I analyzed the reasons by presenting the data from informants in Storfjord. The Sami ethno-political movement seems to influence the mixed population to choose the “either-or” identity category. Therefore, some individuals choose the Coastal Sami ethnic identity even though their Norwegian cultural skills and language are excellent and much better than their Sami skills and language.

I analyzed these mixed populations' ethnic identity management based on Barth's theory and the dual ethnicity. His concept of ethnicity which is produced by social interaction applied to a closer look at the diversity of ethnic articulation among mixed populations and how people construct and mobilize their ethnic boundaries. I also discussed the comparative consideration of mixed descent by indigenous peoples and colonizers as presented by Thuen. He analyzed the mixed descent of Sami and Norwegian in Northern Norway in the 1980s and classified this population as integrated into the Norwegian ethnic category. However, my field observation showed a new politicization of the Coastal Sami identity and the expression of dual ethnicity.

I developed my argument by showing the changes among integrated Norwegians who change their ethnic category to Sami or have dual ethnicity. In the discussions about the mixed ethnic population in Northern Norway, I have tried to outline the changes among them and the process of dichotomizing by choosing different categories of identity management. I discussed the Coastal Sami ethnic revitalization and how it corresponds to the ethnic categorizations. Without someone being identified as a Coastal Sami, there cannot be ethnic revitalization. Therefore, identifying and performing ethnicity is the beginning of ethnic revitalization.

My line of argument is first and foremost that, the Coastal Sami reinvent their tradition and culture which is based on their history. They cannot use the cultural symbols or emblems of the Finnmark Sami which portray the nomadic traditional life through reindeer husbandry. Secondly, the majority of the Coastal Sami population has mixed origins with Norwegian and/or Kven/Finnish. In retrospect, they experienced a multi-lingual and multi-cultural community. However, the Coastal Sami revitalization in the context of a single identity separated them from their multi-ethnic origin. They are not Norwegian but Sami. Is this really the case? Maybe they are more Norwegian with respect to cultural and language skills than Sami. On the other hand, some individuals would like to identify themselves as "both the Coastal Sami and Northern Norwegian". This is more acceptable for the Coastal Sami and others because they are Norwegians with respect to excellence in expressing Norwegian cultural traits and language skills, and to some extent they are also the Coastal Sami. They invigorate their Sami identity by learning the language or through bilingual education for the next generation. This also applies to the single Sami identity group. They also perform the Saminess through reinventing Sami tradition and language learning. Thereby, the dual ethnic

identification as both Coastal Sami and Northern Norwegian should be taken into consideration in the Sami movement as an indigenous people.

I presented above the coastal identities in three categories of ethnic identification. The cultural skill and language competence played a pivotal role in setting the boundaries of these three groups. However, modern societies hardly encompassed a wide range of cultural diversity and minority languages. As Norwegianization and modernization proceeded, the Coastal Sami language seemed to have disappeared. Why is the issue of disappearing languages significant? The reason was presented by the theory of Janda and the argument of Skutnabb-Kangas for language revitalization. In addition; I gained some insight into the Sami language revitalization movement by comparing the differences in Kåfjord, which belongs to the Sami language districts and Storfjord which is placed in a non-Sami language district in Northern Norway. The Norwegian Constitution Article 110a and the adoption of the Sami language Act have influenced Sami language revitalization. Norway also ratified the ILO Convention 169 in 1990. Sami people's rights are acknowledged and they have the indigenous status. These legal bindings helped the Sami language to penetrate the social domain and gain recognition. When the forgotten Sami language was revived, the Sami common feeling and identity was strengthened at the same time.

The Coastal Sami revitalization in the context of dual/multiple ethnicity as an object of research in Norway is new since the Sami ethno-political movement focused on Sami nationhood as a separate people. The debate of the Coastal Sami identity management in the coastal region of Northern Norway will continue to take place within the Sami society and between the Sami and Norwegian societies. I hope my research findings in this thesis contribute to the understanding of coastal identities in the modern age and the Coastal Sami revitalization.

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