5 Integrating, Segregating, Emancipating?

The *General* and the *Specific* in Nordic Sámi Education in the Early 20th Century and Today

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The modern history of Sámi[1] education in the Nordic countries of Norway, Finland, and Sweden is a part of the general impulse toward popular education that the Nordic governments launched in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. At the same time, Sámi groups have been targeted in several cases by specific educational policies where their ethnicity—to put it in contemporary terms—played a substantial role in the design of these policies. For instance, the language assimilation carried out in Norwegian schools with Sámi and Kven (Finnish-speaking) pupils during the first half of the 20th century can be viewed as both *general* and *specific*: On the one hand, the goal was to educate the minorities to an equal, common Norwegian and Norwegian-speaking citizenship. On the other hand, the assimilation policies specifically targeted the Sámi and the Kven, aiming to eradicate these languages in Norway (Minde, 2003).

Similar cases can be made about the Swedish and Finnish policies regarding Sámi education. In Sweden, the *nomad school* system has generated a large body of research during the recent years. The aim of this system was to educate the children of the large-scale reindeer herders in segregation in order to bring the pupils up into a "modernized" livelihood of reindeer herding and to persuade them to stay in that vocation (Elenius, 2006; Sjögren, 2010).

Whereas the nomad school system was already being criticized in the 1920s for having patronizing attitudes towards the Sámi, the notion of specificity in Sámi education has been a popular theme among Sámi educators in recent decades. As many scholars (including Sámi scholars) have pointed out, the Nordic school systems should acknowledge the specificity of Sámi culture by offering education that is culturally sensitive and based on and geared toward Sámi culture (Keskitalo et al., 2013; Olsen, 2019; Svonni, 2015). More recently, scholars in the Nordic countries with Sámi minorities have argued that mainstream curricula in all schools of the countries should also include substantial elements of Sámi culture (Ngai, 2015; Kemi Gjerpe, 2018).

DOI: 10.4324/9781003218180-7

This chapter discusses early 20th-century Sámi criticism toward educational policies against this backdrop of recent debates on Sámi content in education. The chapter lays bare that the question of specificity and generality in Sámi education is not a novel theme. What were the most important points when calling for Sámi specificity in education? What were the assumed advantages of widening the general model of elementary education to the Sámi areas? Discussing the important work of such Sámi teachers and educators as Isak Saba, Per Fokstad, Gustav Park, Karin Stenberg, and Josef Guttorm, this chapter produces a broad narrative of early 20th-century Sámi education, including voices from Norway, Finland, and Sweden, as well as from the Sámi and the majority populations alike. This chapter also serves as a critical comment and call for action to widen the scholarly perspective away from the specific nation-states spanning the Sámi area to the region as a whole. In investigating the general and specific tendencies in Nordic governmental educational policies targeting the Sámi, the chapter scrutinizes the role of the Nordic states in constructing and cementing the conventional view of the Sámi as Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, and Russian minority populations rather than as a cross-national population in its own right.

Norway

In a comparative Nordic perspective with Sweden and Finland, Norway was the country with the clearest and most uniform school policy towards the Sámi population. The turn of the 20th century saw a number of laws that codified strong language assimilation, called Norwegianization (*fornorskning*), as a pivotal part of the educational policies in the areas inhabited by Sámi and Kven (Finnish-speaking) pupils. As elucidated in earlier scholarship (Eriksen & Niemi, 1981; Bråstad Jensen, 2005; Minde, 2003; Kortekangas, 2021), this strong ideology of assimilation stemmed from security policy considerations as well as national economic ideals: Non-Norwegian-speaking groups populating the northern areas bordering Finland and Russia constituted a national threat in the eyes of educational authorities. This security policy argument became intertwined with strong Norwegian-nationalist undercurrents and the ideal of agriculture as the base for economy and sustenance, including in the northernmost parts of Norway where Sámi fishermen and reindeer herders traditionally practiced their livelihoods.

These stringent assimilation policies met with a Sámi opposition that was stronger than the more scattered critical Sámi voices in Sweden and Finland. The first wave of Sámi activity, spearheaded by individuals such as the Sámi teachers Anders Larsen and Isak Saba, argued for more Sámi language to be used within the Norwegian elementary school system. Many children were unilingual Sámi-speakers when starting school, and it was, according to Larsen and Saba, a waste of resources to teach the

pupils in a language they could not understand (Larsen, 1917; Jernsletten, 1998). In 1906, Isak Saba, who was also the first Sámi member of the *Storting*, the Norwegian parliament, published a proposition for a revision of the Norwegian curriculum as part of his election program as a Labor Party MP candidate. The points of this proposition bear witness to the fact that more inclusive school policies existed prior to the strong assimilation of the early 20th century. Saba's points on education and Sámi language were as follows: "1 a. The [church] service shall in the future be held in Sámi to the same extent as before; 1 b. School books in religion and the Bible and hymnals shall also in the future be published in Sámi" (Saba, 1906, as cited in Jernsletten, 1998).

Saba's points highlight the strong role that Lutheran Christianity held traditionally within the Norwegian (and in general, Nordic) school system. A certain secularization took place in the early 20th century with the establishment of the governmental elementary school systems. In the Nordic countries, this also entailed a shift of responsibilities from the Lutheran Churches to the governments. Notwithstanding, Christianity remained one of the most important subjects throughout the first half of the 20th century, and Lutheran Christianity was the self-evident ethical baseline of all education and upbringing (Buchardt, 2013).

Within Sámi education, the link between Lutheranism and education was possibly even stronger, given that the first Sámi schools in the 17th and 18th centuries were founded by Lutheran missionaries, and mission schools continued to be the main venue for Sámi education until 1900 (and in Sweden and Finland even longer). Many of the Sámi of Norway, Finland, and Sweden also used the mission schools as positive examples of education when faced with the new governmental school system that paid less attention to Sámi culture than the mission schools had done. Saba's program also points to this direction: His ideas should be interpreted as an appreciation of the earlier school tradition and the relatively strong role Sámi language had had in the Lutheran context, where the intelligibility of the Gospel was more important than other educational goals (Elenius, 2006; Norlin & Sjögren, 2016; Kortekangas, 2021; Andresen et al., 2021).

Sámi teacher Isak Saba's claims for more Sámi language in schools were met with vigorous opposition from the side of the educational authorities, most notably the school directors of Norway's northernmost county, Finnmark. According to the leading regional educational authorities, the Finnmark school directors Bernt Thomassen (1902–1920) and Christen Brygfjeld (1922–1933), strong language assimilation rendered tuition in Sámi redundant, as the pupils learned Norwegian quickly in schools with no special arrangements for minority languages. According to the directors, Sámi could, however, be used in certain situations such as Christianity instruction and as an accelerator of Norwegianization (when Sámi was used in order to gain quick acquisition of the Norwegian language; Bråstad Jensen, 2005; Kortekangas, 2021).

A generation after Saba's and Larsen's calls for the extended use of Sámi within the Norwegian school system, another Sámi teacher, Per Fokstad, became a vocal opponent of the Norwegianization policies. Fokstad was, in fact, more than just an opponent of assimilation. Whereas Saba and Larsen had proposed a revision of the existing curriculum to include more Sámi language tuition at the turn of the century, Fokstad wrote a proposition in 1920 for a completely new curriculum and school system in Sámi that would run parallel to the Norwegian curriculum. Fokstad wrote his school plan at the time when a general revision of the curriculum and schools was taking place in Norway. The *Storting* appointed a parliamentary school committee in 1922 that lasted for five years. The work of the committee resulted in a number of laws in the 1930s concerning the elementary schools, with no substantial changes with regard to Sámi education. While the committee was working, Fokstad published his school plan (in 1924) in an attempt to influence the work of the committee in a direction that would be favorable to Sámi education (Bråstad Jensen, 2005; Eriksen & Niemi, 1981; Myhre, 1992).

Finnmark school director Christen Brygfjeld did not understand the proposals in Fokstad's school plan. He interpreted the school plan as a "rehash" of obsolete educational ideals from the 19th century (Brygfjeld, 1925). In a sense, he was right, considering that the 19th-century school system, based on traditional missionary values, had been much more positive towards Sámi language than the contemporary school system of Norway. In other ways, Brygfjeld's critique was off-point, however. Fokstad's school plan was in no way a mere rehash or a revival of the 19th-century context where Sámi language had a freer role within the school system. Fokstad's school plan should, rather, be interpreted as a modernist project, borrowing tactically from the general Norwegian, Nordic, and European contexts of ideas on nations, nationalist pedagogy, and the functions of education.

Fokstad's plan was comprehensive in the sense that he aimed the proposed curriculum at being applied in all schools with Sámi pupils. In the schools with a mixed pupil base, with Sámi, Kven, and Norwegian pupils, Fokstad suggested the Sámi have their own stream within the school system that would run parallel to the Norwegian one. Fokstad wanted Norwegian to enter the curriculum of the Sámi school only in the fifth grade of the elementary school and Christianity instruction to be provided in Sámi throughout the school. This would have constituted a radical break with the Norwegian curriculum in use at the time when Fokstad wrote his school plan; it included Norwegian as the most important school subject, especially in the northern areas with Sámi and Kven pupils. In addition, Fokstad saw boarding schools as an option in the mountain regions where the distance between villages was normally substantial. These boarding schools in the mountain areas operated where large-scale reindeer herding was the most common livelihood, so Fokstad spoke for including the

theory and practice of this livelihood in the curriculum. Both in the case of reindeer herding and Christianity, Fokstad considered it paramount that the curriculum included examples from the everyday life of the Sámi, showing that he was well-aware of the reform pedagogy ideals of his time (Fokstad, 1924/2004).

Fokstad's plan never materialized, but he continued his work for Sámi education. Once he was a member of a governmental committee for reforming the school system in the late 1940s, he repeated the basic claims of his 1924 school plan. As Astri Andresen shows, this report was pivotal in changing the course of how the Sámi and Sámi education were viewed and discussed in Norway, thus leading to a period of more acceptance of Sámi culture (Samordningsnemnda for skoleverket, 1948; Andresen, 2016). This shift in perspective was a slow process, and the first separate Sámi curriculum was launched in Norway in 1997, over two decades after Fokstad's death in 1973 (Olsen, 2019). Fokstad's importance both as an inspirational figure and as a pioneer of Sámi education has been important for later generations of Sámi educators and scholars. Despite the fact that his school plan met with vigorous opposition and criticism in the 1920s, Fokstad's pioneering work has borne fruit in the decades following his most active period as an educator and Sámi activist.

Sweden

Swedish policies targeting the Sámi population were twofold. On the one hand, the children of the nomadic reindeer herders of Sweden's mountain areas were sent to a specific school form, the *nomad school*. The nomad school system, established in 1913, aimed to educate efficient reindeer herders. Bishop Olof Bergqvist, of Sweden's northernmost diocese of Luleå, and the elementary school inspector of northernmost Sweden, clergyman Vitalis Karnell, were the main architects and later controllers of the nomad school system. Together with elementary school inspector Karl Lorenz Österberg, they authored a proposition in 1909 that led directly to the establishment of the nomad school system. The nomad school system did not affect the children of the Sámi who were sedentary or not reindeer herders: They attended standard Swedish elementary schools, with assimilation into the Swedish language as the most common outcome. The criticism to educational policies among the Sámi concerned mainly the nomad schools. Some Sámi parents wanted more Sámi to be used in the schools with Swedish as the standard language of instruction (Kortekangas, 2021). The most vocal opposition to the policies, however, regarded the quality and forms of tuition that Sámi critics such as the teacher and clergyman Gustav Park viewed as inferior to the standard Swedish elementary schools.

In a sense, then, whereas the criticism in Norway regarded the fact that the schools had no specific Sámi curriculum or content, in Sweden,

the Sámi opposition criticized the fact that the nomad schools stood out from the general Swedish elementary schools. What is paramount to note is that the nomad school was adapted to the ideals of "true Sáminess" of the Swedish educational authorities who planned, implemented, and controlled the system. Even though Sámi parents and individuals were formally consulted both in the planning phase and later on, the form and content of the nomad school system essentially reflected the views of Swedish authorities rather than the Sámi (Sjögren, 2010). Nevertheless, where the generality of education was the focus of Norwegian Sámi criticism, Swedish Sámi activists disliked the specificity of Sámi education in Sweden.

One of the most vocal critics of the nomad school system, and Sámi education in general, was the Sámi teacher and clergyman Gustav Park. In 1918, a number of Swedish Sámi gathered for a nationwide meeting in the town of Östersund in central Sweden. Park, who at the time was a theology student at Uppsala University, used the meeting as a platform for a heavy castigation of Swedish educational policies targeting the Sámi. The main points of Park's criticism focused on the inferior quality of education in the nomad schools when compared to the standard Swedish elementary schools. Park regarded the low quality of education as a path to second-class citizenship for Sámi children. Park also condemned the obligation of the reindeer-herding Sámi of the mountain regions to place their children in the nomad schools. Park considered it a basic right that the Sámi have the choice between the nomad schools and the standard elementary schools. Park also did not promote the Sámi language as a vital part of education. On the contrary, he considered it a healthy development to have Swedish as the main language of tuition for Sámi children. This, again, is to be read in the contexts of the quality of education and, also, equal citizenship. For Park, the most important thing the Swedish school system could provide to the Sámi children was an education that would help them in the best possible way for their future. The other main function of education for Park was that it disseminated civic values—duties and responsibilities—that were common for all Swedish citizens (Tomasson, 1918).

Park's notions need to be read in their rightful context: As Park himself explained during the meeting, the children already knew Sámi, and to learn Swedish was an important extra resource. He never meant to replace the Sámi language with Swedish. According to Park, it was a functional combination that the children learned and spoke Swedish in the schools and Sámi in their home environments.

Karin Stenberg, a Sámi teacher born in the parish of Arvidsjaur, was Park's coeval and, like him, an ardent critic of Sweden's educational policies. In 1920, she published a book called *Dat Läh Mijen Situd* (*This Is Our Will*) together with the Swedish writer Valdemar Lindholm. In its actual context, and especially in retrospect, Lindholm's and Stenberg's criticism

appears radical in terms of both rhetoric and context. Like Fokstad in Norway and Park in Sweden, Stenberg was an early 20th-century promoter of the political and cultural rights of the Sámi. During her long career, she participated in the founding of the national Sámi organization *Same Ätnam* (1945) and the Sámi folk high school of Sweden (1942). The folk high school had, among other subjects, instruction in Sámi language and history, and it welcomed students from the whole Nordic Sámi area (Olsen, 2019).

The direct purpose of Stenberg and Lindholm's book was to influence the work of a governmental committee appointed in 1919 that investigated the rights of the Sámi and conditions for reindeer herding in Sweden. According to *Dat Läh Mijen Situd*, there was a need for a Sámi perspective to complement the outsider view of the committee (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920). As Patrik Lantto has discussed in his dissertation, the content of the book resembles very much the main critique that the leaders of the Sámi movement, and mainly Gustav Park, had presented in the first national meeting of the Swedish Sámi in Östersund two years earlier, in 1918 (Lantto, 2000).

In the preface to the book coauthored with Lindholm, Stenberg takes credit and responsibility for all the statements of the publication. The core message is concentrated in the first two lines of the book's conclusion:

> We want to live in our fathers' land as Sámi, but not as a people without enlightenment and prospects of development. We believe in the future of our people and in its development into a nation as cultivated as any.
>
> (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920, p. 88)

Despite this almost separatist tone, it is clear that Stenberg and Lindholm situate the struggle of the Sámi mainly in a Swedish context. However, to bolster their arguments for more extensive self-determination and rights for the Sámi, the book makes international contextualizations (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920).

In the first chapter of the book, the authors state that the Sámi have a "will to live." And this will to live, in the "time of the League of Nations" with all the talk about the rights of the small nations, should in itself be an argument for more right to self-determination. The authors make reference to the question of the Åland Islands, a group of islands in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Finland. Around the time of the book's publication, Sweden was trying to persuade Finland to arrange a referendum on Åland on whether the Swedish-speaking region should be a part of Finland (as it was and would remain via a decision by the League of Nations in 1921) or Sweden. Since the Swedes were so interested in supporting the right to self-determination on Åland, the authors enquired why they should think differently in the case of the Sámi in Northern Sweden (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920, p. 5).

Apart from this reference to the body of international affairs par excellence, the book makes another, radical framing of the Sámi case. In a chapter discussing enlightenment and Swedish school policies targeting the Sámi, the book repeats the critique of the 1918 national meeting of the Swedish Sámi in stating that the Sámi should have the right to choose which schools to attend. Since 1913, the children of the reindeer-herding Sámi were forced to attend the nomad schools where they were taught in Swedish in the basic elementary school subjects and alongside their typical Sámi livelihoods. The book takes a stance toward this obligation and states that the quality of education is not good enough in the nomad schools. In opposing the fact that the Swedish state wanted to decide what is considered a good-enough education for the Sámi, the book cites a colonial framework:

> We have heard both before and after the war how Swedes have criticized England and the English for their way of "subjugating other peoples" and their politics in India and Ireland. But we have heard no Swede that would seriously have worried about how the Swedish "colonial politics" have been.
>
> (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920, pp. 69–70)

In the paragraph, Sweden's patronizing of the Sámi is juxtaposed with other colonizing powers of Europe. After this comparison, the framing of the Sámi as a colonized population continues: "We the Sámi, who since time immemorial like dogs have had to be content with what has fallen from the table of our masters, we can understand both Indians and Irishmen" (Lindholm & Stenberg, 1920).

The context is unmistakably Swedish, since the book sought to affect the work of the Swedish governmental committee investigating the situation of the Sámi. At the same time, it is clear that Lindholm and Stenberg view the situation of the Sámi in a much larger context than that of Sweden, the Sámi area, or even Northern Europe. Situating the struggle of the Sámi in a context of European colonialism is a discussion that would really take off some 40 to 50 years after the publishing of Stenberg and Lindholm's book.

Taken together, Stenberg's and Park's criticism portray the patronizing school policies of Sweden as something that would lead to second-class education and citizenship for the Sámi. The ideals of the nomad schools aimed at educating a reindeer-herding population that continued the livelihood of their parents, but this was done in a manner modernized by the school system that was controlled by Swedish educational authorities. Park and Stenberg considered this a disgrace.

Park's, Lindholm's, and Stenberg's criticism was echoed by many Sámi parents who made their voices heard in meetings with the nomad school inspector who was in charge of all the nomad schools in the country.

In these meetings, Sámi parents expressed their discontentment with the school and boarding facilities that were designed by Swedish school authorities to be as "Sámi" as possible. In many cases, these were poorly constructed buildings that were, according to the parents, unhealthy for the children to dwell in. Whereas Park had highlighted the importance of Swedish as the language of instruction, opinions about the main language of education were divided among the Sámi parents. A general pattern indicates that in the areas where Sámi languages were already in a difficult position due to long-time assimilation and Swedish influx, the parents wished for the Sámi language to have a more prominent role in education. In areas where Sámi had a strong standing, many parents acknowledged the benefits of learning more Swedish (Sjögren, 2010; Kortekangas, 2021). The wish for general or equal education was thus conditional in the sense that education in Swedish with the standard Swedish curriculum was a wish of Sámi activists and parents in the context where the future of the Sámi language was secure.

Finland

Finland had the strongest continuation of Sámi educational policies from the 19th to the 20th centuries, and in many ways, also the best situation regarding the use of the Sámi language in schools until the 1940s and 1950s. This was, however, not the result of an active governmental pro-Sámi policy. Rather, the government had neither the resources nor the will to extend the standard elementary school system to the Sámi areas in the beginning of the 20th century. For this reason, traditional catechist schools, a direct continuation of earlier mission schools, constituted the main educational system in the Sámi areas until the late 1920s, and in some regions until the 1950s.

The ecclesial catechist schools often had Sámi-speaking teachers. The number of daily hours and the duration of education in these itinerant schools were substantially lower than in the standard elementary schools. Laura Lehtola, a Finnish teacher who worked as a catechist in the Sámi areas of Inari parish and who used Sámi in teaching, debated in retrospect whether it had been a disservice to allow the Sámi language to live on in and through education. According to Lehtola, the "modernity" brought to other children in Finland through standard elementary schools and their curriculum only reached the Sámi a few decades later with the standard governmental elementary schools. These schools had, as a norm, Finnish as the language of instruction, although a few exceptions to this rule saw Sámi teachers teaching classes in their mother tongue (Lehtola, 1984; Kähkönen, 1989; Kortekangas, 2021).

In Finland, as in Sweden and Norway, opinions were also divided among the Sámi concerning the specificity and generality of school. As the Sámi teacher Josef Guttorm wrote in a letter to Bishop J. R. Koskimies

of Finland's northernmost diocese, Oulu, in his home municipality of Utsjoki, many Sámi opposed having instruction in Sámi since, for example, Finnish carried economic benefits with it and made it easier for Sámi children to become full-scale members of the Finnish state. The fact that the Sámi even debated the use and whole existence of the Sámi language in Finnish Sámi areas saddened Guttorm. Guttorm saw the pro-Finnish Sámi attitudes in Utsjoki as subservient to the majority population of Finland, who regarded the Sámi as "nothing other than Lapps." Guttorm used the word "Lapp" here as a pejorative alternative to the word Sámi that he himself used (Guttorm, 1908). As pointed out by Veli-Pekka Lehtola, however, Sámi preference to use Finnish instead of Sámi can also be interpreted as benefitting them because they already knew Sámi from their home environment (Lehtola, 2012). This interpretation is plausible given that Utsjoki was a municipality with a majority Sámi population. This Finnish interpretation fits the examples from Gustav Park and some of the Sámi parents in northernmost Sweden who showed that tuition in Swedish and knowing Swedish was considered a valuable extra resource, especially in the areas and contexts where the Sámi language had a strong standing. When the Finnish standard elementary system gradually expanded to the Sámi areas, the uniform curriculum of the Finnish elementary school replaced earlier ecclesial educational policies based on Lutheran values. With only three exceptions (including Josef Guttorm and his son Hans Aslak, who both taught in Sámi in the Outakoski elementary school in Utsjoki), applying Finnish language and cultural practices was the norm in the standard elementary schools in the Sámi areas (Lehtola, 2012; Kortekangas, 2021).

Conclusions and Discussion

In all three countries, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, the Sámi activists criticizing existing educational policies called for elementary education that was qualitatively as good as the education provided to everyone else in their respective countries of residence. If this general, or egalitarian, educational ideal was active at the cost of Sámi language and culture, however, Sámi leaders and parents reacted negatively. Already in the first three decades of the 20th century, a different line that promoted Sámi as a population and culture with the same kinds of rights as other Nordic populations also became visible. For Sámi educators such as Per Fokstad, Josef Guttorm, and Karin Stenberg, it was obvious that the Sámi language had the right to exist, survive, and develop alongside other languages and cultures in the Nordic region. These teachers criticized government educational policies for ignoring the needs and wishes of the Sámi. At the same time, they viewed education as a positive force that could benefit Sámi children individually through the teaching of certain skills and knowledge (including of the majority languages of each country) that would help the

children get by in life, both economically and socially. On a more collective level, the teachers pointed out that elementary education could be harnessed in order to strengthen and uplift the Sámi language and culture. In arguing simultaneously in favor of egalitarian elementary education and an added focus on Sámi language and culture, the opinions of the teachers elucidated the blind eye that state-run egalitarian educational policies turned toward minority contexts. The "good state narrative" of these egalitarian policies had little understanding for minority voices that were critical of elementary education, which many educational authorities viewed as an idealistic project of "uplifting the masses" (see, e.g., Nyyssönen, 2013).

The early 20th-century Sámi teachers and activists were important figures in their own time, but they were also a crucial source of inspiration for the post–World War II Sámi movement as pioneers of Sámi activism and as individuals who kept the debate on Sámi rights alive during the preceding decades. The post–World War II Sámi movement made significant gains in teaming up with the global indigenous movement as the base for Sámi rights and education.

By the turn of the 21st century, it was, at least in principle, possible for Sámi students to attend Sámi-language education from kindergarten to high school and to continue on to the Sámi University of Applied Sciences in Kautokeino, Norway. The Sámi educators of today make the point that Sámi children should have the choice to attend schools with curricula that are not translated copies of the curricula of the schools of the majority populations of each country. Rather, Sámi culture and values should permeate the curriculum used in schools with Sámi pupils. These calls for a specific Sámi education are complemented with notions of indigenization—the notion that the general curricula in each country should also include strong Sámi elements (Keskitalo et al., 2013; Kemi Gjerpe, 2018; Svonni, 2015). This is important not only in order to disseminate knowledge about the Sámi to the majority populations but also because a growing number of Sámi pupils attend schools outside of the traditional Sámi areas, where most of the Sámi-speaking schools are located. One hundred years after the important work of Fokstad, Stenberg, and Guttorm, the discussion on the degree of specificity and generality of Sámi education is still active. The debate of today includes strong Sámi voices, with Sámi educators driving the change and development of education rather than being voices marginalized by mainstream educational policies.

Nordic educational policies targeting the Sámi, both today as well as historically, are prime examples of policies that tend to nationalize the Sámi minorities in each country, creating artificial divisions between "Norwegian Sámi," "Finnish Sámi," and so on. These kinds of nationalizations blur cross-national perspectives. Nordic states take great pride in portraying themselves as a highly integrated and progressive region. The example of Sámi education is an illuminating instance of the substantial obstacles that the national borders pose to real intergovernmental

co-operation and the very real obstacles they pose to the Sámi, who are living in an area only rather recently divided by national borders. Scholars today should not accept the result of such policies at face value and only study the rights of the Sámi within each nation-state. Comprehensive and cross-national perspectives are imperative to understanding Sámi history in all its complexity and diversity.

Note

1. The Sámi and the Sámi language are umbrella terms for a number of interrelated indigenous Sámi groups speaking one of the several Sámi language varieties. The traditional home area of the Sámi is located in the central and northern parts of Scandinavia, Finland, and northwestern Russia. The total number of Sámi today is around 100,000 individuals. A substantial number of Sámi have or have had half-nomadic reindeer herding as their main livelihood. See, for example, the web page of the Swedish Sámi Information Centre www.samer.se/4529 for more information in English.

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